



Our Family

by

Heinz and Thea Ruth Skyte, née Ephraim

The History of Burghaslach



(photo: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

Schloss and Herrschaft Burghaslach were originally a fief given by the rulers of Hohenlohe-Speckfeld to the family von Vestenberg. After the Hohenlohe-Speckfelds died out, Burghaslach came to the Counts of Castell. Burghaslach remained however as a Castell fief in the possession of the Vestenberg family. The male line of this family died out in 1687 and the fief returned to Castell. After that it was no longer let out. At the end of the 16th century (1592) the family Vestenberg sold their Manors Breitenlohe and Buchbach together with half of their Burghaslach Manor to the family von Muenster. In 1783 through the purchase of the manors of Breitenlohe and Buchbach by the Counts of Castell-Remlingen and with it the part of Burghaslach owned by the von Muensters also came to Castell. Castell-Ruedenhausen had already sold their part of Burghaslach to Castell-Remlingen in 1777-79. (1)

The administrative district of Burghaslach with Breitenlohe had at that time a total population of 2,415 inhabitants, comprising 281 Catholics, 1,683 Protestants and 251 Jews.

Viehbeck describes Burghaslach itself in 1807 as "a Protestant market town, which apart from a fairly roomy castle also has 97 houses (34 of which had previously belonged to Muenster), where

165 families - 22 Catholics, 530 Protestants and 207 Jews (who have their own synagogue here) altogether 759 people - live." (2)

In 1986 Burghaslach is a quiet little village, some 25 miles north west of Nuremberg, about half way between Nuremberg and Wuerzburg, less than three miles from the Schluesselfeld exit of the busy Wuerzburg - Nuremberg Autobahn.

The Jewish Community of Burghaslach

The Burghaslach Jewish Community is of fairly long standing. Records show that they were Jews in Burghaslach in the 17th century. At that time the Counts of Castell Remlingen and of Castell Ruedenhausen, as well as the Baron of Muenster, owned land and property in Burghaslach and each of these rulers had some of the local Jews under their "protection".

In 1722 the Jewish population comprised 25 families, 14 of which were under the "protection" of the Baron of Muenster, six under that of Castell-Ruedenhausen and the remaining five under Castell-Remlingen. (3)



Haslach creek in Burghaslach

(photo: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

In 1731 the Jewish Community received permission to erect four "Schranken" (barriers) at the end of the village, as "this will be an adornment for the market town and it was known that Jewish communities in other places had recently been favoured with this". It was "to allow Jews to carry food and drink across the street on their Sabbath according to Jewish law". The agreement stated that the community would pay for the installation and a yearly rent of 30 kr. for this, but that the upkeep would be the responsibility of the local council. When in the spring of 1754 one of the barriers however was broken, they asked that the cost of the repairs be paid by the Chancellery. They claimed that if they had to pay for repair and upkeep themselves, the barriers would be damaged practically every week by unruly youths. Although the erection, said to have cost 40 fl., could not have taken place without official permission, no records could be traced in either the "community chests" of Castell Remlingen or Muenster. (4) On behalf of the Jewish community the local Official Johann Jacob Mueller asked that a search for these documents should be made at the register office

of Castell Ruedenhausen, the cost of which would however be the responsibility of the Jewish community. The document was eventually found.

Disputes between members of the Jewish community were generally settled according to Jewish law by the congregation. Only if this was not possible were complaints brought to local officials for settlement. The community also assessed contributions to be paid by each member towards official communal taxes and payments, and the upkeep of some of their own institutions.

The Counts Castell-Remlingen built a new Judenhaus for some of their Jewish subjects in 1754. This house was bought by ancestor Schlom in 1783 and most probably stood on land ancestor Jekof Moyses sold in 1746/47 to the authorities.

The Count of Castell-Ruedenhausen had already sold his Burghaslach possession in 1777-79 to the line Castell-Remlingen, so when this line died out in 1783 all land and properties in Burghaslach including its Jews came under the rule of the House Castell-Castell. The Counts personally appointed the local Rabbi.

In March 1784 the Castell rulers instructed the local official in Burghaslach to order all Burghaslach Jews to present their "Schutzbriefe" (Letters of Protection) or their original reception decree. This order could only be carried out in March 1785 "as some Jews are often away dealing in optical goods in foreign lands. As, however, all local Jews shall be here before the approaching Easter" they were ordered to appear before at the local office. From this document we learn a great deal about the 32 Jewish heads of the families at that time living in Burghaslach: (5)

1. Suessmann, aged approx. 80 years, was born in Burghaslach. He produced his original 1737 Schutzbrief.
2. Joseph Schmelz, born in Muehlhausen, had married the daughter of the local Jew Jekof in 1749.
3. Abraham had come from Oettingen in 1766.
4. Eisig's late father had already been "protected" in Burghaslach. His widowed mother had bought a house there, but given up her own household in 1769. He and his late brothers had then been granted the "protection" by the Baron of Castell-Rehweiler.
5. Lemmlein was granted Schutz of Muenster when he bought a house in 1764.
6. Loew Suessmann: He was granted "protection" after his father had relinquished his own and had handed his little house over to him.
7. Josua received local "protection" in 1774, having previously been "protected" by the Margrave of Ansbach in Fuerstenforst. (6)
8. Feidel was born in Prichsenstadt and lived in Burghaslach since marrying Benjamin's widow in 1775.
9. Moshe Sussmann was granted "protection", having taking over half his father Sussmann's house in 1776-
10. Schlom, born here, was granted "Schutz" on the occasion of his marriage in 1777.
11. Selka had received "protection" in 1784 when he, together with his step-father Feidel, had bought the Judenhaus.
12. Lippmann Joel had received a Letter of Protection from the Guardians of the Barons of Castell in 1779.
13. Aaron Loew: had applied for and been granted Castell protection when he bought a house in 1783.
14. Berlein Loew was the youngest son of the late Jew Loew Benjamin, who had lived under the "most gracious Protection of Castell" for some 50 years and died in 1779. He now owned

his father's house. He and his brother Aaron had each paid annual protection money since 1780.

Five additional Jews were transferred from the former authority of the Counts of Ruedenhausen: Meyer Levi, Salomon Joseph, Schimmelein and Abraham, who stated that they had been given "protection" some 20 years earlier, but had no Schutzbrief and David, who had received his recently.

Another 13 Jews came under the "gracious protection" of Castell together with the former administration of the Baron of Muenster in Breitenlohe: (7) Hirsch Jacob, Henoch Abraham, Salomon Jacob, Hajum Loew, Samson Henlein, Sandel Salomon, Isaac Hirsch, Lippmann Salomon, Zeberlein, Mayer Mandel, Abraham Baer, Loew and Joseph Jacob. (8)

In 1795 Jacob Lehmann became the new Parnoss and the following were summoned for his induction: Joseph, Salomon Joseph, Laemmele, Hayum Loew, Feidel sen., From Abraham Laemmelein, Samson, Josua Loew, Lippmann Salomon, Eisig Hirsch, Eisig Samuel, Moises Sussmann, Schlom Joseph, Aberle, Lippmann Joel. Mayer Mandel, From Abraham, Aron Loew, Loew Isaak, Samuel David, Isaak Baer, Feidel Seckel, Selka Benedikt, Michel Baer, Lammel Abraham, Aron Jacob, David Wolf, Abraham Sussmann, Jacob Moises and Sandel Salomon. (9)

At various times there were discussions and correspondence regarding the reduction of the number of Jews going back to the early 18th century. Some correspondence in 1722 between Castell and Baron of Muenster asked Muenster also to reduce their intake. (10) In 1801 an order was issued to reduce the number of Jewish families, which had then risen to 38. (11)

From various Matrikel lists we learn dates of birth and family names adopted by Burghaslach Jews: (12)

Name	Adopted Name	Born
Joseph Schlom	Sahlmann	1784
Laemmlein Abraham	Kuenstler	1764
Moyses Hayum	Schaerzer	1777
Hirsch Isaac	Mandelbaum	1782
Aron Jacob	Schwarzbauer	1765
Marum Veist	Mainhardt	1758
Samuel Isaak	Hellmuth	1785
Jacob Moises	Mosenauer	1770
Loeser Seligmann	Apfelbaum	
Hirsch Levi	Mossmann	1768
Salomon Lippmann	Biermann	
Isaac Aberlein	Holzinger	1782
Lehmann Isaac	Rosenblatt	1787
Eisig Samuel	Ringler	1741
Jacob Loeser	Eckmann	

Baerlein	Rosenblatt	1761
Isaac Moises	Goldschlager	1758
Veitel Seckel	Rothschild	1755
Salomon Seligmann	Mosbacher	1768
David Wolf	Semelman	1752
Samuel David	Gruenbaum	1753
Anschel Abraham	Ullmann	1762
Moises Levi	Hellmann	1780
Jeremias Esel	Weichselbaum	1765
Loew Abraham	Hangewisz	1789
Meier Mendel	Wiesmacher	1749
Goezel Isaac	Hellmann	1778
Abraham Suessmann	Zeislein	1761
Aron Loew	Hollerbaum	1757
Levi Laemmlein	Zentmann	1771
Loew Salomon	Kriegsmann	1768
Baruch	Rosenthal	1785
Jacob	Lehmann	1765
Elias	Lehmann	1769
Selka Benedict	Guckenheimer	

The community continued to increase during the beginning of the 19th century. Towards the middle of the century, however, members started to leave the village, many emigrating to the USA. After the 1861 "Emanzipationsedikt" more moved into towns.

Members of the Jewish Community Burghaslach (13)

1 January 1897	1 January 1902
1) Bernheimer, Isak	1) Same
2) Eckmann, Gustav	2) Same
3) Eckmann, Jakob	3) Same
4) Eckmann, Moses	4) Same
5) Eckmann, Simon	deceased
6) Friedlein, Frau Mina	deceased
7) Fuld, Louis	moved to Nuremberg
8) Hangewitz, Abraham	5) Same
9) Hellmann, Goetz	6) Same

10) Hellmann, Hermann	7) Same
11) Hellmann, Samuel (deceased)	8) Hellmann, Frau Mina
12) Isner, Benno	9) Same
13) Isner, Frau Sophie	10) Same
14) Kuenstler, Leopold	moved to Straubing
15) Loeffler, Frau Lina	11) Same
16) Massenbacher, Meier	12) Same
17) Mossmann, Gustav	13) Same
18) Roehner, Frau	deceased
19) Rosenblatt, Hirsch (deceased)	14) Rosenblatt, Hannchen
20) Rosenblatt Isak	15) Same
21) Rosenblatt, Samuel	16) Same
22) Rosenblatt, Simon	17) Same
23) Rosenmann, Jakob	18) Same
24) Shapiro, Samuel	19) Same
25) Sturm, Isak	20) Same
26) Sturm, Leopold	21) Same
27) Sulzbacher, Frau Jette	moved to Uffenheim
28) Ullmann, Abraham	22) Same
29) Wortsmann, Gerson	23) Same
30) Wortsmann, Moses	moved to Fuerth
31) Zentmann, Abraham	24) Same
32) Zentmann, Bernhard	25) Same
	26) Wassermann, Frau Lina
	27) Keiner, Frau
Total number of people: 134	Total number of people: 109

Executive Committee

1897: Moses Wortsmann, Gerson Wortsmann, Samuel Hellmann.

1902: Benno Isner, Gerson Wortsmann, Abraham Zentmann.

More Jews moved away from Burghaslach in the beginning of the 20th century and some managed to emigrate in the 1930s Nazi period.

The last recorded entry in the Community Minute Book is a list of assessments dated 17 April 1938.

- Eckmann, Josef 3 Mk

- Eckmann, Julius 3 Mk
- Haugewitz, Abraham 4 Mk
- Hellmann, Isaak 3 Mk
- Rosenblatt, Adolf 8 Mk
- Rosenblatt, Karl 3.Mk
- Ullmann, Salomon 4 Mk
- Zentmann, Max 5 Mk
- Bernheimer, Rosa (widow) 1 Mk

The congregation was dissolved on 1st December 1938. (14)

The Burghaslach Synagogue

Burghaslach had an old synagogue, which stood on land, owned by the Baron of Muenster. Various negotiations between Castell and Muenster to build a synagogue on common ground came to nothing. (15) In May 1731 ancestor Jefkof Moyses applied to the authority of Castell-Remlingen for permission for the five families (16) under their "protection" to establish their own synagogue in a room he had recently added to his house. They suffered harassment and excessive taxes were demanded and collected by the Baron of Muenster for the synagogue, 10 fl. higher than the sum agreed. This led to constant disagreements and conflicts within the Jewish Community, a fact confirmed by the local Castell Government official in Burghaslach. Baron Muenster in 1733 agreed that "in order to protect Jews against poverty, he would in future not take more than 12 fl. for the synagogue". Disagreements and trouble concerning or within the Jewish Community appears to have been continuous and serious. One document dated 29 September 1793 even reported "grosser tumult in der Synagoge, es wurde sogar mit Pulver geschossen" (great uproar in the synagogue, there was even shooting with gunpowder). (17)

By the middle of the 19th century the old synagogue was in a bad state of repair and no longer suitable. It had been located on the first floor of a very old dilapidated building. In winter the synagogue was very cold and during rainy weather the congregation had to wade through puddles to reach it. There was also insufficient room in the women's synagogue.

The New Synagogue

In 1855 the community started to create a fund for the building of a new synagogue. 1 % of the dowry of a bride who settled in Burghaslach, or ½ % of the dowry, if a son or daughter married elsewhere, had to be paid into this fund. A bridegroom coming to live in Burghaslach had "to buy himself in" for 20 fl. in addition to paying his percentage of the dowry. These payments were said to have been customary in other communities for quite a long time.

A suitable site was found when, by chance, the house and barn of the widow Nicholas Roeder came on the market and was bought for 2,200 fl. As the plot was too large for the synagogue the existing house, shop, surplus ground and the material of the barn were therefore sold to Salomon Worts- mann for 1500 fl. (18)

Several plans were drawn up. In 1858 the Building Inspector of the House Castell named Hergen- roeder, submitted plans for a new school and a synagogue, which were approved by the community

as well as the government of Middle Franconia. Estimates were received and the community set an upper cost limit of 9,000 fl.

The local community contributed and donations were received towards the Building Fund amounting to 7,320 fl.: (19)

- 2,500 fl. from "Zehntfond"
- 300 fl. Donation from Mr. Sachs of San Francisco
- 1,000 fl. to be raised from contributions
- 800 fl. Sale of the old synagogue to Dr. Neuburger
- 270 fl. Sale of the old "Armenhaeuschen" (Alms house)
- 750 fl. Donations by members of the local community living in Fuerth, Nuremberg, Regensburg and Wuerzburg
- 250 fl. Donations from 41 men for being "called up" at the service of consecration
- 750 fl. From a tax of 10 fl. for each man's bench and 5 fl. for each woman's.
- 100 fl. Sale of men and women's stands at 5 fl.
- 600 fl. Government contribution towards the building of the school

Additional money was raised by selling shares at 25 fl. to members of the community. A circular from the Executive of the Community addressed to all married Jewish women in the village was sent out on 16th February 1868. Many had indicated that they would like to help with the raising of funds by pledging voluntary weekly contributions. (20)

Contracts for the two buildings at a total cost of 9,081 fl. were given to the local builder Gottlieb Hofmann and the carpenter Wilhelm Lehner on 26 February 1869.

The foundation stone for the synagogue, which incorporated a document, giving some details of the community and the two buildings, was laid on 1st Juli 1869. The Holy Ark, pulpit and reader's desk were made by the local cabinet maker Paulus Mueller.

The 1870 Synagogue Building Committee consisted of Lippmann Ullmann, Isidor Isner, Dr. Neuburger, Salomon Wortsmann and Leopold Kuenstler. A vote was taken whether a screen should divide the women's seats from the men's. The majority of the congregation voted against this. (21)

Members of the Community gave donations towards the two lamps on the entrance steps of the synagogue and other ritual objects. The following articles towards the interior furnishings and fittings were given: (22)

- Teacher Mahrschuetz "Giessfass"
- Salomon Zentmann Thora mantle
- Lippmann Ullmann Thora mantle
- Jacob Mandelbaum Cover for Readers desk
- Isaak Guckenheimer (Nuremberg) White cover
- Dr. Neuburger Cover for pulpit
- Laemmlein Kuenstler Clock
- Isidor Isner 2 Wall Tablets with Loyal prayers
- Goetz Mandelbaum Candleholders
- Herrmann Frank White cashmere cloths for desk and pulpit
- Urias Kuenstler (?) with brass hand
- Frau Maila Guckenheimer 2 brass candelabras

On Friday, 10th June 1870, the new synagogue was consecrated with great festivities. Already on the previous day former Burghaslach Jews, many of whom had travelled a great distance, as well as many officially invited guests had come to stay in the village. A special programme had been printed by the Fuerth printers Albrecht Schroeder (23) to enable the honoured guests to understand the proceedings and also to serve as a souvenir of the occasion.

An account by teacher M. Marschuetz in the Minute Book of the Congregation describes this occasion, which

"started at 3 p.m. with the afternoon prayer in the old synagogue. After District Rabbi Fels from Uehlfeld had given an address there, the Torah Scrolls were taken from the Ark and under canopies in ranks of twice three took their place in the procession. This started off to the strains of a festive march, followed by the choir, all school children with their teacher, then three girls all dressed in white, the eldest of whom, Clotilde Isner, carried the key to the new synagogue on a velvet cushion. Then came the men carrying the Torah scrolls with the Rabbi in the middle, the invited worldly and clerical guests, the teachers of the surrounding areas, the master builder, members of the local authority, members of the Jewish Congregation, male outsiders and then local as well as women and girls from outside the community. It was an imposing sight to see this long procession. Hundreds of non-Jews from the whole of the surrounding areas had come to watch this remarkable ceremony with great interest. The procession moved as far as the steps of the new synagogue, where Clotilde Isner presented the key with a little poetic speech to the Representative of the Royal Government Office from Scheinfeld, who responded, praising the devotion of the local Jewish community and passed the key to the Rabbi. To his call "Open the gates" the doors of the new synagogue opened. The whole crowd went in. To see this great glittering assembly in this beautiful, festively lit House of God left a magnificent unforgettable impression. Then to the sounds of a well trained choir of eight, accompanied by a very precise string quartet, the Torah scrolls were taken three times around the synagogue and then placed into the new sanctuary, followed by an address by the Rabbi about the significance of the House of God (Verse 17, chapter 28, Genesis)".

Apart from this religious ceremony a musical evening ("Harmonie-Musik") was held that night for the invited guests in the "Schlee'schen" garden. On Saturday and Sunday evening celebration balls were held in the "Beer'schen" and "Schlee'schen Lokalen" (Inns). Teacher Marschuetz also reports that these festivities provided topical conversation over a wide area and even reached some political papers. e.g. the "Fraenkische Courier" in Nuremberg, the "Fuerther Tageblatt" as well as Jewish journals. The first wedding ceremony performed by District Rabbi Fels in the new Synagogue was that of Abraham Ullmann and Regina Schwarzbauer.

In 1912 repairs to the Synagogue in the main street in the centre of Burghaslach were undertaken "to make this house of god equal in dignity to the Protestant Church, which had been restored seven years previously".

Owing to the after effects of the war no great celebrations took place for the 50th Anniversary of the synagogue's consecration on 28 and 29 May 1920. The following is a description of the service to commemorate the occasion: (24)

50jaehrige Erinnerungfeier an die Synagogogen Einweihung am 11. u. 12 Siwan 5680 (28. u. 29. Mai 1920)

Angesichts der durch den Krieg hervorgerufenen aeusseren Verhaeltnisse wurde von einer groesseren Veranstaltung abgesehen u. die Feier auf den G"ttesdienst beschraenkt. Die Synagoge wurde mit Fichten u. Guerlanden geschmueckt u. die Tafel mit den Namen der bei der Einweihung gegenwaertigen Gemeindemitgliedern befand sich, mit einem Kranze umgeben vor dem Predigerpult.

Am Freitag Abend wurde der bei der Einweihung gesungene "I'cho dodi" {1} von Vorsaenger u. Chor vorgetragen, vor "bar'chu" {2} erfolgte eine Ansprache des Distr. Rabb. Herrn Dr. Marmes - Schwabach ausgehend von der Einweihung des 2. Tempels u. der Stiftshuette, in der er ehemaligen u. jetz. Gemeindevorstehern dankte u. die seit jener Zeit besonderen Ereignisse (Bau der Friedhofsmauer u. des Frauenbundes) erwaehte.

Beim Morgen Gttesdienst wurden "en bamocha" {3} u. Einheben mit den Gesaengen wie bei der Einweihung v. Vorsaenger u. Chor vorgetragen. Saemtliche Mitglieder (24 Personen, darunter ein "chazan" {4} u. 2 Fremde) wurden aufgerufen. Nach dem ueblichen "mi s'berach" {5} fuer die Gemeinde folgte ein Seelengebet "Yizkor" {6} fuer die bei Einweihung gegenwaertigen, inzwischen heimgegangenen Gemeindemitglieder mit namentlichen Aufruf einetjeden, ein "mi seberach" {7} fuer das einzige noch lebende Mitglied, Herrn Lehrer Marschuetz - Fuerth u. die derzeitigen Mitglieder, nachdem vor dem "Yizkor" die Psalmen 30, 122, 127, 132 rezitiert worden waren, Einheben u. die Predigt unter Anlehnung an den Einweihungstext "ma nora hamakom hase" {8}. Mit dem Gesang des 150. Psalmes schloss die eigentl. Feier.

Es folgte das "Musaph" {9}. Moege die Gemeinde auch die 75 jaehrige Feier in Freuden begehen koennen! Die Gemeinde zaehlt z.Z. 24 Mitglieder u. 5 Witwen, die Volksschule hat 8 Schueler. Verwaltung: Benno Isner, Samuel Rosenblatt, Abr. Ullmann. Lehrer: Emanuel Hess, Kultusdiener: Moses Schottland, Rabbiner: Dr Marmes - Schwabach. Vermoegen : Etwa 9000 Mk.

- {1} Freitag Abend Gebet (Begrueessung des Sabbaths)
- {2} Segnungen
- {3} Gebet vor dem Oeffnen der Heiligen Lade zum Ausheben der Thorah
- {4} Braeutigam
- {5} Segnung
- {6} Gedaechnisgebete
- {7} Segnung
- {8} "Wie furchtbar ist dieser Ort." (Genesis 28.17)
- {9} Zusaetzliche Gebete, die nach dem Lesen aus den Buechern der Propheten, anschliessend an den Morgen Gottesdienst gesagt werden.

50th Anniversary Celebration of the Consecration of the Synagogue on 11th and 12th Sivan 5680 (28 and 29 May 1920)

In view of the general circumstances caused by the war, a bigger event was ruled out and the celebrations limited to the service. The synagogue was decorated with spruce and festoons and the board with the names of all members of the Congregation present at the consecration, surrounded by a wreath, stood before the dais.

On Friday evening, as at the consecration, the "l'cho dodi" {1} was sung by the cantor and choir, followed, before the "bar'chu" {2}, by a sermon by the district Rabbi Dr Marmes from Schwabach on the theme of the consecration of the 2nd temple and the tabernacle, in which he thanked the former and present Executive of the Congregation and mentioned special events since those days (the building of the cemetery wall and the Women's Association).

During the morning service "en bamocha" {3} and the returning of the scrolls to the Ark were the cantor and choir sung, as at the consecration. All members (24 people, amongst them one "chazan" {4} und 2 guests) were called up. The usual "mi s'berach" {5} for the congregation was followed by memorial prayers "Yizkor" {6} for members, who were present at the consecration, but are no longer with us, each one being mentioned by name, a "mi s'berach" {7} for the only still living member, the teacher Marschuetz from Fuerth and the present members, after which, before the "Yizkor", the psalms 30, 122, 127, 132 had been read, replacing of the scrolls and the sermon, based on the text used at the consecration "ma nora hamakon haze" {8}. The actual celebration closed with the singing of psalm 150.

"Musaph" {9} followed. May the congregation also joyously commemorate the 75th celebration! At present the Congregation has 21 members and 5 widows, the elementary school has 8 pupils. Executive: Benno Isner, Samuel Rosenblatt, Abr. Ullmann.

Teacher: Emanuel Hess, Beadle: Moses Schottland, Rabbi: Dr. Marmes - Schwabach. Assets: Approx. 9,000 Mk.

{1} Friday evening prayer welcoming the Sabbath.

{2} Blessings

{3} Prayer before the opening of the Ark.

{4} Bridegroom

{5} Blessing " May he who blessed ..."

{6} Prayer of Remembrance.

{7} Blessing

{8} " How awesome is this place." (Genesis chapter 28, verse 17).

{9} Additional service following the morning service, immediately after readings from the Books of the Prophets.

On 9/10th November 1938, as most other synagogues in Germany, the Synagogue was entered by Nazi fanatics led by a SS Group leader from Neustadt an der Aisch. Though the local Mayor and head of the constabulary were against any destruction of the synagogue, SA members of Burghaslach and surrounding districts broke in, destroyed or looted ritual objects and the interior and set the building on fire. The remains were rebuilt and today the former synagogue is a dwelling house, Neustaedter Strasse 1, next door to the Post Office. Behind the building stands the former Jewish School.

A Mikvah (ritual bath) was built in 1891 at a cost of 302.55 Mark. (25)



Former Synagogue in Burghaslach built 1869, photographed in 1989

(photo: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

The Cantor - Slaughterer - Teacher

The community employed a cantor (chazan), who also served as slaughterer (shochet). A 1836 contract confirms the re-appointment of Chazan Wortsman and lays down his remuneration in detail: (26)

1. Fixed annual cash salary 90 fl.
2. For "calling up" on Sabbaths and Holidays from everybody 6 kr.
3. For blessing of a new mother incl. of 6Kr for calling up 12 kr.
4. For calling up of a bridegroom 24 kr.
5. For reading of the Megile 1.45 fl.
6. For the slaughtering of large cattle 24 kr., for a small one, calf, sheep etc. 3 kr. for a goose 2 kr., for a chicken and a pair of pigeons 1 kr. For a walk of up to one hour to slaughter outside the village 12 kr. and for each further hour another 12 kr.
7. For witnessing a signature at a wedding 1 fl. Whoever did not invite the Chazan to an engagement or to a circumcision has to pay him compensation 1.30 fl. The Chazan has to be invited to weddings or he has to receive 3.30 fl. compensation, to be paid even if the wedding of a local son or girl was celebrated elsewhere.
8. For the writing of the engagement contract 1.30 fl.

These amounts were revised and eventually the cantor/slaughterer was paid an annual salary. In 1872 Salomon Sturm undertook the duties of cantor "punctually and regularly" on weekday mornings and evenings, the New Year and Day of Atonement. He also had to collect all dues, give notice of meetings, was responsible for lighting in the synagogue, searching for the weekly "Sidra" (portion of the law), opening and closing of the synagogue and the filling of the "Giessfass". His son Isaac Sturm undertook slaughterer and associated duties. Both men received 110 fl. annually. (27) When Isaac Sturm resigned in 1873, as buying of hops and travel prevented him to carry on, Jakob Meyer of Aschbach took over. Later these duties appear to have been combined with those of elementary school teacher.

The Jewish School

1833 annual statistics show that the school was attended by 30 boys and 36 girls, divided into three classes for 6-8 year, 8-10 year and 10-13 year olds. Teacher Simon Hamburger had served the community for over 40 years. After his death in 1858 it was decided to move the elementary school into the accommodation formerly occupied by the teacher. The newly appointed religious and elementary school teacher had also to undertake all written office work, combined with the position of cantor and had also to form a choir. In addition to fl. 25 for accommodation and free heating of the school room, he received a fixed salary of 300 fl. An annual school fee of 1 fl. per child was introduced.

In 1863 school fees were paid for 40 children by the following:

Name	No. of Children
Eckmann, Simon	4
Mossmann, Moses	3
Frank, Herrmann	2
Dr. Neuburger	6

Gottschalk, Hermann	3
Rosenblatt, Hirsch	1
Hellmann, Hirsch	2
Sahlmann, Salomon	2
Hellmann, Isak's widow	3
Sturm, Salomon	2
Isner, Isidor	1
Ullmann, Isaak	3
Lehmann, Lorenz	1
Ullmann, Lippmann	2
Mandelbaum, Jacob	1
Vogelbaum, Jakob	1
Massenbacher, Seligmann	2
Zentmann, Salomon	1

There were great difficulties with lighting in the old school rooms and sanitary conditions were most unsatisfactory. The first turf for the new school was cut in April 1869. Already in the middle of September the teacher was able to move into his living quarters and the completed new school was handed over on 1 November of the same year. (28)

As everywhere else the movement of Jews away from the village was also felt in the school. In 1897 when Emanuel Hess was the teacher 32 pupils attended the weekday school and 7 the holiday school. The numbers had been reduced further to 23 and 2 respectively in 1902. By 1920, with the declining Jewish population, only seven weekday and three holiday pupils remained. The school closed in 1924. Thereafter it was only used for religious instruction.

The Jewish Cemetery in Burghaslach

Up to 1724 Burghaslach Jews were buried in Ullstadt. In that year Burghaslach Jews "protected" by "Grafschaft Castell" and by the Baron von Muenster, as well as those under the protection of Schwanenberg in Geiselwind, those of Brandenburg in Fuerstenforst, of Vestenbergsgreuth together with those of the Baron von Polnitz in Aschbach, decided that a common cemetery for all these communities should be founded in Aschbach. Soon problems arose, however, between the various parties and a further agreement said to be "for ever" was concluded in 1761, though the Aschbach Baron von Polnitz is said to have failed to sign the "agreement". Further problems occurred and the official of the Baron von Polnitz in Aschbach held the "Grafschaft Castell" authority responsible for settling outstanding payments. This led Castell to agree the purchase of ½ acre of land for a Jewish cemetery in Burghaslach in May 1775. Aschbach protested. A complaint to the Baron of Muenster resulted in the order that a fine of 20 Reichstaler would be imposed, should his Jews be buried anywhere but in Burghaslach. Further protests by Aschbach to all rabbis and to the authority in Bamberg led Burghaslach Jews, supported by the local authority of "Castell", to ask the Jewish Court in Fuerth to settle the dispute according to Jewish law, which decided in favour of Burghaslach. Aschbach, not happy with the Fuerth outcome, took their protest to the highest authority, the Privy Council in Vienna, which also turned down their complaint in October 1776.

In 1884 the original Tahara house was demolished and rebuilt in its present position.

The Jewish Cemetery is within the village, about fifty meters above the houses Muehlgasse 19/20, a narrow path up a slope leading to the locked wrought iron gates.

Keys to the cemetery were kept by a retired man, who kept an eye on the cemetery, keeping the rough grass down. He had also felled some trees, which had dislocating the gravestones. There are some three hundred gravestones, many of them of sandstone, which has weathered and largely disintegrated, so that inscriptions are unreadable or have completely disappeared. In the lower lying and apparently oldest part of the cemetery the gravestones have mostly sunk into the ground. On our first visit to the cemetery this part had been fenced off and sheep were grazing. Some gravestones are of marble or have marble fronts. Some of these fronts had obviously come off their stones at some time or other, either through their age or by damage and the desecration of the cemetery which took place in the 1930s during the Nazi period. Some of these stones have been re-affixed upside down. Here the graves of ancestor Joseph Sahlmann, who was born in Burghaslach on 16th May 1784, and that of his wife Mathilde née Rosenblatt were found. Unfortunately on our last visit the condition of the cemetery had deteriorated. There was now a wire partition between the open grassy ground at the entrance and the actual site of the graves, but part of it had been opened and sheep were running all over between the graves.

The original Memorbuch, book to the memory of the dead started in April/May 1775 still exists and gives the whole of the layout of the cemetery. It lists, in Hebrew, the location and names of all people buried here up to the 1930s and shows that it was also used by the Jewish community of Vestenbergsgreuth. (29) The first grave is on the western side of the cemetery and is that of Baruch bar Levy, who died on 2nd Tammuz (June/July), aged nearly 80 years. From an entry in the book we learn of the death of great-great-grandfather Schlom and one of the many tragedies of the times due to epidemics of endemic infectious diseases.

The book records the graves of: "The young boy Moshe ben Schlomo, who died on 24 Kislev and was buried on 26 Kislev 574 (17/19 December 1813). Next to him his father the honoured Schlomo ben Josef, who died and was buried the same day. Next to him his daughter the maiden Fradel, who died and was buried the following morning. These three, father, son and daughter died of Nervenfeiber (typhus), may the Lord avert his anger from us and all Israel and banish death for ever, with this in mind I allowed the sniffing of snuff and the drinking of an infusion of tobacco (?) during the funerals and during the cleansing (of the bodies) to overcome the smell of the plague, as consented to by the Chief Rabbi of Fuerth."

The Cemetery Wall

A 82 page document written by Emanuel Hess, at that time the Jewish teacher in Burghaslach, gives a very detailed description regarding the building of the present enclosing wall. Originally the cemetery was bordered by a deciduous hedge, which left it open to everyone especially in winter. Louis Guckenheimer of Nuremberg and one of three Meinhardt brothers, living in Savannah USA first suggested the building of a wall in 1885.

A building committee was formed in 1895 consisting of Meier Massenbacher, Gerson Wortsmann and Samuel Hellmann, the three members of the Executive of the congregation. Emanuel Wortsmann was elected to this and sent out letters asking for contributions towards the 8,000 Mark required. The first response was very poor:

- Gerson Rosenblatt Regensburg 20 Mk
- K. Lehmann Regensburg 10 Mk
- E. Lehmann Regensburg 10 Mk
- Rothschild Lavensworth USA 15 Mk

Others had reservations and promised support if certain conditions were met, e.g. Hirsch Hellmuth of Nuremberg would contribute, providing other businesses did likewise. Sigmund and Anton Sahlmann of Fuerth, also their brother Bernhard were willing to give 1,200 Mk on condition that they, but especially their brother Bernhard, could be assured that the grave of their mother Mathilde Sahlmann née Rosenblatt, which was near the edge, would not be damaged by the removal of the hedge. Sigmund and Anton, however, would only pay their share once Bernhard had done so. Sigmund Hellmuth was willing to contribute providing the building was finished by 1 July 1898.

From the lists of all contributions the movement away from the village can be seen:

- Louis Guckenheimer Nuremberg 400 Mk
- Simon Guckenheimer Savannah USA 500 Mk
- Brothers Marschuetz Nuremberg 700 Mk
- A Loeffler Savannah USA 100 Mk
- Mrs. I. Weissenfeld Vienna 100 Mk
- Rosalie Rosenblatt Nuremberg 50 Mk
- Malie Kuenstler Nuremberg 100 Mk
- Brothers Mainhardt Savannah USA 1500 Mk
- Mrs. I. Guckenheimer Nuremberg 500 Mk
- Hellmann heirs Nuremberg 500 Mk
- H. Ullmann Erfurt 100 Mk
- Brothers Sahlmann Fuerth 1200 Mk
- Lazarus Frank Nuremberg 100 Mk
- A. Rosenblatt Regensburg 1000 Mk
- Aron Schwarzbauer Nuremberg 100 Mk
- Simon Freimann Schnaittach 12 Mk
- Seligmann Frank Scheinfeld 50 Mk
- M Buxbaum Bamberg 400 Mk
- Louis Fuld Nuremberg 100 Mk
- Mrs. Frank Frankfurt/Main 200 Mk
- G. Mainhardt Kairlindach 10 Mk

In addition to interest received on the invested capital, 400 Mk were given the "Landesverein zur Unterstuetzung notleidender israelitischer Gemeinden". The sale of twelve oak trees on the cemetery raised a further 525 Mk.

Contracts for the wall were signed with builder Hofmann in December 1897. The building started in the spring of 1898 and was to be finished by July of that year. It was however to be a protracted affair. Schottland, an employee of the community, had to be engaged to personally supervise the building, when it was found that it was not done according to specifications. Long negotiations took place regarding the type of gate to be fixed. Steps to the gate and door were eventually ordered and the wall was finally finished at the end of 1899.

The site for affixing a memorial plaque with the names of donors, whether to place this on the actual wall or inside the Tahara house, led to serious disagreements.

Isaak Rosenblatt, the treasurer, resigned in 1900 and handed over a surplus of 697.05 Mk to Samuel Hellmann for investment.

Israelitischer Frauenverein (Association of Jewish Women)

This was founded in 1877. "to provide care for Jewish women and children in case of illness and to help them to bear their misfortunes, also to assist needy women, both local and others, financially. Personal service consists of nursing and night sitting for women, girls and boys up to 10 years of age, and for sick Jewish servants, irrespective of whether the employer was rich or poor. Duties have to be recommended by a doctor, the maximum length to be three weeks. Members work six-hour shifts, one attendant by day and two at night. If one fails to undertake duties, a fine of 2 M. will be imposed. On the death of a member, whether rich or poor, a suitable man will perform daily Schiur for which 12 m is payable. On the death of a member without living sons, Kaddish will be said daily, for which 20 M. will be paid. In this case the Schiur is omitted." (30)

The cost of joining the association was 50 Pf. and then a monthly contribution of 20 Pf.

The District Rabbinate

In 1836 Burghaslach was one of 12 Jewish communities belonging to the District Rabbinate of Uehlfeld. The district rabbi received a total annual payment of fl. 450 inclusive of travel expenses. Shares of contributions of each community were calculated according to number of its "Matrikel" places. (31)

In 1873 new divisions of payments were agreed according to the numbers of members of their communities. The following congregations then belonged to the District Rabbinate Uehlfeld:

Community	No. of Members	Amounts - Mark
Scheinfeld	30	63.72
Burghaslach	36	76.25
Ullstadt	14	29.44
Schwarzenbach	11	23.20
Uehlfeld	28	59.28
Diespeck	44	93.21
Pahres	15	31.50 ½
Schornweissach	5	10.37
Kairlindach	15	31.15 ½
Weissendorf	11	23.20

The Burgambach Jewish community had been dissolved.

When District Rabbi Hayam Selz of Uehlfeld died in 1876, the District Rabbinate then said to have covered Uehlfeld, Diespeck, Weissendorf, Pahres, Burghaslach, Scheinfeld, Schnodsenbach, Burgambach, Geiselwind and Schornweissach. (32)

Around 1900 Burghaslach came under the District Rabbinate Schwabach and in the 1930s under that of Kitzingen. (33)

Census Figures of Burghaslach

Year	Inhabitants	Jews (Jewish Families)
1795		30
1804		174
1828		242 (37)
1833		254 (49)
1888		187
1890		180 (40)
1894		158 (38)
1910	894	93
1920		80 (29)
1925	843	73
1933	820	60
1936		46 (14)
1938 (10 Nov.)		39
1939 (1 Jan.)		10
1940 (9 Feb.)		0

Apart from the Jewish cemetery nothing is left of the once thriving Jewish community of Burghaslach.

Fuerstenforst

Until 1972, when it became part of Burghaslach, Fuerstenforst was a very small village lying on the slight incline just above Burghaslach. Today it has a population of less than 80 inhabitants. Fuerstenforst has a long varied and not very peaceful history. Early records go back to the beginning of 14th century, when it is mentioned to have been a possession of free knights from times immemorial. Veit von Vestenberg, district judge of the Burgrave of Nuremberg, at the end of the 15th century built a "Schloss" here. Much was destroyed during the peasant uprisings (1525). Hostilities also existed between different members of the Vestenberg family, some of whom had possessions in Burghaslach and Breitenlohe. In 1561 the bailiff of Neustadt an der Aisch on order of the Margrave of Ansbach occupied Fuerstenforst for some time, causing devastation. The 30 year war (1618-1648) practically destroyed the little village. After the family of Vestenberg had died out Fuersten-

forst became part of the principality of Ansbach in 1687. Towards the end of the 18th century the Margraves of Ansbach and Bayreuth entered a treaty with Prussia and Fuerstenforst for a short time became part of Prussia. Around 1806, however, Napoleon I. assigned the territories of the Margraves to the Kingdom of Bavaria and Fuerstenforst became part of Bavaria.

Fuerstenforst Jews

During the 18th century the Margrave of Ansbach had accepted a number of Jews into his protection in Fuerstenforst. An independent Jewish community of some 50 members existed at the beginning of the 19th century, who had their own school. Later the Jewish children attended the school in Burghaslach. There was also a prayer room and a Mikvah (ritual bath) here. The building, which is now a private house, still stands and there is still a Hebrew inscription on the ceiling of the loft.

Footnotes

- (1) Information kindly provided by Jesko Graf zu Dohna.
- (2) Friedrich Wilhelm Viehbeck "Grafschaft Castell in Franken" (1807) (Territory Castell in Franconia).
- (3) Fuerstlich Castell'sche Archiv, Castell (FCA).
- (4) FCA DII 3, 13.
- (5) FCA DII 3, 12.
- (6) Fuerstenforst formerly small village, in 18th century belonging to Brandenburg. Since 1927 part of Burghaslach. The village used to have small independent Jewish Community with own synagogue.
- (7) Castle 2 miles from Burghaslach.
- (8) FCA
- (9) FCA DII 3, 26.
- (10) FCA DII, 11.
- (11) FCA
- (12) do.
- (13) CAHJP/Jerusalem - N5/19.
- (14) CAHJP Burghaslach Minute Book.
- (15) FCA DII 3 11 (1687 - 1767).
- (16) FCA Jekof, Jeremias, Israel, Hertz and Nathan.
- (17) FCA
- (18) CAHJP N5/11.
- (19) CAHJP N5/17.

- (20) do.
- (21) CAHJP N5/17
- (22) do.
- (23) Copy kindly given by Robert Hofmann.
- (24) CAHJP
- (25) CAHJP N5/20.
- (26) CAHJP N5/8.
- (27) CAHJP N5/10.
- (28) CAHJP
- (29) do.
- (30) CAHJP N5/10.
- (31) CAHJP N5/4&5.
- (32) CAHJP N5/3.
- (33) do.