

**Night of Broken Glass
in Wöllstein
November 1938**

Night of Broken Glass November 1938 in Wöllstein

**We commemorate our Jewish fellow citizens
and other victims of National Socialism**

Bernd Antweiler

Edited by Ortsgemeinde Wöllstein

November 9th, 2013

Why?

That is what I asked myself, what we asked ourselves and what we will ask ourselves again and again
– Why ?

Why could all this happen to our Jewish fellow citizens, friends and neighbours ?
They were members of our local community after all.

With a view of the world that we can not comprehend in our times they were segregated because of their religion and their origin, forced to emigrate or taken away to extermination camps where they were killed.

And all these cruelties did not only happen anonymously in the capital of Berlin – also in a village like Wöllstein there was segregation, hate and inhumanity – leading as far as murder.

That is why!

That is why we commemorate the incidents of the Night of Broken Glass here in Wöllstein.

That is why we commemorate our Jewish fellow citizens, who were forced to leave their homes in Wöllstein after that day.

That is why we call your attention to the fate of Jewish families.

That is why we ask everybody to stay alert – and be tolerant and brave.

The undescrivable harm can not be made undone – but we do not want to forget the victims!

We want to give back the Jewish families their Wöllstein identity, we want their names and families remembered again.

With our exhibition and this booklet we also want to set a sign:
A sign for peace, for reconciliation and understanding, for
tolerance and humanity.

I would like to thank the members of the team, who put this
project into practice with a lot of enthusiasm and made it
possible to show this exhibition.

Wöllstein, November 9th, 2013

Lucia Müller

Mayor of Wöllstein

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Before the Night of Broken Glass

75 years have passed since the so called Night of Broken Glass.

On November 3rd the Polish Jew Herrschel Grynszpan shot the German member of the German embassy Ernst Eduard vom Rath in Paris.

Hitler's minister for propaganda this was a very welcome excuse to start the persecution of German Jews.

He made German newspapers report in great luridness of account about this action and announce various actions against all Jews.

He let the organisations of the NS Party know that they should not appear as organizers of demonstrations, but they were told not to do anything against these actions.

This cleared the way for anti-jewish actions all over Germany.

They were approved by the highest authorities.

Nobody of the offenders had to fear criminal prosecution. „Rowdies – members of the NS- party and the SA derided and and abused Jews.“¹

Hate against Jews, which especially was expressed in the National-Socialistic literature and in the so called “Nürnberg laws” of 1935 (e.g. the inadmissibility of marriages between “Germans” and “Jews”) had prepared the ground for these excesses.²

1 Allef, Eberhard (Hrsg.): Edition Zeitgeschehen, Das 3. Reich, Hannover 1970, S. 85

2 Pleticha, Heinrich, (Hrsg.): Deutsche Geschichte, Gütersloh 1984, Bd. 11, S. 304, Vgl. S. 41 f und S. 44 f

In the German Reich “about 400 people were killed or driven into suicide in the days from the 7th to the 13th of November 1938.

More than 1400 synagogues as well as thousands of shops, residences and Jewish cemeteries were destroyed.”³

A complete lifetime has passed since then.

Enthusiasm for the National Socialism

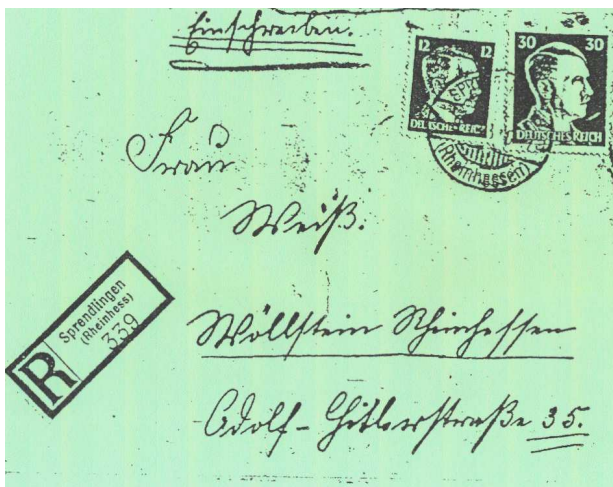
The acceptance of Hitler could be seen all over Germany in elections, by the increase of number of members of the “Party” by the appointment of Adolf Hitler as honorary citizen for example in the neighbour village of Eckelsheim⁴ – or by the renaming of streets.

registered
mail

Mrs Weiß

Wöllstein
Rhinehessia

Adolf- Hitler
Street 35



Also in Wöllstein the Eleonorenstraße was changed into Adolf-Hitler-Straße and the Villastraße became Horst-Wessel-Straße.

³ <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Novembepogrome1938> (23.06.2013)

⁴ Schon am 26.06.1932 wurde Hitler Ehrenbürger von Eckelsheim (Vgl. Antweiler, Facharbeit 1988, S. 24; Kulturausschuss Eckelsheim (Hrsg.): Eckelsheim und seine Geschichte, 1993, S.66)

The local group of the NSDAP (National Socialistic Party) were well organised. 10 so called „Blockguards“, assisted by a large number of informers and helpers provided a very high density of communication, observation, spying and transmission of orders”⁵



Swastika banners in Bahnhofstraße

The enthusiasm for the National Socialism could be seen at Party Activities and deployments.

They took ruthless actions against dissenting people and Jews.

This was the case in Wöllstein, too. Especially in the Night of Broken Glass Jewish fellow citizens were abused and offended, one Jewish fellow citizen was even murdered.

5 Holtmann, Heinrich: Die Märtyrer von Wöllstein, 1996, S.140

Jewish families in Wöllstein

From the beginnings until 1820

We know that already about 1750 Jewish families lived in Wöllstein. Around 1820 the Jewish cemetery was installed and in 1850 our Jewish fellow citizens had their own prayer room in Kreuznacher Straße.

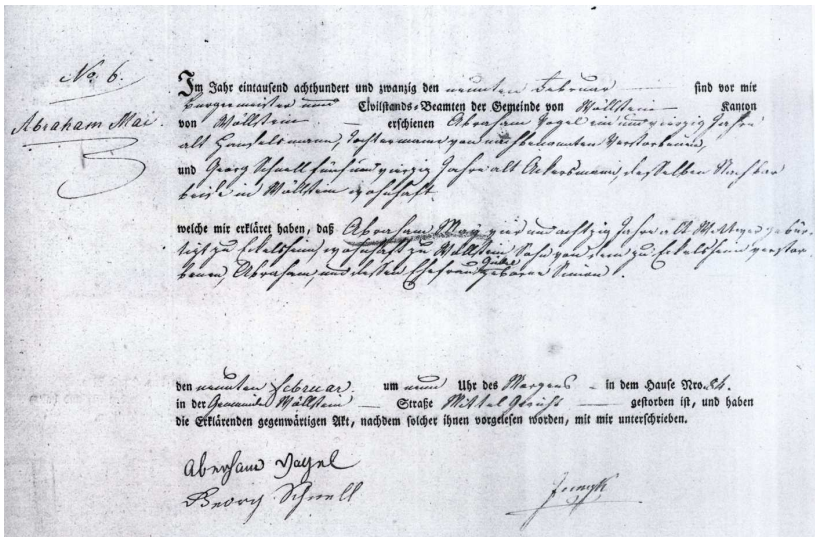
The leaders of the Jewish community were

Bernhard May (1870 – 1886), Markus Kahn (1886 – 1896)

Siegmund May (ab 1896)⁶ and at last Eugen Mendel.

The example of the May families shows that Wöllstein was the home of many generations of Jews.

In the register of deaths of our parish of 1820 one can find Abraham May, who was born in Eckelsheim in 1736, where his parents had lived at that time.⁷



6 Keller, Chronik von Wöllstein, 1908, S. 73; vgl. S. 46 f.

7 Archiv der Verbandsgemeinde Wöllstein

Nr. 6

Abraham May

In the year 1820, the 9th February Abraham Vogel (41 years), salesman, son in law of the deceased and Georg Schnell (45 y.) farmer – neighbour of both – living in Wöllstein appeared in front of me, Burgomaster and registrar of the parish of Wöllstein –district of Wöllstein –

who declared that Abraham May, (84 years) – born in Eckelsheim, living in Wöllstein – son of Abraham (died in Eckelsheim) and his wife XXXX, born Simon

died on the morning of the 9th February in house nr 84 in the parish of Wöllstein – Street Mittelgericht

and both have signed the document with me after it had been read to them

Abraham Vogel

Georg Schnell

Jungk

As you can see from this document of 1820 at this time some more Jewish people lived in Wöllstein – like the Vogel family.⁸

By the marriage of his great granddaughter Sara to the plumber Markus Kahn from Udenheim this family name became local in Wöllstein for more than 100 years.

In the 20th century the name „May“ was spread 7 times among Jewish families.

The other well known names were: Gottlieb, Kahn, Kaufmann, Mendel and Nachmann.

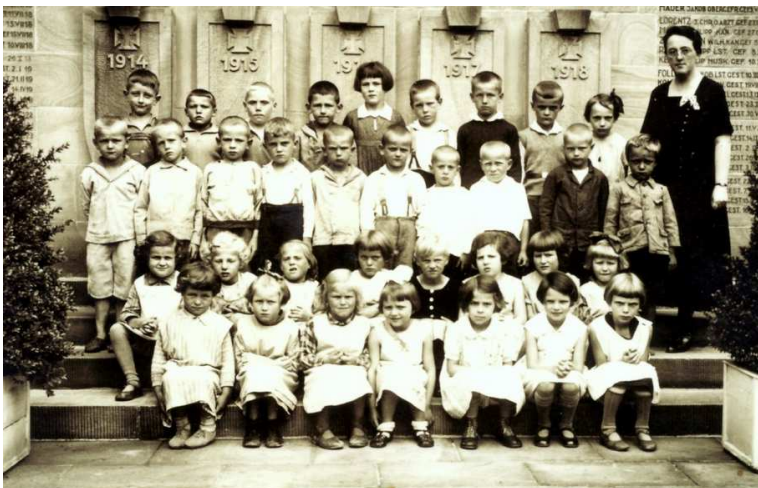
8 A. Vogel war Tochtermann (son in law) des Verstorbenen Abraham May

All of them were closely connected to the “people in Wöllstein and the region.”⁹ They just felt as German citizens. The following examples can show that clearly

- Anna Lang still remembers:

“We were on good terms with our Jewish neighbours. Sister Käthchen, who lived near to our house, took my brother and me to Eleonorenstraße and brought us to Paulinchen May after “Kinderschule”.¹⁰ Paulinchen sat with us at the stove and told us stories until our parents came from the fields and picked us up.”¹¹

Photo from 1932



There often were one or more Jewish children in many classes of Wöllstein school. They were fully integrated – like Gertrud Mendel for example (2nd row, 3rd from right side)

9 Brief von Curt May, 05.05.1988, in: Antweiler, Facharbeit, 1988, S. 63

10 Schwester Käthchen leitete jahrelang den Wöllsteiner Kindergarten (damals: Kinderschule)

11 Lang, 02.09.2013

- Curt May wrote in a letter about his uncle Leo May who had gone to Argentina as a salesman for a Hamburg export company around the year 1890:¹²
„He was such a German patriot, that he had changed all his money into war bonds at the beginning of the first World War, which were completely devaluated. So he lost all his fortune.” He then returned to Germany, took part in the war, was even decorated with the “Iron Cross”. He died in Germany and was buried on the Jewish cemetery in Wöllstein – next to his brother.
- some contemporary witnesses know similar facts about the Kaufmann brothers – living in Eleonorenstraße:
„The men of the Kaufmann family were soldiers in the First World War and some of them were also decorated with the “Iron Cross1”.¹³ “Being former German participants of the war they felt safe in Wöllstein and stayed – despite all warnings – there even after 1938.”¹⁴
- Curt May wrote about the relation of the Jewish and gentile population of Wöllstein:
„The Jews were, as far as I remember that, assimilated and their lifestyle was not different to the one of the rest of the population. A large percentage of the Jews were simple, modest people – living in poor conditions. The mutual agreement with the Christian fellow citizens was perfect and harmonious, all Jews were close friends with gentiles. Therefore the new race politics of Hitler, with the aim of destroying the Jews physically, what was proclaimed in Hitler’s book “Mein Kampf” – hit them hard and they could not understand that. Unfortunately only very few Jews (and gentiles) took that seriously – until the facts disabused them.”¹⁵

12 Curt May in : Antweiler , S. 63 f.

13 Kitzer, 02.07.2013, Espenschied, 03.07.2013

14 KH.Kaufmann, 28.05.2013, Kitzer, 06.06.2013

15 Curt May in: Antweiler,1988, S. 63 f.

- The fact that many Jewish (Hebrew) expressions found their way into our language shows the close contacts of Jews with their fellow citizens.¹⁶

Discrimination against Jews

Starting in 1933 Jews were gradually suspended from clubs and events. The normal contact to their fellow citizens was forbidden.

- Hans Antweiler gives three examples:¹⁷
Kurt May played the piano at concerts with us. “ But soon that was out of favour and he stopped it.” He did not play in public any more.

Bernd sang in the choral society “Sängerbund”. When all Wöllstein Choral Societies were forced to unite, Bernd stayed away.”



Privately (in the May's home) they went on making music together: Paul Kumpa, Willi Schmitt, Kurt May (Klavier), Willi Stephan, Hans Antweiler

16 Vgl. Plattes, Gabriele, Chronik der VG Wöllstein, S. 80 f.

17 Hans Antweiler in: Antweiler, 1988, S. 68; Vgl. Foto S. 16.

„One day – I think it was 1935 – suddenly SA post stood at the door of the house of the May family. We – his musical friends – passed them with our instruments and they didn't stop us. These SA-people were from Wöllstein and we thought that there were a bit ashamed of what they were doing.”

The sports club also suspended Jewish members.

In 1934 they erased the name of the Jew Moritz Kaufmann from the club list.¹⁸

The sons of Siegmund¹⁹ and Berta May, Bernd (*1914) and Kurt(*1917) felt the discrimination of Jews very early, although they meant to be “German Citizens with Jewish Religion” and absolutely assimilated.²⁰

- Kurt May attended the grammar school in Bingen from 1927 to 1934. There he could hear fellow students singing: „When a Jew's blood splashes from the knife, everything will work out fine.”²¹
- Bernd May reported the following incident:
„... in the morning I heard noise in the street. It was still dark but I could see that ...2 persons threw stones into the windows of the .. Adolf May's bedroom. It is the house .. opposite of our former house. At that time A. May's wife was seriously ill and was practically dying. They climbed over the garden fence .. My brother and I followed these invaders with our dog on the lead. .. The next morning we made a record .. I had witnesses .. but nothing more happened.”²²

¹⁸ Vereinsbuch der Turngemeinde Wöllstein, S. 4.

¹⁹ Vgl. Fotos S.30 u. 53, Siegmund/ Sigmund wird verschieden geschrieben, auch in Urkunden/ auf dem Grabstein/ Kurt heißt nach der Auswanderung Curt.

²⁰ Curt May in: Antweiler, 1988, S. 64

²¹ Curt May in: Antweiler, 1988, S. 64

²² Bernd May in: Antweiler, S. 80

- Hans Antweiler described a situation typical for that time in 1988:

„I sat together with my Jewish friend Bernd May ... in the pub “Reichsadler” and had a glass of beer. That was in 1935 or 36. Then a former schoolmate came and asked me to follow him outside. He was a member of the SS, but he did not wear his uniform that night. He told me: “ If you are seen with that Jew again, we will beat you both!” I talked about it to Bernd and we decided to act as they wanted.”²³

Dieter Hoffmann mentions several cases of discrimination in the Wöllstein area in his book “Wir sind doch Deutsche”.

- In September 1933 the Wöllstein policeman Dieterich writes to the district office in Alzey, that he had told the Jew Eugen Kahn “that he – being a Jew – was not allowed to dance with a gentile girl .. and had to go home immediately.”
The report then tells that Kahn had gone home, but from there he had driven away towards Bad Kreuznach. They followed him and saw him in the Kurhausstraße. “ Kahn was taken in protective custody, because he had left Wöllstein although he was not allowed to do that.”²⁴
- In 1936 the „Wöllsteiner Zeitung“ printed the Jewish Service calendar. Therefore the NSDAP District Chairman wrote to the editor that they had to put pressure on him and “ make sure that such monstrosities ... ceased.”²⁵

²³ Hans Antweiler, in: Antweiler, S. 86

²⁴ Kopie des Schreibens in: Antweiler, 1988, S. 81-83,

Vgl. Hoffmann, 1992, S. 192 und Eppelmann, Facharbeit 2011, S. 5

²⁵ Hoffmann, Wir sind doch Deutsche, S. 230

- In 1937 „Der Stürmer“ writes that the gentile L. from Wonsheim rode with the Jew Gottlieb in the same car.²⁶
- Also in „Der Stürmer“ you could read in 1938 that the „Judical law clerk Lahr from Wöllstein plead a case in court for the Jew August Kahn at the district court in Wöllstein. „Der Stürmer“ could not understand such an action of friendliness towards Jews.²⁷



Hans Antweiler, Bernd May, Friedel Mathes, Curt May, Paul Kumpa

In these days they were not able to sit together as informal as you can see them on this photo.

²⁶ Hoffmann, S. 235

²⁷ Ebd. S. 243

Wöllstein contemporary witnesses give more examples that show how Jews were discriminated and their live became more dangerous every day. The “Party” interfered everywhere into people’s daily live:

- Katharina Kitzer says:

“The Kaufmanns – living in Eleonorenstraße – worked in the Erdal factory in Mainz and had to leave from here by train every morning at half past five. They needed good rucksacks and had bought good material – it was a green cloth, what I can remember well, and my father was asked to make rucksacks – with leather laces.

But he was not allowed to work for Jews. Therefore the Kaufmanns contacted us through their neighbour Karl Stephan. In the morning – on their way to the train, they put the cloth in our garden, that reached from Eleonorenstraße to Kirchstraße (today it is our kindergarten).

When the rucksacks were finished, we told Karl Stephan that the Kaufmanns could fetch their Rucksacks where they had deposited the cloth.”²⁸

Hella Kaufmann also tells us that people were not allowed to work for Jews:

“I know of a hairdresser who worked for my father that the NSDAP chairman came into the shop one day and forbade to serve Jews. He threatened us with consequences.”²⁹

- Änni Kanzler gave us another example:

“We delivered eggs to the Mays in our neighbourhood. Then they did not dare to fetch the eggs at our house. So I, being a small girl was sent with the eggs to our neighbour’s,

28 Kitzer, 06.06.2013

29 Hella Kaufmann, 02.09.2013

because children were not observed as close as adults.”³⁰

- Karl Heinz Kaufmann still remembers that
“Wöllstein Jews were brought to Osthofen (in springtime of 1933),”³¹
“an apprentice, who already had an apprenticeship with the Schwenk company in Wöllstein was dismissed because of the instigation of the NSDAP chairman and therefore had to work for Farmers in Badenheim.”³²

Very rarely one could see a normal coexistence of Jews and their gentile fellow citizens.

- Maria Espenschied gives two examples:
“I attended the burial of Mrs Kaufmann in 1934 on the Jewish cemetery. Even the wife of the local chairman of the farmer’s association was there.”³³
“My mother, Barbara Schöneck, was in Bad Kreuznach and waited for the bus at a bus stop. A car stopped. It was one of the Kaufmann Brothers from Eleonorenstraße. He offered to take her with him to Wöllstein. But he asked her - to be on the safe side – if she wanted to refuse, because gentiles were not allowed to ride on the same car as Jews. My mother rode in the car with him.”³⁴

Curt May knows after nearly 70 years that his friend Hans kept the contact with his Jewish friends, while others avoided the contacts. “Between 1933 and 1936 he visited our family although that was frowned upon by others.”³⁵

“ When I left in July 1936 there were only three gentile families that dared to come and say good-bye.”³⁶

³⁰ Kanzler , 02.07.2013

³¹ Kaufmann, Aufzeichnungen Mai 2013, S.1

³² KH Kaufmann, 28.05.13, S.2

³³ Espenschied, 14.05.2013

³⁴ Espenschied, 03.07.2013

³⁵ Curt May „Lebenserinnerungen eines alten Mannes“, Mail an Familie B. Antweiler, 2004

³⁶ C. May in: Antweiler, S. 65

- Alise Schwenck looked back to that time:

“Bernd May was in our house, when a high SA officer in uniform came in. Bernd got frightened and wanted to disappear quickly. But the SA officer said:” Bernd you do not need to worry – I will not do any harm to you.”³⁷

Nothing was like it was before. Jews were afraid of the Nazis and on the other hand former friends “ were afraid of greeting each other or to stay on friendly terms.”³⁸

Emigration of Jewish families

Starting in April 1933 Jewish shops were boycotted and Jewish civil servants lost their jobs. “ As a result a number of families became poor or even lost their basis for living and therefore emigrated.”³⁹

From Wöllstein the first Jews emigrated in the middle of the thirties. Their number increased drastically after the Night of Broken Glass 1938 and the prosecution that got worse after that. Later other edicts followed that made the situation for Jews worse and worse, like the “ edict that Jews were forced to buy in special food shops” ⁴⁰ in 1939 and later the obligation for Jews to wear a yellow star on their clothes. This made the wishes to emigrate stronger.

But “emigration was only possible, if you had relatives abroad or friends who wrote a letter of awareness. ... In most cases the young people left first to prepare everything for the older ones.”⁴¹ So Kurt May (later Curt May) was the first of his family to leave for Argentina. His mother Berta and his brother Bernd

37 A. Schwenck, 04.07.2013

38 Curt. May in: Antweiler, 1988, S.65

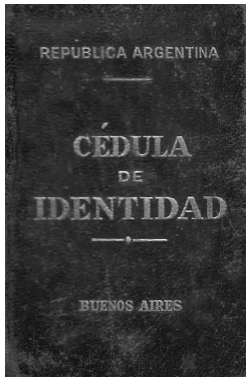
39 Ebd. S.65

40 Radein, Wir sind wieder einmal davongekommen, Norderstedt 2005, S.310

41 Curt May in:Antweiler,1988, S. 65

42 Bernd May wurde in Argentinien als *Bernardo May* eingetragen. Im privaten Umgang und Schriftverkehr hieß er weiter *Bernd*.

followed him a year later, just like their uncle Herrmann and his family.



Bernd May's first passport in Argentina

Eugen Kahn emigrated to New York in 1936.

Eugen and Albert Mendel and their families went to New York in 1937 and Erwin Nachmann went to Italy in 1938.⁴³

Walter Keller, who lived – after his parents had died in 1928 – together with his brother Richard with relatives in Siefersheim, emigrated from there to Shanghai in February 1939 – aged 19 years.⁴⁴

“Some of them did not have the opportunity to emigrate or did not see the danger they were in and “ refused to leave their home”.

43 Aufstellung Bürgermeister Werle 1961 in: Antweiler, S. 87

44 Radein, 2005, S. 32 ff.

45 Curt May in: Antweiler, S.65

The following people moved away from Wöllstein from 1930 to 1938: Paula Deutschmann (née Mendel), Siegfried Mayer, Irma Ulmer (née May), Hedwig Esser, Max Gottlieb and Erna Michel.⁴⁶

Both brothers, Bernd and Curt May very often thought of their hometown. Therefore – after the war – they returned to Wöllstein several times. Also their wives and children came to see Wöllstein.

Also Eugen Kahn, his sons and the Mendel and the Nachmann family contacted people in Wöllstein.

Night of Broken Glass, persecution of Jews, deportation

In the night of the 9th to 10th November 1938 and also on the following days – as all contemporary witnesses⁴⁷ mentioned in this booklet acknowledged – there were destruction, plundering and assaults against the Jewish population in Wöllstein. The worst crimes were the murder of the 74 year old Jewish fellow citizen Adolf May and the abuse of his relative Milli.

Adolf May, born in Wöllstein in 1864, lived with his family in the Ernst-Ludwig-Straße where he had a small business. He and his son Albert also went to their customer's homes where they sold linen for the dowry of young girls.

Adolf May was the shohet of the Jewish community. When his wife died in 1935 his unmarried sister Henriette (Jettchen) took care of him. And he often stayed in her house.

46 Vgl. Liste S. 48 f.

47 Espenschied, Kanzler, Kaufmann, Kitzer, Kumpa, Neumann, Schwenck

Jettchen had a small shop in Kreuznacher Straße. After the terrible incidents of November 1938 she found shelter with relatives who lived in Mainz and she reported to them, “ that Adolf May had been forced out of his bed and had been killed in that night.”⁴⁸

- Dieter Hofmann heard from Wöllstein contemporary witnesses of that time when he made his research for his dissertation:
“ Adolf May had been killed and was found in a wooden box on the next morning with a cut through throat.”⁴⁹
“ people heard Adolf May screaming when his tantalizers had chased him through the Apple River.”⁵⁰
- The burgomaster, Jakob Werle wrote in 1947,
That Adolf May was found “ with his throat cut through - under circumstances that justify the assumption that this was murder.”⁵¹
- In the register of deaths of Wöllstein Adolf May’s death however was noted – like in many other cases – completely different.
On the 19th November they wrote: ⁵²
“The salesman Adolf May, Jew, ... was found dead in Wöllstein, Kreuznacher Straße 9, .. on November 12th.”
“ registered on announcement of the local court in Wöllstein. Day and hour of death unknown.”
“Cause of death : Cuts in the throat (suicide).”

48 Brief Curt May vom 18. Juni 1947 an Bürgermeister Werle, in :Antweiler, S.89

49 Hoffmann, 1992, S. 264, Fußnote 61

50 Ebd. Fußnote 61

51 Schreiben Bürgermeister Werle an Kripo Mainz (ohne Datum auf dem Durchschlag, aber die Polizeidirektion antwortet Werle am 29.Juli 1947 auf „Ihre Zuschrift vom 12. Juli 1947, S.101 und 103

52 Eintrag im Sterbebuch der Gemeinde Wöllstein Nr. 22/1938

Burgomaster Werle wrote to Curt May in 1947: „ I informed the American authorities about the tragic death of your relative Adolf May directly after I took over the position as burgomaster of Wöllstein. At the end of the year 1945 the Criminal Investigation Department in Mainz arrested several people. ... Several witnesses were questioned, but up to now without any result.“⁵³

1947 there was another record of the Parish of Wöllstein against an unknown offender because of murder of Adolf May. The investigation did not lead to a result. Presumably the offenders and their helpers did not talk. Friends of the victim were dead. Bernd May realized in 1988: “Unfortunately I could not get information from victims or witnesses, because all of them had been killed.”⁵⁴



Adolf May in front of his house in Ernst-Ludwig-Straße

Besides the murder of Adolf May in house at the corner of Kreuznacher- and Marktstraße the worst things happened on the other side of the River Appel in Bachgasse. Milli (Emilie) May lived there. She was described to be the very pretty daughter of Simon May. The offenders undressed her, painted her body with black paint and drove her over the

⁵³ Bürgermeister Werle in: Antweiler S. 93

⁵⁴ Bernd May in: Antweiler 1988, S. 80

bridge over the River Appel near to her house.⁵⁵ And the offenders also vandalized her home.⁵⁶

- Anna Lang whose family lived next door to Milly May, still remembers that Milli when she had returned to her house “stood terrified and searching for help behind her frontdoor that was severely damaged.”⁵⁷
- Burgomaster Werle talked in 1946 about various acts of violence that took place on the 11th November 1938: “These people drove all Jews out of their homes and damaged the houses and all the furniture. The tenant of a local pub (Reichsadler ⁵⁸) continued these actions on the following day. A Miss Milli May was treated in ascandalous way on that day.”⁵⁹
This innkeeper “is named by the local people to be one of the offenders against Miss Milli May.”⁶⁰ He moved to Mecklenburg in 1939.⁶¹

The excesses against the Jews continued on the following day. One can not believe it, but some witnesses, who were students in school in those days, tell us that there were teachers who encouraged students to watch the destruction of the Jewish properties.⁶²

- Karl Heinz Kaufmann wrote down:
„During a lesson we suddenly could hear glass breaking. The school was at the place where you nowadays find the “Penny Market”. Mr. B., our teacher left the classroom

55 Die Zeitzeugen Espenschied, Kanzler, Kaufmann, Kitzer, Kumpa, Lang, Neumann und Schwenck erinnern sich genau, dass damals gleich von diesen schrecklichen Vorkommnissen in Wöllstein erzählt wurde. Vgl. S. 51 f

56 Schreiben Bürgermeister Werle vom 6.11.1946 an Millis Bruder Alfred, in: Antweiler, 1988, S. 95

57 Lang, 02.09.2013

58 Werle am 27. 05. 1947 an Rechtsanwalt Labin, in: Antweiler. S. 99

59 Werle am 01. 09. 1946 an Rechtsanwalt Labin , in: Antweiler S. 97

60 Werle, ebd. S. 99

61 Rechtsanwalt Labin am 08.05.1947, Antweiler S. 98

62 Espenschied, 14.05.2013, Neumann, 17.05.2013

and came back some minutes later and said: "Do you know Grünspan (copper rust). None of the students understood what he meant. So he took a small copper coin out of his pocket and asked "What can you see on this coin?" No one knew an answer to the question.

Mr. B. explained: " That is what you call "Grünspan" and this Grünspan (Jew) shot a member of the German embassy in Paris. This is the reason that members of the SS destroyed the windows of Jew's houses in Wöllstein."⁶⁴

We had a day-off from school. The students rushed out of the classroom and ran to the places where there was noise and destruction near to the school – these were the houses of the Nachmann and Mendel⁶⁵ family – later to the Kahn family.⁶⁶

Former students still know that the teacher Mr B. before he released the students said in a good temper:"Now it starts!"⁶⁷

- Burgomaster Werle wrote later:

A large number of students watched the destruction⁶⁸ and many of them "even took part in the demolitions."⁶⁹

Former students, today contemporary witnesses report:

- Alois Neumann: "We came from school. At the Nachmann's house they threw the beds into the street."⁷⁰
- Irmgard Neumann:"We heard the noise in Scheerengasse. Therefore I went to Ernst-Ludwig-Straße with my mother. At the Nachmann's house we saw furniture that was thrown out of the window and

63 Verschiedene Schreibweisen üblich, meist „Grynszpan“ (Vgl. S. 1)

64 KH Kaufmann S. 4

65 Beide Häuser dicht beim Schulhaus (Ernst-Ludwig-Straße)

66 Alzeyer Straße

67 Espenschied, 14.05.2013, A. Neumann 17.05.2013.

68 A. Neumann, 17.05.2013, Kitzer, 02.07.2013

69 Schreiben Bürgermeister Werle vom 27.Mai 1947 an Anwalt Dr. Labin, in: Antweiler, 1988, S. 99

70 A. Neumann, 17.05.2013

the feathers of the beds were in the air. We went back home fast.”⁷¹

- Alise Schwenck: “ My mother said: “look at that, so you can tell it to your children. Slit bed linen came out of the windows of the Nachmann’s house. And some houses further we saw how they chased Mr and Mrs Kahn out of their house and ran frightened around a car.” ⁷²
- Maria Espenschied: “The students saw that Mrs Kahn was oppressed.”⁷³
- Katharina Kitzer: “ When I went home from school I saw that they threw a small cupboard and clothes out of the window.”⁷⁴

Ilse Antweiler wrote down in 1988 that she wanted to cycle from Alzey to Gau-Weinheim. She reported that it was impossible to go on from Wallertheim

“because there were Jewish houses at the road where they threw things and furniture onto the street. So she had to go back and visited her relatives in Wöllstein. There the same things had happened. They had chased Jews out of their houses and homes here as well.”⁷⁵

Mrs Nachmann, one of the very few Jews who had survived the KZ – informed the authorities through her lawyer in 1946

“that during the so called “Action vom Rath” on the 10th November 1938 ...her flat and the furniture of her business.... in Wöllstein were completely destroyed by the mob.”⁷⁶

71 I. Neumann, 17.05.2013

72 A. Neumann, 17.05.13, A. Schwenck, 17.05.13

73 Espenschied, 03.07.2013 u. 02.09.2013

74 Kitzer 27.08.2013

75 I. Antweiler in: Antweiler, 1988, S. 46 f.

76 Antweiler, 1988, S. 96

The furniture of the Wöllstein Synagogue was also destroyed.⁷⁷

- Änni Kanzler: “I saw how they carried books out of the Jewish school in the afternoon – I even think by Jewish women. SA-officers surveyed that. Then the books were burnt in front of the house.”⁷⁸
- Maria Espenschied: “There was also a fire. I saw that Mrs Nachmann from Ernst-Ludwig-Straße fetched water from the river in a bucket to help with the extinction of the fire.”⁷⁹

Very often neighbours had to watch the scenes of these days without being able to help. Jewish fellow citizens were chased out of their homes and driven through Wöllstein.

- Katharina Kitzer told us about such a situation:
“They went up the stairs from the yard and emptied the house. Then Pauline May⁸⁰ and her brother were taken out of the house. During the day my mother and I saw that Mrs May held on to the washing line in the yard of her neighbour’s house, because they wanted to drive her – just like her brother- into a small stable. They splattered her with a broom. My mother was really confused.”⁸¹
- Maria Espenschied also told us that many neighbours had to watch everything and felt helpless:
“I saw that Paulinchen May came into the street – a coat hanger in her hand. She was driven away with other Jews.”⁸²

77 Schreiben Bürgermeister Werle vom 6.Nov. 1946 an Alfred May, in Antweiler, S. 95, Holtmann, S. 142, Plattes, S. 216

78 Kanzler, 04.07.2013

79 Espenschied, 0.3.07.2013, Änni Kanzler sah es auch (22.08.13)

80 Pauline May und ihr Bruder wohnten in der Eleonorenstraße (neben Kitzers). Ihr Haus wurde (zur Verbreiterung der Straße) später abgerissen.

81 Kitzer, 02.07.2013

82 Espenschied, 03.07.2013

None of the contemporary witnesses could tell where they brought the Jews. But it is sure that the witnesses we asked have never seen one of them in Wöllstein.⁸³

- Katharina Kumpa told us that most of Jews had already stayed in their homes before that date – so you did hardly see them in public.
“Irma May (Adolf May’s daughter) and I were on friendly terms when we were children, but later we had less relation to each other, because she did not leave the house any more. And after the Night of Broken Glass I have not seen them again. And did not hear anything from them later.”⁸⁴

Nevertheless some of the Wöllstein Jews stayed in Germany for some time. They went into hiding in big cities or with relatives.

Pauline and Ludwig May for example – we do not know if they were arrested or could escape directly – reached some relatives in Hemsbach. But there they were not safe. In 1942 they were deported and died in camps in France.⁸⁵

The same happened to Milli May. She found shelter in Mainz and married there. She and her husband Robert Rosenthal wanted to leave for America. But they were both deported to Piaski in Poland in 1942 and died there.⁸⁶

Only very few Jewish citizens stayed in Wöllstein after the Night of Broken Glass: August Kahn and his wife⁸⁷, Heinemann Stern, Frida Kaufmann in Kreuzstraße and Minna Kaufmann⁸⁸ and her family in Eleonorenstraße.

83 Kanzler 11.08.2013, Espenschied, 02.09.13, Kumpa 04.09.2013

84 Kumpa, 04.09.2013

85 www.bundesarchiv.de/gedenkbuch, 03.09.2013

86 www.bundesarchiv.de/gedenkbuch (unter: Emilie May), 03.09.2013

87 Liste Werle in: Antweiler, S. 87

88 Ihr Mann war 1932 verstorben.

August and Frieda Kahn moved to Frankfurt in 1939.⁸⁹ In 1942 both of them were deported to Theresienstadt and killed there.⁹⁰

Heinemann Stern lived with the Schwencks, where he was hidden for some time. He moved to an old people's home in Mainz in 1941 where he died.⁹¹

Frida Kaufmann from Kreuzstraße left Wöllstein in 1939. After that in her street - which was also called „Kongo“ – they leaflets were distributed, saying: “ Now the Kongo is free of Jews.”⁹²

The Kaufmann family in Eleonorenstraße was deported.

- Katharina Kitzer⁹³: “ The complete family of Minna Kaufmann⁹⁴ was deported in September 1942,⁹⁵ mother, her son Moritz and his wife Frieda, the sons Willi, Karl, Ludwig and her daughter Flora – 7 persons. No one of them survived.”

“I remember that Mrs Kaufmann was sitting on the back of the car. It was a lorry with a linen hood. I stayed with our neighbours, the Stephans, and we saw that from their house. Mrs Kaufmann gave us some last signs.”⁹⁶

From September 1943 there were no more Jews left in Wöllstein.

Only Frida Kaufmann returned after the war and stayed for some years.

Bernd and Curt May searched contact to Wöllstein friends directly after the war and visited Wöllstein several times. Their children kept these friendly contacts up to today.

89 Liste Werle, in Antweiler, S. 87

90 www.bundesarchiv.de/gedenkbuch, 03.09.2013

91 W. Schwenck, 17.0.5.13, I. Neumann, 16.08.2013, Liste Werle in: Antweiler, S.87

92 KH. Kaufmann S.1

93 Kitzer, 06.06. 2013

94 Der Sohn Hugo und die Tochter Anna Hecht waren vorher emigriert

95 Liste Werle in: Antweiler, S. 87

96 Kitzer, 06.06.2013

Edwin Kahn came to Wöllstein in 1962⁹⁷, his son Milton Kahn started contacts to the Malz family in 2003.

Erwin Nachmann visited Wöllstein several times⁹⁸ and Bill Mendel started contacts with the Lammers family, who now lives in their former house.



Siegmund M. 1869-1925	Hermann May Argentinien	Leo May 1867-1926	Aaron Blum Theresienstadt
Berta May Argent.	Johanna May Argentinien	Bernhard u. May 1838-1913	Rosalie May 1846-1926
Ernst Blum France./ USA	Friedrich Blum Auschwitz	Carola Hertz USA	twinsister died as a child
			Albert Blum France

97 Aufzeichnungen G.Holzer
98 Kitzer, 27.08.2013

The photo of the May family from the times before the Night of Broken Glass is the only existing Family Photo of Jewish fellow citizens from Wöllstein that we still have. It was taken 25 years before 1938.

Five of the persons shown in the photo have already died⁹⁹.
One is unknown.

Six of the persons you can see on the photo emigrated, three were killed in a KZ. No one was allowed to stay in his hometown.

⁹⁹ Ein Mann ist unbekannt, ebenso der Name einer der beiden Zwillingsschwestern, die bald nach der Aufnahme verstarb

Other oppressed and persecuted Groups

Besides the Jews – millions of them lost their lives in these times – other groups were oppressed and persecuted.

And an innumerable number of people suffered in the war.¹⁰⁰

In the centre of the actual exhibition on the Night of Broken Glass we put the fate of our Jewish fellow citizens, but all other victims shall not be forgotten.

The National Socialists proclaimed the “purity of the German blood”. Handicapped and incurable ill people were – just like Jews, Sinti and Roma – segregated from the “German” community. “With the research of “race scientists” the “euthanasia” – the killing of people who were not worth living according to the Nazi philosophy – was justified.”¹⁰¹ From Wöllstein two people were killed in Hadamar. For 15 more the local health authority requested the sterilization according to the “law to avoid genetic diseases” – released on 14th July 1933.

As a rule all so called “Non-Arians” had to suffer from persecution and discrimination.

That lead to the situation that foreign workers were not allowed to sit at the table with the family and grew worse up to cruel attacks against foreign workers.¹⁰²

Therefore Curt May thought it to be very good that after the war in Wöllstein two partnerships with French and English citizens

¹⁰⁰ Vgl. Werle, Gedenkbuch, 1961

¹⁰¹ www.dhm.de/lemo/html/nazi/innenpolitik/rassenpolitik vom 08.08.2013

¹⁰² Beispiel: “Die Wonsheimer SA verprügelt ihre Fremdarbeiter und Kriegsgefangenen” in Radein, S. 219 f

were founded on the level of families and the parishes. He wrote in 1988 from Argentina, that he “thought it to be heartwarming to see the change compared to our youth – when all Germans – even the most uncultivated ones – looked down on the French and the Italians (ratters!).”¹⁰³

The Nazis wanted to stop all political opposition. Therefore political active people were taken into “protective custody”.

- Curt May witnessed:
“ first they arrested supposed communists and other Nazi-opponents. I remember a family on the second floor in our house who were really terrified.”¹⁰⁴
- Karl Heinz Kaufmann tells from his memories:¹⁰⁵
“ the Social Democrats put up bills in 1933 saying: “People who vote for Hitler vote for war”. My father was member of the Social Democrats. He was released of the postal services for political reasons in 1933.”
- “In 1933 .. 3 to 4 SS officers and 2 policemen appeared... the SS officers stayed in the hall and watched and we (my father, my mother and 4 children) were locked up in the kitchen. The policemen searched the other rooms for weapons and SPD material. This happened again 2 weeks later. On that day we had butchered and there were pots of cold grease in the kitchen. They forced us to heat up the grease to check, if there were weapons in these pots.”
- When the sports club was reorganized in 1935 about 40 to 50 boys came to the gym.

103 Brief Curt May vom 05.05.1988 an R.H. und B. Antweiler, mit Bemerkungen zu Partnerschaften

mit Barsac und Great Barford

104 Curt May in: Antweiler S. 65

105 KH. Kaufmann, 1926-1943, Auszüge S.1-9

At first they were asked if they were members of the “Hitlerjugend” or the “Jungvolk”(youth organisations of the Nazi Party). “I was the only one who came forward with that and was sent home. Tears ran down my cheek – I was 9 years old at that time.”¹⁰⁶

- Maria Espenschied still knows:
“Students who were not members of the “Hiltlerjugend” had to attend school on Saturdays.”¹⁰⁷

The police station of Wöllstein reported to the district administration in April 1933 that 7 persons were taken into protective custody, “ that they first only wanted to arrest 2 members of the Communist Party – but then the local NSDAP chairman had seen to it that 2 more communists, a Social Democrat and 2 Jews were also arrested.”¹⁰⁸ The seven men were released 3 weeks later, ..”¹⁰⁹

A few days later another eleven Persons were brought to the KZ Osthofen. This time they arrested 4 members of the Communist Party and 3 members of the Social Democrats, a member of the Christian Zentrum and 3 Jews.”¹¹⁰

Suspects were observed. Letters of the new Wöllstein teacher Emil Darapsky were opened and read. He wrote to his sister in Mainz in 1943:

“You live in perfect peace in Wöllstein, compared to the catastrophes that have happened in the Ruhr Area in the last weeks and at last in Cologne – catastrophes which were caused by Mr Hitler – but this devil does not care about lives and art monuments.”¹¹¹

106 KH. Kaufmann, S. 3

107 Espenschied, 14.05.2013

108 Hoffmann, S. 179 f

109 Ebd. S. 141

110 Hoffmann, S 180

111 Holtmann, S. 80

- Emil's sister answered:
"We perfectly agree in this political attitude. The disaster – if look at it – is that the German people are so indefinitely stupid – stupid and arrogant."¹¹²
- Emil and his sister were arrested in autumn 1943 – because of their negative statements about Hitler and the Nazi regime. The teacher Anton Knab and the Roman Catholic priest Nikodemus were also sent to prison. In Emil's letters it was mentioned that they shared his opinion.
- Emil Darapsky was executed¹¹³, his sister was sent to prison for 5 years.¹¹⁴
- Knab and Nikodemus were absolved by the court in Berlin, but Knab was taken into protective custody again when he returned.¹¹⁵ That was not unusual in these days and he was brought to Dachau where he was battered to death.¹¹⁶
The priest, Nikodemus, was not allowed to return to his parish. Long before they were arrested in October 1943, the teacher Knab and other people who were engaged in the church organisations could feel that they had many personal disadvantages through this commitment.
- Anton Knab played the organ in the Roman Catholic churches in Wöllstein and Siefersheim. „but already since 1937 the Nazi authorities had restrained these activities and in 1939 they forbade the service as organist.¹¹⁷
He asked Alise Geronio to take over the service, without giving any reasons.¹¹⁸

112 Ebd. S. 80

113 Ebd. S. 92

114 Holtmann: Die Märtyrer von Wöllstein, Carl-Brilmayer Gesellschaft Gau-Algesheim, Bd. 39, 1996, 1996, S. 101

115 Holtmann, S. 65

116 Ebd. S. 65

117 Ebd. S. 48

There had been a first accusation against Knab in that year due to efforts of colleagues and the NSDAP chairman – but it ended with an acquittal.¹¹⁹

- Later, in 1942, his participation in the religious life was objected to in an employee appraisal of the Wöllstein court inspector Karl Kantz. It says: “Kantz is politically not reliable .. members of his family are in a monastery! No Sunday without visiting the Service in church....”¹²⁰
- Maria Espenschied told us that her father, known as beadle Schöneck, was arrested:

My father met some man at the corner of Moosgartenstraße and Eleonorenstraße where they talked and smoked. Then the police officer came and asked for Jakob Schöneck. He had to follow him. My father wanted to change clothes but he was not allowed to do that.

“People like you have to be arrested in the street and follow immediately,” were his words. My mother had already gone to bed and was woken up by our neighbor, Sister Kätchen who told her that my father had been arrested.”¹²¹

They accused Schöneck to have made negative statements about Hitler. But there was no official accusation and he was released from the “Kittchen”, the Wöllstein prison. This was in 1934.

All contemporary witnesses remember the fact that it was dangerous in these days to express a different political opinion or to have closer contacts with Jews.

118 A. Schwenck, geb. Gerono, 04.07.2013

119 Holtmann, S. 65

120 Ebd. S. 145

121 Espenschied, 03.07.2013

Final remarks

We really wish that the impressions you get in an exhibition last for a longer time.

Therefore the members of the workgroup wanted to create a booklet to accompany the exhibition, so that every visitor was able “to take something home”. And the students should have the opportunity to get to know history of the village through this documentation.

As a visitor of the exhibition you can learn that history was not only written in the centres of power and big cities, but also complete regions and villages like Wöllstein were struck by the important political influences at that time.

We were very happy that successors of former Jewish fellow citizens supported us with the preparation of the exhibition.

I thank all the contemporary witnesses – named in that booklet - for the open dialogues we had.

Wöllstein, September 2013

Bernd Antweiler

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Private notes /letters

- Kaufmann, Karl Heinz, 1926 bis 1943, Schriftlich festgehaltene Erinnerungen
- Holzer, Gerhard, Recherchen zu Juden in Kreisgebiet

Photos:

- All Photos come from private collections of the Jewish families and our contemporary witnesses. Some of them were edited by our member Thorsten Zimmermann

Contemporary witnesses:

Name	Born:.	Talked to on:
Espenschied, Maria	1925	14.05., 03.07, 02.09.13
Kanzler, Änni	1926	24.04., 04.07, 11.08.13
Kaufmann, Hella	1933	28.05.13 und 02.09.13
Kaufmann, Karl Heinz	1926	28.05.13 und 02.09.13
Kitzer, Katharina	1928	06.06., 02.07, 27.08.13
Kumpa, Katharina	1914	22.04.13 und 03.09.13
Lang, Anna	1934	02.09.13
Neumann, Alois	1927	17.05.13 und 16.08.13
Neumann, Irmgard	1931	17.05.13 und 16.08.13
Schwenck, Alise	1924	17.05., 04.07, 28.08.13
Schwenck, Willi	1920	17.05.13 und 04.07.13

Addendum: Texts und Photos of the exhibition

The following texts and photos are presented in the exhibition. They are the result of the research of the workgroup “Gegen das Vergessen”. They show the fate of Wöllstein Jewish fellow citizens in the Nazi time.

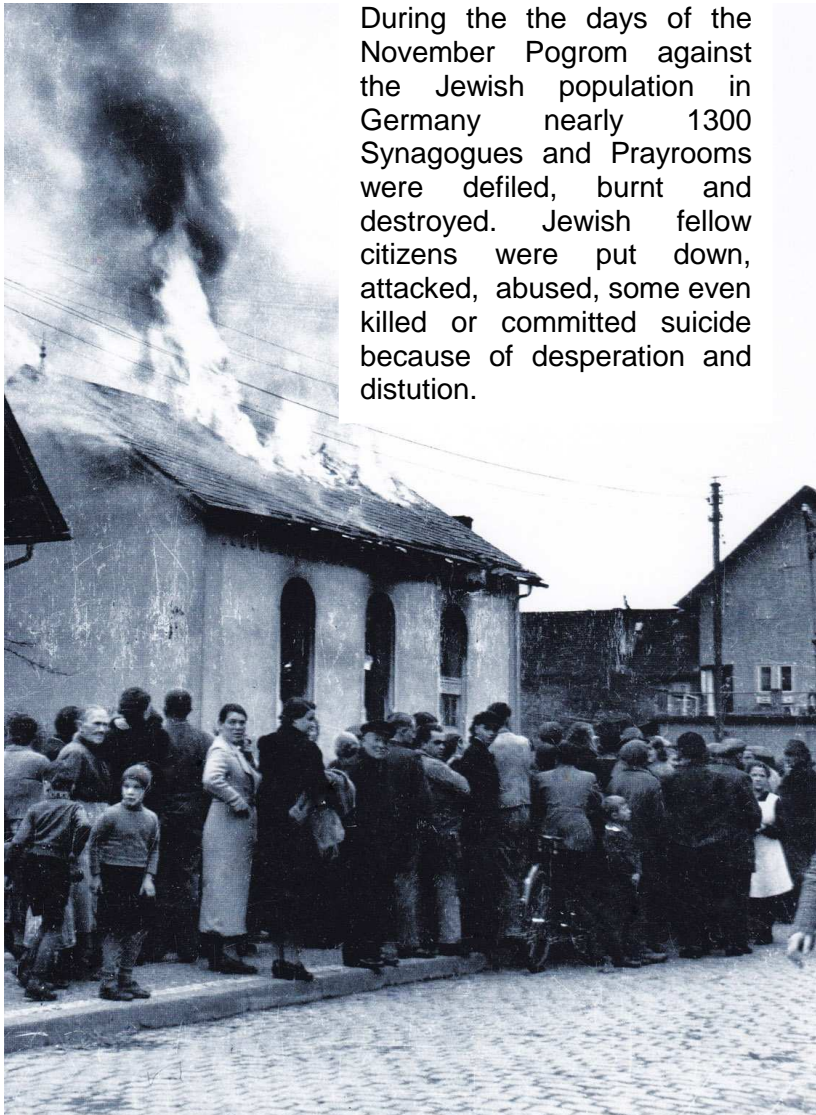
**Adolf May
Milli May
Berta, Bernd und Kurt May
Eugen Kahn
Frida Kaufmann
Isaak, Lina und Josef Nachmann
Daniel Nachmann
Joseph und Minna Kaufmann
Albert und Eugen Mendel**

Members of the workgroup:

Bernd Antweiler, Michael Eppelmann, Gerhard Holzer,
Dirk Lammers, Lucia Müller, Elfi Pfeiffer,
Gerhard Pfeiffer, Torsten Zimmermann.

The night when the Synagogues burnt

Night of Broken Glass 1938



During the the days of the November Pogrom against the Jewish population in Germany nearly 1300 Synagogues and Prayrooms were defiled, burnt and destroyed. Jewish fellow citizens were put down, attacked, abused, some even killed or committed suicide because of desperation and distution.

Their homes were devastated, their shops were destroyed and marauded. About 30 000 Jewish men (1/6 of the Jewish population!) were arrested and taken to the KZs in Buchenwald, Dachau and Sachsenhausen. This action against Jews was said to be “ a spontaneous reaction of the people” to the assassination of the member of the German embassy in Paris, Ernst vom Rath, but it was centrally controlled by the NSDAP, the SA and SS.

It did not only take place in big cities, but also in villages, everywhere in Germany, where - even after 5 years of anti – Jewish propaganda and terror – Jews still lived.

This were about 180,000 (compared to about 500,000 in 1933).

The Night of Broken Glass – because of the broken windows and glasses – was the culmination of anti- Jewish propaganda and terror.

It was the end of the living together of “Jewish” Germans and Germans (who now called themselves “Volksgenossen”) that had lasted for centuries. This night also was the beginning of the deportation and killing of 6 million European Jews (160,000 from Germany and 65,000 from Austria).

The Night of Broken Glass in Alzey and the district:

Only less than 200 Jews lived in the district of Alzey in 1938, 85 of them in Alzey (1933: 525 – 197 in Alzey)

You could still find some Jewish butchers or cattle-dealers or craftsmen. But they could hardly live on their businesses because of the limitations, deprivations of rights and prosecution. Those who could afford it went abroad or at least to big cities. There were no more Jews left in some of the villages in the district of Alzey (e.g. Eich, Monsheim, Osthofen and Wendelsheim) in 1938.

In November extremely violent riots took place in Framersheim, Wallertheim, Nieder-Wiesen and Wöllstein. The Synagogues in Alzey, Eppelsheim, Nieder-Wiesen and Nieder-Saulheim were burnt and destroyed. In Wöllstein 74 year old Adolf May and in Wallertheim 94 year old Abraham Mann were murdered; in Alzey 84 year old Abraham Beckhardt died because of his severe wounds.

15 Jewish men from Alzey were taken to the KZ in Buchenwald, 41 year old Otto Koch was killed there on December 8th 1938.

Most of the others were set free after they promised to sell everything they owned and to emigrate. All of them suffered from severe health and psychological problems because of the arrest.

Many Jews fled from their home villages ("November refugees") and went to Mainz or other big cities (about 140 people from the district of Alzey)

The population census on the 17th May 1939 counted only 171 Jews (1933: 834) in the district of Alzey (today Alzey-Worms).

A great number of them were deported in 1942 and killed in the ghettos and extermination camps in the east.

Only very few people survived.

Exclusion and persecution between 1933 and 1938:

- 01.04.1933 Boycott of Jews
- 07.04.1935 Dismissal of Jewish Civil Servants
- 15.09.1935 Nurnberg laws: Jews were discriminated to be second class citizens
 - bis 1938 250 laws, Verordnungen and edicts to limit the lives and freedom of Jews
- 26.04.1938 Jews had to declare property worth more than 5000 RM
- 14.06.1938 Registration and labelling of Jewish businesses and factories.
- from 13.06.1938 Imprisonment action "Arbeitsscheu Reich (ASR)": 2500 Jews were arrested
- 17.08.1938 Jews were forced to use the first name „Israel and Sara“
- to 05.10.1938 Jews had to convert their passports. Identification mark „J“; separate passports for Jews.

After the Night of Broken Glass 1938:

- 12.11.1938 The Jews had to pay 1 billion RM as „Sühneleistung“ (in the end 1,26 billion). They had to pay for the damages of the pogrom themselves. Claims towards insurances were attached by the Reich administration .
All kinds of businesses were forbidden for Jews. Their firms, houses, estates and all property were "arisiert" – which means dispossessed.
So the Jews were completely excluded from a normal economical life and

- did not any possibilities to make their living.
- 12.11.1938 Jews were no longer allowed to visit cinemas, theatres or other public events (soon after that also museums, sport grounds or swimming pools)
 - 01.09.1939 Curfew for Jews at night – when the war began.
 - 23.09.1939 The radios of Jews were confiscated.
 - 22.10.1940 Deportation of 6500 Jews from Palatia Baden and the Saar Area to the camp in Gurs (South France).
 - 01.09.1941 Obligation to wear the yellow star with a inscription “Jude”
 - 23.10.1941 Prohibition of emigration for Jews
 - 14.10.1941 Order to deport all Jews in the German Reich to the ghettos in the east.
 - 20.01.1942 Wannseekonferenz in Berlin: Decision for The „Final solution of the Jewish problem”
 - 25.03.1942 Deportationen of Jews
 - 27.09.1942 from Rheinhessia to Piaski,
 - 30.09.1942 Theresienstadt and Treblinka (?).

History of the Jews in Wöllstein

We do not know, if there were already Jewish citizens in Wöllstein(that belonged to the archdiocese of Mainz) but it is most likely (e.g. the May family from Eckelsheim)

In 1808 nahmen 15 Jewish citizens adopted new family names. In 1824 5 Jewish families with 24 persons lived here, 39 in 1861, 67 in 1880 ; at the turn of the century 70 persons of 1879 inhabitants. Since 1905 the Jews in Siefersheim – 10 persons – belonged to the Jewish Community of Wöllstein, which was part of the rabbinate of Bingen.

Most of the families lived in poor circumstances. They were fruit dealers or had small businesses. There was a family (Kahn) who had worked as plumbers for generations.

Since about 1820 there has been a Jewish cemetery in Wöllstein. The last to be buried there was Adolf May in 1938. The cemetery was defiled in 1949 and 1950, but the offenders could not be found.

Since 1850 the Jewish Community has had a prayer room on the second floor of the house in Kreuznacher Straße 5, that was owned by the May family. The Synagogue was destroyed in the Night of Broken Glass and the furniture and cult objects were burnt. Since 1955 the house has been a listed building.

In 1933 45 Jews lived in Wöllstein - only 11 persons stayed until 1939.

After the Nazis took on the political power in 1933 and the persecution started, 22 persons emigrated (11 to the USA, 6 to Argentina, 2 to Palastine, 1 to France and Italy and to China (Shanghai);

11 persons moved to bigger cities in Germany. In September 1942 the last 7 Jewish inhabitants of Wöllstein (Minna Kaufmann and her family and Richard Keller) were picked up, deported and killed. Only the wife of the protestant priest who was of Jewish descent survived in Wöllstein.

Of all deported persons only Lina Nachmann survived the camp in Theresienstadt – she emigrated to the USA after that.

Erwin Nachmann returned to Wöllstein for some time.

The fate of some Wöllstein Jews (e.g. Albert May, Erna Nachmann) are unsettled until today. In a whole 33 Jews who were born in Wöllstein or had lived there in the thirties, were murdered.

Until the takeover of power by the Nazis the Wöllstein Jews lived peacefully and well integrated among their German fellow citizens.

Then the misfortune struck them with the persecution by the government and the exclusion and the lack of solidarity by their fellow citizens.

That there were also signs of courage, support and humanity can be seen in the letters and the contacts after the war with the exiled persons and their descendants.

**To commemorate the Jewish women, men
and children who had to leave Wöllstein
after 1933
emigrated, were deported and murdered**

Deutschmann, Paula, geb. Mendel	1934 Mainz
Kahn, Eugen	1936 emigrated to New York
Kahn, Meta, geb. Heidelberg	1936 emigrated to New York
Mayer, Siegfried	1936 Ulmet
Ulmer, Irma, geb. May	1937 Villingen, emigrated to USA (?)
Esser, Hedwig	1937 Elberfeld
Mendel, Eugen	1937 emigrated to New York
Mendel, Else, geb. Mayer	1937 emigrated to New York
Mendel, Walter	1937 emigrated to New York
Mendel, Gertrud	1937 emigrated to New York
Mendel, Albert	1937 emigrated to New York
Mendel, Flora	1937 emigrated to New York
Mendel, Ernst	1937 emigrated to New York
Mendel Werner	1937 emigrated to New York
May, Berta, geb. Fürth	1937 emigrated to Argentina
May, Bernd	1937 emigrated to Argentina
May, Kurt	1937 emigrated to Argentina
Gottlieb, Max	1937 Frankfurt, danach USA (?)
Gottlieb, Werner	1932 Ahrweiler 1937 emigrated to Palästina
Michel, Erna	1937 Mandel, danach USA (?)
May, Hermann	1938 emigrated to Argentina
May, Johanna, geb. Haas	1938 emigrated to Argentina
May, Walter	1936 Frankfurt, 1938 emigrated to Argentina
Nachmann, Erwin	1938 emigrated to Italy, 1951 zurück nach Deutschland
May, Ludwig	1938 Hemsbach 1942 deported to Gurs, Recebedou/Frankreich
May, Pauline	1938 Hemsbach 1942 deported to Gurs, Recebedou/Frankreich

May, Henriette (Jette)	1939 Mainz, Altersheim 1942 deported to Theresienstadt
Stern, Heinemann	1941 Mainz, in an old people's home verstorben
May, Juliane	1942 deported to Theresienstadt
May, Emilie (Milli), verh. Rosenthal	1938 Mainz, 1942 deported to Piaski/Polen
May, Albert	Schicksal unbekannt
May, Adolf	1938 murdered
Nachmann, Isaak	1938 Mainz 1942 deported to Theresienstadt
Nachmann, Karoline geb. Mayer	1938 Mainz 1942 deported to Theresienstadt survived, later to the USA
Nachmann, Josef	1938 Mainz 1942 deported to Piaski/Majdanek
Kahn, August	1938 Frankfurt, 1942 deported to Theresienstadt
Kahn, Jenni, geb. Liepoldt	1938 Frankfurt, 1942 deported to Theresienstadt/ 1944 to Auschwitz
Kaufmann, Minna, geb. Wolf	1942 deported to Theresienstadt
Kaufmann, Moritz	1942 deported to Treblinka (?)
Kaufmann, Frieda, geb. Streifler	1942 deported to Treblinka (?)
Kaufmann, Willi	1942 deported
Kaufmann, Karl	1942 deported to Treblinka (?)
Kaufmann, Ludwig	1942 deported to Treblinka (?)
Kaufmann, Flora	1942 deported to Theresienstadt/Auschwitz

Adolf May 1864-1938

Adolf May lives with his family in Ernst-Ludwig-Straße 53. He has a small shop for textiles and sewing things. He and his son Albert visited families to sell linen for the dowry of the daughters.

Adolf May is also the shoet of the Jewish community.



2 years before he is killed, he has already been harassed once in one night by young Wöllstein Nazis.

Adolf May in front of his house, Ernst-Ludwig-Str.53

Only the courageous intervention of Bernd May and his brother Kurt prevented worse actions. The offenders are stopped by the two brothers, there are witnesses – the incident was reported to the authorities – but nothing happened.

After the death of his wife Karolina (died in 1935) he often stayed in the house of his sister **Jettchen** (Henriette) **May** , who also had a small shop for sewing things and linen.

Her small shop with a shop window is situated at the corner Kreuznacher Straße/Marktstraße. In a small extension in Marktstraße Adolf May is found after the Night of Broken Glass with a cut through throat.

Many rumours circulated about his homicide. In the newspaper this action is described as a suicide.

„Wöllstein. Der in den siebziger Jahren stehende Jude Adolf May hat sich am Hals und Kopf solche Verletzungen beigebracht, daß er an deren Folgen s t a r b. Da sich vor langen Jahren dessen Vater erhängte, eine Schwester einen Selbstmordversuch unternommen und eine Tochter sich vom Zug hatte überfahren lassen, ist die Annahme berechtigt, daß der S e l b s t m o r d e d a n k e i n F a m i l i e n e r b s t ü c k in dieser jüdischen Familie ist.“

(Original excerpt from Mainzer Anzeiger 14.11.1938, Hoffmann „Wir sind doch Deutsche“, S. 264)
Wöllstein. The Jew Adolf May – in his seventies – has injured his throat and head in such a way that he died after that. As his father had killed himself ...and one sister tried to commit suicide and one daughter had also killed herself you could assume that thoughts of suicide are congenital in this family.

After the war, in 1947, Jakob Werle, Burgomaster of Wöllstein, at the instigation of the emigrated relatives of Adolf, made a report for murder.

The investigation of the C.I.D. in Mainz did not lead to any results, partly because documents had been burnt, partly because the police questioning in Wöllstein also had no results. The crime has not been solved until today, although involved persons were named.

Adolf May ist he last Jewish fellow citizen who is buried on the Jewish cemetery in Wöllstein.

Milli May

1894 – 1942

Milli worked as a shop assistant in a fashion shop Dietz in Mainz during the week and returns to Wöllstein regularly on her free days.

Milli May, born in 1894, a young relative, who lives in Bachgasse 3, is also a victim of persecution and cruelty that night.

The offenders undress her, paint her body with black paint and is driven over the bridge of the River Appel towards Klausengarten. And the offenders also vandalized her home.



Milli May lived in
Bachgasse.

Milli May gets away to Mainz after the Night of Broken Glass. There she gets married to Robert Rosenthal from Limburg; they intend to emigrate to the USA, but they do not succeed. On the 25th March 1942 they both are deported to Piaski/Poland And die there.

Adolf's son Albert May (born 1901) has been missing since that night. And we do not know anything about his daughters Katinka and Irma.



Adolf and Albert May's
shop was in
Ernst-Ludwig-Straße 53

Berta May

Bernd und Kurt May

Berta May, since 1925 widow of Siegmund May, is the heart of the family. Berta May loves to have guests in her house in Ernst-Ludwig-Straße 46, especially the friends of her sons Bernd and Kurt.

1932 in the wine cellar of the May family
Up on the right: Kurt, Berta and Bernd May.



Bernd, born in 1914, is a merchant; Kurt, born 1917, attends the Gymnasium (College) in Bingen. The two brothers have friends – and they often celebrate and make music together.

Starting in 1933 both feel that they are more and more isolated. Kurt experienced discrimination in his school through anti-Semitic statements in class and in the school books. He leaves school in 1934 and starts an apprenticeship in Offenbach.

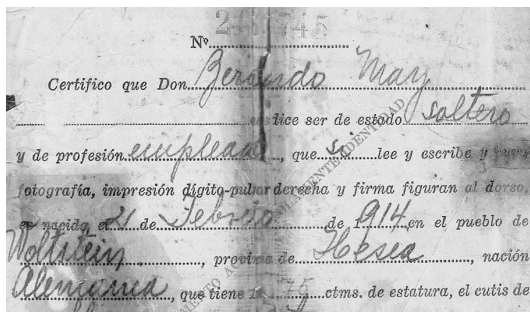
Kurt is no more allowed to take part in public performances and concerts of a group of Wöllstein musicians.

A SA-officer checks all persons who enter the house. Bernd stops singing in the choral society.

A young Wöllstein man of the same age threatens him with a

good beating if they are seen together again. So the friends only meet secretly.

The Mays feel that the situation for Jews gets more and more unbearable. As they have friends in Argentina, Kurt leaves for Buenos Aires at the age of 19; Bernd and his mother Berta follow him in August 1937.



Bernd May's first passport in Argentina 1937

Bernardo and Curt, how both brothers are called now, work as businessmen in Argentina and get married there. All their lives they have regular contact to Wöllstein, as well as their children Roberto, Alfredo, Vera and Daniel.

Curt's daughter Noemi always shows her guests from Germany the company nameplate, that was installed at the house of her grandfather in Wöllstein.



Company nameplate:

Bernhard May

Mehl und Landesprodukten

flour and agricultural products

Eugen Kahn 1904-1972

1933 the unmarried
Salesman Eugen Kahn,
son of August and
Jenni Kahn, in
Ernst-Ludwig-Straße 4.



oben: Meta und Eugen Kahn
unten: Milton und Edwin Kahn
in den 50ziger Jahren

The parents have a shop for housewares, cycles and sewing machines in Alzeier Straße 4. In 1917 they move to Ernst-Ludwig-Straße 3 with their shop, but after 1933 the situation gets worse for the business. From 1936 August and Jenny live in Alzeier Straße, their shop is sold in 1939.



Alzeier-Straße 4

With the takeover of the National Socialists also Eugen experiences a time of discrimination and terror.

On May 3rd Eugen Kahn and nine Wöllstein citizens are taken into protective custody and taken to the KZ Osthofen. 18 days later he is released again.

On the evening of the 5th September the Wöllstein police station is informed that a Jew behaves improperly at a dance in a pub. They talk about Eugen Kahn – 28 years old at that time – who is in the ballroom of the guesthouse “Leineweber”. He dances with the niece of the landlord, the day before he has already danced with a Flonheim girl. He is just about to leave the pub, when the police stops him. He is told that – being a Jew – he is not allowed to dance with a gentile girl – and that they do not want to see him in the streets that evening. That the police officer means to gate him completely is not clear for Eugen. He goes to Bad Kreuznach with his friends by car. The policeman who learns about the trip to Bad Kreuznach by a whistle-blower – waits for him and arrests him.

After a short stay in the Wöllstein prison he is again taken to Osthofen on the 8th September – but is released again on the 16th September.

In 1935 Eugen Kahn gets married to Meta Heidelberger. They spend their honeymoon in Italy. When they returned home from the honeymoon with Venetian glasses in their luggage, German customs officers stop them and are told that “Jews should not have such valuable glasses.” – This is one of the sentences they hear.

In the same year a Wöllstein fellow citizen gives the advice to leave Germany. “The offenders get out of control”, is what they are told three years before the November pogroms.

In 1936 Eugen and Meta emigrate to New York City. This is only possible because of the assistance of Ferdinand Kahn – an uncle of Eugen.



Eugen Kahn's shop in New York

In New York both sons – Edwin (*1938) and Milton (*1943) – are born. Eugen works as a mechanic, later he opens a toy shop. In 1953 the family moves to Colorado, where Eugen and Meta build and run a motel.

In the fifties the couple visits Wöllstein for the last time – both sons also visit the home country of their parents in the following years.

Eugen Kahn dies in 1972.

Martin und Frida Kaufmann

1921 Martin Kaufmann from Bad Kreuznach gets married to the Jewish woman Frida Feit who has worked as maid in a Jewish family in Wöllstein since 1919. They live with their children in Kreuzstraße in Wöllstein until the 16th June 1939. Their children experience the Nazi time until that day in Wöllstein. They report as contemporary witnesses:

„Officially no one ever talked about the fact that my mother was a Jewess. But when we moved to Mainz, they distributed leaflets in Kreuzstraße, saying:” Now the Kongo is free of Jews”(Kongo was the name for Kreuzstraße among Wöllstein people)

„I only learned in 1933 that I was of Jewish descent –my classmates bullied me with that. And the teacher (Baußmann) encouraged my classmates to beat me, when something had happened in school. I saw that Jews were arrested, deported and taken to Osthofen. That was in spring 1933. The Social Democrats put up bills in 1933 saying: “People who vote for Hitler vote for war”.

Martin Kaufmann was released of the postal services for for being an active member of the Social Democrats and earned his living by working for farmers. Two times their home was searched by policemen and SS-officers.

“In 1933 after the takeover of the Nazis 3 to 4 SS officers and 2 policemen appeared (Mr Dieterich and Mr Blumenfeld). The SS officers stayed in the hall and watched and we (my father, my mother and 4 children) were locked up in the kitchen. The policemen searched the other rooms for weapons and SPD material – my father was member of the SPD .

This happened again 2 weeks later. I do not know if they found anything. On that day we had butchered and there were pots of cold grease in the kitchen. They forced us to heat up the grease to check, if there were weapons in these pots.”

It is extremely hard for the 9-year old son that he is not allowed to play football in the new sports club. And is not allowed to go to grammar school. His brother loses his apprenticeship – due to the intervention of the NSDAP chairman of Wöllstein – and can only work as a farmhand.

The son experiences the consequences of the Night of Broken Glass as a school kid. He reports:

„The problems in school began after the 9th November 1938. During a lesson we heard the breaking of glass. The school was where we now find the Penny Market. ...Mr Baußmann immediately announced a day off at school.... and students helped to vandalize the homes of Jews.”

“Mr. Baußmann told me that he actually had to ban me from school. But that did not happen because we moved to Mainz in June 1939.”

So on the 16th June 1939 the complete family moves to Mainz.

Martin Kaufmann, who has already been in the army in the first world war has to join the army a second time. His sons also have to join the army. One son dies, the second is captured, is released in 1946, aged 19 years, and returns to Wöllstein.



On the 27th February 1945 Frida Kaufmann and her 2 daughters returns to Wöllstein. They live in Eleonorenstraße for some time, as they find work at the winery Wirth.

When their father returns from the war, the family moves to Gerberstraße, where they live until 1953. The family is engaged in public life. One daughter has a small agency of a health insurance, their son is member of the sports club and secretary of the choral society.

1953 the family moves to Mainz.

Isaak und Lina Nachmann Josef Nachmann

Isaak Nachmann is born in 1875 in Stein-Bockenheim. At the end of 1930 he buys a house in Ernst-Ludwig-Straße 23 – together with his second wife Karoline(Lina) Mayer and his son Josef(of his first marriage). They have a store selling various goods and also deal in wine. Isaak also sells clothes in the surrounding villages.

During the Night of Broken Glass the shop and the house are destroyed. In a letter Lina Nachmann writes:

„When this work was done, the students of the Wöllstein school appeared again (about 30 to 40) and destroyed the second floor of the house up to the attic in a very barbaric way.” As the house is uninhabitable and no chance is left to earn their living, the complete family flees to Mainz.

Their son Josef gets married to Franziska Mayer from Bodenheim. He and his young wife are deported from Mainz to the Ghetto Piaski/Poland and are killed.



Josef and Franziska Nachmann

Josef is killed in the extermination camp Majdanek on 25th July 1942.

In September 1942 Isaak and his wife Lina are transported to Theresienstadt; There Isaak dies on 26th January 1943. Lina survives more than two and a half years of KZ – imprisonment.

After a longer stay in a refugee camp she emigrates to the USA, first to Milwaukee, later to California.



Elsa Mendel and Lina Nachmann

Daniel Nachmann 1863-1937

One older Brother of Isaak, Daniel Nachmann (born 1863) moves around the turn of the century from Stein-Bockenheim to Wöllstein. He has a shop – selling wines, crops and fruit – in Kirchstraße 2.

In 1936 he sells his shop and house and wants to emigrate to Paris, but he dies on 3rd May 1937.

His grave and that of his wife Minna Löwenberg are found on the Jewish cemetery of Wöllstein.

Their daughter Erna (born 1904) lives in Paris in the Thirties and it is said that she was killed there. Her brother Erwin (born 1910) leaves for Italy and survives war and persecution. Erwin registers in Wöllstein in 1951, but only stays here occasionally. He lives in Kaiserslautern.



tombstone of Daniel Nachmann and Minna Löwenberg on the Jewish cemetery in Wöllstein

A granddaughter of Isaak Nachmann, Anneliese Esser, née Isaac from Wallertheim writes in August 2013 about the incidents of November 1938: “The Nazis arrested my dad in Wallertheim; my mother, my sister Rosel and I fled to Wöllstein, where neighbours of my grandfather Isaak Nachmann (The Schwenk family) hid us in their barn. They hosted us and our grandparents. A sign of humanity that I never will forget. On the other hand this night of terror is manifested in my brain forever.”

Minna Kaufmann

1861-1942

The family of Joseph and Minna Kaufmann lives in Eleonorenstraße 55 (Adolf-Hitler-Straße since 1933) and has a business for agricultural products.

The couple has 5 sons and 4 daughters – born between 1886 and 1899: Hugo, Sophia, Wilhelm, Moritz, Karl, Ludwig, Anna Helena, Flora, Eugenia.

Their father (born 1852) dies in 1932; after that their mother works in the business with the children, her daughter Flora does the household.

In 1929 they start a clothes shop in Ernst-Ludwig-Straße 3, that Ludwig Kaufmann runs – by appointment of a relative in Mainz, but it is not very profitable in those hard days.



Ernst-Ludwig-Straße 3

In the Thirties 5 of the children still live in Wöllstein.

Moritz gets married to Frieda Streifler. Due to the harassment and the limitation of the Nazis the business went down and stopped completely after 1938. The family became poor.

All seven members of the family are picked up in the middle of the night in September 1942 by the Gestapo, deported and murdered: Minna (81 Years old), and her daughter Flora to Theresienstadt, Moritz and his wife Frieda, Karl, and Ludwig probably to Treblinka; we do not know where Willi is brought to. Their furniture and the complete household are sold by the NSV("Volkswohlfahrt").

After the war you can read in an official letter of the Burgomaster: „ The deportation of the above mentioned persons was done by lorry in autumn 1942. We could not find out the exact date – also it was not known where to they were deported”.(1949) – and again in 1961; “ We do not know anything about the fate of the Kaufmann family.”

The only surviving members of the family are Hugo and Anna (married Hecht), who were able to emigrate to the USA on time.

They try in negotiations – lasting for more than decades – after the war to get compensation money for the material losses of the family.

Albert and Eugen Mendel

Moved to Wöllstein From Nieder-Wiesen

The Mendel family surely lived in Nieder-Wiesen in the second half of the 18th century. Starting in 1817 until 1908 one can find the name "Mendel" 55 times in the birth register. On the new Jewish cemetery (used since 1869) we find 14 graves of the family.

The butcher and cattle dealer Simon Mendel, father to Eugen und Albert, was born in 1867. He got married to Emma Levy in 1893; they had 12 children between 1894 and 1908, among them Eugen (born 1896) and Albert (born 1901). Both sons were cattle dealers and started their own business in Wöllstein in Ernst-Ludwig-Straße 25 in the Twenties.



Familie Mendel lived in Ernst-Ludwig-Straße opposite the old town hall

Eugen got married to Elisabeth Mayer from Böchingen (children: Walter and Gertrud) Albert got married to Flora Vogel from Nieder-Saulheim (children: Ernst and Werner)

Until 1933 their business went rather well. In 1927 an alteration was permitted. But already on 28th April 1933 they were arrested in Osthofen together with 5 Communists, although they were not politically active at all.

The „Volksblätter“ used that for a very defaming comment:

“Wöllstein. (the Jews Mendel arrested.) Eugen and Albert Mendel, both known as „eager“ cattle dealers, were arrested by the police last week. They are accused of trickeries of all kind and of a generous support of opposite parties, especially of the SPD and KPD(Social Democrats/Communists). The examination has not been finished yet. We still hope to find out more about their trickeries.”

In June 1937 the brothers left for New York with their children and their parents from Nieder-Wiesen (10 persons). Werner, their youngest child was only 2 years old.

Their parents Emma and Simon celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in Bridgeport/Connecticut.

One sister of them, Florentine married the cattle dealer Richard Mayer, a brother of Eugen's wife. Her family emigrated to the USA – Florentine died in New York in 1933.

Many other members of the big Mendel family from Nieder-Wiesen could not emigrate and were killed by the deadly persecution machinery of the Nazis.

6 members of their family – all born in Nieder-Wiesen were deported in 1941/42 and murdered.

In Alzey they placed “golden cobbles” (Stolpersteine) for Heinrich Mendel, his wife Settchen Rosenthal, for Leo Mendel and his wife Erna Schanzer to commemorate their lives.

There has been a direct contact with Bill Mendel in New York. He is a grandson of Albert Mendel (born 1901 in Nieder-Wiesen). His father Werner, (born in Mainz 1934) died some years ago; his brother Ernst (born 1930 in Mainz) lives in New York.

Bill Mendel has visited Wöllstein several times with his family.