

Family Nathan Strauss

Ringstrasse 9, today number 8, newly built house

Salesman Nathan Strauss, born 1874, was from Rothenkirchen. He was married to Adelheid née Braunschweiger, born 1880 in Burghaun. The couple had one son:

Leo, born around 1915

Around 1926, Nathan Strauss, who had fought in the First World War, lived with his family at Burgstrasse in the house of Samuel Stuckhardt. In 1929 he bought the house in Ringstrasse 9 from widow Jeanette Nussbaum, who had moved to Huenfeld.

In the course of the Night of Broken Glass, Nathan Strauss was arrested and carried off to concentration camp Buchenwald. Several weeks later, he returned home. In September 1941 he was arrested again for picking blueberries in the forest together with Julius Braunschweiger. Both were sent to Nazi labor camp Breitenau near Kassel. While Julius was released home in December, Nathan was taken to concentration camp Dachau on 2nd December 1941. A medical examination at Breitenau had come to the conclusion that he was fit enough for the transfer to Dachau!

It is possible that at the concentration camp Dachau Nathan was used as a human guinea pig in experiments. Those experiments included, for example, exposure to freezing temperatures or experiments in a pressure chamber. In any case, he died already on 12th March 1942. In the official Dachau NS-documents you can read: Darmkatarrh (intestinal infection). But usually those pieces of information were a lie.

Soon after, his wife Adelheid received a parcel in the post, that she had to pay for. Inside the parcel was the urn with her husband's ashes. At that time, Adelheid lived with her siblings Ansel and Gusta Braunschweiger at Dimbachstrasse 13. They had been forced to sell the house at Ringstrasse shortly after Nathan's return from Buchenwald and Adelheid had had to leave it in the meantime.

Supposedly, Nathan was buried in Burghaun. This would make him the very last Jewish person being buried at the Jewish cemetery in Burghaun. However, it probably was not a dignified burial since on the one hand, the Jewish religion does not allow cremation, and on the other hand, the Nazis had long since barred the Jews from accompanying the dead to their last resting place.

In those last months in Burghaun, Adelheid Strauss had to endure a lot of misfortune even in addition to the deportation and death of her husband. On 20th October 1941 her brother Ansel died, and soon after her sister Gusta and her sister-in-law Fanny were deported to Riga. She and Jeanette Wohl, who also lived at Dimbachstrasse 13 by then, were left behind. Finally, in May 1942, both women had to leave Burghaun. An old woman from Burghaun remembered having seen two Jewish women around that time as they were walking towards the train station with a bundle under their arms. These might well have been Adelheid Strauss and Jeanette Wohl. Most probably they had to join the transport of Jews from Fulda to Kassel on 31st May 1942.

Fact is that Adelheid Strauss and Jeanette Wohl were deported from Kassel to the Lublin area in Polen on 1st June, probably to death camp Sobibor. There they were murdered. As instructed by superior authorities, the local police in Burghaun entered “moved, address unknown” into their records as a cover-up.

Son Leo Strauss emigrated to New York in April 1937. There he got to know his future wife. With the US Army he came to Germany in 1945 and visited Burghaun three times to find out about the fate of his parents from whom he had not obtained any signs of life.