



## Selig Siegmund Cohn and Ida Cohn, nee Wintersberg, lived at Bismarckstraße 12.

The married couple, Siegmund and Ida Cohn, lived in a ground floor apartment at Bismarckstraße 12 from the beginning of November 1934 until their deportation on 6 December 1941. During this same time the sculptor Heinrich Ruhland and his wife, Grete, lived on the second floor and Miss Dora Knabjohann on the third. Their landlord lived on Klosterstraße.



The new building which has replaced the old semi/duplex house. H.K-W, 2013

Selig Siegmund Cohn was born in Friedland, Mecklenburg, 160 km/100 miles north of Berlin, on 10 August 1874. Presently there is no information available concerning his parents, his childhood, how he learned his trade and how he and his wife got to know each other. Ida Wintersberg was born in Wulfhagen, Niedersachsen, 50 km/30 miles west of Hanover, on 16 August 1875.

As of 1900 Siegmund Cohn was living in the “Free and Hanseatic City of Lübeck”. At 26 years of age he started earning his livelihood, at first selling produce and used items from his apartment at Beckergrube 70. In 1905 his wife, Ida, followed him to Lübeck. On 13 October 1907 their son, Salomon Siegfried, was born in Lübeck and their daughter, Gerta, one year later on 3 October 1908.

### Inscriptions at the Installation:

HIER WOHNTE  
SIEGMUND COHN  
JG. 1874  
DEPORTIERT 1941  
ERMORDET IN  
RIGA

HIER WOHNTE  
**IDA COHN**  
GEB. WINTERSBERG  
JG. 1875  
DEPORTIERT 1941  
ERMORDET IN  
RIGA

installation  
29 April 2013



Beckergrube 70 in 2013, H.K-W

The entry in the 1907 Lübecker Address Book for Siegmund Cohn reads: Beckergrube 70, Art and Antique Dealer Siegmund Cohn, as well as his apartment. In the same year of 1907 the family moved across the street to Beckergrube 71.



Beckergrube 71 in 2013, H.K-W



An early photo of Beckergrube 71,  
Museum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte

It was here that the children grew up. First they either attended the elementary/primary schools close to their home or were tutored at home. After Easter in 1915 until 1924 Gerta attended Ernestinen School and Siegfried, who the family called "Bubi", attended the Dom Secondary School until 1923. He attended for six years leaving the school after the first public examination.

Both of the children were very musical and took piano lessons. Their religious instruction was conducted by Rabbi Dr. David Winter on St. Annen-Straße. Their parents were active members of the Israelite Community. Ida Cohn was a member of the Women’s Association and Siegmund was serving on the Community Committee.



Siegmund Cohn was a member of the Community Committee. Entry in the 1916 Lübecker Address Book.

During the time the children went to school they experienced how their father had become a leading specialist in the city for the art and antique trade. In October 1918 he was able to purchase the building at Breite Straße 19, where he opened an art and antique store. One year later in 1919 Siegmund Cohn was cited for the first time in the “directory of auctioneers, who have been on the staff of the city and county authorities” as the sole expert and auctioneer for art work and antiques. His appointment was for five years and was publicly announced.



Announcement in the 29 May 1919 Lübeckische Anzeigen (Announcements) indicating the official appointment of Siegmund Cohn as an expert in and auctioneer for art work and antiques. Archiv der Hansestadt Lübeck:

Polizeiamt 2366

In 1924 and 1929 his appointment to this office was renewed.

In 1919 he also purchased a villa at Israelsdorfer Allee 11 for his family’s home. Yet less than two years later the villa was sold and in December 1920 the family moved back to Beckergrube. This time they moved into an apartment at Beckergrube 65 on the third floor.



The building at Beckergrube 65 in 2013, H.K-W





Ida and Siegmund Cohn with their daughter. This picture was possibly taken after Gerta completed her secondary education on or a similar occasion. From the family's private collection.

Gerta Cohn also became a pianist. She and her brother would accompany the silent movies in different theatres by playing four hands piano. Gerta's granddaughter, Marina Herbst, remembers "My grandmother always told the story that sometimes they would be playing something very lively even though it was a sad scene in the movie since they could not see the screen,"

At the end of the 1920's the family began to fall on hard times. The reason for this decline cannot be established. A statement by the auctioneer Alwin Pump made in 1958 gives one a vague idea as to the situation: "Mr. Cohn was at one time very wealthy, but then, according to my understanding, he became involved with a Lübeck antique business, which was already in financial difficulties, and the final years of the business were financially very bad ones." (Landesarchiv Schleswig-Holstein, Paragraph 761, No. 20038)

As of 1930 Siegmund Cohn could hardly find a customer for his auctioneering services and the family moved out of the flat on Beckergrube to Obertrave 10 and then in 1932 to Marlesgrube 75. They lived there for two years before moving to Bismarckstraße. According to a remark on his registration card, Siegmund Cohn was "on 9 December 1931 prohibited from advertizing that he was an official auctioneer for the state." His position as an official auctioneer was to end in 1934. The reason for this early termination is presently not known. At this time Siegmund Cohn was 57 years old.

Their children were 23 and 24 years old when they endeavoured to find gigs as independent musicians, apparently even outside of Lübeck, as the entries on their registration cards indicate. Gerta found work in Hamburg and Berlin, while Siegfried was busy in many small venues.

At the start of the Nazi regime their difficulties grew. In August of 1935 Siegfried Cohn was forbidden by the Reich Musicians' Association, to work as a musician and two years later he was forbidden to work as a composer. He found employment in Joseph Jacoby's Globus Department Store on Breite Straße 33 and remained there until November 1939. Many other young Jewish people also found employment at the Globus.

Gerta Cohn moved to Hamburg in August of 1935, where she had met Arnold Herbst, whom she later married.



Gerta and Arnold Herbst. From the Family's private collection.

Her granddaughter commented: "Arnold, that is what my grandmother always called him, was Dr. Freud's secretary. According to documents in Hamburg he had no permanent employment. We know that my grandmother's job provided for the family, even when their children were young."

Raphael was born on 7 April 1936 and Manfred on 14 June 1937. Of course the Lübeck grandparents were elated with grandsons. The Hamburg grandparents are only said to have shown little interest in the children but there was a friendly elderly neighbour who kept an eye on them.



Gerta and Arnold Herbst with their sons Raphael and Manfred. From the family's private collection.



In Argentina: Gerta und Arnold Herbst with their sons Raphael und Manfred, from the family's private collection.

With the 1938 November pogrom the family's situation became severe. Both Arnold Herbst as well as Siegfried Cohn along with many other Jewish men were arrested and taken to the Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp, north of Berlin. Gerta Herbst managed to organize a possible emigration for her husband and thereby he was released. Presumably Arnold Herbst fled

to Shanghai, where no entrance visa was required. Gerta and their two young sons followed him by way of the Trans Siberian Railway. She also was able to organize for passage on a ship to South America.

They first lived in Paraguay where Gerta was able to provide for the family by working in a hotel in the Asuncion city centre. A few years later they went to Buenos Aires and Tucuman, Argentina. There Gerta was employed as a hotel manager. Her husband left her for another woman, with whom he had three daughters. Raphael also went to live with his father and his new family.

Their younger son, Manfred, remained with his mother and with her future partner Ludwig Karl Ernst Schatz of Hamburg, who was called "Pito." They moved to Concordia, outside of Buenos Aires, where Pito managed a firm dealing in wool and leather. Manfred would later become his business partner.



Manfred Herbst, from the family's private collection

Manfred Herbst was the one who got into contact with the International Red Cross in order to discover what had happened to his mother's brother, his Uncle Siegfried.

Siegfried Cohn had suffered serious health problems while in the Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp. His hands were impaired by frostbite and someone had pulled out some of his tendons. Therefore, from that time on it was most difficult for him to continue as a musician. In the spring of 1939 he was released from the camp and returned to his parents in Lübeck, where he sought medical help but little could be done for him.

On 23 August 1939 Siegfried Cohn cancelled his registration to emigrate to England. From there he emigrated to Australia and changed his name to Sid Conny. He lived in Melbourne where he earned his living by giving music lessons for piano, organ and accordion. Like his sister he believed that he was the sole survivor of hi

After their children had fled Ida and Siegmund Cohn were alone in Lübeck and remained living on Bismarckstraße. In the fall of 1941 the couple received their "Evacuation Notice" which ordered them to prepare for their transport "to the east." On 4 December 1941 they had to get themselves with their allowed 50 kgs/110 pounds per person luggage to the assembly point at St. Annen-Straße 11. There they gathered at the Jewish community's former seniors' home, along with another 90 people, including several youth and children, from Lübeck, Bad Schwartau and Ratzeburg. The original day, 5 December 1941, for their departure to Riga, Latvia, was suddenly postponed to the next day, which was the Sabbath, making this postponement an additional humiliation to practicing Jews. Those gathered were then transported along with their luggage by bus to the main train station, where they found carriages/passenger cars waiting for them. The train brought them to Bad Oldesloe, where their train was coupled to other carriages/passenger cars from Hamburg, Kiel and other locations in Schleswig-Holstein making up the "Hamburg Transport." About 1,000 people were on board the Hamburg Transport.

The trip, which took many days, ended at the Skirotava Train Station in the south of Riga. The people were then driven 3 km/2 miles on foot to the distant Jungfernhof, which was at one time an estate on the Daugava River. It was by no means prepared to receive several hundred people. Some four thousand families from many places were packed together in sheds and stalls with multi levelled wooden bunk beds. There were no means of heating the buildings and as well as no lavatory facilities.

Many people died due to the cold and hunger in those winter months. In February of 1942 about 1,000 children, women and ill people were transported to the Bikernieki Forest and shot. A second execution operation took place on 26 March 1942. It is not known when and under what circumstances the Cohns died. They were 67 and 68 years old.

Only after many years did their two children locate each other and in 1978 they had a reunion in Australia.



Sid Conny (Siegfried Cohn) in the music room of his house in Melbourne / Australia. Photo from the family estate

Siegfried Cohn, who had taken the name Sid Conny, died in Melbourne in 1984. Two years later Gerta Herbst's had to cope with her partner's death and her son Manfred died at an early age in 2005. She had been in close contact with him, his wife, Enda, and their children, Patricio and Marina.

Gerta Herbst, nee Cohn, died while visiting her eldest son on 18 November 2006. Therefore, she was not buried in the village of Villa General Belgrano, where she had lived for a long time and felt at home. Also her close relatives, grandchildren and in-laws were unable to pay their last respects to her.

Until the day she died a small frame with two portrait photos of her beloved parents was to be found on her night stand.



Ida and Siegmund Cohn, the family's private collection.

Their great-grandchild, Marina Herbst, came from Dublin along with Marina's mother, Enda Herbst, who lives in Argentina, for the laying of their Stolperstein in Lübeck. At the stone laying ceremony Marina Herbst read the following verse:

shoa

silence echoes oma's words

my poor parents

— what else is there to say?

Marina Herbst, 2013



Marina and Enda Herbst at the ceremony of laying the Stolpersteine on Bismarckstraße, Lübeck. Foto Ralf Küpper, 29 April 2013.

#### References in Addition to Standard Reference Materials:

- Adressbücher und Melderegister der Hansestadt Lübeck
- Archiv der Hansestadt Lübeck: Staatliche Polizeiverwaltung Lübeck 109, 110,



124.- Amtsgericht, Grundbuch St. Gertrud 569 (Israelsdorfer Allee 11 und Jahnstraße 15), Innenstadt 270 (Breite Straße 19).- Amtsgericht, HRA 262 und HRB 198.- Neues Senatsarchiv 12068, 7752, 5566.- Polizeiamt 2363-2366. - Schul- und Kultusverwaltung 666.- Schulverwaltung, Amt für Schulwesen 897.- Oberschulbehörde 1354, 1478, 1479.- Ernestinenschule 39.

- Bundesarchiv: Gedenkbuch, Opfer der Verfolgung der Juden unter der nationalsozialistischen Gewaltherrschaft in Deutschland 1933-1945, [www.bundesarchiv.de/gedenkbuch](http://www.bundesarchiv.de/gedenkbuch)
- Gedenkbuch Riga  
Buch der Erinnerung, Die ins Baltikum deportierten deutschen, österreichischen und tschechoslowakischen Juden, bearbeitet von Wolfgang Scheffler und Diana Schulle, München 2003
- Guttkuhn, Peter: "Der Senat will gebildete Bürger haben", Jüdische Schülerinnen der Ernestinenschule während der Ära Hoffmann, in: 200 Jahre Ernestinenschule, Lübeck 2004, Fußnoten S.31
- JSHD Forschungsgruppe "Juden in Schleswig-Holstein" an der Universität Flensburg, Datenpool (Erich Koch)
- Katz, Josef: Erinnerungen eines Überlebenden, Kiel 1988
- Landesarchiv Schleswig-Holstein, Entschädigungsakten, Abt. 352 Kiel, Nr. 6600, Abt. 761, Nr. 20038, Nr. 17580
- Lohmeyer, Susanne: Biografien der Familien Herbst und Zimniak,
- in: Stolpersteine in Hamburg-Eimsbüttel und Hamburg-Hoheluft-West, Biographische Spurensuche, Band 2, S. 544 ff, Hamburg 2012
- Lübecker Generalanzeiger, Anzeigen aus den Jahren 1925, 1927, 1929,
- Repro Albrecht Schreiber
- Memorbuch zum Gedenken an die jüdischen, in der Schoa umgekommenen Schleswig-Holsteiner und Schleswig-Holsteinerinnen, hrsg. V. Miriam Gillis-Carlebach, Hamburg 1996
- Philo-Atlas, Handbuch für die jüdische Auswanderung, Reprint der Ausgabe von 1938, Frankfurt am Main
- Albrecht Schreiber, Zwischen Davidstern und Doppeladler, Illustrierte Chronik der Juden in Moisling und Lübeck, Lübeck 1992
- Schriftwechsel und Gespräche mit Marina Herbst, Dublin, und Enda Herbst, Argentinien, 2012 /2013
- Yad Vashem, The Central Database of Shoah Victims Names
- Yashek, Richard (Jürgen Jaschek), Die Geschichte meines Lebens, Wie ein zwölfjähriger jüdischer Junge aus Lübeck und Bad Schwartau die Konzentrationslager überlebte, Lübeck 1998
- Conversations with contemporaries of the Cohns

Heidemarie Kugler-Weimann, 2013

Translation: Glenn Sellick and Martin Harnisch, 2014