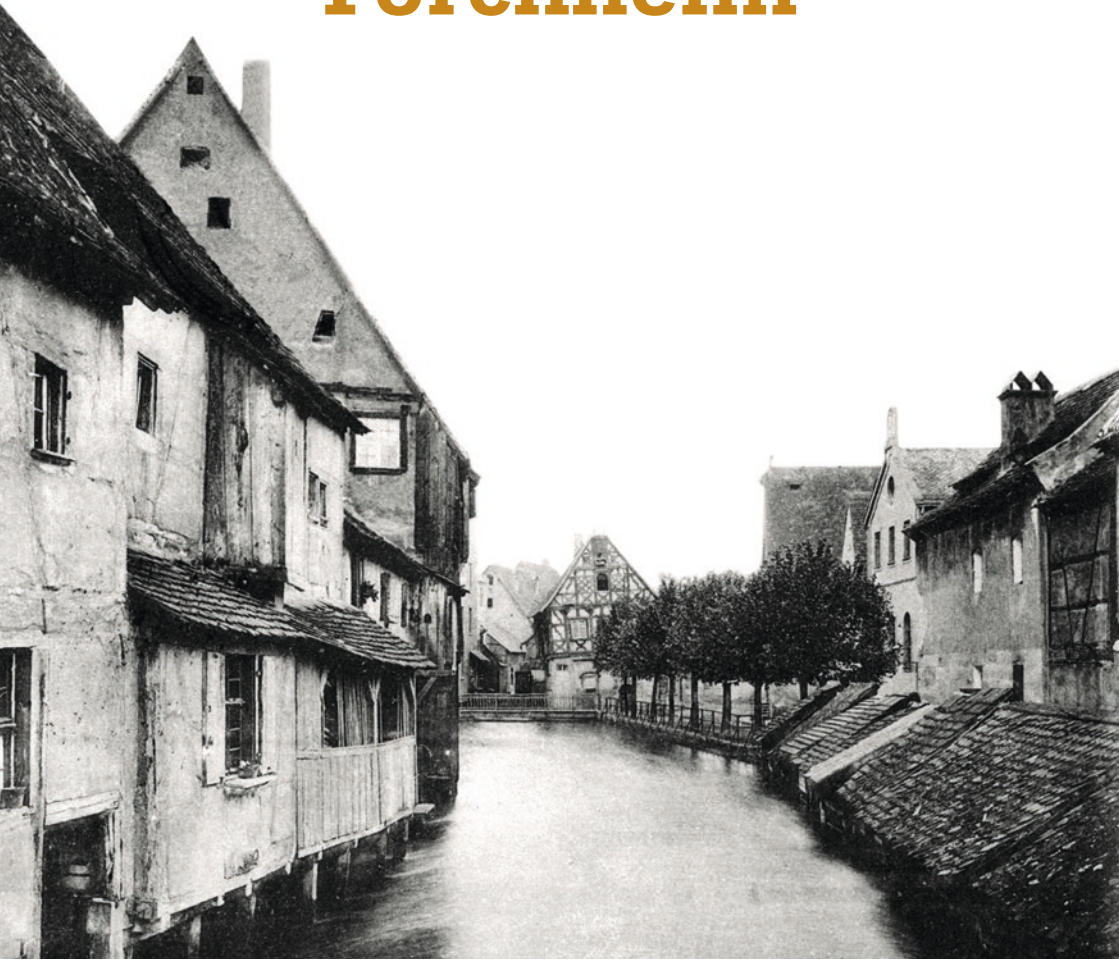




# The Jewish Trail Forchheim



30 stations through Forchheim's Jewish past



# The Jewish Trail Forchheim

Join us on a journey into Forchheim's Jewish past. People of the Jewish faith lived here as early as the Middle Ages, but it was not until the 19th century that political equality was achieved. This was followed by a period of peaceful coexistence which came to an abrupt end with Hitler's "seizure of power" in 1933. The tragic climax was the deportation and murder between 1941 and 1944 of the 14 Jews who remained in Forchheim. The Jewish Path tells their history and stories at 30 stations in the town and reminds us of the former Jewish life here.

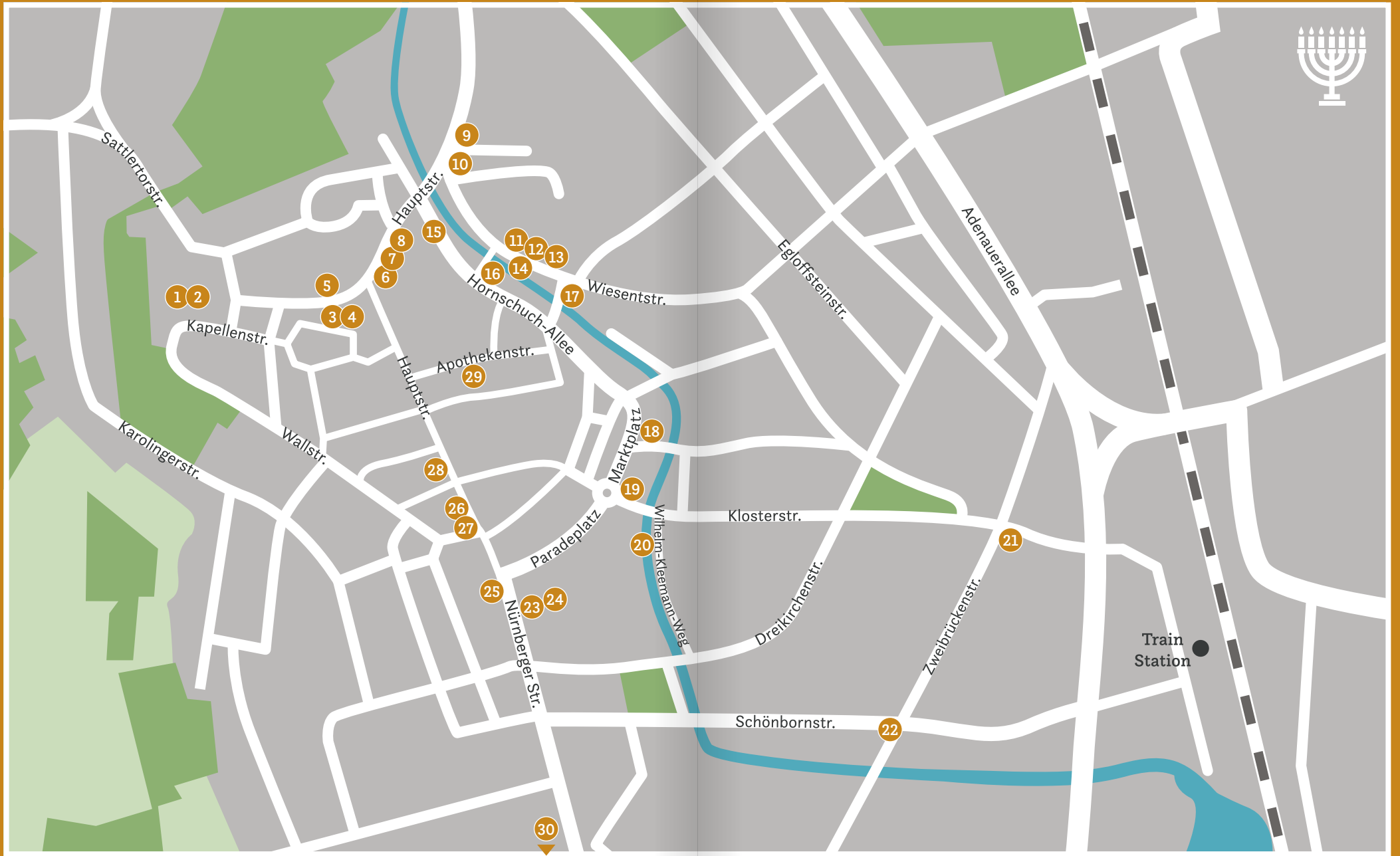
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Also visit our website at [www.juedischer-pfad.de](http://www.juedischer-pfad.de), there you will find more photos and audios.



Excerpt from the town map of Forchheim

## Under the Prince Bishop's protection

The bishopric of Bamberg was founded in 1007 by Emperor Heinrich II. Since that time the town of Forchheim remained, almost without interruption, part of the domains of the Principality of Bamberg. As the title indicates, the Prince Bishop was not only the spiritual head but also the ruler in worldly matters. The consent of the Prince Bishop was a prerequisite before Jewish families were permitted to settle within the Principality. A small Jewish community was already in existence in Forchheim in the Middle Ages.

In order to obtain the ruler's protection the Jews needed to show proof of their wealth. They could purchase a "Letter of protection" for themselves and their families. Even after obtaining this document, they were still required to pay protection money each year. The number of protected Jews at any one time was limited.

That the protection could be rescinded without justification was demonstrated in 1499 when under Bishop Heinrich III Groß of Trockau all Jews were expelled from the Principality.

## In the Pfalzmuseum – Documentation, Memories, Memorials

Forchheim's Town Museum is located in the so called "Kaiserpfalz" the impressive residence built for Prince Bishop Lambrecht von Brunn at the end of the 14th century. A significant part of the Pfalzmuseum describes the history of the town of Forchheim. An important section is devoted to the fate of the Jewish community during the Nazi regime. A thought-provoking presentation recalls the destruction of the synagogue followed by demolition using explosives on 10th November 1938. Documents and photographs recall the great injustice perpetrated on the Jews as well as the transportation and murder of fourteen Jewish townspeople of Forchheim. A plaque which had been rescued from the Nazi mob and was brought to light again by chance in 2009 now occupies a place of ho-

nour within the museum. It had originally been erected by the Jewish community in remembrance of those Jews who gave their lives in the First World War.



Staging "Jews and National Socialism" at the Pfalzmuseum Forchheim

## Concessions to the Jewish minority

For centuries the law of the land placed tight restrictions on the social and economic living conditions of Jewish residents. In the 18th century the Jewish minority were granted a series of concessions. From then on Jews were allowed to rent a large room in the town hall for events such as the celebration after a Jewish wedding to which many guests were invited. Also, the buying and selling of property, including the financial aspects were permitted as was trading of "horned beasts". Near to the old bridge across the river Regnitz a plot of land was designated as the "Jewish pastures" where Jewish dealers could graze their herds.



The town hall of Forchheim

## Same rights – same duties within the Empire

The fountain on the town hall square is the central war memorial in Forchheim. With the creation of the German Empire in 1871, the Jewish population were granted equal rights. Many liberal-minded, assimilated Jewish citizens banded together to form the "Central Association for German Citizens of the Jewish Faith".

At the outbreak of the First World War Jewish men were subject to mobilization. Many regarded it as their patriotic duty to fight for Germany. Many returned home wounded. Four Jewish soldiers from Forchheim died on the battlefield: the brothers Ludwig and Richard Ebert, Ludwig Bauer and Sigmund Heller. Paul Schmidt returned to his home town where he succumbed to his serious wounds.

The Jewish community erected a plaque in honour of their fallen comrades within the synagogue. The granite slab was removed and hidden by two municipal workmen before the synagogue was demolished by the National Socialists on November 10th, 1938. For a long time the plaque was regarded as lost until it was rediscovered in a shed by employees of Forchheim's Gardens and Parks department. The plaque is now on display in the Pfalzmuseum.

In memory of those who fell in the First World War the town commissioned Georg Leisgang to erect a fountain in 1927. On the associated plaque the names of the Jewish dead are also listed along with their military rank and the year of their death.

## The financial world – the banker Anton Schmidt

Anton Schmidt (\* 1848) a son of the cattle dealer David Schmidt bought the impressive, historic house Sattlertorstraße 6 which comprised not only apartments but also two shops and a “dental workshop”. During the First World War he offered war bonds for purchase. Tragically his son Paul was so badly wounded in 1915 that after returning to Forchheim he died of his injuries. During the National Socialist period the widowed banker Schmidt was repeatedly subjected to hostile attacks and insults on the open street. It is said that to escape he frequently fled into the Catholic Cloister Church. Anton Schmidt died in the Jewish hospital in Fürth in 1940.



*Bankhaus Schmidt at Sattlertorstraße 6*

## Pay by instalments – Haimann Frank’s shoe shop

There were several Jewish families with the name Frank in Forchheim. They all came from the nearby village of Weilersbach and were related to each other. After the relaxation on the rights of settlement, Haimann Frank took up residence in Forchheim in 1861. Ten years later he bought the property at Hauptstraße 23. This building with its impressive stone facade had previously been the residence of the town commandant. The merchant Haimann Frank

regularly visited the trade fair in Leipzig and offered in his premises “footwear from the simplest to the finest”.

Frank’s daughter Betty and her husband James Isidor Pariser continued the footwear business. Since they offered payment in instalments, they were particularly popular with working class customers. After the death of his wife, James Pariser sold the footwear business and left Forchheim. He died in 1942 in the Theresienstadt ghetto.

## Quality at a good price – Rosenthal & Co.’s department store

Rosenthal’s department store founded in 1904 by Benno and Max Rosenthal was the first and remained the only department store in Forchheim. The assortment of goods included ready to wear clothing, bed clothes, shoes, carpets, toys and much else. The wide range of choice attracted many customers. The owner was Max Lefèbre, a Prussian, who had married Klara Rosenthal the sister of the stores founder. The success of the business was due amongst other things to the customer friendly opening times. The store opened on Sundays. The needs of Christian customers were also taken into account, suits and dresses for the communion of Catholic children and confirmation of Protestant children were also sold.

Max Lefèbre employed eye-catching full page adverts in the local press and repeatedly offered “bargain weeks” when prices were reduced for buying in quantity. This dynamic storekeeper died at the early age of 48 while on a train journey. The flourishing business was taken over by his eldest daughter Elli and her husband Paul Wertheim. The store was plundered during the Reich’s Pogrom Night in 1938. Along with other Jewish townspeople from Forchheim Paul Wertheim was imprisoned in the concentration camp at Dachau for several weeks. In 1939 Elli and Paul Wertheim together with their son Martin and the widow Klara Lefèbre succeeded in fleeing to Cuba. Later the family moved on to the USA.



*The Rosenthal department stores’ at Hauptstraße 11*



*Hauptstraße 11 in 2023*

## Brought to safety – living in exile

Some Jews from Forchheim managed to emigrate from Germany in time. From 1937 onwards Robert Bayreuther lived in the USA, in 1939 Willy Bayreuther emigrated to Canada via England. The Wertheim family fled to Cuba, Anton Bauer ended up in Australia. Irmgard Gröschel reached Switzerland as an unaccompanied child (Kindertransport), her parents Bernhard and Rose Gröschel fled to the USA. For many the fresh start in a strange country

was difficult. Not speaking the foreign language they had to start with simple jobs. The textile merchant Bernhard Gröschel recycled zip fasteners from old clothes. The emigrants frequently managed to ensure that their children received a good education. Thus, many achieved professional advancement, e.g., Ludwig Bauer who became Professor of Chemistry at the University of Chicago.

## Max Zeiller – a well known personality in the town

Max Zeiller (\*1864), who belonged to an old, established Jewish family was a classic example of Jewish integration into German society.

He was unmarried and lived in the house Bamberger Straße 8. He was the chairman of the Jewish community in Forchheim for more than 25 years. From 1910 to 1917 he was a member of the Town Council representing the Citizen and Trade Association. From 1912 to 1932 he was the head of the Forchheim fire brigade alongside its commandant, the brewery owner Andreas Schindler. Max Zeiller was a notable personality of the town. He died in 1937, and thus did not experience the worst excesses of the National Socialists. Nevertheless, the antisemitic propaganda and hate campaigns in the Nazi publication "Der Streiter", which appeared in Forchheim after the First World War, cannot have escaped his attention.

*Max Zeiller (in picture on the right)*



## The "Jewish quarter" in Forchheim

After their expulsion in 1499 Jewish settlement in Forchheim was permitted again only after 1648 when the Thirty Years' War ended. It was hoped that after the devastation of the war an influx of well-to-do Jewish families would lead to a rejuvenation of the economy in town and on the land.

The Jewish families who settled in Forchheim after 1648 lived in the area that is now the Wiesentstraße. The section

between Badsteg (Bathing Landing) and Hundsbrücke (Dog's bridge) was known as Jews' lane. Jewish families occupied the houses 1, 3, 5, 15, 16, 17 and 19 as well as Lohmühlgässchen.

In the 18th century the house on the plot Wiesentstraße 15 was occupied by the prosperous Wolf Rothschild who allowed his fellow believers the use of his private synagogue. The synagogue destroyed in 1938 later occupied the same site.

## The synagogue – the centre of the Jewish community

Forchheim's synagogue was erected in 1807/1808 on the site of the former dilapidated building. Sandstone blocks from the town fortifications which date back to the Middle Ages were included. In 1876 an extra story was added to provide an apartment for the teacher and cantor Michael Löb Kleemann and his family. The prayer room on the ground floor contained the Torah ark on a south-east facing axis in which six valuable Torah scrolls were housed. The inventory of the synagogue also included brass candelabras and religious objects made of silver such as the Torah mountings and decorations.

In 1836 a new mikveh was erected on a plot of land behind the synagogue. This mikveh is now part of a dwelling house. Ritual washing in flowing water was a mandatory requirement for pious believers. Above all women made regular use

of the mikveh, especially after menstruation or having given birth. It was necessary to remove all clothing and for the whole body including the hair to be submerged.

*The Forchheim synagogue (3rd building on the right edge of the picture)*



In the Reich's Pogrom Night of the 9th to 10th November 1938 the Nazis plundered the synagogue and desecrated the interior. The brawling mob threw the Torah scrolls into the river Wiesent. The owner of the mill Margarete Wittmann had the parchment rolls fished out of the water and hid them in the mill. After the war, she handed the scrolls over to the JRSO (Jewish Restitution Successor Organization). The final fate of the scrolls can no longer be determined.

*Uncovering the mikveh during construction work in 1989*



## Station 12 · Wiesentstraße 15

### Pogrom Night – The Night of Broken Glass

The court records of the proceedings of the District Court of Bamberg from 1949 provide us with a comprehensive description of the events of the so called Pogrom Night on 9th November 1938. In the trail the ringleaders were held accountable for their actions. The murder of the Secretary to the Embassy in Paris von Rath, by the young Polish Jew Herszel Grynszpan, was a welcome excuse for the violence throughout Germany. Forchheim also experienced serious rioting. The Nazis fetched the Jews from their houses, mishandled them, dragged them to the police station where they were incarcerated. Businesses were looted, homes were devastated, valuable religious objects were stolen from the synagogue. Before the eyes of the onlooking mob, the Jewish citizens were forced to load the debris of the synagogue onto carts with their bare hands. The majority of the Jewish men then spent several weeks in "protective custody" in the concentration camp at Dachau.



*The Forchheim synagogue after the demolition in 1938*

## Station 13 · Wiesentstraße 15

### Ludwig Bauer – Eyewitness to the Nazi horror

In school and daily life Ludwig Bauer (1926–2023) experienced discrimination and hate time and time again. In the Pogrom Night, as a twelve-year-old, he was forced to witness the storming and desecration of the synagogue. At that time the Bauer family were living in the teacher's apartment above the prayer room. The parents and their son hid in the attic, but to no avail. Father and son were arrested and locked up. A traumatic experience for Ludwig. His father Anton Bauer was taken to the concentration camp at Dachau. After his release Bauer, a veteran of the First World War made every effort to obtain exit permits for himself and his family. They managed to escape to Australia where relatives of the mother were living.



*Ludwig Bauer at his graduation in Sydney in 1949*

Later Ludwig Bauer studied chemistry. He emigrated to the USA, founded a family there and taught at the University of Illinois. He could never forget the horror of the Nazi period. It was only in his old age that he decided to publish his traumatic childhood experiences in the form of an eyewitness account.



*Anton and Paula Bauer 1951*

## The memorial on the bank of the river Wiesent

In 1982 a monument was erected on the banks of the river Wiesent to perpetuate the memory of the Jewish community. The sandstone column was created by the sculptor Hermann Leitherer (1919–1991) from Bamberg. The German inscription is



*The monument on the Wiesent*

rather clumsily worded and translates as “The town remembers in veneration and gratitude the achievements and sufferings of their Jewish fellow citizens”. The Hebrew inscription is taken from the Book of Psalms.

Requests to erect a memorial to the life and suffering of the Jewish population of Forchheim were made to the town administration as early as 1956 – Jewish individuals with roots in Forchheim were also actively involved. In 1966 Wilhelm Kleemann, the son of the teacher and cantor Michael Löb Kleemann was presented with the Ring of Honour of the town of Forchheim. The keynote speakers announced their intention to ensure the creation of a worthy monument to the Jewish community. Since the plot on which the synagogue originally stood was used as a car park the monument was erected across the road on the bank of the river Wiesent.

## Two Jewish widows – persecuted by the Nazis

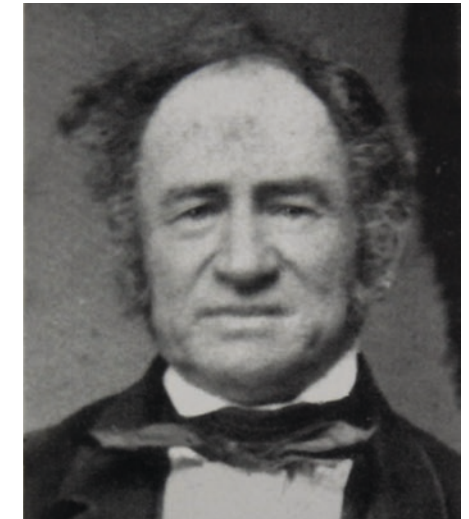
In the 19th century many Jewish townspeople lived in what is now the Hornschuchallee. House number 4 was under Jewish ownership for a long time and later belonged to the master wainwright Johann Kotz. He had married the Jewish widow Sophie Brückner, née Sternberg. During the National Socialist regime the house was occupied by two Jewish widows who

did not remain untouched by the Nazi terror. The widow Rosa Tiesler was deported from this address in 1942. In 1944 the 80-year-old widow Sophie Kotz was transported to Theresienstadt. This marked the end of Jewish life in Forchheim. After the Second World War, for short periods of time, individual survivors of the Holocaust were resident in the town.

## Moses Moritz Zeiller and a tragic accident at the Annafest

Moses Moritz Zeiller was a dealer in textiles and fabrics. His dwelling place including his business premises was on the Badsteg within sight of the synagogue. The respected merchant was granted the honour of being admitted to the Royal Privileged Shooting Society. Unfortunately he was involved in a tragic accident which occurred during the annual shooting competition at the Annafest in 1844. A young assistant whose job was to register the scores on the target left his cover too early and was hit by a shot that Zeiller had fired, he died of the wound. Thereupon an angry mob gathered before Zeiller’s house. The local militia quickly appeared and positioned themselves to protect the Jewish merchant and his family. The amateur dramatic society StaTTTheater Forchheim has taken the dramatic event and turned it into a theatrical production

in 2022. “Der Tod im Kellerwald” was performed in 2023 with great success.



*Moses Moritz Zeiller*

## From Forchheim to the world at large – Isidor Lederers agency for emigrants

In the middle of the 19th century many people saw no alternative to emigration to North America. This was also the case for many young Jews. The economic adversity and the hope of a freer, better life drove them to this step. The preliminaries involved many formalities: juveniles needed parental permission, confirmation of good character, a booking for the sea voyage and proof of financial liquidity.

The Jewish dealer in leather and paper, Isidor Lederer recognized a market opportunity and opened an emigration bureau at his home address Wiesentstraße 16. He repeatedly offered his services in the local publications the Intelligenz-Blatt and later the Amtsblatt.



Babette Rosenbaum born in Forchheim in 1840 left in 1855 after the early deaths of her parents. Her aunt Babette Traub was willing to take the girl in. It was an enticing offer, her aunt who had emigrated to New York was the owner of a cigar factory. Isidor Lederer who was Babette's guardian made the preparations for her emigration. Like Babette Rosenbaum many young Jewish emigrants found success in America. The most famous example is Levi Strauss (1829–1902) from Buttenheim (11 km north of Forchheim).

*Wiesentstraße 16 in 2023*



Station 18 · Marktplatz 5

## After 1861 – Forchheim's Jewish community expands

As industrialization progressed, the population of Forchheim increased markedly. This was accompanied by a growth of the Jewish population. While the Bavarian Jewish Edict of 1813 permitted the residency

of only 20 Jewish families within the town, the abolishment of this requirement in 1861 allowed them to choose where they wanted to live. Jewish families from villages in the neighbourhood such as Weilersbach, Wiesenthau, Kunreuth, Ermreuth and Gunzendorf settled in the town and took up employment there. For example, Moses Bauer a cattle dealer from Ermreuth moved with his family to the house at Marktplatz 5 while the neighbouring house at Vogelstraße 1 belonged to Max Bayreuther a cattle dealer from Kunreuth.

In 1880 there were 212 Jewish residents in Forchheim; that was 4.8% of the population. In the following period while the population of the town continued to grow the number of Jewish residents fell continuously. Jewish children in Forchheim attended the Catholic schools. Boys and girls were, however, taught in separate buildings.



*Marktplatz 5 in 2023*

Station 19 · Marktplatz 1

## Samuel Kleemann and the Paint Manufactory Kreul

Samuel Kleemann, another son of the Jewish teacher Michael Löb Kleemann was born in Forchheim in 1862. The elder brother of Wilhelm Kleemann, he gained a doctorate in chemistry and worked for several years as a chemist in England before buying the Paint Manufactory Kreul, founded in 1838 and in 1900 still operating at the Marktplatz in Forchheim. His first wife died in 1915, his only son Willy fell in the war in 1916. In 1920 Samuel Kleemann sold the factory, from 1921 he lived in Munich, taught at the university and together with his second wife Erna ran a grain dealership. After the Aryanization of the business, the Kleemanns moved back to the home of Erna's parents in Cologne. From there they were forced to move into a "Jewish retirement home". Samuel Kleemann died in May 1942 shortly before he was due to be deported. His wife Erna



*Samuel and Marie Kleemann with son Willy*

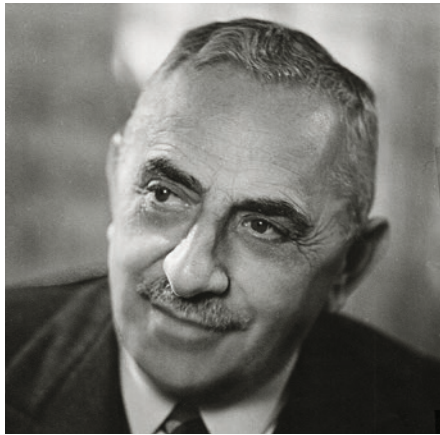
was transported to the Theresienstadt ghetto in June 1942 where she took her own life in July 1942. Samuel Kleemann's sister Elise Grünbaum (\*1860) was also a victim of the Holocaust. The story of her family and her life has been movingly described in the book "Our Days Are Like a Shadow" by Inge Geiler.



*Marktplatz 1 in 2023*

## Wilhelm Kleemann – a benefactor of his birthplace

The Jewish teacher of religion and cantor Michael Löb Kleemann was a highly respected person both in the Jewish community and the town of Forchheim. He took up his position on April 1st, 1860 and occupied it for almost 50 years. Of his seven children Samuel (\*1862) and Wilhelm (\*1869) were the best known.



Wilhelm Kleemann



After training at the Banking House A.E. Wassermann in Bamberg and gaining experience in several other positions Wilhelm Kleemann was appointed director of the Dresdener Bank in Berlin. He received a variety of honours, was a member of numerous economic committees and was board member of the Jewish community in Berlin. At the end of 1937 he and his wife fled from the increasing sanctions to Amsterdam and in 1940 on to the USA. Wilhelm Kleemann died on March 10th, 1969 in New York.

Wilhelm Kleemann proved to be very generous towards his birthplace. Together with his brother Samuel in 1918 he established the “Michael and Amalie Kleemann Foundation for the poor and sick”. And after the Second World War he repeatedly made donations to sports clubs, charitable organizations and the Catholic rectory of St. Martin in Forchheim despite the persecution and killing of family members by the Nazis. In 1966, over 90 years of age, Wilhelm Kleemann visited his birthplace where he was presented with the Ring of Honour.

In 2014 a path along the Wiesent was named after Wilhelm Kleemann. The Local History Society laid a commemoration stone designed by the artist Harald Winter.

Homepage of the Kleemann Monument:  
[www.forchheim.de/wk/](http://www.forchheim.de/wk/)

Kleemann memorial

## Rosa Tiesler – persecuted, transported and murdered

Rosa Tiesler, née Becker was born in West Prussia. At the age of 26 in 1903 she underwent an adult baptism in the Lutheran Church of St. John in Forchheim. She ran a grocer’s shop together with her husband Paul Tiesler at the Paradeplatz which later moved to Hauptstraße. Hence, she was known personally to many townspeople of Forchheim. Her husband died in 1924.

During the National Socialist regime Rosa Tiesler was subjected to harassment and humiliations. For example, she was interrogated at the police station under the pretence that she had not worn the

prescribed Star of David when on the street. Rosa Tiesler was deported in spring 1942. The widow suspected what was in store for her and asked to receive communion from the Protestant priest. Crying bitterly she took her leave, clearly moved, knowing that she would lose her life. On 24th April 1942 she was “packed off” to Bamberg and from there, on the next day deported to East Poland. In 1998 the congregation of St. Johannis erected a plaque in memory of Rosa Tiesler in the church porch. A stumbling stone has also been placed in remembrance at her last dwelling place.

## The Foil and Coating Factory David Morgenstern – the arrival of the industrial age

Jewish entrepreneurs played a significant role in the industrialization of Forchheim. Water power from the rivers, good transport links and cheap labour made Forchheim a promising location.

From their inception or for long periods the Optical Works A. Schweizer, the Paper Works Ellern, the Paint Manufactory C. Kreul and the Foil and Coatings Works were all Jewish owned.

By 1854 two Jewish businessmen from Fürth had recognized Forchheim’s potential. The 35-year-old merchant, Joseph Pfeifer Morgenstern and Moritz Franken-

thal, son of a factory owner, bought a water mill on the south side of the town where they installed a mirror glass and foil manufactory and from 1855 onwards they produced mercury coated, zinc foil. In 1861 Dr. David Morgenstern (1814–1882) took over the foil manufactory from his brother Joseph. The company expanded continuously and began with the production of copper foil, tinsel and tinfoil. The company remained in the family until Aryanization by the National Socialists in 1935. From 1940 onwards, special foils have continued to be manufactured on the site.

## 1813 Edict of Jewish rights – the road to emancipation

After secularization in 1803; the worldly authority of the Prince Bishop of Bamberg ceased to exist. The territory was subsumed into the Duchy (from 1806 Kingdom) of Bavaria and Forchheim became the seat of a District Court of Bavaria. The Jewish Edict of 1813 was intended to define the citizenship rights of the Jewish population.

The Jewish Edict was ambivalent. It introduced a series of improvements for the Jewish minority but also included some conspicuous restrictions. Jews were now allowed to practice their religion freely, could attend schools and universities and were permitted to train for and enter

“middle-class” professions. In keeping with modern times Jews were required to adopt a family name which could, however, be freely chosen. Frequently the name of the place of birth was selected e.g., Baiersdorfer, Dormitzer or Zeiller. A negative aspect was that Jews were only allowed to live in specified towns and villages and the number of Jewish families per town was limited. This was regulated in the “Matrikel Paragraphs”. In Forchheim the number of Jewish families was limited to twenty. The result of these restrictions was that many Jews found themselves forced to emigrate to North America.

## On the road to death – the deportations

In 1941 16 Jewish people remained in Forchheim and were designated to be deported: three of them died beforehand. Ilse Braun returned to Forchheim on September 10th, 1941 to support her parents and grandmother. Thus, since 1941 a total of 14 people were deported. They were, with almost no exception elderly people mainly widowed or single women. Jenny Abraham, Leo Abraham, Gottlieb Braun, Rosa Braun, Flora Heller, Ilse Cilly Braun, Ida Schönberger and Greta Zeidler were deported on November 27th, 1941. The destination of the transportation, which departed from Nuremberg was the concentration camp at Jungfernhof near Riga.

On the same day detective sergeant Hans Luft wrote in his report to the mayor of

Forchheim. “While the transportation from the Paradeplatz was taking place



Jenny Abraham

a large number of local residents had gathered who watched the transportation process with great interest and satisfaction .... We can be perfectly sure that Forchheim will be free of Jews by Christmas”. The number of Jews remaining in the town and the surrounding administrative area was determined regularly every three months.

A second deportation took place on March 23rd, 1942. The destination was Izbica in East Poland, a ghetto which was used as a transit centre. Those taken were Julius Prager, Sera Rosenbaum and Salie Braun. One month later on April 25th, 1942 Rosa Tiesler was deported to Krasnystaw also in East Poland. To the present day the people named as deported are regarded as “missing” since neither a date nor the circumstances of their deaths are known. The results of investigations, however, seem to indicate that those sent to Riga were shot near to the town or murdered in an extermination camp.

On August 6th, 1942, although ill, Berta Sundheimer was taken. On January 17th, 1944, the last person to be deported was the over 80-year-old Sofie Kotz.



Leo Abraham



Deportation of Gottlieb Braun on 29.11.1941



Deportation of 8 Jewish persons on 29.11.1941 from Forchheim to the camp Riga-Jungfernhof

Both women were taken to the Theresienstadt ghetto where Berta Sundheimer died on December 6th, 1943 and Sofie Kotz on October 13th, 1944.

An obelisk commissioned by The Forchheim Local History Society was designed by the artist Rudolf Ullmann and erected in 2008 in remembrance of those deported from Forchheim.

## Salie Braun's washing

Emma Rosalie Braun, known as Salie was a daughter of Julius Braun from Kunreuth who moved, around 1870, to Forchheim with his family. He opened a "store" at Paradeplatz 4 where he sold bedclothes and feather beds. After her father's death Salie, who was unmarried, took the business over. On November 12th, 1938, three days after the Pogrom Night her shop was closed down. At the time Salie was also the carer of her aged mother, Karolina.

The NSDAP designated the house at Paradeplatz 4 as the Jews' House. Any Jew in Forchheim who did not own a house was

forced to live here. Karolina Braun died in February 1942. One month later on 23rd March her daughter Rosalie was deported.

Shortly before, Salie had brought her washing and some shirts to a neighbour who should take care of the washing basket and its contents until her return. But Salie never did return. She was deported to the ghetto at Izbica in East Poland and murdered in a concentration camp. Salie's washing was presented to the museum in 2016. The fine embroidery of her name "Salie" is a reminder of her to this day.



Julius Braun's department stores' at Paradeplatz 4



Paradeplatz 4 in 2023

## "Gröschel has the best materials" – Gröschel's house of fabrics

Colourful, expensive silks, brightly iridescent prints from Asia splendidly embroidered headscarves these were the basis for the festive traditional costumes of Forchheim and it's environs. The farmers' wives and daughters in the region bought their much valued materials "at Gröschel's" and had their costumes made to measure. The haberdashery business was founded by Bernhard Gröschel (\*1814) who came from the village of Wiesenthau and carried on by his son Philipp (\*1847). The shop was at Hauptstraße 64 in Forchheim. The family tradition was carried on by Bernhard Gröschel jun. (\*1878). His daughter Irma revealed that her father, whose daily occupation centred on colourful materials, was in fact colour-blind. However, his outgoing temperament plus small concealed notes, allowed him to compensate for this little imperfection. Together with his brother-in-law Leo Abraham, Bernhard Gröschel opened a business for ready-to-wear clothing on the other side of the street (Hauptstraße 65). After the rioting of the Pogrom Night in 1938, the business was "aryanised". Bernhard Gröschel and his family were able to flee to the United States. His sister Jenny (\*1877) and her husband Leo Abraham were victims of the Holocaust.



Philipp Gröschel's house of fabrics at Hauptstraße 64



Rose and Bernhard Gröschel

## Deprived of a livelihood – the boycott and Aryanization of Jewish businesses

Repeated calls to boycott Jewish businesses appeared as early as 1933 in the National Socialist propaganda publication “Der Streiter”: “Forchheimers, don’t buy from Jews!” Defamatory attacks were made by the Nazis on individual Jewish business people such as the merchant Paul Wertheim. On March 31st, 1933 both Forchheim newspapers published calls to boycott 18 Jewish businesses. On April 1st SA members (Sturmabteilung – Brown-shirts) took up position in front of the shop and prevented customers from entering. Further discriminatory measures followed with the aim of isolating Jews from everyday public life.

Up to this time Jews had played a significant part in the economic life of the town. Their diverse businesses had supplied the population with a variety of goods and offered a wide, frequently inexpensive range. The industries which had arisen since the middle of the 19th century had made it possible for many people to put food on the table. Jewish entrepreneurs had played a substantial role in this upswing. After the Pogrom Night Jewish businesses were forcibly closed down and taken over by new “Aryan” owners. The Foil Manufactory was already aryanized in 1935, the Schweizer Optic company followed in 1942.



Hauptstraße 64 in 2023



Hauptstraße 65 in 2023

## In the Middle Ages – living shoulder to shoulder

In the Middle Ages the Jews lived within the town wall, but on the periphery. Their houses were along a narrow lane which ended at the wall. A “Jewish churchyard” is also mentioned in the records. Remin-

ders of the Jewish population did not disappear with their expulsion in 1499. For example the designations Upper and Lower Jews house (Hauptstraße 54 and 56) remained in use.

## A Hebrew inscription from the year 1720

When the house at Apothekenstraße 4, which now belongs to the Volksbank Forchheim was being renovated, an inscription was found above a door lintel on the first floor: the Hebrew letters Mem – Zajin – Resch – Chet, below them the date 1720. If the missing vowels are added, the word Mizrach appears which means East. Synagogues and prayer rooms are usually orientated towards the east. The Holy City of Jerusalem, a place of longing for Jews living in the diaspora is to be found where the sun rises.



Apothekenstraße 4 in 2023



Hebrew inscription 1720

Reinhold Glas, a local historian has found evidence that from 1680 to 1818 the house was Jewish owned. The Jew Seligmann bought it from a Christian and bequeathed it to his son Männlein Seeligmann, known as Goldsticker. The house then passed into the possession of Michael Joseph, a protected Jew (see section 1, Bishop’s protection). His son, Joseph Michael, then sold the house back to a Christian.

## The house of eternity – the Jewish cemetery in Baiersdorf

Jewish cemeteries are also known as the “house of life” (Beth ha-Chajim) or “house of eternity” (Beth ha-Olam). In Baiersdorf there is a large Jewish cemetery which lay within the old town wall. Not only



*The Jewish cemetery in Baiersdorf*

the dead of Baiersdorf and other Jewish communities from the environs were buried here but also from Forchheim. Many gravestones close to the modern entrance show the town name Forchheim and the names of Jewish families from Forchheim for example: Anker, Bayreuther, Fleischmann, Frank, Gröschel, Heller, Kleemann, Prager, Zeiller and many more.

The first mention of the Jewish cemetery in Baiersdorf was in 1529. The oldest gravestone dates from the sixteenth century, the youngest from 1938. For some of the deceased who were interred later it was not possible to erect a gravestone. The Jewish cemetery in Baiersdorf is the largest in Franconia. The number of graves which remain is 1278.

### Glossary

**Ikat:** refers to a dyeing technique from Indonesia used to pattern textiles that employs permanent dyeing of the yarns prior to weaving the fabric

**Jewish Edict:** The Jewish Edict of 1813 was intended to redefine the citizenship rights of the Jewish population. The Jewish Edict was ambivalent. It introduced a series of improvements for the Jewish minority but also included some conspicuous restrictions. Jews were now allowed to practice their religion freely, could attend schools and universities and were permitted to train for and enter “middle-class” professions. In keeping with modern times Jews were required to adopt a family name which could, however, be freely chosen. A negative aspect was that Jews were only allowed to live in specified towns and villages and the number of Jewish families per town was limited.

**Letter of Protection:** in order to avoid being subjected to recurrent pogroms Jews could seek the

protection of the ruling Lord for which it was necessary to show proof of a certain level of wealth and to pay for a „Letter of Protection“

**Matrikel Paragraph:** The details of the Jewish Edict were set out in the Matrikel Paragraphs.

**Pogrom:** a violent riot incited with the aim of massacring or expelling an ethnic or religious group, particularly Jews.

**Protected Jew:** in possession of a Letter of Protection -see above -the number of protected Jews within a defined territory was restricted.

**Torah arc:** an ornamental chamber in the synagogue that houses the Torah scrolls.

**Torah scrolls:** the most holy Jewish script comprising the five books of Moses, hand written in Hebrew.

**Torah shield:** is one of the five ornaments of the Torah which is laid on the cover of the Torah scroll

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