



## Betty Ohmann, née Giesen, lived at Klosterstraße 5.

For the many years between 1898 until her deportation in 1942 Betty Ohmann lived in her home at Klosterstraße No. 5 with her family, later only with her husband and finally alone as a widow.

### Inscription at the Installation:

HIER WOHNTE  
 BETTY OHMANN  
 GEB. GIESEN  
 JG. 1864  
 DEPORTIERT 1942  
 THERESIENSTADT  
 ERMORDET 17.4.1944

installation  
 29 April 2013



Klosterstraße 5, picture H.K-W 2013

Betty Ohmann was born in Berlin on 8 November 1864. She was the daughter of Ricka Giesen (née Pflaum) and Ludwig Giesen. Her father was a businessman. Nothing is known at this time about her childhood or youth as well as when and how she met her husband. At 22 years of age she married Carl Heinrich Georg Ohmann from Liegnitz, Schlesien now Legnica, Poland.



Marriage Certificate. From the family's private collection.

The marriage ceremony took place in Ludwigslust, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 110 km/75 miles east of Hamburg, where Carl Ohmann worked as a book dealer. Carl (often also written as Karl) Ohmann was born in 1854, which made him almost 10 years older than Betty and he was not Jewish. The couple moved to Hamburg and lived there until 1898.

While they were living in Hamburg they had three daughters: Margarete Henriette Friederike

Emma in 1886, Else Luise Theodora Martha in 1887 and Luise Frieda Charlotte in 1890.

When the five membered Ohmann family moved to Lübeck in 1898 they first lived on Körnerstraße and then at Klosterstraße Nr. 5, in a house they had just built.

In 1899 Carl Ohmann became a member of the “Gesellschaft zur Beförderung Gemeinnütziger Tätigkeit”\*) (Society for the Furtherance of Charitable Activities), as reported in the “Lübeckische Blätter” (Lübeck Pages).

\*)Translators Note: (Quoted from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia) “The Gesellschaft zur Beförderung gemeinnütziger Tätigkeit (“Society for the Furtherance of Charitable Activities”) is Lübeck’s oldest charitable organization”, it was founded in 1789. “The democratically structured and middle class society and its social house (from 1826 at the address Breite Strasse 33, and from 1891 at Königstrasse 5) rapidly became the centre of practical reform work in the spirit of the Enlightenment. The company was involved in the improvement of conditions in many areas of life; for example, it established a River Lifesavers Institute.” ...” It ran the Sparkasse zu Lübeck, a credit union, and up to 1934 the Museum of Art and Cultural History. In 1938 their concert, theatre and lecture hall, the Kolosseum, was moved to the Kronsfordter Allee.” For more information see Wikipedia.

Already while living in Hamburg Betty Ohmann had established herself as a writer using the pseudonym Ella von Kronburg. With this pen name, together with her husband, who in the meantime had become a publisher and editor, she worked for the “Hamburger Hausfrauenzeitung” (Hamburg Housewife Magazine) for about a year (1890-1891). In the “Lexikon deutscher Frauen der Feder” (Encyclopaedia of German Women Writers) Ella von Kronburg was noted as a writer for “A Practical Magazine” – “The Women’s Consulting Time”. Whether or not her articles were on social or even political issues, how to run a home, recipes, or child rearing tips no one has been able to discover at this time.



„Lexikon Deutscher Frauen der Feder“ located in Stadtbibliothek Lübeck (Lübeck City Library)

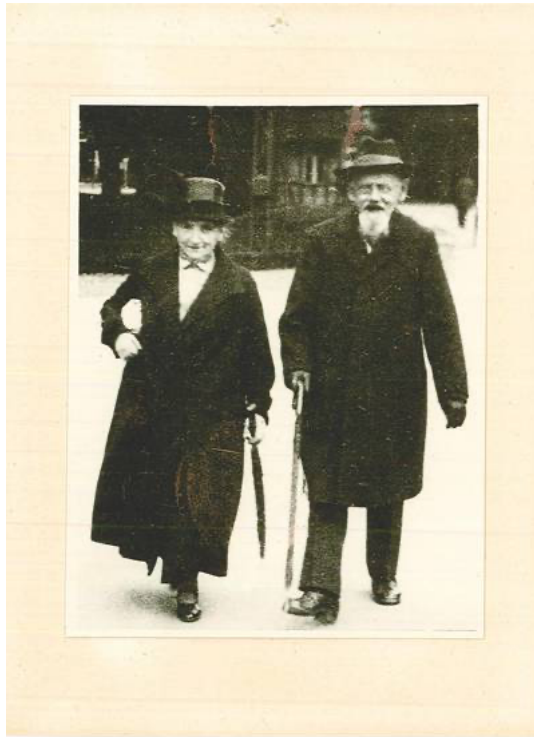


Foto: Ohmann. From the family’s private collection.

Certainly Betty Ohmann continued practicing her writing career when the family moved to Lübeck, since her husband worked as a literary agent in the city and himself wrote feature articles. In the 1910 Lübeck Address Book one finds the listing: “Ohmann, Carl, Writer, office of the national and international press. Publishing house for northern German and international delivery service, commerce and shipping magazines, Klosterstraße 5.” In the 1923 address book the listing is: “Ohmann, Carl, Writer, Literary office for the German national and international press, Klosterstraße 5.”

Researching “Literary Agents” of that time period one finds the following: “Lübeck Agent Carl Ohmann (founded 1900) circulated over a half a dozen feature articles, among them Ohmann’s Feature Article, Ohmann’s Calendars and Ohmann’s Puzzles.” In J. Kürschner’s 1902 “Handbuch

der Presse (Press Handbook)” Karl Ohmann, Lübeck is listed in a catalogue of feature article writers as: “His popular medical, science, fashion, technical, household, agricultural as well puzzle articles can be obtained separately.”



Betty Ohmann and husband, from the family's private collection

In the meantime their three daughters had married. Margarete and her husband, Erich Fischer, an engineer, who was born in 1916, lived in Hamburg. Else, her husband, Walter Bruhn, and their three children, Karl-August, Inge and Hans-Jürgen lived in Rostock. Luise, who had since become a gardener’s assistant, and her husband, Reinhold Aereboe, a farmer, lived in Bad Schwartau. Reinhold was the son of a now retired pastor, who had served in the cathedral church and was living on the Priwall Peninsula in Travemünde. The Lübeck artist, Albert Aereboe, was Reinhold’s brother.

Betty’s husband, Carl Ohmann, died on 3 March 1928 at the age of 74. His obituary in the 6 March 1928 Lübecker Generalanzeiger (General Advertiser) mentions those surviving him as his now widowed wife, their three children, and his sister Emma Ohmann from Liegnitz.



Obituary in the 6 March 1928 Lübecker Generalanzeiger

In that same year Betty Ohmann’s daughter Else’s husband died and so she had to henceforth raise their three children by herself.

In March of 1933 Betty Ohmann had a detailed last will and testament drawn up, which among other things attempted to guarantee that her children would own her house upon her death since they were financially helping her to make ends meet. “So that the interest . . . may be paid after my death, I bequeath my house to my children, since I myself cannot at this time cover all my expenses.” Clearly Betty Ohmann sensed life’s uncertainties which would be created by the new party in government in Germany.

On the old address registration card for the Ohmann family there is a pink note pasted upon,

which reads: Wife is a Jew. Because of this Betty Ohmann allowed herself to be baptized into the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in 1902. The pastor of the cathedral and father of her future son-in-law, Carl Aereboe, conducted the ceremony in his office.

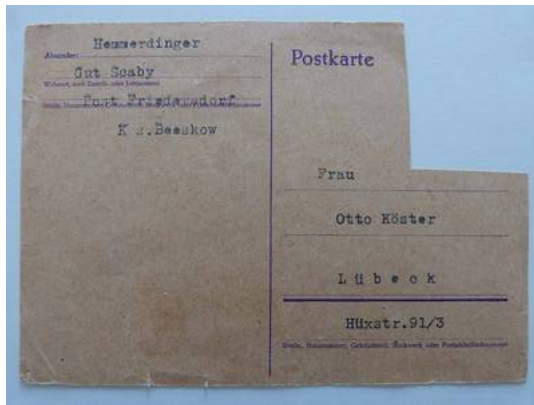


Baptismal Certificates

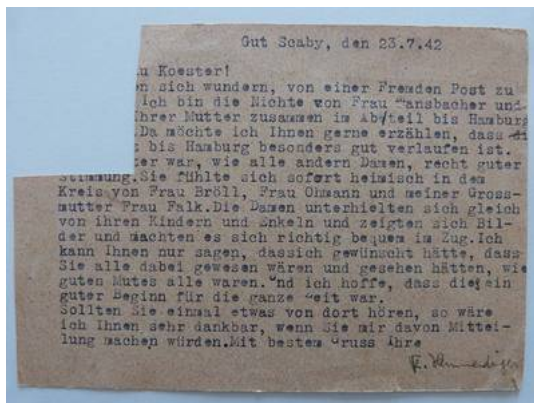
Even her baptism could not protect her from the discrimination that was to come. She was dispossessed of her rights and persecuted. Her daughters were labeled “Mixed Race First Degree” and were isolated. As a consequence Luise and Reinhold Aereboe had to close their garden shop in Bad Schwartau in October of 1934. Afterwards as a “Half Jew” she was unable to find anyone who would hire her.

On 19 July 1942 the 79 year old Betty Ohmann along with several others from Lübeck, mainly Jewish seniors, were deported to Theresienstadt (Teresin near Prague) via Hamburg. The transport had over 800 people and upon arrival in Theresienstadt was recorded as “VI/2”. At least 18 people from Lübeck were among the 800. The official explanation for the deportation was “A change in place of residence” with lodging provided in “a seniors’ home in Bohemia”, and it is quite possible that like many others Betty Ohmann had to pay a sum in advance for this “lodging in a home”.

A postcard was received by the daughter of one Frieda Dieber, another one of those deported, a few days after the train left Lübeck. The postcard described what happened on the first stage of the trip, that is between Lübeck and Hamburg. “You are probably wondering who this stranger is, who is sending you this card. I am the niece of Mrs. Mansbacher and I shared the same compartment to Hamburg with your mother. Therefore, I would like to tell you, that the trip to Hamburg went well. Your mother was in good spirits as were the rest of the women.



Postcard. From the the Dieber family’s private collection



This description of the trip to Hamburg was written by Theresa Hemmerdinger, who was born in

Berlin in 1911. She herself was taking vocational training at the Skaby Estate near Berlin in preparation of emigrating to Palestine. She had been in Lübeck to say goodbye to grandmother, aunt and other relatives. The family of Frieda Dieber treasured this postcard as well as several short notes from Theresienstadt which reported things like, "I am doing well" and "It is nice here" while things were really much different.

"The majority of the people transported to Theresienstadt from Germany during those months were seniors. More than half of them were over 65 years of age. They were transported in sealed goods wagons/box cars to the Bohušovice train station. The trip took 20 hours and then they had to lug and drag along the street their permitted 50 kg/110 pounds of luggage 4 km/3 miles to Theresienstadt. When the wagons/box cars were opened many people fell out half unconscious while the dying and dead remained in the wagons/box cars.

One transport after another arrived at Theresienstadt. No one knew where all these people would find a bed since the ghetto had more people in it than there was room. The Council of Elders and the Relief Service were overwhelmed. The food ration per person was continually being reduced, and as a consequence the death rate rose. In June of 1942 all of the barracks were occupied to overflowing and in July there absolutely no room left in them. People had to sleep in underground bunkers, in the courtyards, in the entrance halls to buildings, and in the attics." (www.ghetto-theresienstadt/info/Das Ghetto der Alten)

For almost two years Betty Ohmann suffered from hunger, and the cold, filth and disease in the ghetto. She died on 18 April 1944 at 81 years of age. On 5 October 1945 before the Hamburg Provincial High Court two survivors of the ghetto, Johanna Siegmund and Erna Plünnecke, testified in regards to her death: "Since we are Jews, we were evacuated to Theresienstadt in July 1942. We were evacuated along with Betty Ohmann, nee Giesen, Klosterstraße 5, Lübeck. Mrs. Ohmann had shared a room with us. Then she was moved to the seniors' home in Theresienstadt. There she died on 18 April 1944. We saw her body. We were also present at the burial."

Since there is no death certificate for Betty Ohmann, which is unusual since in most cases one was issued upon death, her family had to be content with this testimony.

At the laying of a Stolperstein in front Betty Ohmann's last residence at Klosterstraße 5, Lübeck, her great-granddaughter read this poem:

„Über viele Jahrzehnte

Schweigen

wenig Worte

wenig Wissen

„During the many decades

keeping quiet

few words spoken

little known

aber doch spürbar:

Trauer, Fassungslosigkeit und Empörung

in der Familie

in den Generationen

but still noticed:

sorrow, bewilderment and indignation

by the family

by all the generations

und nun endlich:

ein kleiner Stein

ein Stolperstein

ein Gedenkstein

ein Ruhestein

and now finally:

a small stone

a Stolperstein

a memorial stone

a resting place stone

eine traurige, aber beruhigende Erinnerung

a sorrowful but quieting reminder

und ein gutes Gefühl!

and a good feeling!

Mit Dank von Herzen im Namen der Familienangehörigen:

Brigitte Nüchter und Timm Nüchter (Urenkelin und Ur-Urenkel von Betty Ohmann)

With heart felt thanks in the name of her family:

Brigitte Nüchter and Timm Nüchter,

Betty Ohmann's great-granddaughter and great-great-grandson

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