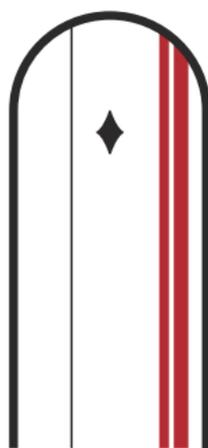


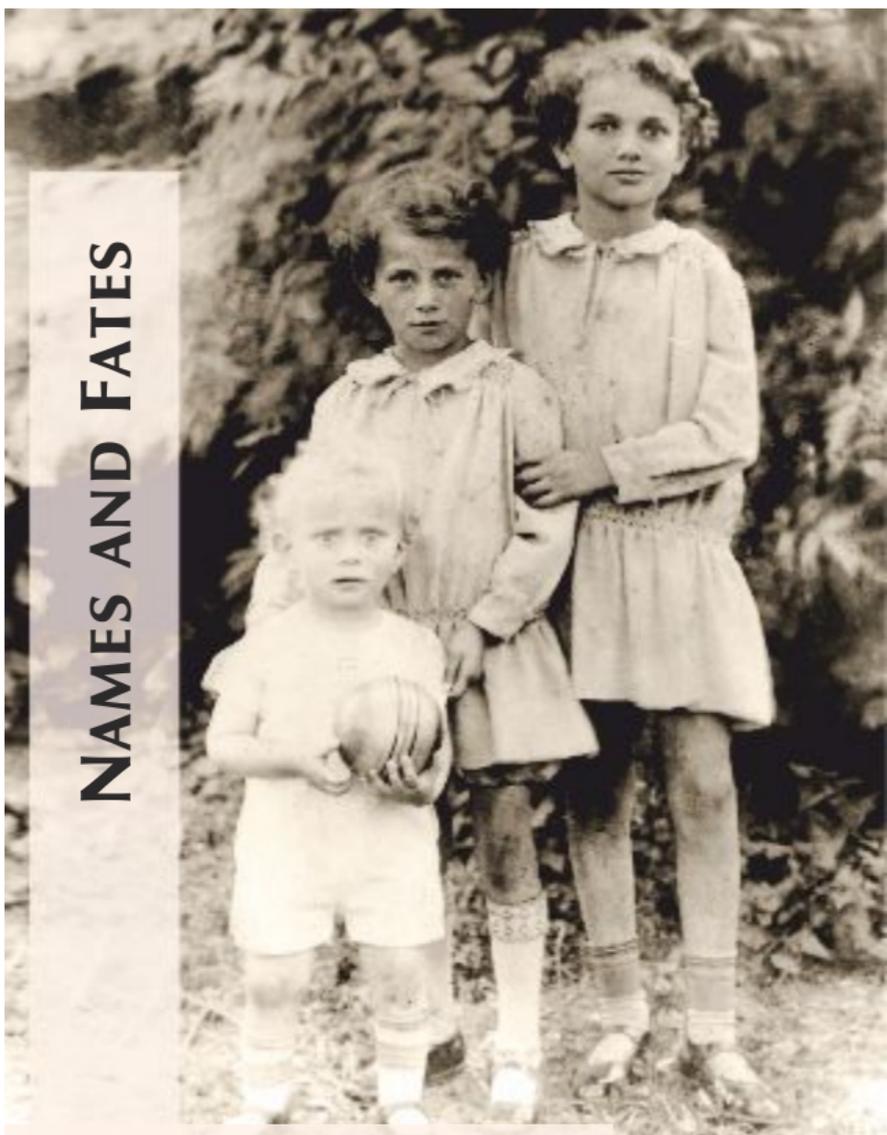
Arbeitskreis
Landsynagoge
Roth e.V.



ואהבת לרעך כמוך

»Love your neighbor,
for he is like you.«

NAMES AND FATES



MEMORIAL BOOKLET

LAYING OF THE MEMORIAL STONES
»STOLPERSTEINE«

in Weimar-Roth on August 24th & 25th, 2013

Written by
Annegret Wenz-Haubfleisch
Weimar-Roth 2013

Translated from the German by Sara K. Hayden, Kirchhain 2014

Introduction

The honorable citizen became the undesirable Jew, was then displaced, or deported to the East and murdered

The year 1926 marked the 35th anniversary of Roth's choral club Liederkranz, in English "Wreath of Songs," and a singing competition was held on May 24th and 25th to celebrate. For the occasion a booklet was printed, in which a poem entitled "Festival Greetings" welcomes the "brothers in song" to "friendly, peaceful Roth." The booklet includes a short history of the club, the program for the festival, a list of festival committee members divided into countless subcommittees, the club's membership list, including active, honorable, and passive members, and finally the competing choirs and their singers.

Of the six Jewish families memorialized on the following pages, three had members in this, Roth's oldest club. Berthold Stern sang Tenor II and Josef Bergenstein Bass II. The club included seven honorable members, one of whom was a Jew: Hermann Hoehster. Berthold Stern and Hermann Hoehster can be found as young men in a 1904 picture of the choir. The Jewish club members were particularly active in the festival committee. Hermann Hoehster was part of the administrative and press subcommittees, Berthold Stern part of the finance, economic, and press subcommittees, and Josef Bergenstein was in the reception subcommittee. Bergenstein, well-known for being an excellent athlete, was additionally active in the gymnastics club founded in 1909.



Erwin Hoehster,
seated in the middle of the second row

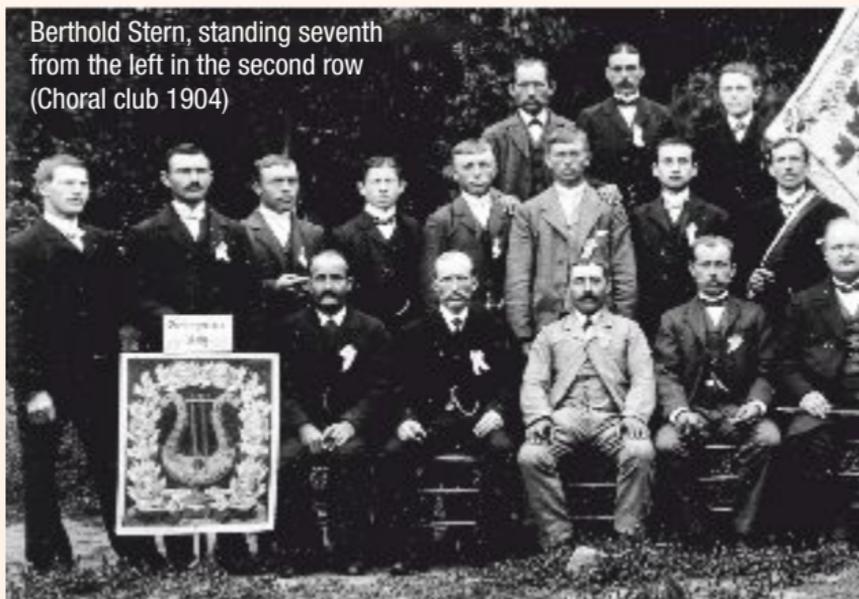


Erwin Hoechster, Hermann Hoechster's oldest son, was very fond of soccer and played in the newly founded Sport Klub Roth in 1931. He also enjoyed acting and directing in the theater group. As the German saying goes, the one who builds a house intends to stay, and that is just what Mannes Stern's family had planned, when they built themselves a private home in 1929. Their forefathers had lived in Roth for more than 150 years.

Despite all of the research invested in the study of National Socialism, it is nevertheless hard to imagine how things were to develop over the course of only a few years. Before 1933 Roth was not particularly "brown." A look at the election results for the Reichstag during the Weimar Republic shows that, while many citizens of Roth were inclined to German Nationalism, many others voted for the Social Democratic Party of Germany or for the Communist Party of Germany. The few remaining votes went to one of the various liberal parties. Votes in Roth for the National Socialist German Workers' Party ("Nazi Party," NSDAP) in the Reichstag elections from 1928 to 1932 lay well below the average for the county. As late as in 1934, many village residents openly expressed their grief at the sudden death of the young mother Selma Roth and subsequently attended her burial.

By 1935 the situation was much different. Signs stating "Jews are unwanted here" are documented as having stood on the property of a small business owner and on a farm. Markus Roth, who sold feed and fertilizer, was put on trial for breaking the law and denounced in the press, as a result of which his business came to a standstill.

Berthold Stern, standing seventh from the left in the second row
(Choral club 1904)



When Emma Stern, Roth's mother-in-law, died in 1937, not one Christian resident of the village went to the cemetery. The Jews even had to build the coffin themselves, although none of them were trained in carpentry.

Those who had earlier been the playmates of the Jewish children joined the Hitler Youth, were indoctrinated with Nazi propaganda, and abandoned their old friends. The Jewish children became isolated, their daily life bleak and dreary. One of the two teachers at the school in Roth was a staunch Nazi. He subjected the children to diatribes against the Jews, all the more demoralizing the Jewish schoolchildren. Beginning around 1937 Jewish children were no longer even permitted to attend the school.

It may be that the Jewish families did not immediately recognize that their lives were in danger. In any case, by the mid-thirties they could not mistake that their economic survival was no longer feasible and that they and their children had no future in Germany. They tried to leave the country, but several families had neither the financial means nor the contacts needed to emigrate. The Bergenstein and Nathan families had no chance from the start. Some members of the Hoechster, Roth, and Stern families were able to flee, but only one of the Stern families remained intact. Eleven Jewish inhabitants of Roth survived in the US, South Africa, and in England.

For those who stayed behind, life became increasingly difficult as the laws and ordinances became stricter and the economic difficulties more severe. In order to survive, valuables and real estate had to be sold. A few courageous

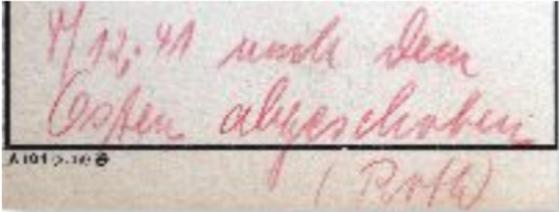


Hermann Hoechster, standing third from the right in the second row

village residents secretly provided their Jewish neighbors with groceries.

Roth became a ghetto village in the summer of 1941. Twenty people from Neustadt were placed in the homes of Jewish families, ten in the Hoechster family, six with the Sterns, and two with each of the Nathans and the Bergensteins. After the first deportation to Riga in December 1941, which claimed the most people's lives, a few stayed behind in the houses that had been owned by the Jews of Roth. They and the remaining Stern family were deported to Theresienstadt in 1942. There were a total of three deportations in the administrative district of Kassel, but no Jews from Roth were taken to the Lublin District at the end of May 1942.

Following each deportation, the official at the county government office noted the date in red on the remaining identity card duplicates:



Translation: "M[arburg], Dec. 1941 deported to the east, (Roth)"

Register of Jews living in Roth.
(Sequential) Number, Surname, First Name, Occupation,
Date of Birth, Place of Birth, Place of Residence, Street Address, Comments

Beleg I

Register
des in Landkarte des Reiches eingeschriebenen Juden.

Nr.	№	Vorname	Beruf	Geburts- datum	Geburtsort	Wohnort	Strasse u. Haus-Nr.	Bemerkungen
1	1	Griffen, Frau	Wirtin	9.9.21	Roth	Roth	Griffen 8	✓ 1. Dec. 1941
2	2	"	"	2.12.29	Griffen	"	" 5	✓ 8 Dec. 1941
3	3	"	"	15.12.32	Roth	"	" 5	✓ 13 Dec. 1941
4	4	Langenhein, Frau	Wirtin	25.12.29	Roth	"	" 11	✓ 13 Dec. 1941
5	5	"	"	14.4.21	Roth	"	" 11	✓ 13 Dec. 1941
6	6	"	"	9.2.22	Roth	"	" 11	✓ 13 Dec. 1941
7	7	"	"	16.7.22	Roth	"	" 11	✓ 13 Dec. 1941
8	8	Steffen, Frau	Wirtin	9.9.22	"	"	" 8	✓ 13 Dec. 1941
9	9	"	"	8.9.24	Siedelburg	"	" 8	✓ 13 Dec. 1941
10	10	"	"	1.8.12	Roth	"	" 9	✓ 13 Dec. 1941
11	11	Horn, Frau	Wirtin	26.5.29	Siedelburg	"	" 95	E. 1001 902
12	12	"	"	7.2.26	Roth	"	" 95	1. Dec. 1941
13	13	"	"	31.5.29	Roth	"	" 95	1. Dec. 1941
14	14	Steffen, Frau	Wirtin	26.7.21	Siedelburg	Roth	" 97	1. Dec. 1941
15	15	"	"	7.2.27	Siedelburg	"	" 8	1. Dec. 1941
16	16	"	"	21.7.22	Siedelburg	"	" 8	1. Dec. 1941
17	17	"	"	19.11.22	"	"	" 8	1. Dec. 1941

05600

Fifteen Jews from Roth were murdered in concentration camps. In the span of only a few years, the activities of Nazis had changed Roth from a “friendly, peaceful” village to a nasty, hostile, and inhumane place for their Jewish neighbors.

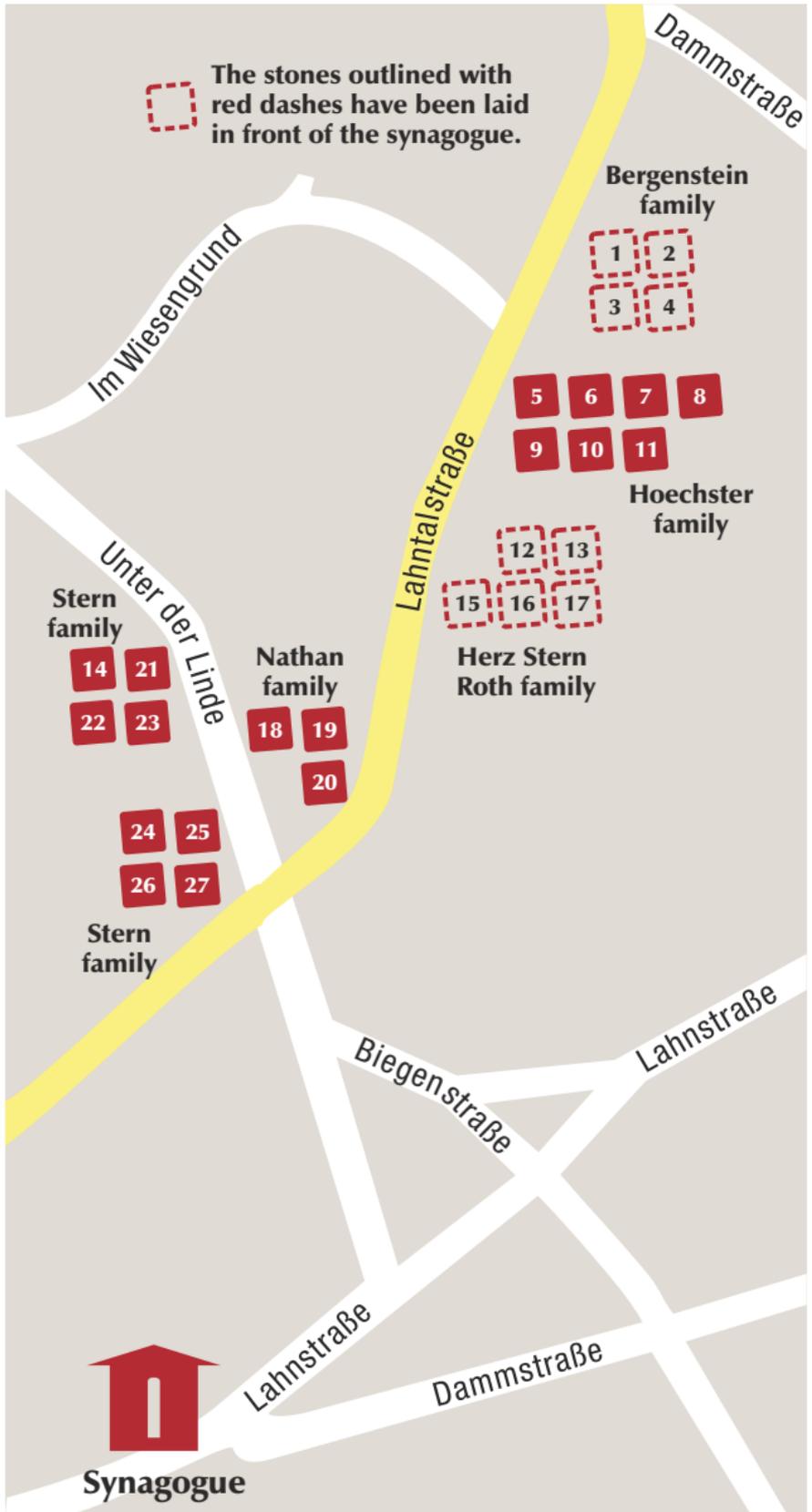
The memorial stones are an expression of our grief about what was done to our fellow human beings. Each individual stone is a small sign to help us remember (German Denkmal,) since it carries the name and sketches the fate of a deported or murdered person in front of the house where he or she once lived. Furthermore the stones are signs to admonish and warn us (German Mahnmal) to join and to espouse the values of our free and democratic society. Finally, the stones serve as signs to keep us aware of the past (German Merkmal) because the stones in front of the synagogue, the cemetery, and the private homes prevent the topography of Jewish life in Roth from being forgotten.

Memorial stones were laid for Bertha, Louis, and Hugo Stern as well as for Toni Roth in 2010, and we now wish to honor the other deported and murdered Jews from this village. The Arbeitskreis Landsynagoge Roth (Committee for the Synagogue in Roth) deeply regrets that two families refused to allow stones to be laid before their houses. These nine stones will be laid in front of the synagogue since that was the religious center of their lives. The correct addresses will be noted in the hopes that the stones can one day be moved to their due place.



Teacher Knott; Helmut Hoehster, standing first from the left;
Kurt Bergenstein and Walter Roth, seated second and third from the left

Map of the Memorial Stones in Roth





The Bergenstein family

Josef Bergenstein	1
Clara Bergenstein, neé Nathan	2
Heinz Bergenstein	3
Salomon Kurt Bergenstein	4

The Hoechster family

Herz „Hermann“ Hoechster	5
Bertha Hoechster, neé Wertheim	6
Manfred Helmut Hoechster	7
Betti Ilse Hoechster	8
Thea Trude Wetmore, neé Hoechster	9
Irwin Isaak „Erwin“ Hoechster	10
Marion Solovei, neé Hoechster	11

Herz Stern & The Roth family

Herz Stern II	12
Markus Roth	13
Toni Roth, neé Stern	14
Herbert Roth	15
Irene Roth	16
Walter Roth	17

The Nathan family

Pauline Nathan, neé Goldschmidt	18
Caecilie „Cilly“ Nathan	19
Gertrude „Gerdi“ Nathan	20

The Stern family

Bertha Stern, neé Rosenbusch	21
Hugo Stern	22
Louis Stern	23

The Stern family

Hilda Stern, neé Bachenheimer	24
Klara Stern, neé Speier	25
Julius Stern	26
Otto Stern	27

The Bergenstein family

known as the "Levis"

Address: 26 Lahntal Street / formerly: House #11

The Bergenstein family did not survive the Holocaust. The entire family was deported to Riga on December 8th, 1941. From there they were taken to Stutthof on October 1st, 1944, where we lose all trace of the family.

Josef Bergenstein

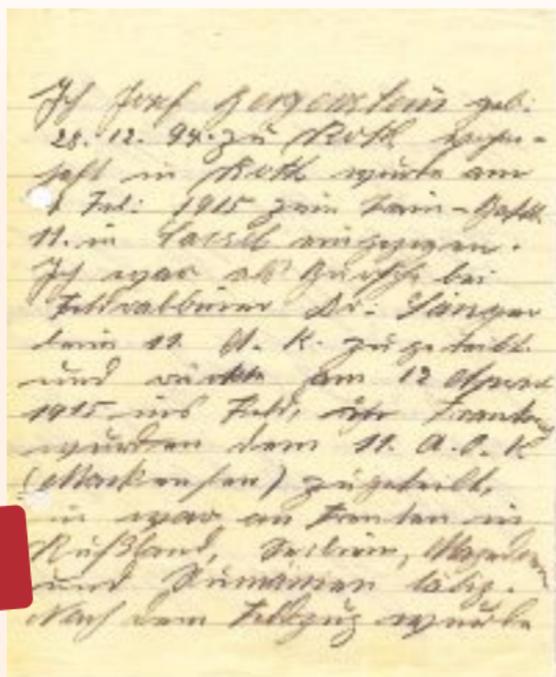
December 28, 1894 in Roth – last recorded October 1, 1944 in Stutthof

was the son of Levi Bergenstein and Goldine Spier. At the beginning of 1915, soon after his 20th birthday, he was drafted to the army, returning home only in 1918. Although trained as a butcher, he ran a small store in his parents' house.

A tall man of slender build, he was a member of the local gymnastics club founded in 1909 and apparently quite a good athlete. He also seems to have enjoyed singing, since he let his deep bass voice ring out in the men's choir Liederkranz. He married Clara Nathan from Lohra on June 28th, 1921.



Josef Bergenstein



Clara Bergenstein, neé Nathan

April 4, 1901 in Lohra – last recorded October 1, 1944 in Stutthof

was the daughter of Bertha and Abraham Nathan. She and her husband Josef Bergenstein had two sons, Heinz and Salomon Kurt. Living in Lohra at the beginning of their marriage, they moved into Josef's parents' house in Roth at the end of the 20's. Josef was forced to close his store at some point. In 1938 he was working for a foundation contractor in the region. He was arrested right after the Night of Broken Glass and was supposed to be deported to the Buchenwald concentration camp, but, as the document pictured below demonstrates, he was able to save himself from this first arrest by recounting his time as a soldier in the World War I.

in all Götter: mag der
Harmat zu klaffen
Es ist kein Satz
meiner Augen hat
Wahrscheinlich auf irgend
mit Götter für alle
sinn für meine Augen
ab immer für jemand
halten sollten.
In der dem Vorfahre
1918 bin ich im Kadetten
gelingen die letzten Papieren
gelesen

Josef Bergenstein



2

Clara Bergenstein

Heinz Bergenstein

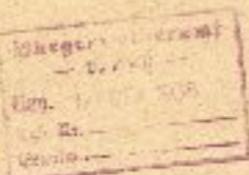
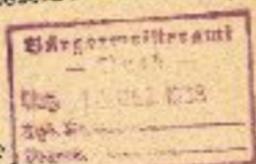
September 4, 1922 in Lohra – last recorded October 1, 1944 in Stuthof

was the oldest son of Josef und Clara Bergenstein. After finishing school in May 1936 he moved to Kirchhain to begin an apprenticeship as a merchant.

Following the Night of Broken Glass in 1938, at sixteen, Heinz was arrested in Roth and deported to the Buchenwald concentration camp. He was released in December because he was still a minor, as the letter pictured below documents, but his parents had to pay for his return. He moved back to Roth from Kirchhain in January of 1939. In 1940 he was apparently working in Mainzlar.

Lehrling Staatspolizei
Staatspolizeidirektion Kassel
LI D - 200/35 B.

Kassel, den 30. Dezember 1938.



An den
Herrn Bürgermeister
als Ortspolizeibehörde
in
Roth, Hesse-Nassau.

Betrifft: Judea Heinz Birkonahein, geb. 4.9.22, aus Roth.

Minderjährigkeit
Wegen Minderjährigkeit des Franziska Bergenstein
wird - werden Verpöndeten entlassen. Es wird deshalb
gebeten, die Angehörigen des Schutzpflichtigen beschleunigt
zu veranlassen, das Rückreisefahrtgeld von Weimar/Th. nach
des Wehrteils telegraphisch an die Kommandatur des Konzentrationenlagers Buchenwald bei Weimar/Th. abzusenden.

In Auftrage

Salomon Kurt Bergenstein

July 30, 1928 – last recorded October 1, 1944 in Stutthof

was only able to attend the school in Roth until about 1937. He moved to Frankfurt in May 1939, probably to the Jewish Orphanage (Israelitische Waisenanstalt) Roederbergweg 87, Frankfurt am Main, which existed until 1942.

He celebrated his bar mitzvah in August 1941, probably in the orphanage. What school he attended during his time in Frankfurt and when he returned to Roth from Frankfurt is unknown.



3

Heinz Bergenstein



4

Salomon
Kurt Bergenstein

The Hoechster family

known as the "Bluems"

Address: 22 Lahntal Street / formerly: House #8

The two oldest children of this family of six were able to emigrate and survived. Hermann Hoechster, his wife, and the two younger children were deported and murdered.

Herz "Hermann" Hoechster

September 3, 1881 in Roth – probably November 1943 in Auschwitz

was the son of Isaac and Settchen Hoechster. His son Irwin Isaak "Erwin" was born to his first wife, Mathilde Hoexter from Roth, daughter of Herz Hoexter and Thekla Baer. Mathilde died in 1916. In 1919 Hermann Hoechster married Bertha Wertheim from Hatzbach.

Hermann earned his living selling fabric and notions in a sales room in his house and as a peddler. He traveled to the surrounding villages with a wagon pulled by a Great Bernard, making him well-known in the area.

Fond of singing, he took part in the men's choral club Liederkranz founded in 1891. Later he was even made an honorary member.

As the community elder, he was responsible for the affairs of the Jewish Community in Roth from 1926 until his deportation in 1941. Hermann Hoechster is described as having been a friendly, generous, and helpful man, if also as having been particularly strict in religious matters.



Hermann Hoechster





As the community elder he had to witness the destruction of the synagogue and to organize the details of the forced sale of the property in February 1939. He was able to save a small Torah scroll, however, and Sabbath services were consequently held in his living room. He was arrested following the Night of Broken Glass and held for a time at the concentration camp in Buchenwald. After returning he never spoke with his family about this traumatic experience.

Bertha Hoechster, neé Wertheim

November 7, 1889 in Hatzbach – probably November 1943 in Auschwitz

was the daughter of Aron and Rosalie Wertheim. She and Hermann had three children, Thea Trude, Betti Ilse, and Manfred Helmut. Together with her husband and son she was deported to Riga on December 8th, 1941. They were transported from there to Auschwitz on November 2nd, 1943, and murdered that same month.



The Hoechster Family ca. 1937



Bertha Hoechster

Manfred Helmut Hoechster

December 15, 1927 in Roth – probably November 1943 in Auschwitz

was the youngest child of Hermann and Bertha. When the school in Roth closed its doors to Jewish children in 1937, he had only finished half of his schooling.

He moved to the Jewish Orphanage (Israelitische Waisenanstalt) Roederbergweg 87, Frankfurt am Main, in May 1939. What school he attended there is unknown.

He spent his vacations with his parents in Roth, and his parents traveled to Frankfurt for his bar mitzvah in December 1940. A year later, on December 8th, 1941, he and his parents were deported to the ghetto in Riga, then to Auschwitz on November 2nd, 1943. He was murdered that same month.

Betti Ilse Hoechster

October 15, 1922 in Roth – last recorded March 1, 1943 in Auschwitz

was the second daughter of Bertha and Hermann Hoechster. She also attended the school in Roth. In September 1940 she moved to Roederbergweg 87, Frankfurt, the address of the Jewish Orphanage, probably to work. In February 1941 she and 120 others were taken to Berlin and forced to work in munitions production at Siemens.

She went back to Roth for a few days in September 1941, which was probably the last time she saw her parents.

A final correspondence between her and her brother Erwin has been preserved from the beginning of 1943.



7

Manfred Helmut Höchster



8

Betti Ilse Höchster

The Red Cross letter was sent to the Siemens Camp, Kommandanten Street 58-59. Her brother wishes her a happy twentieth birthday and asks about their parents. She answers that she is doing well and that their father has work. It is very unlikely, however, that she still had any contact with her parents, who were deported in 1941. Ilse Hoehster was herself deported to Auschwitz on March 1st, 1943, when we lose all trace of her.

Thea Trude Hoehster

February 15, 1920 in Roth – September 7, 1999 in St. Louis

was Hermann and Bertha's oldest daughter. She attended the school in Roth. In 1937 she wanted to accompany her sister-in-law Henni to South Africa, but she was not permitted to enter the country. That same year she moved to Frankfurt, where she began her apprenticeship as a seamstress. She lived at Bockenheimer Anlage 2.

On June 12th, 1939, she emigrated to London. She was the last of the Jews from Roth who was able to escape. The Hoehster family had a relative in the British capital who organized a place for her as a nanny in the Jewish Goldschmidt family.



Herbert Roth and Ilse Hoehster
on Erwin Hoehster's motorcycle



9

Thea Trude Höchster

Trude was very homesick and greatly concerned for her family. In her despair she wrote to the British monarch about their troubles in Nazi Germany.

Fully unexpectedly, the family received entry clearance, which would have allowed them to immigrate to England, but this shimmer of hope arrived too late. England declared war on Germany, destroying all possibility of bringing the family together.

Trude met Erwin Wuerzburger from Hoechst near Frankfurt in her relatives' boarding house. They married in 1940, and their first son Stephen was born in 1945 in London. They emigrated to the US in 1946, and settled in Gary, Indiana. Their second son Michael was born there.

The family took on the name Wetmore. Trude took care of the household and raising their children, while also working outside the home to add to the family's income. Living out the Jewish faith meant a lot to her. She ran a kosher household, attended Sabbath and Holiday services, and was active in the Jewish community. Throughout her life she observed the Jewish-Hessian traditions that she had grown up with in the village. She continued to speak German, maintained her love for nature, and kept a vegetable garden.

Born in 1920, she told her descendents, including four grandchildren, about the happy experiences of her youth in Roth before the Nazis came to power. She died on September 7th, 1999, in St. Louis.



Erwin Hoechster, standing back row third from the right

Irwin Isaak “Erwin” Hoechster

September 6, 1910 in Roth – June 31, 1985 in Johannesburg

was Hermann's first son and the only child that he had with his first wife, Mathilde Hoexter. Mathilde became ill with tuberculosis, and Erwin remembered not being allowed to go near his mother's sick bed. He was six when his mother died. He attended the school in Roth and then completed a three-year apprenticeship as a draper with Aumann and Rapp in Frankfurt. He then took up his trade in Roth.

Erwin was well-integrated with his peers in the village, acting and directing in the local theater group. He not only played soccer in the Sport Klub Roth, he also supported the club financially. He was very fond of his motorcycle, which impressed everyone generally. The older Jewish children in the village got their pictures taken on it. Since the motorcycle helped him get around faster, he was able to reach customers who lived further away. He was politically active, supporting the social democrats and publicly speaking out against the Nazis.

He fell in love with Henriette (Henni) Walldorf (October 8, 1912), daughter of Moses Moritz Walldorf and Dina Thekla from Ebsdorf. They married in 1936. Soon after, he had to flee the country because his political activities and Jewish heritage made life in Germany too dangerous for him. He followed his brother-in-law, Max Walldorf, to Johannesburg in South Africa on September 9, 1936. He was the first Jew from Roth who managed to flee. Shortly thereafter, his wife bore their child, Marion, in the house where she and her parents were being held, Haspel Street 17 in Marburg.

Henni and Marion were able to join Erwin in April 1937. Erwin and his brother-in-law ran a repair shop for sewing machines and Erwin also served in the army for a short time. Later he became a successful sales representative. He was very critical of the South African apartheid regime, clinging to his political ideals and democratic and moral principles. He even encouraged his only daughter, Marion, to emigrate to the US with her family. Erwin Hoechster died shortly before his 75th birthday on June 31st, 1985, in Johannesburg.

Marion Solovei, neé Hoechster

December 20, 1936 in Marburg

was the last child born to a Jew from Roth in Germany. When she was only a few months old, in April 1937, she and her mother fled the Nazi regime, emigrating to South Africa. As her parents' only child, she grew up loved and sheltered, but at the same time in the shadow of the Holocaust and the deaths of nearly all of her relatives.

She married the diamond trader Norman Solovei in 1959. He had been born in Riga in 1926 and moved with his family to South Africa in 1934. While living in South Africa, Marion gave birth to her son Howard in 1962 and her daughter Robyn in 1963.

Marion and Norman emigrated to the US in 1964. Her father Erwin had encouraged them to emigrate because it was important to him that his grandchildren have the chance to grow up in a free democracy.

In the US, Marion Solovei studied psychology and became licensed as a marriage, family, and child therapist in 1976. The part-time program of the United States International University enabled her to get her doctorate in psychology in 1987, and she received her license in 1989. She worked as the clinical director of a non-profit organization for over 35 years before opening her own practice. She was married to Norman for over 50 years when he died suddenly in 2011. She has three grandchildren.



11

Marion Hoechster

The Stern family

known as the "Herze"

Address: 20 Lahntal Street / formerly: House#7

Herz Stern II

March 27, 1866 in Roth – January 15, 1943 in Theresienstadt

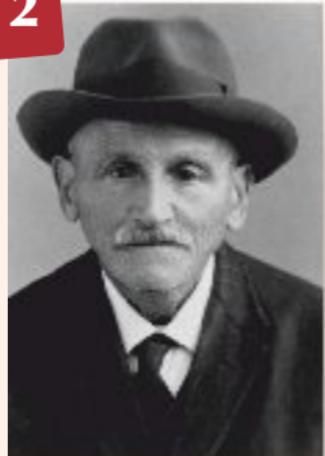
was the son of Haune Stern and Adelheid Wetzstein. He married Emma Rothschild from Angenrod near Alsfeld in 1895. They had two children, Hermann and Selma born in 1897 and 1899, respectively. He earned his living as a butcher and cattle dealer, later also working as a peddler. Herz's son Hermann died at the young age of twenty while serving as a soldier in Macedonia during World War I.

Herz's daughter married Markus Roth from Nieder-Ohmen and bore three children, but she also died young, in 1934. His wife Emma passed away three years later in 1937. When his son-in-law managed to emigrate to the US in 1938, Herz moved to Frankfurt, Gwinner Street 20, where the sister of his son-in-law, Jenny Frank, lived.

Jenny Frank's family of four lived there with two other people in a ghetto house. After 1940, Herz was forced to move into the nursing home at the address Handwerk Street 30 (currently Lange Street). The Jewish community had been forced to establish this home, which more closely resembled a collective point. Herz was deported from this address on August 18th, 1942, and taken to Theresienstadt where he died on January 15th, 1943.



12



Selma Roth
and her three children

Herz Stern II

The Roth family

known as the "Herze"

Address: 20 Lahntal Street / formerly: House#7

Markus Roth

September 5, 1893 in Nieder-Ohmen – 1967 in Chicago

was the son of Jonas and Lina Roth. He first learned the trade of a butcher. During World War I he participated in many battles and was awarded both the second class Iron Cross and the Hessian Medal of Bravery. He married Selma, the daughter of Herz and Emma Stern in 1922, and moved into their house. A dealer in feed and fertilizer in Roth, he was in close contact with his customers and well-respected by all. He and Selma had three children, Leo Herbert, Adelheid Irene, and Jakob Walter.

His wife Selma died suddenly of an infection on February 28th, 1934. In 1936, he married his wife's relative, Toni Stern.

The Oberhessian Newspaper (Oberhessische Zeitung) published an article in 1935, denouncing Markus Roth for unfair business practices. This was a common Nazi tactic for ruining Jewish businesses. Markus Roth's business effectively collapsed, and he and his family had to live on their savings and their own meager farming.



Markus Roth



Order of Merit:
The Hessian Medal of Bravery

With no prospect of being able to care for his family in Germany, Markus Roth decided to emigrate to the US. On June 16th, 1938, he gave the proper authorities notice of his family's departure, and they boarded the ship New York in Bremerhaven, on which they reached safer shores.

The Roth family settled in Chicago, where some relatives from Roth had already moved in 1937. They now had to build a new life for themselves, which wasn't easy for Markus Roth and his three half-grown children. Another baby, Helen, was born in January 1939, which didn't make things any easier. The once independent businessman had to work as a hired hand in a slaughterhouse. The work was hard, and the family's economic situation was not easy. In time the work affected his heart. He died in 1967 in Chicago.

Roth, den _____ 1938

MARKUS ROTH Futter- u. Düngemittel
Partenburger Str. 100/101a, Lützen 100/101a

RECHNUNG
 an *Herrn Heinz Wisbrod Wölfskronen*

1. Jan	41 Rechnung	332, 78
15. Mai	per cassa	15 "
28. Juli	"	27 "
28. Okt	"	38 "
23. Dez	"	217 "
28. März	"	35 "
28. März	Rutbetrag	37 78
	Betrag dankend erlassen	
Jan 1939	<i>Herbert [Signature]</i>	

Bitte sind in guten Zustand innerhalb 14 Tagen zurückbringen

The last bill calculated for Markus Roth's business

Toni Roth, neé Stern

July 27, 1898 in Roth— January 28, 1998 in Chicago

was the daughter of Mannes and Bertha Stern. She long suffered from the knowledge that she had had to leave her mother and two brothers behind in Germany where they did not survive the Holocaust. She was the good soul of the family, who raised and cared for her stepchildren with all of the love that she had for her own biological daughter. She was deeply loved and respected by all of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

She was a talented baker and cook, continuing to make food in the Hessian-Jewish village tradition in Chicago.

Toni Roth died on January 28th, 1998, nearly 100 years old.

Herbert Roth

October 17, 1923 in Roth

is the oldest son of Markus and Selma Roth. He was well-integrated with his village peers before 1933. He greatly enjoyed playing soccer on the fields near the Lahn river. After Hitler came to power, his boyhood friends all joined the Hitler Youth, and he was excluded from the games. The school-teacher Knott held diatribes against the Jews every morning, always ending with the sentence “with the exception of those present.” Of course, uttering this sentence brought attention to the boy, causing the most harm. In addition to his tragic and difficult family situation, he was isolated from those who were once his friends.



14

Toni Roth



In October 1936 Herbert Roth became the last Jewish boy to celebrate his bar mitzvah in the synagogue in Roth. In preparation for their emigration, Markus Roth sent his eldest son to Marburg for English classes. When they first arrived in the US, he did the translating for the family. Herbert did all he could to integrate himself in his new country and to leave the difficult years of his childhood behind him.

Soon he only spoke English. At first he went to high school, but he left after two years without graduating. He worked in the pants store owned by his uncle, Mr. Hammerschlag, to bring in some money for the family. He joined the army in 1943, but had to withdraw after only a few months for health reasons.

After a short interim working for an insurance company, he got a scholarship to study accounting at a college in Chicago in 1944. He graduated in 1946, and first began to work for a small company. He started his own business as a certified public accountant with great success in 1950.

Herbert Roth was also very active in his community and served twelve years as director, later as president of the Jewish Children's Bureau. He then served 16 years as president of a Jewish nursing home. He met his wife Elsa in Chicago. She came from Bad Duerkheim. They married in 1948, and have two daughters, five grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. Elsa Roth died on June 25th, 2013, after nearly 65 years of marriage.



Herbert Roth, on the left in the second row, at morning roll call



Herbert Roth

Irene Roth

January 22, 1925 in Roth – September 15, 1969

was the daughter of Markus and Selma Roth. She attended the school in Roth and graduated from a school in Chicago. She then began working various jobs, one being at a book-binding shop. She also helped care for her nephews and nieces. She died on September 15, 1969, at only 44 years of age.

Walter Roth

April 18, 1929 in Roth

is the youngest son of Markus and Selma Roth. He was also the last child born to a Jewish family in Roth. His mother passed away when he was only five. He never played with the other boys from the village in his childhood, his only playmates were the older Jewish boys, Kurt Bergenstein and Helmut Hoechster. One instance of being ostracized at school has particularly stayed with him over the years. The school-teacher Knott had had a prize for the student who could solve a math problem the fastest. Walter was the fastest and wanted to claim his prize, but the teacher said that this prize could not be won by a Jew.

When Walter arrived in the US he didn't yet speak any English, so he was put in the kindergarten class despite being nine years old.



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Irene Roth



17

Walter Roth



He learned English quickly, however, and was accepted to the school proper. He skipped a grade and ended up finishing high school with honors.

Attending the University of Illinois in Chicago, then the Law School of the University of Chicago, he earned his law degree in 1952. After spending a year at a kibbutz in Israel, he settled down as a lawyer in Chicago.

He was very active in the community, serving as a member of the American Jewish Congress and the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, among other things. He was president of the latter for many years, writing books and countless articles about the history of Jews in Chicago.

He published his memoirs, *Departure and Return*, in 2013. It deals with his emigration from Roth and his reflections on later visits he made to the village.

He and his wife Chaya, who was born in Berlin and also survived the Holocaust, have a son, two daughters, and seven grandchildren.



The Nathan family

known as the "Bettes"

Address: 2 Unter der Linde / formerly: House #2

*None of the Nathan family survived the Holocaust.
All three women were deported and murdered.*

Pauline Nathan, neé Goldschmidt

March 5, 1884 in Falkenberg near Homberg/Efze –
probably November 1943 in Auschwitz

was the daughter of the merchant Heinemann Goldschmidt and Zibora Katz.

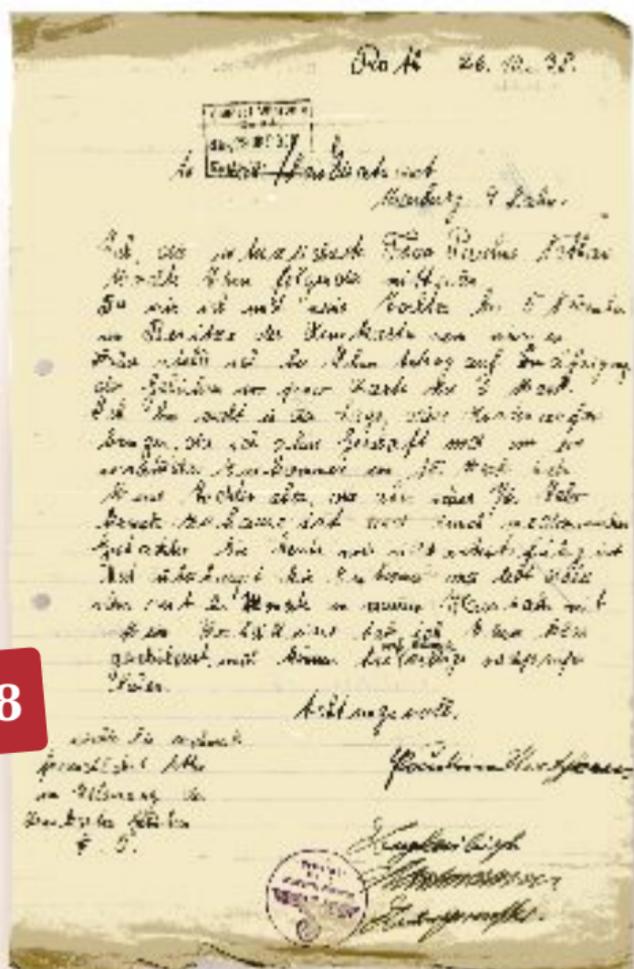
She married the cattle dealer and butcher Hermann Nathan from Roth, who was three years her junior, on December 23rd, 1911. He was the oldest son of Abraham Nathan and Berta "Betti" Stern. Betti came from Romrod near Alsfeld. She died in 1939, the last Jew to be buried at the cemetery in Roth.

The small family lived in poor conditions, which became

Unfortunately,
no picture of
Pauline Nathan
has been
preserved.

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Pauline's application
for the cost of her
identity card
to be waived





worse when Hermann Nathan died in 1932, at 45 years of age. In fact, their economic plight was so severe that Pauline applied for the cost of her identity card to be waived in 1938... and this was granted to her.

Caecilie “Cilly” Nathan

August 2, 1919 in Roth – probably November 1943 in Auschwitz

was the only child of Hermann and Pauline Nathan. When she was born, Hermann Nathan made the following entry in the family Bible, which has miraculously been preserved: “My darling daughter Cilly Nathan was born on August 2nd, 1919.” Caecilie attended the school in Roth. In 1937, she moved to Taunusplatz 17, Frankfurt, and worked as a housekeeper. For health reasons, however, she had to return to Roth in October 1938, and could no longer contribute to the family income.



School picture, ca. 1925



Caecilie Nathan

Gertrude “Gerdi” Nathan

February 3, 1897 in Roth – probably November 1943 in Auschwitz

was Pauline's unmarried sister-in-law, the daughter of Abraham and Berta Nathan. She and Pauline lived together. Her identity card indicates that she was a housekeeper, but she apparently worked for a horticultural farm in Marburg between 1937 and 1941. She delivered vegetables and potatoes, and her customers are said to have helped her out. The three women were deported to the ghetto in Riga on December 8th, 1941. Following the closure of the ghetto, they were transported to Auschwitz on November 2nd, 1943, where they were murdered probably that same month.



Gertrude Nathan

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The Stern family

known as the "Hirne-Malches"

Address: 1 Unter der Linde / formerly: House #98

Bertha Stern, neé Rosenbusch

May 26, 1869 in Borken – May 18, 1944 in Auschwitz

was the daughter of Feist Rosenbusch and Gelle Strauss from Amoeneburg. In 1891 she married Mannes Stern (January 25, 1861 – January 29, 1933), who was himself the son of Bonfang Stern and Malchen Wetzstein and the brother of Herz Stern I.

They had three children, Louis, Hugo, and Toni. They first built their own home in 1929, when their children were already grown. Even at that time a village resident is said to have predicted that the family wouldn't remain in the village permanently. This prophecy was to come true in a terrible way.

Mannes died on January 29th, 1933, having little time to make use of his new home.



Bertha Stern



Unter der Linde 1

Hugo Stern

February 7, 1896 in Roth – May 18, 1944 in Auschwitz

The family ran a small fabric store in the house at 1 Unter der Linde. After the death of her husband, Bertha continued to run the store with her younger son, Hugo.

Hugo traveled with a box wagon and horse to sell his wares. Known as “Hugo of Roth”, he was a well-respected peddler.

Following the deportation of the community elder, Hermann Hoehster, in December 1941, Hugo Stern presided over the affairs of the Jewish Community, in particular overseeing the secularization of the Jewish cemetery and the sale of it to three village residents who owned land adjacent to the property. The sale was conducted via the Hesse-Nassau district office of the Reich's Association of the Jews in Germany (Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland.)



Louis Stern

May 31, 1894 in Roth – January 29, 1943 in Auschwitz

was Mannes and Bertha's oldest son. He worked in a large department store in Frankfurt and lived there during the week, coming home on weekends, the evening before the Sabbath. He registered himself with the authorities as having moved back to Roth on October 2nd, 1938, probably because the department store had been “arianized,” thus putting him out of a job.

Toni Stern, Mannes and Bertha's daughter, (see above) married the widower Markus Roth in 1936, and they emigrated to the US with their family in 1938.

Bertha, Hugo, and Louis Stern were the last Jews to be deported namely to Theresienstadt, which occurred on September 6th, 1942. They were later transferred to Auschwitz. Louis was murdered on January 29th, 1943. Bertha and Hugo on May 18th, 1944.



Excerpt of a letter from Bertha Stern to her daughter's family on the occasion of the birth of her granddaughter Helen.



The Stern family

known as the "Vorne-Malches"

Address: 14 Lahntal Street / formerly: House#98

The Stern family in the Lahntal Street was the only Jewish family in Roth of which all members escaped the Holocaust.

Hilda Stern, neé Bachenheimer

December 19, 1862 in Fronhausen – 1964 in Chicago

was the firstborn of eight to Isaac Bachenheimer and Johanna Langsdorf. Four of her siblings and her father emigrated to the US at the end of the 19th century. Hilda married the merchant, Herz Stern I of Roth (April 1, 1858), the oldest son of Bonfang Stern and Malchen Wetzstein. The name of the house "the Malches" stems from his mother's name.

The couple had two children, Berthold born in 1886, and Paula born in 1887. Herz Stern died on July 1st, 1932, at the age of 74.



24

Hilda Stern



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Klara Stern

Klara Stern, neé Speier

November 9, 1891 in Hoof near Kassel – January 16, 1972 in Chicago

was the daughter of Julius and Jettchen Speier. She married Berthold Stern (February 12, 1886), the son of Herz and Hilda Stern. Berthold Stern was awarded the second class Iron Cross for his part in World War I, and he was left with a bad wound from his time in battle. He sang Tenor II in the men's choral club Liederkrantz. Berthold dealt in cattle and had a dry goods store. After he died of leukemia in 1929, Klara continued to run the store on her own. Thus, when the Nazis came to power, she was a widow, living with her widowed mother-in-law and her two sons, Julius and Otto.

The family recognized the signs of the times relatively early and applied for visas at the American consulate in Stuttgart at the end of 1936. These were immediately granted because Hilda's well-off siblings in the US vouched for her. Klara and her sons boarded the ship Manhattan in 1937.

One year later Hilda emigrated with her daughter Paula's family. Paula was married to the cattle dealer Hermann Wertheim in Kirchhain. All of them settled in Chicago.

Hilda Stern died there in 1964 at the ripe old age of nearly 102 years. Klara Stern passed away on January 16th, 1972.



The Stern family
ca. 1921

Left to right: Back row, Klara & Berthold Stern, Herman & Paula Wertheim
Front row: Max Wertheim, Hilda & Julius Stern, Marga Wertheim, Herz Stern I

Julius Stern

November 14, 1919 in Roth – January 8, 2005 in Chicago

was the oldest son of Berthold and Klara Stern. Shortly after the Nazis came to power he finished his time at the school in Roth and began attending a higher level school in Kirchhain. He lived with his Aunt Paula. Following his emigration to the US, he was able to get a job working in the textile factory Hart, Schaffner & Marks in Chicago, where he worked his way up to a supervising position. He joined the American army around 1941-42, and was stationed on the Aleutian islands in the Pacific. After returning from the war, he married Renée in 1946, who was also a Jewish-German emigrant. She was from Mannheim. They had two daughters, one of which died as a young bride, and four grandchildren. Julius Stern died on January 8th, 2005, in Chicago.



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Julius Stern



27

Otto Stern

Otto Stern

July 5, 1922 in Roth – May 22, 2013 in Florence, Kentucky

ended his schooling in Roth in 1936. He moved to Kirchhain the end of April, where he began an apprenticeship as a merchant. He registered his notice of departure with the authorities in Kirchhain on April 27th, 1937, and emigrated to the US with his mother and older brother. He joined the American army in 1942, and served in France, where he saw many battles. He was awarded the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star for bravery in battle. After the end of the war he was stationed in Diez on the Lahn River. Being relatively close to Roth, he seized the opportunity to visit the place of his birth. He was appalled to find the cemetery desolated and the graves of his ancestors defiled. He ordered the village mayor to have the cemetery restored, and it was.

He was horrified to learn that none of his relatives and no Jewish neighbors remained in the village. They had all been deported. The only familiar faces to be found were those of Jenny and Trude Loewenstein in Fronhausen, who had survived the concentration camp.

When he returned to the US, Otto Stern married Ilse Libmann from Weinheim on October 6th, 1946. He worked for companies that produced material for shoe repair. At times he filled an executive position, and for some years he ran his own business. He had two sons and five grandchildren. One of his grandchildren died in the war in Iraq.

Otto Stern died on May 22nd, 2013, in Florence, Kentucky.

Otto Stern's return to Roth as a G.I.





Sources and Acknowledgments

Most of the information contained in this booklet comes from contemporary Jewish and non-Jewish witnesses and their descendents, from private correspondences, and from official sources in the Municipal Archives of Weimar, the Hessian State Archives in Marburg, and the Hessian Main State Archives in Wiesbaden.

The pictures have been provided mostly from private sources and the State Archives in Marburg (Holding 180 Marburg: numbers 4850, 4851, 4853 (identity cards), 3593, and 4827). We would particularly like to thank the witnesses and their descendants in the US for their help in the creation of this booklet.

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Arbeitskreis Landsynagoge Roth e.V.

The Arbeitskreis was founded on January 27th, 1996. We promote the use of the former synagogue in Weimar-Roth as a memorial site, an educational site, and as a place that enables the contact of various cultures. The synagogue provides an out-of-school learning experience for the comprehensive school in Niederwalgern (Gesamtschule Niederwalgern.) We stay in close contact with this school. Maintaining good relations with surviving Jewish citizens of Roth and in the nearby villages as well with their descendents is also of utmost importance to us. All activities taking place in the synagogue are coordinated by our committee.

Memberships

- Gesellschaft für Christlich-Jüdische Zusammenarbeit Marburg e.V.
- Landesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Gedenkstätten- und Erinnerungsinitiativen zur NS-Zeit in Hessen
- Förderverein des Fritz-Bauer-Instituts Frankfurt
- Förderkreis Synagoge in Vöhl e.V.
- Marburger Bündnis gegen Rechts
- Gegen Vergessen - Für Demokratie e.V.
- Region Marburger Land e.V.

Our Group

usually meets every second Thursday of the month at 8 pm in the Roth Community Center

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