



Marlesgrube 41
Benzion, Sara und Rahel Morgenstern



Marlesgrube 41 - The Morgenstern Family

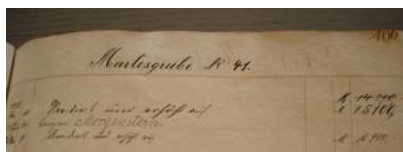
The Morgenstern family lived at Marlesgrube (streetname) 41 from 1915 until May 1940. The house they had lived in was destroyed in the 1942 bombing of Lübeck. For this reason Gunter Demnig laid his Memorial Stones for the Morgenstern family near the entrance of the present day school on Marlesgrube.



Approximately at this location there was a building with the address Marlesgrube 41 until 1942.

Benzion Morgenstern (born 9 December 1864 in Rypin, Poland) and his wife, Frieda, nee Mischka, immigrated to Lübeck in 1900 from the Polish town of Rypin, which is situated east of Thorn (today Toruń/Poland). They were both 36 years old when they immigrated to Lübeck with their two young children, daughter Sara, who was seven years old (born in Rypin on 4 November 1893) and son Herman, who was four years old upon their arrival in their new home town.

During their first years in Lübeck the family moved several times. First they lived on Große Gröpelgrube, next on Stavenstraße, then on Balauerfohr and lastly on Marlesgrube in 1914. First they rented rooms at Marlesgrube 28 then bought the house at Marlesgrube 41.



An entry in the records of the Fire Insurance Fund for Marlesgrube 41 (from the archives of Hansestadt Lübeck, 32 Brandassekuranzkasse, Häuserregister, St. Marien-Quartier)

The Morgenstern family went through many hardships. After their second son, Joseph, was born in 1901, a third son, Emanuel, was born in 1903 but died when he was only a few days old. On 14 October 1904 Rahel and her twin sister were born, but her twin sister died nameless three days later. In September 1906 their ten year old son, Hermann, died of cirrhosis of the liver. Finally, Lea, born in August of 1913, died at the age of two. Thus only three of the Morgenstern's seven children lived to move into the house, which their father had bought.

Benzion Morgenstern had a second-hand shoppe on the ground floor of his home.



An advertisement from 15 September 1926 in the Lübecker Generalanzeiger (the Lübecker

Inscriptions at the installation:

HIER WOHNTE
BENZION
MORGENSTERN
JG. 1864
DEPORTIERT 1941
ERMORDET IN
RIGA

HIER WOHNTE
SARA MORGENSTERN
JG. 1893
DEPORTIERT 1941
ERMORDET IN
RIGA

HIER WOHNTE
RAHEL
MORGENSTERN
JG. 1904
HEIMATORT
VERLASSEN 1936
DEPORTIERT 1941
ERMORDET IN
RIGA

installation
29 Juli 2009

Following completion of his schooling Joseph Morgenstern was able to complete a vocational training course in the Noa Honig department store and worked thereafter as a bookkeeper. It seems that he was very shy and an introvert. Rahel Morgenstern worked as a nanny in people's homes and as a children's nurse in orphanages. She found employment in Altona (near Hamburg), Frankfurt am Main, Mainz, Wyk on the Island Föhr and in the 1930's worked in Travemünde during the summer months. Her other siblings, Joseph and Sara, remained with her parents.

Frieda Morgenstern died in January 1928 at 64 years of age. She is buried in the Jewish Cemetery in Moisling. Her tombstone is inscribed with her Jewish first name, Frumet. It is almost certain that her children, who died before her, were also buried in the Moisling cemetery, but no trace of their graves can be found there.



A 1928 photo of Rahel Morgenstern (on the right), her friend, Martha Doum and Martha's son, Adolf, taken in Lübeck. (From the Estate of Abraham Domb-Dotan, Israel)

In 1936 Rahel Morgenstern moved to Hamburg. The Kultussteuer*) files (Jews don't have a "church" like Catholics or Protestants therefore this tax is called "Kultussteuer" in German) of the Jewish community reveal that her address for places of residence and employment were the same: Brahmsalle 15 I c/o Levi; Kielerallee 13 I c/o Rabbiner; Klosteralle 22 E c/o Magnus and finally the Israelites' Hospital at Eckernförderstr. 4, where she worked as a cook's helper. According to the community's records she paid no taxes due to her small income.

*)translator's note: Kultussteuer, is the name of the German church tax when applied to the Jewish denomination as Jews don't have churches. In Germany churches and bodies of other denominations have the legal right to raise assess this tax, normally a percentage of their members' income-tax. The 'churches' decide upon the percentage and the tax is collected in conjunction with the income-tax.

Joseph Morgenstern was arrested during the pogrom of November 1938. He was held in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp (north of Berlin) from 15 December 1938 to 10 January 1939. He was released because he and other Jewish men from Lübeck were able to obtain ship's passages to Shanghai.

However it was not only Joseph who Benzion Morgenstern and his daughters had to worry about. The windows of their second hand business were destroyed in the 9 November 1938 pogrom. The business closed in December due to the passage of the "Exclusion of Jews from Commerce and Business" law. At the beginning of December the police made an inspection of the premises and found that the business was still open because the owner, due to his foreign citizenship, was permitted to stay open to the end of December but only one week later a second inspection discovered the situation had changed, as recorded in a police report."



13 December 1938
police
report.Hansestadt
Lübeck Archives,
State Police
Administration 126.

Bertha and Dora Lexandrowitz, who lived at Marlesgrube 50, wrote letters to their relatives, who had already emigrated to Shanghai. From these letters more can be learned about the Morgensterns. One June 1939 letter reports,

"The Poles have been given very short notice, in that in a few days they will be forced to

emigrate. Nor is there any other option for them and they are extremely uneasy and worried."

And a letter from 21 August 1939 recounts,

"Rahel Morgenstern is also anxiously waiting for a permit and Mr. M and Sara hope to be able to travel there as well." (p. 61)

The before mentioned permit was a working visa for England, which was absolutely necessary in order to emigrate to England. The files of the Hamburg Religion Authority contain this remark,

"Removed Feb. 39, emigrated"

but then the war began on 1 September 1939, which eliminated all hopes of fleeing to England.

Shortly after the outbreak of the war the Lübecker sisters wrote to their nephew Rolf in Shanghai:

"Could not Joseph M. teach you and a few other children?? He certainly could do that and would thereby earn some money." (p. 64)

A 5 May 1940 letter reads,

"The Morgensterns will be moving to the Asyl and indeed will have two rooms and a kitchen in an apartment from Buschner." (p. 88)

The seniors home of the Jewish community in Lübeck was called the Asyl and was located at St. Annen-Straße 11. Heinrich Buschner, a non-Jew, was the caretaker of the Jewish community's property. He became so upset at the 1939 destruction of the Synagogue he spoke out publicly against the Gestapo about this blasphemy for which the Gestapo arrested him. Through the efforts of the pastor of the Aegidien Church Buschner was released and then the pastor tried to have him admitted to the Strecknitz facility for the mentally ill. Presumably Benzion Morgenstern was forced to sell his house, in order to raise funds to pay the required fees for their planned emigration and living expenses until they emigrated.

Also many letters noted they had received Joseph Morgenstern's greetings and extended greetings to him. Finally Dora Lexandrowitz, after moving to Hamburg, wrote at the beginning of January 1941 about a visit to Lübeck,

"I had a wonderful noon meal with meat at Morgenstern's . . . Does Joseph come to visit you? How is he doing?" (p. 116)

Benzion Morgenstern and both his daughters, Sara and Rahel, were deported to Riga, Latvia, on 6 December 1941. It is not known whether they had died in the Jungfernhof camp or were shot in the Bikerniekiwald (Bikernieki Forest) in Riga in February and March of 1942 or whether Sara and Rahel were selected to become slave labourers in work details. If they had been selected then it is possible that upon the approach of the Russian Army they were transported by train and/or truck and/or forced to march (sometimes called a death march) to the west. Possibly their fate will never be discovered.

At the time of their deportation Benzion Morgenstern was 76 years old, Sara 48 and Rahel 37.



On the reverse side of this photo from the estate of Rosa Korn, nee Lexandrowitz, in Israel is written, "Mr. Morgenstern with his two daughters, Sara and Rahel."

Benzion, Sara and Rahel Morgenstern each have a "Page of Testimony" at Yad Vashem which

were completed by a son of their friend Martha Doum.



Page of Testimony
at Yad Vashem

Joseph Morgenstern survived the war, living in Hongkew ghetto in Shanghai and later emigrated to St. Louis, Missouri, USA.

References in Addition to Standard Reference Materials:

- Adressbücher, Meldekartei und Sterberegister der Hansestadt Lübeck
Archiv der Hansestadt Lübeck, Staatliche Polizeiverwaltung 8, 25, 109, 110, 124, 126, 130 /
Brandassekuranzkasse 32, Häuserregister, St. Marien-Quartier
- Bundesarchiv: Gedenkbuch, Opfer der Verfolgung der Juden unter der
nationalsozialistischen Gewaltherrschaft in Deutschland 1933-1945,
www.bundesarchiv.de/gedenkbuch
- Datenpool JSHD der Forschungsstelle "Juden in Schleswig-Holstein" an der Universität
Flensburg
- "Hoffentlich klappt alles zum Guten...", Die Briefe der jüdischen Schwestern Bertha und
Dora Lexandrowitz, bearbeitet und kommentiert von Heidemarie Kugler-Weimann und
Hella Peperkorn, Neumünster 2000
- Lübecker Generalanzeiger 1925
- Memorbuch zum Gedenken an die jüdischen, in der Schoa umgekommenen Schleswig-
Holsteiner und Schleswig-Holsteinerinnen, hrsg. v. Miriam Gillis-Carlebach, Hamburg 1996
- Albrecht Schreiber, Zwischen Davidstern und Doppeladler, Illustrierte Chronik der Juden in
Moislung und Lübeck, Lübeck 1992
- Staatsarchiv der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg: Kultussteuerkartei der jüdischen
Gemeinde
- Yad Vashem, The Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names
- Zeitzeugengespräche

Heidemarie Kugler-Weimann, 2011

Translation Glen Sellick and Martin Harnisch, December 2011