



Frieda Dieber, née Rubensohn, Bismarckstraße 10

From 1937 until the summer of 1942 Frieda Dieber made her home in the apartment building at Bismarckstraße 10.



Bismarckstraße 10 and 10a, H.K-W 2013

Frieda Dieber was born in the small town of Crivitz, Mecklenburg on 6 January 1868. She was the second child to be born to Israel Moses Rubensohn (1838-1906) and his wife, Sophie, nee Pommer (1844-1937). She grew up in Crivitz with her siblings, Franz (born 1866), Adolph (born 1870), Helene (born 1874) Albert (born 1879) and Bernhard (born 1881). Her brother Ernst was born in 1872 but died at the age of one.



Israel Moses and Sophie Rubensohn and their six grown children. Picture from the family's collection.

Frieda Rubensohn married the travelling salesman, Wilhelm Philipp Herrmann Dieber, on 23 August 1892. Wilhelm was not Jewish. He was born the son of a dentist in Magdeburg in 1871 and was baptized as a protestant in the St. Katharinen Church. In order to be married in the church Frieda agreed to be baptized. The young married couple then lived in Magdeburg, where their son, August Hermann Kurt (also written as Curt) was born in 1895. Their daughter, Lotte Marga Walli, was born in Dresden in 1898, while their second son, Willy Franz Olaf, was born in Stettin (now Szczecin in Poland) and lastly their youngest daughter, Elli, was born in Lübeck in 1903.

Frieda Dieber was registered in Lübeck for the first time in 1902. She was registered along with her three children, Kurt, Lotte and Willy, but not with her husband since they had separated. It appears that they were never divorced.

Inscription at the Installation:

HIER WOHNTE
FRIEDA DIEBER
GEB. RUBENSOHN
JG. 1868
DEPORTIERT 1942
THERESIENSTADT
ERMORDET 25.7.1944

installation
29 April 2013

When Frieda was 34 an even heavier twist of fate befell her. Her youngest son, Willy, died in Lübeck on 29 September 1902. The attending physician indicated “general physical decline” as the cause of death on the death certificate.

Frieda and her children, Kurt, Lotte and Elli, moved several times within the city of Lübeck. Her children grew up, went to school and became adults in the Hanseatic City.

Frieda’s two daughters were married in a double ceremony in the Lauenburg villages Panten and Lankau on 15 August 1922. Her daughters were “employed” there, meaning they were maids and nannies. Lotte Marga Walli married Otto Köster, a barber, and lived with him at Huxstraße 91/93 in a flat on the third floor. Otto’s barber shop was located at Huxterdamm 4. At their civil ceremony she declared her religion as being “Mosaic.” Her husband was not Jewish. Elli married Paul Martin Max Krauthammel, a journeyman painter. They first lived in Loignystraße, and later for many years at Travelmannstraße 15. In the records of the registry of residents one finds that Elli Krauthammel, nee Dieber, was registered as a protestant.

Shortly after this Frieda’s son, Curt, married Milda Schreiber on 5 September 1922. So it was that at the age of 54 all of Frieda’s children were married and thus out of the house. In the same year Frieda left Lübeck and moved in with her mother in Schwerin, 60 km/38 miles southeast of Lübeck. Sophie Rubensohn was at this time 78 years old. Her great grandson, Erich, remembers her as a practicing Jew, who followed the traditions and rituals of the faith and who had a designated prayer room in her flat. Sophie Rubensohn and her daughter, Frieda, were dependant on the financial support of her sons, respectively Frieda’s brothers, especially the support by Adolph Rubensohn.

In 1935 Frieda was registered as being a widow, pensioner and a member of the Jewish congregation living at Münzstraße 7. Many times she traveled to Lübeck to visit her children and grandchildren. Only after the death of her mother on 11 April 1937 did she move back to the Hanseatic City. She rented a small flat with two rooms and a kitchen on the second floor at Bismarckstraße 10 from the Grebien siblings. At this time Frieda was 69 years old.

Elli and Paul Krauthammel had two children, Bernd (born 1924) and Jutta (birth year not known). Lotte Köster had a daughter, Ruth (born 1923) and Curt had two children, a son, Erich (born 1923) and a daughter, Helga (born 1926). The entire family remained in close and friendly contact with one another.



Frieda Dieber with her children. From the family’s private collection.



Frieda Dieber with her grandchildren Erich and Helga, from the family's private collection.



Frieda Dieber (third person from the right) with her children, son- and daughter-in-law and grandchildren, from the family's private collection.

Curt and family lived in a flat in the building of this father-in-law, the master shoe maker E. Schreiber at Blankstraße 22. He paid very little rent and lived a very secluded life in order to stay out of the public eye and therefore avoid as much discrimination as possible. Curt, a textile salesman by trade, fought in World War I. From 1923 to 1933 he was a manager in a department store owned by Noah Honig, who was Jewish. Once the boycott of Jewish stores began the department store lost business and thereby Curt was laid off. He then started and became independent with his own "travelling business." At first he was very successful but then an anti-Semitic article appeared in the Völkischer Beobachter, (the People's Observer, the newspaper published by the Nazi Party,) in which his mother, Frieda Dieber who was living in Schwerin, was mentioned. As a consequence he lost business and in 1937 he was only a sales representative. He was dismissed from the Kyffhäuserbund, the umbrella organization of the German War Veterans, being labelled "a half Jew" but was drafted into the Wehrmacht (German Army) during World War II. After the Allied invasion near Le Havre he was lucky enough to be taken prisoner.



Curt Dieber in uniform, the family's collection

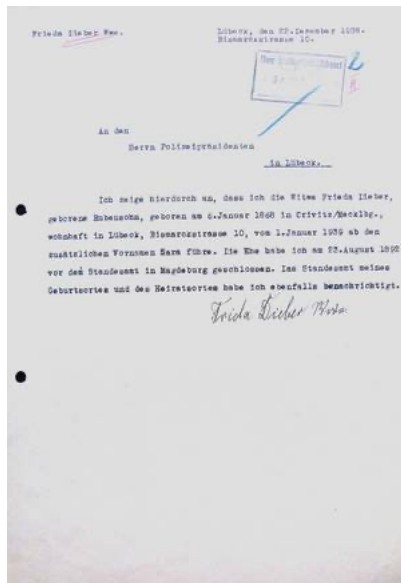


Curt Dieber in civvies, the family's collection

The policies of excluding Jews and denying them rights also applied to the "Half Breeds first and second class" and therefore affected Frieda Dieber's children and grandchildren. Even as a 90 year old her grandson, Erich, could for example exactly recall how he and his cousin, Bernd, who was the same age as he, were affected following the enactment of the 1935 Nuremberg Race

Laws. Due to the Race Laws they were thrown out of the “Jungvolk”, the youth organization of the Hitler Jugend, which was for boys from ages 10 to 14. He and his cousin were very athletic and were members of the sports club Lübecker Turnerschaft (Lübeck Sports Association), which under the Nazis automatically became part of the “HJ” as the Hitler Youth was abbreviated. The leader of the Sports Association came to their home and demanded they hand in their uniforms. Now they could no longer take part in any sports training in the city’s main gymnasium.

At the end of 1939 Frieda was forced to add the prescribed given name of Sara to her name and to do so in writing, which was to be given to the police.



With this declaration Frieda Dieber accepted Sara as part of her name as required by law. Archives of the Hanseatic City of Lübeck, Staatliche Polizeiverwaltung 124.

Although Frieda was not included in the December 1941 deportation to Riga, which affected the majority of Jews still living in Lübeck, she still experienced the many further legal restrictions. Most likely the 1 September 1941 Police Order hit her hard. The Police Order forced her to wear the “yellow star,” which labelled her as being a Jew, when in public.

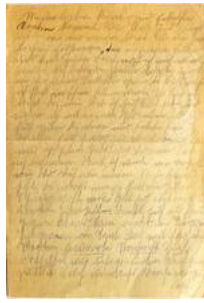
According to the recollections of her grandson she was however not too concerned about these orders and for example she went to a movie without the “yellow star.” Jews were strictly forbidden to attend the movies.

In the summer of 1942 Frieda received her “Evacuation Notice.” It was officially called “a change of residence” to a “seniors’ home in Bohemia, now a large district in the Czech Republic. It is most likely that Frieda and others like her had to prepay for this “accommodation in a home.” Her daughters helped her pack two trunks with clothing and household articles.

A neighbour on Bismarckstraße, one Erna Gogowsky, kept a diary and noted the following for 18 June 1942:

“Mrs. Dieber, the Jew who lives nearby, must leave Lübeck in three days. Throughout the day I have seen how small and large articles as well as furniture have been picked up by her children. In spite of it all I never realized that she had to leave Lübeck. Her children have tried everything to reverse the order but to no avail. She is only allowed to take bed linen, clothing and 50 Marks. It is said she is going to a seniors’ residence in Bohemia. Nothing more is known. Isn’t that hard on such an old woman?”

Her husband was Aryan, all her children have married Aryans and yet she must move. Her children have offered to take her in even without a ration card for her. Even that had no effect. The furniture will be confiscated by the Finance Office. The flat will be given to people who have been bombed out.”



Frieda Dieber's
farewell letter. From
the family's private
collection.

On her last evening in Lübeck, which Frieda was allowed to spend the night at her daughter Lotte's flat and not at the assembly point at St. Annenstraße 11, she wrote her farewell letter to her daughter Elli, son-in-law Paul and her grandchildren Bernd and Jutta. Among other things one reads in the letter:

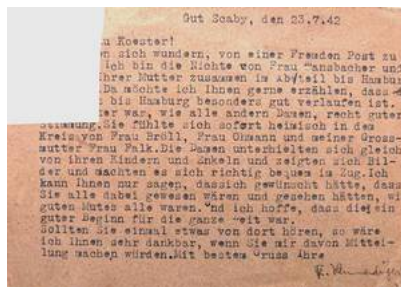
„. . my dear Juttalein, your picture is bringing me much joy and I will always treasure it. My dears, you know how I love you all and I want to especially thank you, Paul. You were, yes, always a good son-in-law. May God repay your children for everything.” Frieda had received a telegram from her sister, Helene, and her husband, that they too were required “to move” to Bohemia. “Therefore, they will be moving in the next few days, hopefully where I will be. That would bring me immense joy. Hopefully I will be able to write you soon. . . Now my dear grandchildren, Bernd and Jutta, farewell. I wish you good health. I hope that we will see each other in the future. It is 10 o'clock in the evening. Otto and Lotte send their greetings. Thank you herewith for everything. With never ending love and many kisses.”

Her elder daughter, Lotte, accompanied her to St. Annen-Straße on 19 July 1942 at 5 in the morning. She was given the number 792 and from there the 74 year old was deported to the Theresienstadt Ghetto via Hamburg on “Transport VI/2.” She never again saw her two trunks with her belongings.

The remainder of her belongings left in Lübeck were auctioned off by the Alwin Pump Auction House with the proceeds going to the State Treasury.

A few days after her mother's deportation, Frieda's daughter, Lotte Köster, received a postcard in the mail from a Mrs Hemmerdinger upon which the following was written:

„You are surely wondering, why you are receiving a postcard from a stranger. I am the niece of Mrs. Mansbacher and I traveled to Hamburg in the same compartment as your mother. Therefore I would like to tell you that the trip to Hamburg went especially well. Your mother, as well as the other women in the compartment, was in a really good mood. She immediately felt at home in the company of Mrs. Bröll, Mrs. Ohmann and my grandmother, Mrs. Falk. The ladies quickly began talking about their children and grandchildren. They showed each other their pictures and were truly relaxed on the train. I can only tell you that I wish you had been there and seen what a good attitude their all had. And I hope that this good start carried through to the end of their trip. If you should ever hear from them, I would be so thankful, if you could tell how they are getting along.”



Postkarte vom 23.7.1942, Familienbesitz
Dieber

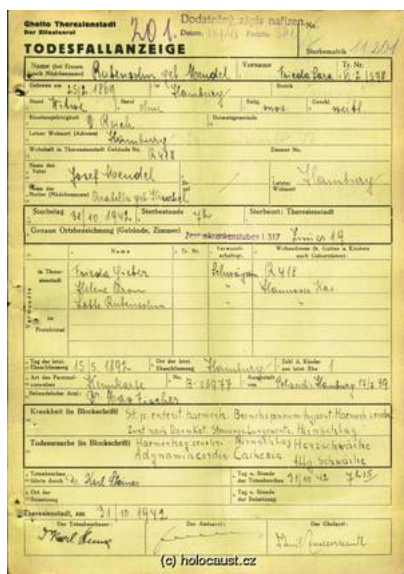


Postcard dated 23.7.1942, from the Dieber Family's private collection.

These lines were written by a Theresa Hemmerdinger, born in Berlin 1911 who was preparing her emigration to Palestine on an estate called Skaby near Berlin. She had come to Lübeck to say good-bye to her Grandmother, her aunt and other relatives.

In Frieda Dieber's family the postcard was cared for like a number of short handwritten notes from the Teresin Ghetto stating things like: "I am fine". and "It is nice here." Or "I'm in an old people's home, the accommodation is very good,"

But the reality was completely different. "For the most part it was older people who arrived at Teresien from Germany during those months. More than half of them were over 65. They arrived at the train station in sealed trucks/box cars. Many of them had been traveling for over 20 hours and then with their last ounce of strength had to drag their 50 kg/110 pounds of allowed luggage a distance of 4 km/2 plus miles to Theresienstadt. When the trucks/box cars were opened many of those inside fell out half unconscious. The dead and dying remained in the trucks/box cars. One train transport after another arrived at the station. No one knew where all these people would be accommodated since the ghetto was already filled past its capacity. The Elders' Council and the council's Relief Services Committee were completely overwhelmed. The food ration per person was steadily decreased while the death rate increased. In June of 1942 all of the barracks were overfilled. In July there was absolutely no room left in the available buildings. People had to sleep in cellars meant for cheese storage, in court yards, in entrance ways to buildings and in the attics."

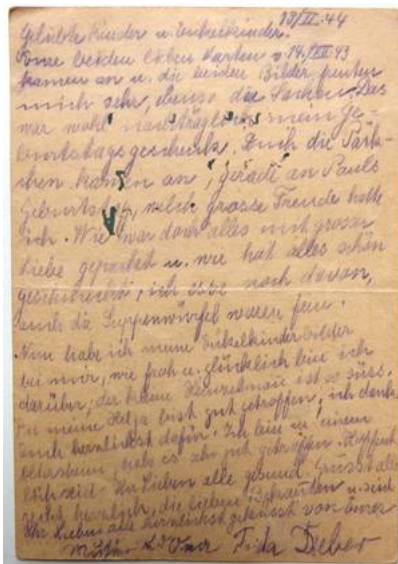


Death notification for Frieda Dieber's sister-in-law, Frieda Rubensohn, née Mendel.

On her postcards from Terezin Frieda Dieber used the following addresses in the Ghetto: Neue Gasse 18, then Bahnhofstraße 6-16 and finally Hauptstraße 02/18.

Her children regularly sent parcels with food and clothes from Lübeck. Pictures of her grandchildren were a source of exceptional joy.

„ Now I have my grandchildren with me, how happy am I about it; the little Heinzelmann is so sweet. You, my Helga, look very nice on the picture, thank you so much für it,“ (13.2.1944)



Postcards from Frieda Dieber sent from the Ghetto Teresien dated 13 Feb. and 6 June 1944, from the family's estate



In the last months of her life Frieda may have been taken care of by her brother, Bernhard Rubensohn, who along with he wife, Gertrude, nee von Halle, was transported to Theresienstadt in January of 1944. The married couple had lived in Rostock, 100 km/60 miles east north east of Lübeck. They had fled to Holland after Bernhard had been released from prison after his arrest during the November 1938 pogrom. After the occupation of Holland by the German Wehrmacht (Army) they were taken to the Westerbork Camp in Holland and then were deported to Teresin on 18 January 1944.

In the ghetto the married couple were housed on Lange Straße. “I am able to see Uncle Bernhard and Aunt (Gertrude) every day. Health wise I am doing relatively well. My longing for all of you is very great and I always think of you.” Thus wrote Frieda in her last postcard to Lübeck on 6 June 1944.



Bernhard Rubensohn und Gertrude Rubensohn, geborene, Familienbesitz

Frieda Dieber died on 25 July 1944 t the age of 76 years. For two long years she survived the hunger, cold, filth and suffering in the Teresin Ghetto. in her casse a notification of her death appare tly does not exist in contrast to the usual practice of issuing one.



Postcard from Bernhard Rubensohn to Curt Dieber dated 14 Sept. 1944, from the family's estate.

Frieda's brother and sister-in-law remained in contact with the relatives in Lübeck. But on 9 October 1944 both of them were deported to Auschwitz and it can be assumed that shortly after their arrival at the death camp they were murdered in a gas chamber.

Frieda Dieber's brother, Adolf, had committed suicide on 8 June 1938 as would Franz later on. Only her brother Albert Rubenson and his family were able to flee from the persecution, emigrating to Palestine.



Erich and Helga Dieber 1942, from the family's private estate

Frieda Dieber's children and grandchildren survived the last years of Nazi rule in Lübeck. Though they were discriminated against as „Jewish interrelated“, their grandsons Erich Dieber and Bernd Krauthammel were drafted in the war years into the Wehrmacht like their son Curt Dieber. Bernd Krauthammel did not survive the war, he perished in February 1945.