

Nachmann LEVY

24 Apr 1829 – 20 Sep 1903

Nachmann Levy, son of **Hirsch Levy** and **Betty Lewien**, was born on 24 Apr 1829. It is likely that he was named after his maternal grandfather, **Levy Nachmann Lewien**, who it is believed, died in the same year that Nachmann was born. Nachmann Levy's occupation was *Kaufmann*, and following the deaths of his older brother **Salomon Levy** in 1856, and his father **Hirsch Levy** in 1865, he took over the family's business of running a general store in Hohenbostel.

On 30 Aug 1866, in Linden, he married **Johanne Meyer**, born in 1840. She was the daughter of **Isaac Meyer** from Neuhaus on the Elbe River, in the province of Mecklenburg.



Johanne Meyer and Nachmann Levy



Nachmann Levy - enhanced



Johanne Meyer - enhanced

Nachmann and Johanne had four children:

- (i) **Hermann** b. 10 May 1868
- (ii) **Julius** b. 31 Jan 1870
- (iii) **Dina** b. 19 Jun 1872.
- (iv) **Siegfried** b. 11 Dec 1882.

Hermann died on 7 Aug 1870 at age 2.

Around 1870 Nachmann Levy bought House No. 9 at the main crossroad in Hohenbostel. He also bought the neighbouring House No. 10 in 1871. The houses were originally built in the 1730s.



This picture, possibly taken before 1911, shows Nachmann Levy's general store in Hohenbostel. The two houses at the centre and left are the ones he purchased in the 1870s.



These two photos of the same houses were taken later, possibly in the 1920s, when they were Leo Goldschmidt's store and family home.

Nachmann died in Hohenbostel on 20 Sep 1903 at the age of 73. Johanne is believed to have died around 1910 at the age of 70.

The author has a copy of the eulogy delivered on his death in 1903. It reveals some aspects of Nachmann Levy's life and personality.

“Born a weak child, the years of his youth were often interspersed by illness. This did not hinder him from acquiring an exceptional level of education for the time in which he lived. After he had gone away from home to learn his occupation, he returned again to his parent's house where he established his livelihood with the smallest of means. But diligence in his work, steadfastness and perseverance in his endeavours, combined with righteousness and conscientiousness, crowned his efforts and work with admirable success. And so, he presented, until the end of his life, the image of a virtuous, competent merchant, an indefatigable, faithful worker tending his plot. And so he gained an honoured place in the community, and enjoyed a high regard in his life.”

“He loved his children profoundly, not as a commanding, strict father, but rather as a benevolent friend, who influenced them with goodness and gentleness. As he concerned himself with their health and well-being, he also took pains to give them a quality education.”

Nachmann Levy's reputation for gentleness and piety continued after his death. My mother remembers her teacher at the Jewish elementary school in Barsinghausen telling stories about her grandfather. She was told that, following a fire in the synagogue, only one place was left undamaged, and that was the seat belonging to Nachmann Levy. This was attributed to divine intervention. Nachmann Levy was strict in his observance of the Sabbath, such that on a Saturday the non-Jewish residents of Hohenbostel knew they could not disturb him until three stars were visible in the sky, signalling an end to the Sabbath.

My mother retold other family legends. During one of his illnesses Nachmann Levy was believed to have died, but miraculously came back to life. On another occasion, he was wakened during the night by a loud noise in his house and went downstairs to investigate. He wandered around in the dark but could not find the source of the disturbance and went back to bed. Next morning the family found a large hole in the flagstone floor where its support had collapsed into the basement. Nachmann had unknowingly walked over this hole in the dark and could easily have been killed if he had fallen through. Both these incidents were regarded as a sign of divine intervention on behalf of a most pious man.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Nachmann Levy', written in dark ink on a light background.

Nachmann Levy's signature, from 1899

Following Nachmann's death, his son Julius ran the family store, but died around 1910 at age 39. He was unmarried. The store then passed to Nachmann's son-in-law Leo Goldschmidt, who died in 1936. The property was sold by Leo's heirs in 1939. The money was urgently needed to finance the emigration of my parents and Leo's widow Irma. In 1961 the old houses were demolished and replaced by a mini shopping mall.



The new building on the former Goldschmidt property in Hohenbostel in 1996