

English version

Family Michael Speier

Stadtstraße 8, torn down, now church square ("Kirchplatz")

Michael Speier, born 2nd August 1863, came from an old Burghaun family. He was a shoemaker and salesman. On 14th August 1894 he married Rosalie Gans, born on 18th October 1868, from Rotenburg Fulda. They had four children:

Hannchen (Johanna) born 1896, Betti born 1899, Martha (Manni) born 1902 and Jakob born 1905

On 30th November 1923, Rosalie died in Burghaun at the age of only 55. The family was said to have been very poor. Michael's cousin, the salesman Willi Speier who had lived at Bahnhofstrasse 24 until about 1914 and later in Frankfurt Main, supposedly kept supporting them financially.

It looks like Michael Speier had already moved to Frankfurt before the Night of Broken Glass in 1938. In January 1939 he lived at a Jewish home for the elderly there. In May 1940 he received a directive from the exchange control office to open a special secure account for his money. Since Mr Speier had neither savings nor any income at all, he asked them to exempt him from this directive.

His last address was the Jewish retirement home in Rechneigrabenstraße, where he had been living since July 1941. That house was later also used as gathering place for the people who were scheduled for deportation. From here the almost 80-year-old man was transported to Theresienstadt where he died on 26th October 1942.

Hannchen, his oldest child, worked for a weaving mill in Schlitz travelling to the villages in the area. From her you could order table and bed linen and other kinds of linen. In 1936 she still lived in Burghaun. Later she married Josef Dreyfuss, born 14th April 1900 in Frankfurt Main. In 1940 he worked in a cloth factory near Frankfurt where the couple lived in a street called Unterlindau. From their apartment in number 47, Hanna Dreyfuss was deported to the ghetto in Litzmannstadt (Lodz) together with her husband on 19th October 1941. There they died.

Betty had already lived with her aunt, the respected master tailor Jettchen Gans in Rotenburg Fulda since she was a young girl. Alongside seven other apprentices Betty learned the trade of a tailor from her aunt who had become her substitute mother after Rosalie's death. After the devastations and looting in the course of the Night of Broken Glass in Rotenburg, both master tailors moved to Frankfurt Main on 2nd December 1938. Because of new Nazi laws they were only allowed to work for Jewish customers. Between 21st October 1939 and 25th November 1941 Betty Gans had been arrested at the police station, the reason why is unknown.

Likewise it is not known if she returned to her aunt after her release.

Jettchen Gans was deported from Frankfurt to Theresienstadt on 1st September 1942 while Betty was deported from Darmstadt to the Ghetto Piaski near Lublin in Poland on 25th March 1942. Both women did not survive.

Martha, who never married, managed the household after her mother's early death. Probably she took care of her father in Burghaun until the end. In January 1936 she still lived with him and her sister Johanna at Stadtstrasse. Nobody knows what became of her, she remains missing. In November 1939 none of the Speier family lived in Burghaun anymore.

Jakob, the only one who survived the holocaust, emigrated to Israel in 1934 / 1935. He supposedly was a follower of the zionist movement already in Burghaun. The last people heard from him was when he wrote to the mayor's office in Burghaun after World War Second to inquire after the fate of his father and his sisters.