



# Our Family

*by*

**Heinz and Thea Ruth Skyte, née Ephraim**

## THE LEVYS IN BIRNBAUM

Practically all the information on the Levy family comes from a Prayer Book of Meyer Joseph Levy, grandfather of Alfred Ephraim and great-grandfather of Thea Skyte, in which he had recorded family data. The records are mostly written in Hebrew script, but in the German language. A few entries are in German. It is not easy to read and, up to now, it has not been possible to have these entries translated completely or to be sure that the translations so far are entirely correct.

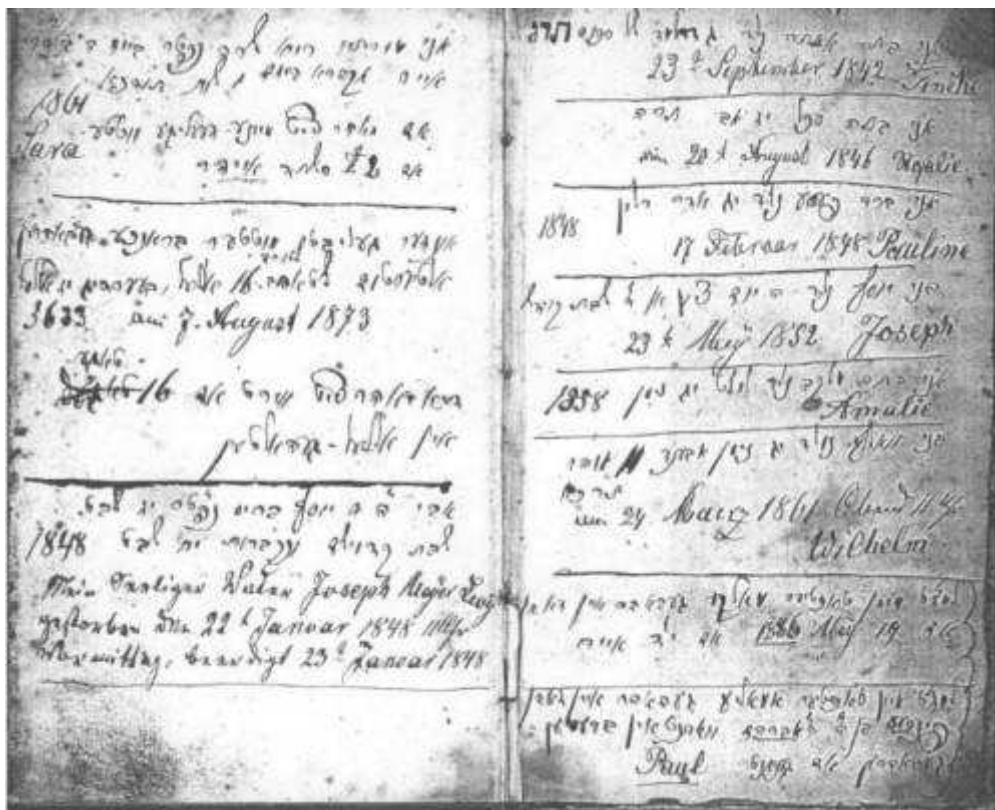
It has also not been possible to find links with some known members of the Levy family, who were also cousins of the Ephraims. There is a definite possibility and some indications that the Levy and Ephraim families may have been somehow related, perhaps cousins marrying cousins. The wife of great-grandfather David Ephraim, for instance, was Hannchen née Levy. Further research is necessary.

JOSEPH MEYER LEVY,

father of Meyer Joseph Levy, is the first recorded ancestor. He must have been born sometime in the second half of the 18th century. The town register of Birnbaum in the Grand Duchy of Poznan shows that he became a naturalised subject on 11 July 1834. He was a horse dealer (or trader) and was married to Sara. They lived in Birnbaum, though may previously have been resident in Pritisch, a village west of Birnbaum and a few miles south east of Schwerin. Joseph died on 22 January 1848 and Sara in 1861. Their son:

MEYER JOSEPH LEVY

was born in Birnbaum on 3 August 1815. He was a trader and married to Bertha née Alterthum, born in Schwerin an der Warthe on 27 February 1818 and died on 7 August 1873 at Gottschimer Muehle near Driesen.



The Prayer Book of Meyer Joseph Levy with family records

(photos: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

Meyer Joseph and Bertha had six children, all born in Birnbaum:

- Tinche Levy 23 September 1842
- Rosalie Levy 20 August 1846 - 25 December 1914, Berlin
- Pauline Levy 17 February 1848
- Joseph Levy 23 May 1852 - 14 January 1927, Berlin
- Amalie Levy 13 March 1858 - after 1938, Hamburg
- Wilhelm Levy 24 March 1861 - ?, Berlin

In a document dated 13 November 1871 Meyer Joseph notified the Police Authority of his move with his family from Birnbaum to Berlin. It is doubtful though whether they actually moved at that time, as they certainly still lived in the area in 1873.

Bertha Levy née Alterthum died on 7 August 1873 at Gottschimer Muehle near Driesen, just four months before the marriage of their daughter Rosalie to Julius Ephraim.

ROSALIE LEVY,

was born in Birnbaum on 20th August 1846. A letter dated June 1873 shows that preparations were made for her wedding to Julius Ephraim of Neustadt near Pinne. Her mother was going to Schwerin to find accommodation for the couple.

Gottschim, 8th June 1873

My one and only darling Julius!

I have received your letters of yesterday and today, which found me very well and I hope that these lines will also find you in the best of health. I was so pleased yesterday to learn from your letter that you will do the work and I beg god that he will bring you luck for this. In todays letter you inform me that you think that I have not understood the letter. I admit that I was terribly excited, please believe me that I am completely reassured. My dear Julius, you say I reproach you, God help me, how could I do that. For heavens sake please do not be cross with me. You speak of misfortune, unfortunate bride, had I meant it so, I am really so very happy to have you and will happily share everything with you. By suffering I did not use a good expression, I only meant that one says this and the other that. I have to mention once more that I am completely reassured and hope that you are also. Now enough of that and don't take any notice of other people telling you tales, answer them back. Don't you know the old proverb "anyone getting married will be badly spoken of, anyone who dies will be praised". You must be convinced about my love for you, as I know yours for me, you know that you are my all and everything is going to be alright. The dear mother did not travel today as the weather is terrible, but hopes to go tomorrow and then everything will be in order, she shall only rent a flat, everything else will settle itself. I am very busy just now, as Karoline has been stealing and wants to leave and has not done anything for a few days, and you know our Helten, so I have to do it, but I like it, it is a diversion for me , as I have no patience for sewing.

You are writing that you are as you were the other day, I, however have so much to tell you that I have no time to worry, today I talked to you all night, but only in my dream, but when I woke up, I was wonderfully happy. When I sit in the room and hear somebody coming along the corridor, I

always think it will be my beloved, but he does not open the door, and I comfort myself in the hope that we will not live apart for too long. I am telling you what I mean, no flattery.

Now I am awaiting your Tuesday letter, my dear Julius, I always set you a date and you will then have a letter from me on Wednesday, but I shall not mention anything about this letter and don't you write anything about it either. Whoever laughs last, laughs loudest and together we shall happily talk about it.

Dear mother is just going to travel to Mederwiehe to engage a maid and Papa is also on his travels, so I am all alone. Now I shall stop as I am constantly interrupted.

I beg you once again, please, do not be cross with me and I am waiting for Tuesday's letter.

Much love and kisses from your faithful Rosalie

Please give regards to all relatives and tell Malchen that we are cross because she does not write it is also possible that dear mother will be there herself next month to talk to Max.

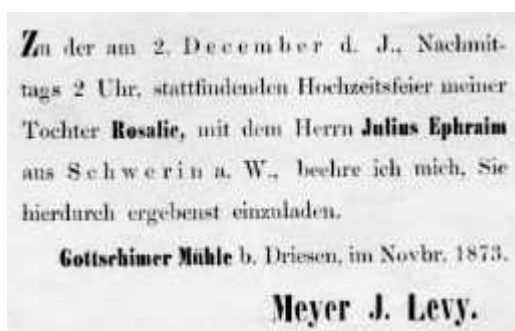
When Auntie visits mother she can tell her about our relationship. I received the letter yesterday and enclose it for you.

The dear parents send their best regards. Pauline has not come home yet.

Unfortunately Bertha Levy did not live to see her daughter married. She died on 7 August about three months before the wedding. Rosalie and Julius were married on 2nd December 1873 at Gottschimer Muehle near Driesen.

## WEDDING INVITATION

to the wedding of Rosalie Levy and Julius Ephraim:



(photo: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

Translation:

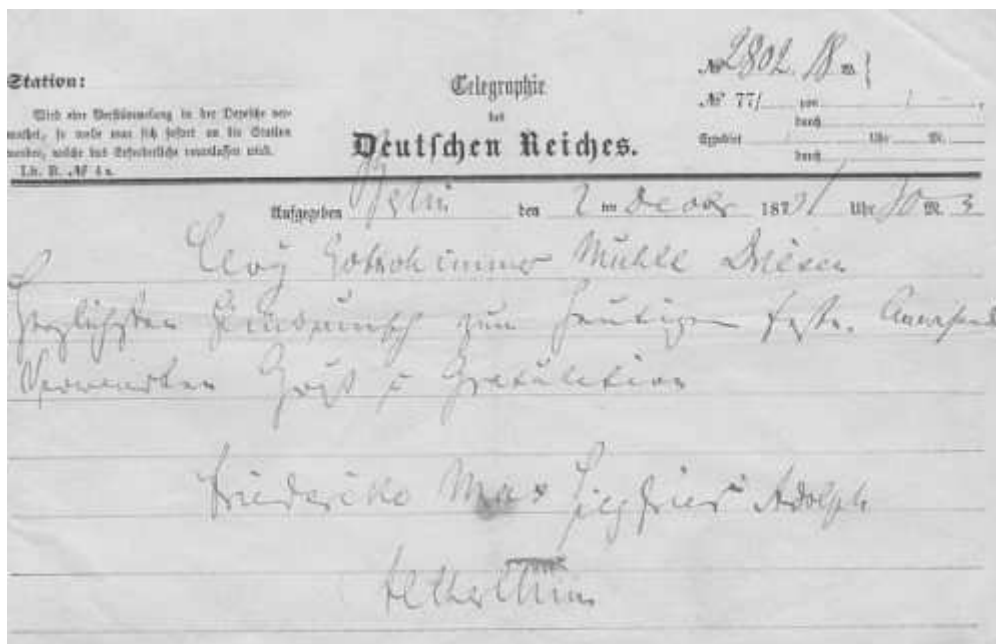
I have the honour to cordially invite you to the wedding of my daughter Rosalie with Mr Julius Ephraim of Schwerin/Warthe, which will take place on 2nd December at 2 p.m.

Gottschimer Muehle near Driesen, November 1873

Meyer J. Levy.

## WEDDING TELEGRAM

sent on the occasion of the wedding of Rosalie Levy and Julius Ephraim on 2 December 1873 by members of the Alterthum family:



(photo: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

Meyer and Bertha's two sons Joseph and Wilhelm settled in Berlin. Daughters Tinche and Pauline married and settled in Neutomichel and Meseritz, two towns not far from Birnbaum. Daughter Amalie married Pinkus Aron on 13 January 1884 and, after living in Bremen, the family finally settled in Hamburg. Meyer Joseph Levy eventually moved to Berlin and lived with Rosalie and Julius Ephraim, as family letters written by him in 1896 show.

