

The Jewish cemetery in Oberursel

The small and unpretentious Jewish cemetery in the Altkönigstraße in Oberursel gives an insight both into Jewish life in Oberursel before 1933 and the persecution of Jews during the Nazi era. 43 gravestones can be found in the small cemetery today. The inscriptions of the gravestones are partly weathered. Only rarely relatives, who are scattered all over the world, come to visit the graves of their ancestors. The cemetery and the individual gravestones vividly demonstrate the lively Jewish life that once existed in Oberursel.



The cemetery was partly destroyed in 1944. Gravestones worth 150 Reichsmark were sold to a stonemason.

A documentary about this cemetery was published in 2020: “Here rests a capable woman, crown of the house, God-fearing, pure and upright.” The remaining gravestones of the burial site were deciphered and translated by Dr. Lothar Tetzner. Together with the historian Angelika Rieber, he has researched and compiled further historical family data. In addition, Angelika Rieber has been searching for traces of the cemetery’s history. She regularly offers guided tours of the cemetery.

The site of the cemetery was made available to the Jewish community in 1857 by the municipality. Previously, the Oberursel Jews had been buried in other cemeteries such as the burial ground in Seulberg. The oldest surviving gravestone dates back to 1866. The last gravestone commemorates Alfred Feinberg, who died in the Buchenwald concentration camp in 1939. It is a direct reference to the violent end of Jewish life in Oberursel.



Tracing Jewish Life in Oberursel

Only a few places today are visible reminders of former Jewish life in Oberursel: the small Jewish cemetery in Altkönigstraße, the plaques on the site of the former synagogue in Weidengasse and the Feinberg-house on the market square, the memorial to the victims on Hospitalplatz and, since 2022, the stumbling stones in front of the houses of former Jewish residents of the Taunus town. This tour through Oberursel’s town center highlights some of the homes and places of Jewish residences and businesses.



For further reading:

Rieber, Angelika:

- Wir bleiben hier! Lebenswege Oberurseler Familien jüdischer Herkunft, Frankfurt 2004
- „Haltet mich in gutem Gedenken“. Erinnerung an Oberurseler Opfer des Nationalsozialismus, Oberursel 2015
- „Hier ruht eine tüchtige Frau, Krone des Hauses, gottesfürchtig, lauter und aufrecht“. Der jüdische Friedhof in Oberursel

Hrsg: Angelika Rieber und Lothar Tetzner, Oberursel 2020

https://www.alemannia-judaica.de/oberursel_synagoge.htm

https://www.alemannia-judaica.de/oberursel_friedhof.htm



Information about regular guided tours tracing Jewish life in Oberursel and at the Jewish cemetery can be found on the website of the town of Oberursel and at: <http://www.gcjz-hochtaunus.de/>

Research and texts: Angelika Rieber

Illustrations and photos: Oberursel town archive, Bernd Ochs collection, Angelika Rieber collection, photos: Angelika Rieber and Herbert H. Popp

Map material: www.openstreetmaps.org, City of Oberursel

Imprint at: <http://www.gcjz-hochtaunus.de/>

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Tracing Jewish Life in Oberursel

A City walk



Gesellschaft für
Christlich-Jüdische Zusammenarbeit
Hochtaunus e.V.

1) The Herzfeld family • For centuries, the Herzfeld family was rooted in Oberursel, as numerous graves in the Jewish cemetery testify. The mill owner Wolf Herzfeld was probably the most prominent representative of the family. In 1855, he bought a house in Weidengasse, where he ran a grinding mill. His brother Lazar lived in the nearby Ackergasse. The two sons Siegfried and Hermann moved to Frankfurt at the end of the 19th century. Several members of the Herzfeld family became victims of the Shoah.



2) The former synagogue in Weidengasse • Jewish residents in Oberursel can be traced back to 1636. From the end of the 18th century the number increased continuously. In 1792, a separate community was founded, and in 1803 the small synagogue in a rear building in Weidengasse was inaugurated, maybe reinaugurated. The growing community also contributed to the establishment of a Jewish cemetery in Altkönigstraße. In the 20th century, the number of community members declined sharply, so that since the 1920s a congregation of its own did not exist anymore. The building was sold shortly before the November pogrom of 1938.



3) The victims' monument at the Old Hospital • In 2003 Ernst Röder, whose mother was murdered in Auschwitz in 1943, expressed the wish to commemorate his mother with a memorial stone. This gave rise to the idea of a memorial to all victims of the persecution associated with Oberursel. The design of the pupil Juliane Nikolai was realized on the Hospitalplatz. Figure by figure, a memorial was created which on the one hand illustrates the division of society through the Nazi politics; on the other hand, it emphasizes remembrance as a common concern.

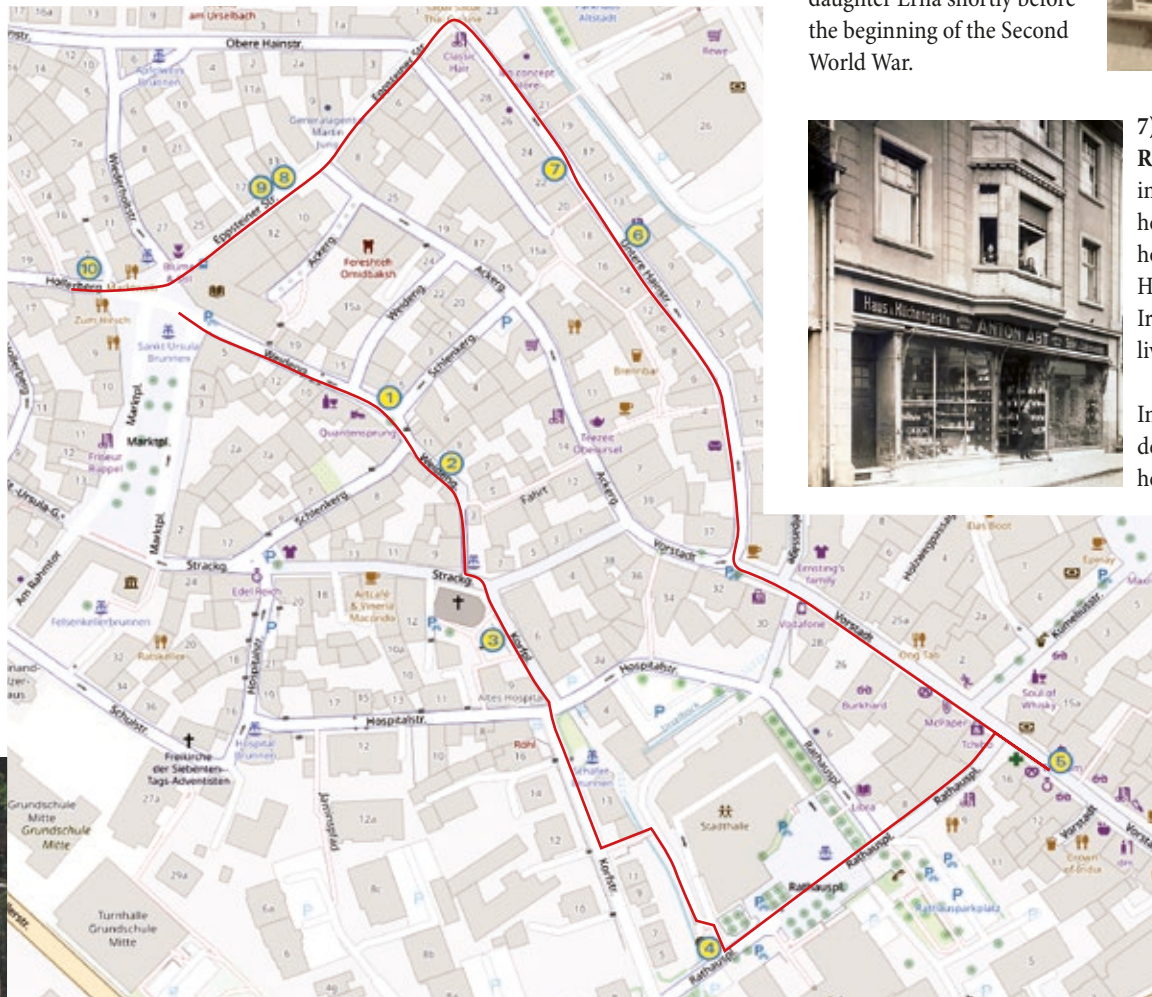


4) Memorial stone in memory of the victims of the Nazi era

The initiative to erect a monument in memory of the victims of the Nazi era, was carried out in 1985 by a group of activists named „1933 - Never again“. Two years later, the city erected a memorial stone on the town hall square with a quote from Richard von Weizsäcker: „In mourning we commemorate all victims of war and tyranny. Only those who deny the past are in terrible danger of repeating it.“



5) Wittwe Hassan • The Wittwe Hassan retail chain was founded in 1878. In 1912, Alfred Mayer and his brother-in-law Julius Sommer took over the chain. The head office was in Hanauer Landstraße. Approximately 40 branches in and around Frankfurt carried coffee, chocolate and other delicatessen. Increasing pressure on Jewish company owners forced them to sell the branches. In 1937, the business in Oberursel was taken over by one of the employees. In January 1939, after weeks of imprisonment in the Buchenwald concentration camp, Julius Sommer managed to escape to the USA. His brother-in-law Alfred Mayer survived in hiding in the Netherlands.



6) Confectionery store Unger-Schwarzschild • The members of the Unger-Schwarzschild family had an active part in club and economic life in Oberursel. The business of Siegfried Unger and his wife Henriette at Untere Hainstraße 11 was considered the best in town. The boycott of the National Socialists had a direct effect on the family, even though many Oberursel residents continued to shop there. In 1936 and 1938, the daughters Erna and Rosa left Germany. During the November pogrom, the business was devastated. Siegfried Unger was abused, arrested and interned for several weeks in the Buchenwald concentration camp. He was able to flee to Chile to his daughter Erna shortly before the beginning of the Second World War.



7) Household goods store of Recha Mannheimer in 1918, Recha Mannheimer and her sister Rosalie took over the household goods store in Untere Hainstraße 22. Their three nieces Irene, Leonie and Helga Kahn lived in the house with them.

In 1935, Recha Mannheimer decided to sell the business to her employee due to the increasing boycott pressure and moved to Scheffelstrasse in Frankfurt. From there she was deported to Theresienstadt in August 1942 and murdered in Majdanek.

Her nieces Leonie and Helga managed to escape to Great Britain. Irene was sentenced to prison for political reasons, later taken to Ravensbrück and murdered in the Bernburg killing site.

8) The Grünebaum Family • The cattle dealer Wolf Grünebaum was one of the founders of the volunteer fire brigade in Oberursel. His grave can be found in the Jewish cemetery in Altkönigstraße. The family lived at Eppsteinerstraße 13, formerly Homburger Straße. Wolf Grünebaum's son Ferdinand, a decorated soldier in the First World War, died young. Of the seven daughters, Adelheid, Johanna and Rosa became victims of the Shoah. Jenny, Selma and Frieda, who lived in a so-called "Mixed Marriage", were able to escape the terror. Daughter Ida survived in hiding in Belgium.



9) The Schwarzschild family • Josef Schwarzschild was born in 1869 in Oberursel. The family lived at Eppsteinerstraße 15. Josef Schwarzschild became a stone sculptor and owner of the gravestone shop S. Schwarzschild in Frankfurt. According to the Oberursel Warriors' Association's minute book, he was one of seven applicants to design the memorial "in memory of the glorious war with France 1870/71". Josef Schwarzschild returned from the First World War as a war invalid. On September 15, 1942, he and his wife were deported to Theresienstadt. He died there six months later.



10) Feinberg-Heilbronn family • For decades the Feinberg and Heilbronn families lived in the house at Marktplatz 7, in the so-called Malerwinkel (painter's corner), where they ran a vinegar, brandy and liqueur factory. The family was firmly anchored in Oberursel. As Rosa's husband Abraham Feinberg was originally from Lithuania, the family's German citizenship was revoked in 1934. The Feinbergs thus became stateless. Their son Alfred, a victim of a criminalization campaign, perished in Buchenwald concentration camp in 1939. Abraham Feinberg died in Oberursel in 1942 of the consequences of an attack. Rosa Feinberg, her daughter Sophie and her sister Therese Heilbronn became victims of the Shoah. Only their brother Adolf Heilbronn was able to escape to the USA.

