

Family Jakob and Recha Stern

Ringstrasse 4, today number 5, newly-built house

War widow Recha Stern née Oppenheim, born on 10th January 1884, came from Nentershausen near Rotenburg / Fulda. She was married to Jakob Stern, born 1881 from Burghaun. The couple had two sons:

Isfried, born 1912

Leo, born 1913

The owner of the house was Jakob's father Wolf Stern, born 1852, who also lived in the house until his death in 1928. His mother Amalie née Braunschweiger from Steinbach had already died in 1917. As a soldier of infantry regiment 83, Jakob Stern went to war and died "for the fatherland" already at the beginning of the campaign on 7th November 1914 during a battle near Capellerin in France.

Young widow Recha Stern managed a small shop in her house for many years. You could also buy buns there from Jewish baker Blumenthal from Rhina.

Contemporary witness Hans Gies (1911 to 1992) remembers:

"Recha lived upstairs in the house (the old Sterns downstairs). She sold chocolate and other stuff, small things, groceries too, I remember that. As children we always went to the shop to buy sweets when we had a few coins."

In December 1938 Recha was forced to sell her house way under price. After the approval of the sale by the Nazi officials, she had to leave her house immediately, remembers a villager. Since she did not know where to go, she temporarily lived with Ansel Braunschweiger at his house in Dimbachstrasse. She had to close her little shop on 1st September 1939 because of Nazi laws against the Jews. Lately, it had hardly been profitable anyway. At least she had a small pension as a war widow.

Recha Stern must have left Burghaun around December 1939 / January 1940. She found shelter in Frankfurt at Fichtenstrasse 8. Since 1st February 1940 she lived at Hanauer Landstrasse 17 together with her sister Sara. Both women were deported to the ghetto in Minsk on 11th November 1941. There she died either of the deathly living conditions or was a victim of extermination.

Her son Isfried attended school in Fulda. After graduating, he began to study dentistry, but as a Jew was not allowed to finish. In Hamburg he met Hilde, a nurse. They got married in Hamburg in 1938 and together they emigrated to the United States 1939 / 1940. There he had to study from the very beginning again, but obviously he was successful, since we meet him again as dentist in New York in 1951.

Leo, who had worked as a farm hand in Gudendorf near Cuxhaven in the 1930s, escaped to Argentina. There he also worked on a farm. Later he, too, must have emigrated to the United States, since he obviously lived in New York in 1951.

A letter to her niece Herta Stern from 28th September 1941 seems to be the last sign of life from Recha Stern before she was deported to the murderous ghetto Minsk in Belarus.