



Our Family

by

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THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS OF BAIERSDORF



(photo: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

Baiersdorf is a small town in Mittelfranken (Middle Franconia) north of Nuremberg/Fuerth, approximately half way between the towns of Erlangen and Forchheim. It had belonged to the "Markgrafentum" (Margraviate) Kulmbach-Bayreuth and been the summer residence of the Margraves of Kulmbach-Bayreuth. It had a comparatively large Jewish community. According to Johannes Bischoff in his 1953 book "Baierdorf, Entwicklungsgeschichte einer fraenkischen Kleinstadt" (History of the development of a small Franconian town), published for the 600th anniversary of the "Stadtrechtsverleihung" (Grant of Freedom of the Town), the first documentary evidence of Jews in Baierdorf are "Judenbriefe" ⁽¹⁾ issued by the Margrave in January 1473. Bischoff, however, states that Jews have lived in Baierdorf already 90 to 100 years before that and also quotes the Encyclopaedia Judaica (Berlin 1929) that gravestones on the Baierdorf Jewish cemetery probably go back to the beginning of the 15th century.

In 1594 Georg Friedrich of Brandenburg granted "Schutz" (protection) to two families. ⁽²⁾ Various "Privilege" (Privileges) were signed after that. A 1686 request by an agent of French Huguenot refugees, who had settled in Erlangen, to expel Jews from Baierdorf and make their houses available to Huguenots was rejected by Margrave Christian Ernst. ⁽³⁾ Much was due to the enormous

influence of the "Hoffaktor" (Court Jew) Samson Salomon had at that time. Further privileges were granted. ⁽⁴⁾ In 1695 the Margrave granted Jews the freedom to trade and a "Jewish Pharmacy" was opened in 1699. ⁽⁵⁾

Margrave Christian Ernst granted a further privilege in 1709 when the following 34 Jews living in Baiersdorf with their families are named: ⁽⁶⁾

- Samson Salomon Simon Voit Goldstuecker Eissig
- Veit Samson Loew Hennlein Hierschmeyer
- Salomon Samson Baruch Jacob Mannelein Lazarus
- Abraham Koppel Isaac Hennlein Salomon Lazarus
- Moyses Goldtschmied Samuel Gerson Salomon Goldstuecker
- Huenlein Weil Moyses Goldstuecker Hirsch Hess
- Son-in-law of above Jacob Lazarus Jacob Samuel
- Schmey Hess Mannelein Samuel
- Jakob Feisel Hess Seeligmann
- Jakob Schmey Mannelein Joseph Joel Schlencker
- Loew Mannelein Michael Mannelein Mannelein Baruch

Due to various expulsions of Jews from towns, Jews were taken "under the protection" (Schutz) of various local rulers, free knights and institutions mainly for financial reasons. ⁽⁷⁾ So Jews in ever increasing numbers managed also to settle in Baiersdorf.

Below is a 1811 list of all "protected" and "tolerated" Jews in the "Rezartkreis" (Rezart district). District administration Erlangen: Baiersdorf

"Listed are all names of heads of families who, if not otherwise stated, are married, number of sons and daughters (unnamed), number of female or male relatives (unnamed), names of widows, who are counted as heads of families, occupations of heads of families. If not otherwise noted all families are under "unmittelbaren Koenigsschutz" (unmittelbare koenigliche Schutzfamilie) (direct royal protection)".

Name	Sons	Daughters	Relatives	Occupation
Benjamin Kohn	1			trader
Abraham Forchheim	3	2		goes errands
Joseph Kohn	no children			trader
Mayer Kohn		1		trader
Isaac Kohn, single				trader

Hirsch Wolf Levi		2	1 female	trader
Seifel Wolf Levi			1 female	trader
Anschel Isaac	1			trader
Abraham Hirsch	1	3		goes errands
Rebecke Jonas widow		2		Is kept by charity
Baruch Aaron	1			trader
Pinkas Baruch		2		trader
Hirsch Baruch	1	1		trader
Wolf Pretzfelder		6		poor, is kept by charity
Jendel Salomon Samson widow	1	4		poor, is kept by charity
Mendlein Merzbacher		1		poor
Loew Diespeck	3	2		trader
Moses Huettenbach	2	2		poor
Moses Mittelshofen		4	1 female	paperwork
Samuel Frensdorf		4		trader
Mendlein Kathmann	2	1		goes errands
Kathmann Mendlein	1			trader
Simon Haenlein	1	1		trader
Sara Abraham widow	1	1		trader
Lekisch Mayer ⁽⁸⁾	4	2	1 female	trader
Salomon Springer, single			1 female	trader
Isaac Springer	3	1		trader
Guethel Mayer Loew widow		2		poor
Moses Mayer Loew	1	2	1 female	trader
Michel Raphael	2	2		poor
Nattaß Wolf Lazarus				poor, kept by

widow				charity, no "Schutz"
Kroenla, Wolf Nathan widow	1			poor
Wolf Loew				trader
Rebecka, Loew Wolf widow		2		poor
Jacob Mayer		3		poor
Jacob Mendel	3			goes errands
David Marx			1 female	poor
Marx David		1		trader
Hirsch Baer Levi		3	4 female	trader
Mendlein Baer	1	1		trader
Moses Salomon	6	3		poor
Haenlein Loew Kohn	1	2		trader
Salomon David Kohn		1		trader
Joel Frensdorfer	2	1	1 female	trader
Veitel Baer Levi		4	1 female	trader
Wolf Ottensoos		1	1 female	trader
Moses David		3		trader
Hirsch Mendel, widower	1			goes errands
Veitel Hirsch Levi		1		goes errands
Haenlein Salomon Weil				trader
Salomon Weil, single				trader
Juda Loew Kohn	1	1		trader
Mayer Gerson	1	4		poor
Maenlein Gerson				poor
Samuel Hirsch Gidiar	2	1		trader
Gerson Baer Gidiar	2	2		trader
Lazarus Kohn	2	1		poor

Maennlein Wolf	1	1		poor
Kallmann Eisig	1	2		trader
Moses Hagenbach	2	1	1 female	trader
Sara, Samuel widow				poor kept by charity, no "Schutz"
Mayer Samuel	1	1	1 female	trader
Salomon Eisig	2	3	1 female	trader
Jantof Lazarus	1	1		trader
Maennlein Lazarus		1	1 female	trader
Jantoff Maennlein				trader
Loefer Loew Hirsch	2	3	1 male,2 female	trader
Hayum Baer Levi	1	1	1 male	trader
Simon Mayer	2	5		trader
Lehla, Isaac Vorchheim widow				poor
Nathan Hirsch				trader
Lazarus Sulzbacher	4	1	1 female	trader
Guethel, David Pasfist widow	2	4		poor, no "Schutz"
Baer Marx Levi			1 female	trader
Abraham Baer Levi		1		trader
Eisig Loew Berlein		1	1 female	trader
Isaac Seligmann	4	3	1 female	trader
Michael Dormitz	1	2	1 female	trader
Moses Kohn	3	1		trader
David Moses		4		poor
Nathan Baer	3	2		trader
Baruch Loew	1	1		trader
Isaac Merzbacher	2	4	1 female	trader

Lippmann Baer				trader
Maennlein Moses		1		trader
Edel, Moses Selka widow	2	1		poor
Lazarus Isaac, single				trader
Simon David Dispecker	4	5		trader also assistant rabbi, no "Schutz"
Seligkind	4	2		cantor, no "Schutz"
Abraham Seckel		2		assistant rabbi and clerk to country district Jews
Josua Levi		1		school teacher
Samuel Lazarus	1	2		school teacher
Koppel Kips	2	1		school teacher
Haennlein Hayum Weil	4	1		school teacher
Moses Wolf	1	1	1 female	Synagogue servant, no "Schutz"
Salomon Jacob				Torah writer, no "Schutz"
Jantof Levi	1	3		school teacher

Of the 97 families seven families were without "Schutz". ⁽⁹⁾

As elsewhere in Bavaria the 1813 "Judenedict" took its toll here too. The number of Jews to settle in the little town being strictly limited by the "Matrikel" laws, children of Jewish inhabitants had to find other places to settle, such as Forchheim, Ichenhausen, Fuerth, Munich etc. A great many emigrated in the 1840/60s finding a new home in the United States and a few came to Britain.

After the edict of 1861, when Jews were at last given the chance to move freely, many settled in larger towns. A new Jewish community was also established in nearby Erlangen, where no Jews had been allowed to live since 1711.

THE JEWISH POPULATION OF BAIERSDORF ⁽¹⁰⁾

Year	Inhabitants	No. Jews	House owners	Percentage of Population
1619			9	
1632			12	
1709		34 families		

1713		40 families (300 individuals)	24	
1728		54 families		
1763		79 families		
1771		83 families, and 24 Rab- bis, cantors, teachers and slaughterers		
1776		367		
1807		83 families		
1811		97 families (457 individuals)		
1837	1550	440		28.4%
1867	1332	153		11.5%
1871	1271	128		10.1%
1880	1411	86		6.1%
1890	1264	55		4.4%
1900	1308	33		2.5%
1910	1393	32		2.3%
1925	1300	12		1.3%
1932	1400	14		1.0%
1933 (16. May)	1449	19		1.3%
November 1938		3		
31.12.1938		1		
1945		1		
1956		1		

Of the 19 Jews living in Baiersdorf in 1933, two had moved and died in Nuremberg and Hanover in 1936 and 1937 respectively. Others still managed to emigrate to the USA, Brazil and other countries. ⁽¹¹⁾

Ophir and Wiesemann in their book give the following numbers having left Baiersdorf after 1933: 5 had moved to Nuremberg, 6 USA, 3 France, 1 Lithuania.

The last three remaining Baiersdorf Jews were arrested during Kristallnacht in 1938 and taken to the Town Hall in Erlangen. They were the couple Ludwig and Lina Kohn (née Offenbacher) and a Keiner daughter married to a non-Jewish farmer.

"With the removal of the Kohn family Baiersdorf has become practically free of Jews" reported the "Erlanger Tageblatt" of 23 November 1938. After their release the couple moved to Fuerth to Lina's mother, Adelheid Offenbacher (née Schopflocher), widow of Julius. Their intention to emigrate to the USA was blocked by the Erlangen administration objecting to them being issued with passports. When they eventually obtained passports, it was too late for them to be able to leave Germany. They were moved to the former "Sahlmann-Villa" in Fuerth, which had been confiscated and used to accommodate many Jewish families, who had been forced out of their houses and apartments, until the Kohns and Adelheid Offenbacher were transported on 22 March 1942 from Fuerth to Izbica. They were finally reported "missing" and "declared dead" in 1953. ⁽¹²⁾

The third person arrested on Kristallnacht, married to a non-Jewish farmer, returned to Baiersdorf after her discharge and continued to live there with her husband until her death in 1957. ⁽¹³⁾

THE BAIERSDORF SYNAGOGUE

A synagogue which "stood near the cemetery" is recorded in 1530 and was rebuilt in 1651. In 1710/1711 the Baiersdorf Jewish community bought the plot Judengasse 14 on which a house for the Rabbi and Cantor was erected. Before being selected as Rabbi of Munich in 1826 Hirsch Lekisch Aub, son of ancestor Lekisch Aub of Baiersdorf, officiated in Baiersdorf. Had he possibly lived in this house? Hirsch had studied in Prague and received his qualification as rabbi from the administration of Upper Franconia. Next to this house, after the demolition of an old building, the Synagogue was built in 1711. The interior had been donated by Samson Salomon Baiersdorf. One of his daughters married Moses, son of Glueckel von Hameln, in 1700 in Baiersdorf. The beautiful curtain covering the Aron ha kodesh until the devastation of the Synagogue on 9th November 1938 is said to have been presented by Glueckel.

The Synagogue was 20 m long and 10 m wide. Attached to the Synagogue was a mikwe and the Tahara house.

As everywhere in Germany the Synagogue was entered on the night of 9 November 1938, the interior looted and destroyed. Some conflicting reports state that Ludwig Kohn on orders of the SA at his arrest had to pack candlesticks and other valuable religious objects and to take these with him to Erlangen.

The site was bought by the town in 1945. In 1997 the savings bank built on the site of the former synagogue carries a memorial tablet with an impression of the former synagogue and the inscription "Synagoge 1711 - 1938".



Memorial tablet for the former Baiersdorf synagogue (1997)

(photo: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

The Newspaper "Erlanger Tageblatt" had reported on 23 November 1938:

"With the removal of the Kohn family Baiersdorf has become practically free of Jews. So a problem of the last centuries has finally ended. The Star of David, which insolently shone above the local Synagogue for four centuries, was taken down and the interior of the synagogue was destroyed. As the Synagogue was partly damaged through this, this rather dilapidated building will be demolished. In a few years, where the Synagogue and Jewish cemetery is now, it is intended to build a new school and to make sport fields for the training of our youth. Neither shall the name "Judengasse" remind us any longer of what unfortunately once used to be, but shall never be again".

However in 1997 the name Judengasse, situated in the very centre of Baiersdorf, again bears its old name, though none of the former Jewish buildings are recognisable or are possibly no longer in existence.



Judengasse in the centre of Baiersdorf (1997)

(photo: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

Also in Judengasse is the "Meerrettich-Museum" (Horseradish-Museum) relating the history of the growing and manufacturing of horseradish products, for which the area is very well known. Its goods are exported to many parts of Europe. It also has a few reminders including some photographs, of the Jewish community of former years.

One of the Thora scrolls appears to have been secretly saved after Kristallnacht and been entrusted to the Protestant community in Baiersdorf. After being hidden for over 50 years it has emerged in the last few years and has been presented to the Museum by the Protestant Clergyman Reinhard Bogdahn on his recent retirement of Baiersdorf. ⁽¹⁴⁾ It is now displayed in the "Meerrettich Museum" in Judengasse.

The "Erlanger Nachrichten" of 5/6 September 1998 reports:

At the moment the Baiersdorf Local History Museum has one Thora scroll saved in 1938 from the demolished Synagogue at its disposal

A PIECE OF PAPER AS EVIDENCE OF FORMER GLORY.

The new exhibit is a present of the only recently retired Protestant Clergyman Reinhard Bogdahn

Baiersdorf

"If some Baiersdorfer still not want to understand then there is practically no further help for them". This sentence appeared in the Tageszeitung (Daily paper) on 23 November 1938 referring to those inhabitants, who did not approve of the desecration of the Synagogue. These people, as the quotation shows, existed and would today be described as courageous.

However their names have not survived. Two weeks after the night of the program, when Jews all over the country were threatened and their houses burned, the local press came to the conclusion that: "Owing to the damage to the roof caused during

the removal of the Star of David and the destroyed interior, the Baiersdorf Synagogue, in parts also dilapidated, shall now be demolished. In its place a new school shall arise and sports fields "for the training of our youth shall be developed".

Plaque of Remembrance

Today the local savings bank stands on the former Jewish ground. Only a 1986 bronze plaque shows how the Synagogue looked at one time. The cemetery also desecrated in 1938 is locked. Whoever wants to see the relic of the once flourishing congregation has to visit the local Meerrettichmuseum (Horseradish Museum).

There Hans-Thomas Schamel has recently hang a Thora scroll. Schamel tells us that this exhibit was saved from the Baiersdorf Synagogue. Ilse Sponsel of Kleinseebach, expert in Jewish history, adds: "The scroll was saved after Kristallnacht and secretly entrusted to the Protestant community. When the Protestant clergyman recently retired, he gave the scroll to Schamel's Local history and Meerrettich-Museum.

Judengasse, where the Museum is located, has a second treasure of the Jewish past, though secretly hidden. At No 2, the corner house, its age can be estimated from the exterior, had in the past a Mikwe (ritual bath) in the cellar. The foundations can still be seen, however behind them are now the plastic containers of the oil heating.

According to Ilse Sponsel, the local police officer stationed in Baiersdorf, advanced his objection to the action when between six and ten SA men (brown shirts) drove from Erlangen to the small neighbouring town. Despite this the three remaining Jewish citizens were threatened and arrested and transported to the Palais Stutterheim. They were the couple Ludwig and Mina Kohn, who were probably murdered a few years later, as well as Maria Schuebel ⁽¹⁵⁾, wife of the cattle merchant.

THE BAIERSDORF CEMETERY

The Baiersdorf Jewish cemetery is also situated in the middle of the town behind the former synagogue. Some of the graves are believed to go back to the beginning of the 15th century.



Gate of the cemetery

(photo: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

The cemetery served several of the Jewish communities of the surrounding areas. Until the acquisition of the Old Jewish Cemetery in Fuerth in 1607, Fuerth Jews protected by Ansbach found their last resting place here. It was also used by the Jewish communities of the Hochstift Bamberg in Hausen, Gaiganz, Pinzberg, Wiesenthau, Hirschaid and Mittel- and Oberehrenbach until 1725, as well as Jews in Bruck, Dormitz, Forchheim, Kunreuth and also the community in Bayreuth for some years. ⁽¹⁶⁾



The Jewish cemetery of Baiersdorf

(photo: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

EDUCATION OF JEWISH CHILDREN IN BAVARIA

Two years after compulsory general education for children was introduced in the Electorate of the Palatinate and Bavaria, regulations "regarding better school lessons for Jewish children" were set out in 1802. These laid down precisely how Jewish communities had to operate their schools. Wherever no Jewish schools existed Jewish children had to attend Christian schools. Jewish boys would also be allowed to attend schools of higher education. Religious and cultural freedom of Jews had to be respected, and religious education remained the responsibility of Jewish teachers. ... "In order that this in their moral development completely neglected class of our subjects shall in future be able to take advantage of a civilised society by better education.. ...We expect Christian teachers without distinction to instil in their pupils the principles of true Christian morals, that is love for their fellow beings and mutual respect". "In return Jewish teachers shall try to discourage unsociable attitudes and so perpetuate immoral or anti-government prejudices against Christian subjects". These regulations, however, did not have the intended effect.

The "Edikt ueber die Verhaeltnisse der juedischen Glaubensgenossen im Koenigreich Bayern", the so-called "Judenedikt" of 10th June 1813, in its last three paragraphs laid down very detailed rules regarding the education of Jewish children. Jewish children of both sexes in towns, as well as in rural areas, were obliged to attend schools. Apart from religious education they had to participate there in the same lessons as the rest of the population, and would also be allowed to attend institutions of higher education according to existing regulations regarding school and education arrangements. Jews would also be allowed to establish their own schools, if they employed officially qualified teachers, who were Bavarian subjects, who would receive a minimum annual salary of 300 fl. and who would be bound to observe the official curriculum. To study Jewish theology Jewish boys

would only be given permission after they had received favourable reports from an official institute of education of the Bavarian Kingdom.

The final paragraph of the edict ended "Jews in Our country shall gratefully recognise these regulations as Our proof of the careful attention We give to all Our subjects, and the police authorities shall vigorously oversee that these rules are carried out precisely".

THE BAIERSDORF JEWISH SCHOOL

On 25 December 1827 the Jewish community of Baiersdorf applied to the Bavarian government for permission to establish their own Jewish school. The document was personally signed by: ⁽¹⁷⁾

- Eisig Leb Rau B.L. Reichmann
- Wolf Lamm Jandoph Lohmann
- Isaac Fridlaender Joel Lohmann
- Moses Wolf Schechter David Seeligmann
- Maenlein Lew Bernheimer Blum Strauß
- Lippm. B. Feistman Wolf Ottensoser
- Mayer Kohn N.H. Lipkowitz
- Gerson Baer (Hebrew signature) Samuel Klein

This application was at first refused as not necessary, most Jewish children "readily attending the school and partaking in the same lessons as Christian children". A separation was not desirable and rich Jews employed private teachers and poor Jews received contributions for their children from the community to attend the school. Even some members of Jewish community were against it for various and personal reasons. Two teachers, who were engaged when Jewish children attended the school would also ask for compensation for loss of income. In February 1829 an election for the establishment of a separate school and the engagement of Heinrich Julius Dessauer of Ansbach as combined Jewish religious and elementary teacher was taken and resulted in 31 votes for an amalgamation of religious and elementary instruction and 29 against. A petition against the proposed closing of a female industrial school in Baiersdorf went to the King in 1831. The Jewish school eventually opened.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Although the 1813 edict allowed Jewish children to attend establishments of higher education, other paragraphs limited the number of Jews permitted to live in each town or village by the introduction of the "Matrikel" regulations. Apart from aiming to gradually reduce the number of Jews in any particular district if it was considered to be too large, Jews could only settle in such places, where Jews had already been resident prior to the 1813 edict. In places like Kitzingen, Erlangen and other Bavarian towns Jews had previously been expelled. So Jews were still forbidden to reside there until the Matrikel laws were finally repealed in 1861.

In Erlangen, for instance, a "Privileg" of the Margraves Christian Ernst and Georg Wilhelm of 1711 was still in effect. "In order to show their favour to Christian- and Alt-Erlangen", they had decreed

that from then on and for all times neither they nor their descendants would allow Jews to settle in the town or its suburbs, for any reason whatsoever. Foreign traders, Italians or Jews would be forbidden to trade in the town apart for the period of the annual fair or they would have their goods confiscated.

So when after 1813 Jewish children were officially permitted to attend the Koenigliche Studienanstalt (now Gymnasium Fridericianum) in Erlangen, the 1711 regulations forbade them to stay in the town. As Jewish parents of surrounding areas were anxious to give their gifted children the best education they could manage, the children suffered great disadvantages and hardship. Two Baiersdorf boys, Salomon Ehrlich (son of Lazarus Lippmann Sulzbacher) and David Aub, son of ancestor Lekisch Aub, were the first Jewish pupils to attend the Gymnasium Fridericianum in Erlangen in 1815. To attend classes they were faced with a daily 1½ hour walk to school and then home again. Later Jewish children appear to have lived in Erlangen as weekly borders with non-Jewish families. The following Baiersdorf boys also attended the Gymnasium in the early days of higher education for Jewish children: Moses Gutmann (1824), Wolf Kohn (1832-1835), David Kunst (1833-1836), Abraham Lehmaier (1827-1831), Jonas Lehmaier (1830-1834), Moses Lehmaier (1831-1836) Isaac Lohmann (1831-1835) Abraham Merzbacher (1832- 1833), Joseph Seligmann (1832- 1833) and Joseph Merzbacher (1852-1855).

Other difficulties faced by Jewish pupils in establishments of higher education were the observance of Jewish holidays and, of course, of the Sabbath. Examinations in Latin took place at the gymnasium between 8 a.m. and noon on each first Saturday in the month. The result of these tests counted towards their grading in the class at the end of the year. These grades were very important as they also determined whether or not youths were eligible for military service. Pupils graded in the top fifth of each class were apparently exempt from conscription later. Pupils, who did not attend school on Saturdays, were counted as "Hospitant", guest pupils, who were not eligible to take the State Final Examinations, unless they were given special permission to take these privately.

Regulations were interpreted in different ways in different towns. Heated debates amongst headmasters and teaching staff of different areas took place, clearly demonstrating their great hostility towards their Jewish pupils. Jews were accused of being lazy, pupils intending to become rabbis refusing to write on Saturdays etc.. One headmaster remarked:

"...just because of the cursed Jews we cannot expect teachers to hold the tests on other days, so that our only remedy is to let the Jews be and refuse to grant them leaving certificates". Jews were accused of only lazing around on Sabbaths but a letter from a local rabbi had been received with "learned citations ...that such laziness on the Sabbath was G'd's commandment". New regulations concerning attendances of a gymnasium were expected and it was thought that more Jews would intend to enter higher education. The result would be that "either orthodox Jews would give in, or what was more likely, that Christian teachers would have to hold their examinations on another day, to allow circumcision and foreskin to participate together in the scholarly contest".⁽¹⁸⁾

In October 1835 the regional government issued new guidelines stating that whoever attends official places of education would have to conform to general rules. Examinations could be held on any day of the week including Saturdays, so that Jews were not exempt from taking these examinations or from writing on Saturdays and lessons had to be attended punctually at all times.

Prior to 1835 Erlangen appears to have been very liberal in interpreting regulations and there appear to have been no great difficulties. Twice a year examinations were held on Wednesdays to allow teachers to allocate their Jewish pupils respective grades. Teachers asked the government to be allowed to continue the existing practice of leaving the decision whether or not to write on Saturdays

to their Jewish pupils. If, however, they had to carry out these government orders some ways should be found to inform Jewish boys of these rules, e.g. through the Rabbi so that Christian teachers should be spared this task. The government rejected this. If Jewish pupils refused to do so, they would have to found their own schools and would then be unqualified to occupy official positions. They were, however, given permission to have time off on Saturdays and Jewish holidays to enable them to attend synagogue services. For some towns list of the hours they were released from attending lessons on such days are in existence.

Further correspondence between the government and Erlangen finally led to another order in 1838 "that Saturdays' school work should be arranged in such a way as not to disadvantage any pupil". So, at least as far as Erlangen was concerned, the problem was solved.

REMINDERS OF THE FORMER BAIERSDORF JEWISH COMMUNITY

Apart from the Judengasse possibly two other sites recall former Baiersdorf Jewish inhabitants in the present day: The staedtische Kindergarten, formerly the David & Fanny Seligmann'sche Kinderheim and the war memorial.

THE STAEDTISCHE KINDERGARTEN

formerly

THE DAVID & FANNY SELIGMANN'SCHE KINDERHEIM



Staedtischer Kindergarten (1997)

(photo: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

Members of the Seligmann family can be traced back in Baiersdorf to 1680. Between 1838 and 1843 the last members of the family to have lived in Baiersdorf all emigrated to the United States,

where over the years they were all extremely successful in various enterprises and set up bank houses in various parts of the States and later also in Frankfurt and London.

In 1904, in memory of their parents, all the Seligman brothers now living in Frankfurt, London and New York made an endowment of 10,000 Mk for the building of the David und Fanny Seligmann'sche Kinderheim in Baiersdorf (Children's Home). The fund was expanded by the "Rosalie Lehmaier Stiftung", an endowment given by Louis Lehmaier in memory of his mother Rosalie née Seligmann, wife of Morris Lehmaier. ⁽¹⁹⁾

The Seligman family also undertook to be responsible for any additional costs involved with the project. With various other donations already received including one by Kommerzienrat Gerngross of Nuremberg, also a native of Baiersdorf, the town felt that the cost of the building was covered and could commence. The ceremonial laying of the foundation stone took place on the 27 July 1905.

The ceremonial opening of Home on 20 June 1906 was recorded by the press:

The little town was covered in flags in honour of the opening of the David and Fanny Seligmann'schen Kinderheim's. Henry Seligman, his wife, his son-in-law and his wife were greeted by members of the Town Council and other communal organisations. The party moved to the Home, where all the inhabitants had already gathered. After speeches and the ceremonial handing over of the key to the Town Council and then to the newly engaged teacher the Home was officially opened. After the consecration by the town's vicar and various further speeches the ceremony closed with a reception. ⁽²⁰⁾

Baiersdorf bestowed the Freedom of the town on Henry Seligman as well as on Ludwig von Gerngross and Wilhelm Gerngross in recognition for their charitable work for the town. In order that the poor and needy of the town could participate in the honour bestowed on him, Henry Seligman sent a cheque to the town to be distributed by the administration amongst the needy poor of any denomination. Later the Freedom of Baiersdorf was also bestowed on Isaak, the youngest of the Seligmann brothers.

Members and descendants of the family continued to support the Home and the poor and needy. Charles D Seligman ⁽²¹⁾ of London, son of Isaak, made a further endowment for the upkeep of the Home in 1929.

During the Nazi period the plaque displayed on the front of the building was removed in 1934 and the street given the name Horst-Wessel-Strasse.

The building still stands. During 1994/95 it was enlarged and modernised and is now a Nursery School and on its front carries a plaque

"Staedtischer Kindergarten
gestiftet von Familie Seligmann"

(Municipal Nursery School, donated by the Seligmann family)

and the street again carries the name Seligmannstrasse.

THE BAIERSDORF WAR MEMORIAL



(photo: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

On the war memorial are the names at least two Jews of Baierdorf, the Hirschkind brothers, sons of the Baierdorf butcher Philipp Hirschkind, who lost their lives during World War I.

ERNST HIRSCHKIND, born in Baierdorf on 14 August 1892 served in the 9th Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment and was killed in action on 21 June 1916. ⁽²²⁾

MAX HIRSCHKIND, born in Baierdorf on 15 November 1896 moved to Nuremberg. He was a corporal in the 1st Bavarian Infantry Battalion and was killed on 26 November 1917.

Footnotes

- (1) Probably "Schutzbriefe", Letters of Protection.
- (2) Pinkas Hakehillot.
- (3) do.
- (4) Eckstein, A: Geschichte der Juden im Markgrafentum Bayreuth (History of Jews in Markgrafentum Bayreuth).
- (5) Encyclopaedia Judaica.
- (6) Eckstein, A., Geschichte der Juden.
- (7) Prior to 1800 areas of Bavaria north of the Danube, the present districts of Lower, Central and Upper Franconia, had consisted of great number of completely independent territories, governed by various rulers and also by numerous independent knights. All of

these had complete authority over their territories and had no superior but the emperor.

- (8) Lekisch, our ancestor, is listed on this list as Lekisch Mayer, whereas he was the son of Abraham Mayer.
- (9) State Archives Nuremberg Rep.270/II Nr. 30.
- (10) Various sources.
- (11) Ilse Sponzel.
- (12) Fuerth Gedenkbuch 1997.
- (13) Ilse Sponzel: Aufloesung und Ende der juedischen Gemeinde in Baiersdorf (Break-up and end of the Jewish Community Baiersdorf) in: Aus der juedischen Geschichte Baiersdorfs, published in 1992 in connection with an exhibition in the Town Hall in Baiersdorf.
- (14) "Erlanger Nachrichten" newspaper of 5/6 September 1998, translation by Thea Ruth Skyte.
- (15) Probably a member of the Keiner family, married to a non-Jewish farmer and cattle dealer mentioned by Ilse Sponzel in Aufloesung und Ende der juedischen Gemeinde Baiersdorf (Break-up and end of the Jewish Community Baiersdorf) in Aus der juedischen Geschichte Baiersdorf (From the Jewish History of Baiersdorf).
- (16) Johannes Bischoff.
- (17) State Archive Nuremberg. Bestand Erlangen No 1.
- (18) Ursula Muenchoff: Juedische Schueler des Gymnasium Fridericianum Erlangen 1815 - 1861 (Jewish pupils in Gymnasium Fridericianum in Erlangen 1815 - 1861) published 1989 in Erlanger Bausteine zur Fraenkischen Heimatkunde.
- (19) Ilse Sponzel.
- (20) Translation by Thea Ruth Skyte.
- (21) Charles D. Seligman was knighted in 1933.
- (22) Reichsbund Juedischer Frontsoldaten: Die Juedischen Gefallenen des deutschen Heeres, der deutschen Marine und der deutschen Schutztruppen 1914 - 1918 (Jewish members of the German Army, German Navy and German Colonial Forces).

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