

# **Levy and Levisohn Families of Hohenbostel and Barsinghausen**

A Family Tree of the descendants of the family patriarch (Levi Joseph of Barsinghausen) can be viewed at this [link](#).

Compiled by

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## Preliminary Notes

This document is an updated version of “*The Levisohn Family of Barsinghausen*”, a booklet I wrote in 2000 in response to an inquiry from a distant relative (a descendant of the LEVISOHN family) living in the United States. That booklet was never intended to be a public document. I prepared just one copy, and sent it to them.

More than 20 years later I was surprised to see the title “*The Levisohn Family of Barsinghausen*” on Google as a published book, with my name as author. It was even listed among the holdings of the National Library of Israel. Presumably, when the original recipient had no more use for it, they passed it on to a used bookseller, who advertised it, and from there it made its way onto the internet.

Since then, I have received inquiries from others who have found this title using Google. They have asked me for a copy of this book. I do not possess any copies of the original booklet. However, I still have the original computer file.

In response, I have decided to place a new 2023 version of the document on my website. In the process of reviewing the older version, I realized that a significant update was required, because it contained personal information about some people who are possibly still living. That is not appropriate for a document that is available to the general public. Therefore, such references have been removed. Other updates were also necessary.

Nonetheless, in a document of this nature, despite good intentions, it is almost impossible to ensure that all unacceptable personal information has been removed. If anyone reading this document feels that it contains information that should not be available to the general public, I ask that they should write to me, and I will attend to the matter.

## Acknowledgements

During their formative years, in the early 1900s, my mother and her four siblings lived in the village of Hohenbostel, near Barsinghausen, near the city of Hannover, in Germany. My mother, Lore STREAT née GOLDSCHMIDT (1908-2000) and her sister Grete WEINBERG née GOLDSCHMIDT (1902-2001) provided me with much information in this document from their memories.

I am deeply indebted to Friedel HOMEYER (1931-2008), who I corresponded with and visited in Barsinghausen in 1996. Prior to his retirement, he was head of the *Landkreis Hannover*, a government agency that served the small towns and villages in the 2,300 sq. km. region around the city of Hannover. In the years 1975-1982 he amassed material about the history of the Jews in this region. He published several books, and was awarded prizes for his contributions.

## Names in this Document

Jews in the Kingdom of Hannover were not required to formally adopt surnames until about 1828. Before that date, they were mostly known by their given name followed by their father's name. Thus, if a man's given name was Levi and his father's name was Moses, he was known among his friends and neighbours as Levi Moses. In synagogue, where Hebrew was used, he was probably known as Levi ben Moshe.

Among his Jewish friends and neighbours he may have also been known by a Yiddish nickname derived from his given name (a common nickname associated with the given name Levi. was "Leib").

Wikipedia has an extensive article on Jewish naming practices over the ages and in different regions, and if the reader is interested it provides much additional information.

What is important, in this document, is to note that when name like Levy Moses is given, and it is written in lower case characters, Levi is the given name, and Moses is a patronymic (father's name). If it were written Levi MOSES it would mean that MOSES was the family's permanent surname. Some Jewish families did adopt permanent surnames before 1828, but for the most part, they did not do so until it was required by the authorities.

In this document, if a name is given as Levi (Leib) MOSES, the name in parentheses is the name that was colloquially used by person's family, friends and neighbours.

## Women's Names in this Document

Unless specifically stated otherwise, in this document, women are always referred to by their maiden name.

This does not imply that Jewish women did not follow the normal custom of adopting their husband's surname after marriage. Using maiden names is simply a convention that I have adopted to avoid confusion.

## Links

The symbol ↓ is a link to further information about this person later in the document. Click on the symbol to immediately link to the new place.

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## Barsinghausen

Barsinghausen, 20 km south-west of Hannover, has existed for more than 1,000 years. Augustine nuns established a convent here in the 12th century, beside the Deister forest. During the Reformation in 1543 the convent became a Protestant women's residence. Around 1820 Barsinghausen had 63 houses and 546 inhabitants and its industries included a quarry and coal mine. By 1931 it had 5,000 inhabitants and was connected to Hannover by streetcar. By 1965 the population had grown to 12,900.



The Synagogue in Barsinghausen<sup>1</sup>

The earliest documentary evidence that Jews lived in Barsinghausen is a *Schutzbrief* issued to a Jew, Salomon Ruben, on 2 October 1702. It appears that Salomon Ruben and his family were the only Jews in Barsinghausen. Life was not easy for him. In 1725 the leader of the shoe and leather workers issued a formal complaint that the Jew Salomon Ruben should not be permitted to engage in the leather and tanning business. In 1734 a ruling was issued forbidding Salomon Ruben from conducting Jewish worship services in his house. By 1748 it is recorded that Salomon Ruben had died and there were no *Schutzjuden* in Barsinghausen.

The next mention of Jews is in the year 1770 where it is recorded that a Jew Levi (Leib) Joseph, formerly of Springe (another small community about 13 km to the southeast) had been given a *Schutzbrief* to live in Barsinghausen. He died in 1808.

By the year 1816 there were a total of 17 Jewish inhabitants in Barsinghausen; 8 males (4 of them over and 4 under the age of 14 years), and 9 females, (4 over and 5 under the age of 14 years). All of them were related to the deceased Levi Joseph either directly or indirectly by marriage.

The numbers of Jews in Barsinghausen increased during the 19th century as shown below. They established a small synagogue and cemetery in the 1840s. At its peak in 1925, the community numbered 68 Jews.

	1871		1885		1895		1905		1925		1939	
	Total	Jews	Total	Jews	Total	Jews	Total	Jews	Total	Jews	Total	Jews
Barsinghausen	2243	47	3111	43	4017	42	4915	45	4725	65		23

The original Jewish cemetery was a small plot, 890 square metres, in the Deister forest. From the early 1800s until about 1910 when it was filled, Jews who died

<sup>1</sup> The illustration shown above is an artist's rendition. It was drawn long after World War II, and should not be considered accurate.

in Barsinghausen and its surroundings were buried in this cemetery. Afterwards a new Jewish cemetery was opened.

Sadly, the old cemetery in Barsinghausen became a victim of the hatred that swept through Germany during the Nazi era. Desecration of Jewish cemeteries was a common occurrence. In the mid 1930s the old cemetery was attacked by local members of the SA and SS. Gravestones were knocked over and broken. Complete obliteration, however, came later.

Early in 1945, as Allied troops were invading Germany, businesses that had been bombed out of the cities sought to relocate in rural areas to maintain production for the war. In Barsinghausen, a Hannover building supply dealer decided to relocate his business to the site of the one-time Jewish cemetery. With the approval of the local Nazi leaders he started excavating the site.

In April 1945 American troops occupied the region around Hannover. One might have expected that further damage to Jewish cultural sites would have been stopped immediately, but it was only in August/September 1945 that the construction work on the site of the old Jewish cemetery was halted. By this time the cemetery was completely destroyed and all the old gravestones were gone.

In 1982, one gravestone was found, that of Jeanette LEVISOHN née COHN. It was located on the grounds of the one-time Teacher Training School, which had been used by the Nazi Party during the period 1937-45. The stone was badly damaged. Other gravestone fragments were also found on the same site. To this day no-one knows who moved the stones, or how.

In 1982, thanks to the efforts of Friedel Homeyer, a new gravestone for Jeanette LEVISOHN née COHN, bearing a copy of its original Hebrew and German inscription, was erected on the site of the old cemetery. It stands as a memorial to the others whose graves were destroyed. Subsequently a second gravestone was found and re-erected on the site.



The photograph at the left, taken in 1996, shows what remains of the site of the old Jewish cemetery in Barsinghausen. Jeanette LEVISOHN née COHN's tombstone is partially obscured by leaning tree trunks in the center of the picture.

The “new” Jewish cemetery, which was opened in 1910, was not destroyed during the 1930s and 1940s and its Jewish graves remain in reasonably good condition. This cemetery includes the graves of the author's grandparents, Leo GOLDSCHMIDT and Dina LEVY. There is evidence of some damage to the gravestone of Dina LEVY, but it has been repaired. During World War II, unused space in the cemetery was used to bury Russian prisoners-of-war (non-Jews) who had been brought to Germany as slave labourers and had died during their captivity.

# Hohenbostel

Hirsch LEVY was the first Jew to establish his home in Hohenbostel, about 2 km north-west of Barsinghausen. This may have been around 1820, when he married Levi Joseph's granddaughter. Around 1870 - 1890 another Jewish family named BALLIN was also present in Hohenbostel, but otherwise the LEVY family was the only Jewish family in the village. Farmland to the south-west of the village centre (between Hohenbostel and the neighbouring village of Luttringhausen) was called *Judenkamp*, probably because the Jewish residents grazed their animals there. About 1870 Nachmann LEVY purchased Houses No. 9 and No. 10 at the main crossroad in the centre of Hohenbostel. House No. 9 was both the family home and the general store.



Judenkamp



Hohenbostel House No. 9 (at left)

Among the documents in the possession of the author is a copy of an 1832 letter by a religious teacher, Jacob ALTMANN, to the leader of the Jewish community in Twistringen (near Bassum) applying for employment. The letter is in German, written in Hebrew script. In 1832 Jacob ALTMANN was living in Hohenbostel where he was employed as a religious teacher, presumably for the Jewish community in Barsinghausen (one assumes that Hirsch LEVY did not employ a religious teacher only for his own children). Jacob ALTMANN evidently did move to Twistringen, because he was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Bassum in 1864.

The numbers of Jews in Hohenbostel during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century is shown below.

	1871		1885		1895		1905		1925		1939	
	Total	Jews	Total	Jews	Total	Jews	Total	Jews	Total	Jews	Total	Jews
Hohenbostel	400	9	564	12	785	5	924	4	897	3		1

# Earliest Ancestor

## Levi Joseph

**Levi (Leib) Joseph**, the earliest traceable ancestor of the family, received a *Schutzbrief* on 31 December 1770 permitting him to live in Barsinghausen. Previously he had lived in Springe, another small community about 13 km to the southeast.

He did not have a surname. His given name was Levi (or colloquially, Leib) and the name Joseph was a patronymic (i.e. his father's name). Jews in Barsinghausen and elsewhere in the Kingdom of Hannover did not adopt surnames until about 1828. It is likely that he was the only *Schutzjude* in Barsinghausen from 1770 until about 1792.

It must be noted that Jewish names from this period were often confusing (e.g. Levi Joseph's son was called Joseph Levi). Also, spellings were not consistent. In old documents relating to Barsinghausen one finds similar but slightly different names. My conclusion from interpreting several, occasionally contradictory, pieces of information is that there was one individual called Levi (colloquially known as Leib) Joseph and he died in Barsinghausen around 1808. Based on the dates of birth of his children and other factors, one can guess that he might have been born around 1740.

The records show, at different times, different names for his wife. I have concluded that Levi Joseph married twice; his first wife was **Betti**, and his second wife was **Hanne Joseph** (born 1756).

Children by Betti:

- ↓ (i) **Caroline (Keti)** b. before ~1776
- ↓ (ii) **Joseph Levi** b. 4 Jun 1777.

Children by Hanne Joseph:

- (iii) **Meir Levi** b.1783.
- (iv) **a daughter** (name unknown).
- (v) **a daughter** (name unknown).
- (vi) **Isaac Levi** b. 1792.

In a report dated 21 Feb 1814, Hanne Joseph, widow of Leib Joseph, was living in Altenhof with her two sons (Meir Levi aged 31 and Isaac Levi aged 22) and two unmarried daughters. Neither brother had a *Schutzbrief*. In 1817 Isaac Levi requested that the *Schutzbrief* held by his mother be transferred to him. This request was denied.

It is likely that Hanne Joseph and her children were poor. Their names are not mentioned in reports after the year 1817, so it is assumed they were forced to move away.



## Children of Levi Joseph

### Caroline (Keti) Levi

**Caroline (Keti) Levi**, daughter of Levi Joseph and his wife Betti, was born sometime before 1776 and she died around 1821. She married **Levi Nachmann**, born 2 Jan 1768 in Polle (a small town on the Weser river, 56 km south of Hannover). He received a *Schutzbrief* in 1794 allowing him to reside in Barsinghausen. Records for Polle show that in the early 19th century there were three households there with the name Nachmann. Presumably, they were related to Levi Nachmann, but we do not know precisely how. The author is also related to a family called NACHMANN from the town of Bassum, but there is no evidence that the two Nachmann families, of Polle and Bassum, were related to one another.

In Barsinghausen, Levi Nachmann was a *Kaufmann*, dealing in dry goods (i.e. textiles) and grain. He also did some butchering. In a report dated 12 Jan 1816 it states that Levi Nachmann and his wife Karoline, daughter of Levi Joseph, had 7 children:

- ↓ (i) **Betty (Beile)** b. 17 Aug 1795.
- ↓ (ii) **Meier** b. 13 Feb 1801.
- (iii) **Joseph** b. 26 Oct 1803.
- ↓ (iv) **Zacharias** b. 12 Jul 1805.
- ↓ (v) **Lea** b. 12 May 1808.
- (vi) **Zipora** b. 1810 (according to another record b. 5 Feb 1807).
- (vii) **Berend** b. 10 Jul 1814

The 1816 report describes Levi Nachmann as a wealthy man. In 1804 he had received permission to purchase property that was formerly a *Leibzuchthaus* (a dower house), and built himself a new residence on the site. Bear in mind that, according to the strict letter of the law at that time, Jews were not permitted to buy real estate. Other records from the period 1804 to 1825 show that Levi Nachmann attempted to buy other plots of land, leading to protracted legal disputes. In 1824 he received approval to deal in copper and brass.

The youngest child Berend died at age 35, on 18 Jul 1849, in Barsinghausen. No additional information is available about children Joseph and Zipora.

Levi Nachmann adopted the surname **LEWIEN** around 1828. The author has speculated that he may have chosen it because it was similar to his name: Levi N. But that is simply a guess. After 1828 he was known as Levi Nachmann LEWIEN.

In 1829 Levi Nachmann LEWIEN transferred his *Schutzbrief* and his business to his eldest son Meyer LEWIEN. It appears that Levi Nachmann LEWIEN died around 1829.

He had a sister, Fridericke Nachmann, born in 1757 in Polle, who came to live in Barsinghausen. She died on 7 Feb 1840.

## Joseph Levi

**Joseph Levi**, son of Levi Joseph and his wife Betti, was born 4 Jun 1777 in Barsinghausen. His occupation was horse dealer and he also performed some butchering. He married **Henriette (Hendel) LOBENBERG**, born 25 Feb 1776, daughter of Bendix and Rieke LOBENBERG. Hendel died on 16 Aug 1855 in Barsinghausen. Joseph died 23 Jun 1850 in Barsinghausen.

In 1828 he adopted the surname **LEVISOHN**. This choice of name certainly makes sense; Joseph was, after all, the son of Levi.

Joseph and Henriette had four children, all born in Barsinghausen:

- (i) **Betty (Bela)** 23 Jul 1811.
- ↓ (ii) **Levi** b. 18 Oct 1812.
- (iii) **Hanne (Hannchen)** b. 14 Dec 1814.
- (iv) **Rosette** b. Dec 1815.

Betty died at age 72 on 9 Jan 1884, in Barsinghausen. She was unmarried. The cause of her death was deemed to be “old age”. Hanne, also unmarried, died on 11 Jul 1851, in Barsinghausen, at age 36 of “liver disease”. Her occupation is given as *Putzmacherin* (milliner). There is no additional information about Rosette.

The report of 12 Jan 1816 states that Joseph Levi made a reasonable living from horse trading but was not as wealthy as (his brother-in-law) Levi Nachmann, nor did he own any land.

## Grandchildren of Levi Joseph

### Betty (Beile) LEWIEN

**Betty (Beile) LEWIEN**, daughter of Levi Nachmann LEWIEN and his wife Caroline, married **Hirsch LEVY**. See further details [below](#).

### Meier LEWIEN

**Meier LEWIEN**, son of Levi Nachmann LEWIEN and his wife Caroline, was born on 13 Feb 1801, in Barsinghausen. His occupation was *Kaufmann*. On 26 Oct 1836 he married **Henriette BLANK**, born 1813 in Gestorf.

They had eight children, all born in Barsinghausen:

- (i) **David** b. 2 Mar 1840.
- (ii) **Lea** b. 11 Dec 1841.
- (iii) **Levy** b. 1843.
- (iv) **Salomon** b. 11 Feb 1845.
- (v) **Rebecca** b. 22 Dec 1848.
- (vi) **Jacob** b. 1 Feb 1850.
- (vii) **Zipora** b. 19 Jul 1851.
- (viii) **Joseph** b. 25 Mar 1854.

The third son Salomon died soon after birth on 25 Apr 1845. The family then experienced a series of sad deaths beginning in 1868. Daughter Lea is recorded as having died on 24 Jul 1868; she was 26 years old and married (her married name was DANIELS). Her place of residence was recorded as Osnabrück, but she was buried in Barsinghausen. Cause of death was given as *Zehrung*. This is a non-specific term implying weakness or fatigue (i.e. the doctors really didn't know). Oldest son David died at age 30 on 7 Apr 1870, in Barsinghausen. Cause of his death was given as *Zehrung*. Then daughter Zipora died at age 21 in 1873 in Barsinghausen of *Zehrung*. Second son Levy died at age 33 on 1 Jul 1876, in Barsinghausen, also of *Zehrung*. Fifth son Joseph died at age 28 on 12 Feb 1883, in Barsinghausen, also of *Zehrung*.

Thus six of the eight children died young. We do not know what became of the other two, Rebecca and Jacob.

Meier (Meyer) LEWIEN served as *Vorsteher* (Leader) of the Barsinghausen Jewish Community in the 1840s. He died at age 79 on 5 Dec 1880, in Boardinghouses. Cause of death was given as "old age".

## Zacharias Levy LEWIEN

**Zacharias Levy LEWIEN**, son of Levi Nachmann LEWIEN and his wife Caroline, was born on 12 Jul 1805 in Barsinghausen. His occupation was *Handelsmann*. On 11 Jun 1851, in Hannover, he married **Elise (Zere) SCHRAGENHEIM**, born 1828, in Sehnde, Amt Ilten.

They had one child, born in Barsinghausen:

- (i) **Levi** b. 17 Jul 1852.

We do not know what became of this child.

Among the family mementos that my mother kept was an old Haggadah (Passover prayer book) published in 1799. This Haggadah is in Hebrew with translation into German - but the German is in Hebrew characters. An inscription on the front cover indicates that this Haggadah once belonged to Zacharias, when he was young. He has signed his name "Zacharias Levy Nachman" (note that his family only adopted the name LEWIEN in 1828). The inscription includes a German poem, written in Hebrew characters, warning people not to steal his book.



The poem in hand-written Hebrew script reads:

Dieses Buch ist mir lieb  
Wer es mir stiehlt ist ein Dieb.  
Wird er nicht gefangen  
so wird er doch gefangen.  
Es sei Herr oder Knecht  
hängen ist sein Recht.  
Wird er nicht begraben,  
so fressen ihn doch die Raben

The German Script reads:

Dieses ist ein Recht daß an  
jedem Mensch an gefahen werden  
muß.

Zacharias Levy Nachman

Unfortunately the poem loses too much in translation to be presented in English.

Zacharias died at age 48 on 19 Jan 1854, in Barsinghausen. Cause of death was *Zehrung*.

## **Lea LEWIEN**

**Lea LEWIEN**, daughter of Levi Nachmann LEWIEN and his wife Caroline, was born on 12 May 1808, in Barsinghausen. She married **Abraham GOLDSCHMIDT**, born 15 Aug 1800, in Gehrden. As far as we can tell, Abraham was no relation to other GOLDSCHMIDTs in the author's family tree. He died at age 36 on 24 Oct 1836, in Gehrden. Lea died at age 25 on 9 Aug 1833, in Gehrden.

They had one child, born in Gehrden:

- (i) **Israel** b. 12 Sep 1832.

He died at the age of 11 months, on 15 Aug 1833, six days after the death of his mother.

## **Levi LEVISOHN**

**Levi LEVISOHN**, son of Joseph Levi LEVISOHN and his wife Henriette, married **Caroline LEVY**, daughter of his cousin Betty (Beile) LEWIEN and Hirsch LEVY. The marriage lasted only 20 months before she died. He then married **Jeanette COHN**. For further details follow this [link](#).

## Betty LEWIEN and Hirsch LEVY

**Betty (Beile) LEWIEN**, daughter of Levi Nachmann LEWIEN and his wife Caroline, and granddaughter of Levi (Leib) Joseph, was born on 17 Aug 1795, in Barsinghausen. She married **Hirsch LEVY**, born 16 Apr 1785. His father's name was I. Levy. According to the author's aunt Grete WEINBERG née GOLDSCHMIDT, Hirsch LEVY immigrated to the Kingdom of Hannover from Bohemia and settled in Hohenbostel, married a local girl, and made his living as a *Handelsmann* (dealer in second-hand goods). He died on 7 Jan 1865 at age 79, in Hohenbostel. Betty died at age 80 on 24 Sep 1875, in Hohenbostel. Cause of death was "old age".

Betty LEWIEN and Hirsch LEVY had seven children, all born in Hohenbostel:

- ↓ (i) **Caroline** b. 20 Jun 1821.
- (ii) **Marianne** b. 16 May 1822,
- ↓ (iii) **Lea** b. 13 Apr 1825.
- (iv) **Salomon** b. 18 Jun 1827, Hohenbostel,
- ↓ (v) **Nachmann** b. 24 Apr 1829.
- (vi) **Rebecca** b. 11 Feb 1833.
- ↓ (vii) **Zipora** b. 16 Nov 1837.

Marianne was unmarried and lived in the family home in Hohenbostel until she died on 18 Jul 1893 at age 71. According to a family legend told by my mother, Marianne LEVY, in her youth, fell in love with Levi LEVISOHN from Barsinghausen (see page 28), but did not marry him. Even when she was older she used to become faint whenever he came by. Levi was her mother's first cousin, but this degree of consanguinity would not have barred them from marrying. Presumably he did not feel the same way about her.

The oldest son Salomon worked as a *Handelsmann*, but he died at age 28 on 16 Jan 1856, in Barsinghausen.

There is no information on what became of daughter Rebecca.

## Children of Betty LEWIEN and Hirsch LEVY

### Caroline LEVY

**Caroline LEVY**, daughter of Hirsch LEVY and Betty LEWIEN, was born on 20 Jun 1821 in Hohenbostel. She married her mother's cousin **Levi LEVISOHN**. For further details follow this link.

### Lea LEVY

**Lea LEVY**, daughter of Hirsch LEVY and Betty LEWIEN, was born on 1 Jul 1824 in Hohenbostel. On 8 Mar 1854, in Hohenbostel, she married **Herz (Naftali) BENJAMIN**, born 3 May 1818 in Hannover,

They had seven children:

- (i) **Clärchen**, b. 25 Dec 1854, Hannover, d. 22 Oct 1864, Hannover.
- (ii) **Levy**, b. 14 Jun 1857, Hannover.
- (iii) **Marianne**, 27 Jun 1858, Hannover, d. 3 Aug 1858, Hannover.
- (iv) **Benjamin (Bernhard)**, b. 31 Mar 1860, Hannover, d. 16 Aug 1860, Hannover.
- (v) **Sallie (Salomon)**, b. 7 Jun 1862, Hannover.
- (vi) **Julius**, b. 26 Jul 1863, Hannover.
- (vii) **Hermann**, b. 12 Mar 1865, Hannover, d. 12 Aug 1872, Hannover.

Lea died 6 Aug 1872 in Pymont. Herz died 18 Jun 1897 in Hannover.

### Nachmann LEVY

**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 we believe, died in the same year that he was born. Nachmann LEVY's occupation was *Kaufmann* and following the death of his brother in 1856, and his father in 1865, he operated the family's general store in Hohenbostel. On 30 Aug 1866, in Linden, he married **Johanne MEYER**, born on 15 Jan 1840. She was the daughter of Isaac MEYER from Neuhaus-an-der-Elbe, in the province of Mecklenburg.



Nachmann LEVY



Johanne LEVY née MEYER

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 at age 2 on 7 Aug 1870. Julius ran the family store following Nachmann's death, but died himself around 1910 at age 39. He was not married.

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. After Nachmann's death ownership of the properties passed to his son Julius and then to his son-in-law Leo GOLDSCHMIDT. Leo died in 1936 and the properties were sold by his heirs in 1939. The houses were demolished in 1961 and replaced by a mini shopping mall.

Above is Nachmann LEVY's signature, from 1899. He died at age 73 on 20 Sep 1903, in Hohenbostel. Johanne is believed to have died around 1910.

The eulogy delivered on his death in 1903 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 parents' 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 being taught stories about her grandfather in the Jewish elementary school she attended in Barsinghausen. She was taught 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 also 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.

## **Zipora LEVY**

**Zipora LEVY**, daughter of Hirsch LEVY and Betty LEWIEN, was born on 16 Nov 1837. On 28 Feb 1864, in Hannover, she married **Isaac BLUMENTHAL**, a *Kaufmann* (merchant), who was 41 years old at the time of their wedding. They lived in Barsinghausen where they had four children:

- (i) **Hermann**, b. 21 Mar 1865
- (ii) **Albert**, b. 16 Apr 1866
- (iii) **Elise**, b. 6 Jul 1868
- (iv) **Clara**, b. 25 Feb 1872

Isaac BLUMENTHAL died in Barsinghausen in 1873, at the age of 50. It is not known when Zipora died, or what became of her sons Hermann and Albert. During the Holocaust Elise and Clara are believed to have been deported to Minsk, where they died.

## Children of Nachmann LEVY and Johanne MEYER

### Dina LEVY

**Dina LEVY**, daughter of Nachmann LEVY and Johanne MEYER, was born on 19 Jun 1872 in Hohenbostel. On 7 Jun 1899, in Hohenbostel, she married **Leo GO(LDSCHMIDT)**, born 10 Jan 1868 in Stolzenau (son of Isaac GOLDSCHMIDT and Fanny NACHMANN).



The photograph above shows Leo and Dina around the time of their marriage in 1899. Below are their signatures.

*Leo Goldschmidt*      *Dina Goldschmidt  
geborene Levy*



After they were married Leo and Dina lived in Stolzenau, where they had five children:

- ↓ (i) **Kurt**, b. 09 Jan 1901.
- ↓ (ii) **Grete**, b. 13 Dec 1902.
- ↓ (iii) **Anni**, b. 09 Apr 1904.
- ↓ (iv) **Max**, b. 13 Oct 1905.
- ↓ (v) **Lore**, b. 20 Jan 1908.

The photograph above was taken in 1908. In the centre is Dina with Lore on her lap. At the top left is Anni; at the top right is Max. Grete and Kurt are at the lower left and lower right respectively.



Leo GOLDSCHMIDT's store in Stolzenau circa 1911

The picture at the left shows the whole family standing in front of Leo GOLDSCHMIDT's store in Stolzenau. Leo himself is standing in the doorway. From left to right the children are Anni, Kurt, Max, Grete and Lore holding on to her mother's skirt.

The goods in the store window are mainly clothing. The person looking out of the window at the left is Leo GOLDSCHMIDT's assistant, Seelig.

In 1912, Leo wound up his store in Stolzenau and moved to Hohenbostel to operate the general store that had previously been owned by his father-in-law. The business continued to operate under the name "Nachmann Levy" until it was dissolved in the 1930's.

Dina died suddenly on 27 Sep 1919 in Hohenbostel at the relatively young age of 47. In May 1921, in Breslau, Leo married **Irma APPEL**, born 6 Mar 1880 in Kobylin, Posen (daughter of Hermann APPEL and Dorothea FELDMANN). Irma had been a nurse, and she became a second mother to the children, especially the youngest two, Max and Lore.



The GOLDSCHMIDT store in Hohenbostel



Irma APPEL in 1913

Leo contributed to the development of Hohenbostel, where his family were the only Jews. He was a co-founder of the volunteer fire brigade. He was also an active member and regular attendee of the synagogue in Barsinghausen. Leo died on 16 Jun 1936, in Hohenbostel, at the age of 68. At his burial in the cemetery in Barsinghausen a eulogy was given by the teacher and rabbi, Siegfried ROTHSCHILD. He said, in part:

*"...We have lost a man who was who was, for many years, a faithful friend to many of us. One had to know him to understand him. He was not always able to express his feelings the way he truly felt inside; his external manner was often rough, even though he always meant well.*

*Our community has also lost a great deal. Who will fill the empty place he leaves in our synagogue? Year after year, regardless of wind or weather, he did not shy away from making the long walk to attend our Shabbat service. Right up to the last weeks, whenever possible, he always arrived punctually at his place. He also gave of himself in active service to our community. Who, in future, will blow the Shofar for us on the High Holydays? Who will recite the morning prayers on these days in his place? We are but a small community, and so we feel the loss more keenly because it will be so difficult for us to fill the gap which he leaves..."*



Leo Goldschmidt c. 1930

All five children escaped from Germany shortly before the outbreak of World War II. Kurt and Anni went to the United States, Grete to South Africa and Max and Lore to England. Kurt and Max both changed their surname to Goldsmith. Of the five, only Grete did not have children.

Irma also escaped, first to England where, at the age of 60, she went to work as a domestic servant. Later she joined her stepson Kurt in New York. She died on 21 Jun 1973 in New York at the age of 93.

Although she was always known by the family as Irma, her real name was actually Jenny. She adopted the nickname Irma as a young nurse so as not be confused with another Nurse Jenny who worked in the same hospital. As a nurse she served her country with distinction in the First World War.

## Siegfried LEVY

**Siegfried LEVY**, son of Nachmann LEVY and Johanne MEYER, was born on 11 Dec 1882 in Hohenbostel, and later lived in Köln. (Cologne). He married **Miriam (Änne) COSSMANN**.



They had two children:

- (i) **Kurt** b. 20 Mar 1910, d. 10 Aug 1942
- ↓ (ii) **Ruth** b. 1912.

Siegfried, together with his son Kurt, fled to Holland, prior to World War II, while daughter Ruth went to Palestine.

Records from the Arolsen Archives and the Dutch Holocaust Memorial give information on what happened to Siegfried and Kurt after they came to Holland, but there is no mention of Miriam. Perhaps she died before they emigrated from Germany.

Siegfried was captured after Holland was invaded by the Germans, and was taken to the Westerbork Transit Camp. He was transported on a train with 560 deportees that departed Westerbork on 31 Aug 1942 and arrived at Auschwitz on

1 Sep 1942. The *Gedenkbuch* gives the date of Siegfried's death as 3 Sep 1942, indicating that he was gassed upon arrival.

## **Grandchildren of Nachmann LEVY and Johanne MEYER**

### **Kurt GOLDSMITH**



**Kurt**, oldest son of Leo GOLDSCHMIDT and Dina LEVY, was born on 9 Jan 1901 in Stolzenau. In 1931 he married **Grete LENDT**, born 1 Oct 1904 in Goeppingen. Kurt was a businessman in Cologne until 1939, when he emigrated to the United States with his wife and son. He subsequently changed his surname from GOLDSCHMIDT to GOLDSMITH.

Kurt and Grete had one son.

After arriving in the United States the family lived in the Washington Heights area of New York City, a neighbourhood with a large German-Jewish immigrant population. Kurt established himself as a photographer. He provided support to his step-mother Irma who came to live in New York City after leaving England.

Grete died in November 1972.

In 1974 Kurt married **Thea HIRSCHFELD**, born 5 Oct 1905 in Germany. She died on 3 Mar 1988.

After several years with deteriorating health, Kurt died on 12 Aug 1994.

## **Grete GOLDSCHMIDT**



**Grete**, oldest daughter of Leo GOLDSCHMIDT and Dina LEVY, was born on 13 Dec 1902 in Stolzenau. She emigrated to South Africa approx. August 1937 and in 1938, in Johannesburg. she married **Leopold ROSENSTEIN**, born 1889. He died in 1945. In 1947, in South Africa, Grete married **Oscar WEINBERG**, born 5 May 1903 in Gersfeld, near Fulda, Germany. Oscar ran a successful business in Johannesburg which enabled them to leave South Africa in about 1960 and retire in Lugano, Switzerland. Oscar died there on 30 Jan 1980. Grete subsequently lived in Freiburg, Germany, where she died on 5 Jun 2001. She had no children.

## **Anni GOLDSCHMIDT**



**Anni GOLDSCHMIDT**, daughter of Leo GOLDSCHMIDT and Dina LEVY was born on 9 Apr 1904 in Stolzenau. In 1931 she married **Manfred METH**, son of Alfred METH and Flora APPEL. They had one child.

During the Hitler period Anni and Manfred planned to emigrate to Spain, but their marriage began to fail. They separated and Anni was left on her own with her young daughter. Mother and daughter escaped from Germany in 1940 thanks to an affidavit provided by Selma NACHMAN née MEERTIEF of Montgomery, AL. They eventually reached New York City where Anni worked as a milliner.

In 1947, Anni married **James JOSEPHS**, but he died in the same year after they were married. She continued to live in New York City for many years, and then lived in Fairfax, Virginia. Anni died on 19 Mar 1996 at the age of 91.



## Max GOLDSMITH



**Max**, younger son of Leo GOLDSCHMIDT and Dina LEVY, was born on 13 Oct 1905 in Stolzenau. He worked for a Swiss-based company in the cotton business and left Germany in 1937 and established himself in Manchester, England. He subsequently changed his surname from GOLDSCHMIDT to GOLDSMITH. In 1939 he was able to bring his younger sister Lore, and her husband and child to England. Max was interned as an “enemy alien” and spent some of the war years on the Isle of Man.

In 1941, in London, he married **Mimi LANDESBERG**, born 5 Jan 1907 in Leipzig, Germany.

Max and Mimi had four children born in Manchester, three daughters and one son, the youngest two being twins:

Max continued to work for the same company until he retired. Mimi died on 19 Dec 1989 in Manchester. Max died on 4 Apr 1991 in Manchester.

## Lore GOLDSCHMIDT



**Lore GOLDSCHMIDT**, youngest daughter of Leo GOLDSCHMIDT and Dina LEVY was born on 20 Jan 1908 in Stolzenau. Her mother Dina died in 1919 when she was 11 years old, and her father married Irma APPEL in 1921 when she was 13. Irma provided much support during Lore’s formative years.

Lore was required to leave home and learn to support herself when she was 16 years old. She lived and worked mostly in southern Germany until 1936 when she met her future husband during a visit to her stepmother Irma’s family in Breslau. On 18 Oct 1936, in Barsinghausen, she married **Georg STRIETZEL**, born 17 May 1910, son of Karl STRIETZEL and Minna REISSMANN. Georg was an administrator of the “Breslau Synagogen Gemeinde”, the organization that managed the facilities of the Breslau Jewish community.

Following the Kristallnacht pogrom of 9 Nov 1938, Georg was among those Jewish males arrested and imprisoned in Buchenwald concentration camp. He

was released after approx. 6 weeks and, with the help of Lore's brothers Kurt and Max, the family fled to England in March 1939.

Lore and Georg had two sons.

In England, Georg changed his name to **George STREAT**. At the outbreak of the war he was interned as enemy alien, but was released on agreeing to join the British Army. Following the war he worked as a sales executive in the chemical industry, first in Manchester and then, after 1955, in London, with the Shell Chemical Company.

George died on 25 Jan 1978 in London. Lore died on 7 Aug 2000 in London.

## **Kurt LEVY**

**Kurt LEVY**, son of Siegfried KEVY and his wife Miriam Cossmann, was born on 20 Mar 1910 in Cologne. He emigrated to the Netherlands on 31 Jan 1935. Documentation from the Arolsen Archives gives his occupation as "Driving Instructor".

The photo on the right shows Kurt and his wife **Gertrud LESSER** (b. 29 Oct 1909 in Hamburg).



**Kurt LEVY and Gertrude LASSER**

The Dutch Holocaust Memorial site provides the following information: Kurt Levy and Gertrud Lesser had a child named **Gerard Louis Edgar LEVY** (b. 25 Mar 1941 in Amsterdam). After the Nazis invaded the Netherlands Kurt, Gertrud and their baby Gerard were arrested and sent to the Westerbork transit camp. Kurt is recorded as a prisoner at Westerbork for just one day - 15 Jul 1942. Kurt, Gertrud and Gerard were deported from Westerbork to Auschwitz on a train with 1135 deportees that departed Westerbork on 15 Jul 1942 and arrived at Auschwitz on 16/17 Jul 1942.

According to the *Gedenkbuch* (German Federal Archive Memorial Book), Kurt's declared death date is given as 10 Aug 1942. This suggests that on arrival at Auschwitz he was selected for work, but after approx. 3 weeks he was sent to the gas chambers. Gertrud's declared date of death is 17 Jul 1942, suggesting that she was selected for the gas chambers immediately after arrival. Their baby

Gerard is not listed in the *Gedenkbuch* - I assume that he was gassed together with his mother, but I am surprised the *Gedenkbuch* has no record of him.

## **Ruth LEVY**

**Ruth LEVY**, daughter of Siegfried LEVY and his wife Miriam COSSMANN, was born in 1912. She emigrated to Israel where she married **Karl WERNER**, born 1910. Karl died in 1986, in Israel.

In Palestine, Ruth LEVY worked as a nurse at the Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem.

Ruth and her husband Karl WERNER had one daughter, born in Israel.



Ruth LEVY

## Levi LEVISOHN

**Levi LEVISOHN**, son of Joseph Levi LEVISOHN and his wife Henriette, and grandson of Levi (Leib) Joseph, was born on 18 Oct 1812, in Barsinghausen. His occupation was horse dealer, and he also dealt in other livestock, including cattle. It is believed that he made a relatively good living from this business, which he inherited from his father. He was also prominent in the Barsinghausen Jewish community. He was its leader from 1856 to 1861. He built the family home at No. 3 Kaltenborn Street.

On 3 Mar 1846, when he was 33 years old, he married, in Barsinghausen, 24 year old **Caroline LEVY**, b. 20 Jun 1821, daughter of his cousin Betty (Beile) LEWIEN and Hirsch LEVY.

Just over a year later, Levi and Caroline had one child, born in Barsinghausen:

- (i) **Rieke (Rahel)** b. 9 Jun 1847

Caroline died 5 months after the birth of her child, at age 26, on 19 Nov 1847, in Barsinghausen. The child Rieke died at less than 3 years of age on 15 Mar 1850, in Barsinghausen. . Cause of both the mother and the child's deaths is given in the records as "nerve fever" – which is not particularly informative.



Levi LEVISOHN



Jeanette COHN

However, Levi subsequently re-married. On 3 Jun 1851, in Göxe, he married 24 year old **Jeanette COHN**, born 5 Jun 1827, daughter of Meyer COHN and Caroline BEHREND. Levi was 38 at the time of his second marriage. Note that Caroline BEHREND was the niece of Itzig BEHREND of Rodenberg, whose memoirs are quoted in Part 2.

Levi and Jeanette proceeded to have 12 children (5 boys and 7 girls), all born in Barsinghausen:

- ↓ (ii) **Johanne** b. 24 Feb 1853.
- (iii) **Marianne** b. 16 Feb 1854.
- (iv) **Helene** b. 2 Jun 1855.
- ↓ (v) **Josef** b. 28 Feb 1857.
- ↓ (vi) **Aaron** b. 28 Feb 1857. (Josef and Aaron were twins)
- ↓ (vii) **Magnus** b. 8 Aug 1858.
- ↓ (viii) **Benjamin (Bendiza)** b. 1 Feb 1860.
- ↓ (ix) **Elise**, b. 1861
- ↓ (x) **Bertha** b. 6 Nov 1862.
- (xi) **Jenny** b. 2 Sep 1864.
- (xii) **Rosa (Rieke, Rosalie)** b. 27 Jun 1866.
- ↓ (xiii) **Meyer** b. 11 Dec 1867.

Eleven of the children reached adulthood. One of the girls, Jenny, died on 24 Dec 1872, when she was 8 years old, of scarlet fever.

Eight of these twelve children (Johanne, Josef, Aaron, Benjamin, Elise, Bertha and Meyer) married and had descendants. There is further information about them below.

The three that reached adulthood, but did not have descendants were daughters Marianne, Rosa and Helene. Marianne and Rosa did not marry. Around 1890, they established a ladies' fashion store at Marktstr. 22 in Barsinghausen. The store, which specialized in making ladies' hats as well as other fashion items, was sold in the mid 1930's. Marianne died at age 82 on 23 Sep 1936 and was buried in the "new" Jewish cemetery in Barsinghausen. In 1937, Rosa, at the age of 71, emigrated to the USA. She died in 1959, at the age of 92, in New York. Helene married **Aron ARENSBERG**, but they had no children. Helene died on 21 Jan 1932, in Barsinghausen. She was also buried in the "new" Jewish cemetery in Barsinghausen.

Levi LEVISOHN led a life that was fairly typical for a Jew in his time and place. He did not get married until he was financially secure and able to support a wife and children. This meant that he was well over 30 when he got married. In 1846, when Levi first got married, his father was 69 years old and had probably given over much of the control of the family business to Levi. Obviously Levi didn't mind having children well into his middle age – he was 55 years old when his youngest child was born.

Levi died in Barsinghausen on 11 August 1871 at the age of 58. The cause of his death is given in the records as *Blattern*. This word is not in modern German dictionaries.

His wife Jeanette was 44 years old when he died. She lived as a widow for another 38 years, until she died at age 82 on 24 Dec 1909, in Barsinghausen. At the time of her husband's death she had 12 children to look after, ranging in age from 18 to less than 4. As mentioned above, one of her children died in the following year. One can imagine the strength she had to muster to deal with her unfortunate situation.

Her gravestone is one of only two which remain today on the site of the old Jewish cemetery. We have the text of the eulogy that was delivered at the graveside at the time of her burial. It was delivered by *Lehrer* COHN, the spiritual leader of the Barsinghausen Jewish community, and it gives a glimpse of the respect she had earned.

*"She was a valiant woman, in the most beautiful and lofty sense of this word; valiant as a wife and mother; valiant in taking on and fulfilling obligations; valiant in her piety and fear of God. She was the epitome of a genuinely traditional Jewish woman, something that we rarely see in these modern times.*

*With her husband, who preceded her into death a generation ago, she led the happiest and most intimate family life, a life which exemplified all the virtues of the Jewish heart, and each noble act of the Jewish character. "She was entrusted with heart of her husband" - because he knew that, with her, the education of their many children, and the affairs of their household, would rest in the best of hands. Their family life exemplified the words of the poet:*

*"And inside, the modest housewife reigns  
And rules wisely in the domestic circle,  
And teaches the girls and resists the boys  
And ceaselessly moves her busy hands  
And increases the gain with order and good sense."*

*But the offspring had not outgrown their infancy when this woman encountered a stroke of fate which darkened the sky of their life, and destroyed the family's luck and joy. The loving husband, the caring father, became the victim of a malicious illness. Such bitter losses normally cause those affected to feel a sense of helplessness, quiet resignation and idle worry. However, your departed mother, dear mourners, behaved quite differently in that hard time! The valiant woman grew into a heroine. She tore herself away from her mourning stool, because she felt called to attend to higher duties - she alone had to feed the family and see to the education of the children. And, honoured mourners, what your mother did at that time, went to the outermost boundary of motherly love. It is permanently recorded in your hearts, and by all those who knew the dear deceased. It was earned as monument to be held in your family chronicle, as a monument outlasting ore and stone.*

*But the Almighty did not just put obstacles in her path. He also blessed her with many joys and some luck. The teachings and principles which she transmitted to her children fell on fruitful soil.*

*She was spared the grief of having a child that did not turn out well. All her children, here in this place, and those living near and far across the ocean, have become useful members of human society and maintain an honorable station in life. That is also what our text means with the words: "Their children rise up and praise them". Because everything that we are, what we do, and how we conduct ourselves, is to a large extent a product of our education.*

*"Many women have done well, but you surpass them all." Your departed Mother, dear Mourners, was equipped with those characteristics and virtues, which are always acknowledged as positive. Apart from restless, untiring activity, she exhibited a rare level of energy. Inactivity seemed to her, a lost piece of her life. The urge to work was a fundamental element of her life, and her hunger for education, knowledge and mental stimulation did not abate even as she grew into old age."*

## Children of Levi LEVISOHN and Jeanette COHN

### Johanne LEVISOHN

**Johanne LEVISOHN**, oldest child of Levi LEVISOHN and his wife Jeanette was born on 24 Feb 1853, in Barsinghausen. On 15 Oct 1879, in Barsinghausen, she married **Ruben BALLIN**, born 10 Nov 1844 in Aurich. It is believed that Ruben BALLIN was a member of the BALLIN family that was resident in Hohenbostel in the 1880s.

Ruben and Johanne BALLIN had two sons:

- ↓ (i) **Leo.**
- ↓ (ii) **Oskar**, b. 14 Feb 1888

Johanne died at the age of 75 on 26 Aug 1928. Ruben died at the age of 88 on 11 Mar 1933. Both were buried in the Jewish cemetery in Barsinghausen.

### Josef LEVISOHN

**Josef LEVISOHN**, son of Levi LEVISOHN and his wife Jeanette, was born on 28 Feb 1857, in Barsinghausen. He and his brother Aaron were twins. He married **Julie WEINBERG**, born 6 Dec 1867 in Pekelsheim.

They had one child, born in Barsinghausen:

- ↓ (i) **Henny** b. 2 May 1898

Josef LEVISOHN lived with his family in the house that his father had built at No. 3 Kaltenborn Street. The author saw this house from the outside when he visited Barsinghausen in 1996. It is close to the centre of the town. The house has a disturbing history. In 1942, as the Nazis stepped up their actions against the remaining German Jews, the government decreed that all Jews in the region had to vacate their homes and move into so-called *Judenhäuser* (Jew-houses). This was just an interim measure – these houses were only used until the Germans were ready to deport them. Josef LEVISOHN's house at 3 Kaltenborn Street became one such Jew-house, presumably because it was quite large.

Josef died on 18 Jan 1940. According to one family tree on Ancestry, he died in 1923, but that is probably incorrect. Either way, he did not personally experience the events that happened in 1942, but his widow, Julie, did experience them. According to the records, the Nazis evicted 8 other Jews from their homes in Barsinghausen, and they were moved into her house. It is not known how long



they lived together in what one can assume were cramped conditions, but on 23 July 1942 all the residents of the house were ordered out and sent by special train from Hannover to the concentration camp at Theresienstadt. The author has a list of all those that were deported on that date, and Julie LEVISOHN's name is on the list. She was 74 years old at the time. Many of them were subsequently sent to Auschwitz to die in the gas chambers. Julie died on 9 January 1943 in Theresienstadt concentration camp.



The photograph at the left shows 3 Kaltenborn Strasse, as it appeared in 1996. This is the same building that was used as a *Judenhaus* in 1942.

## Aaron LEVISOHN

**Aaron LEVISOHN**, son of Levi Levisohn and his wife Jeanette, was born on 28 Feb 1857 in Barsinghausen. He and his brother Josef were twins. He married **Henny DANIELS**, born 30 Jun 1866. Aaron on died 21 Feb 1923 in Barsinghausen. Henny died in 1930 in Barsinghausen.

Aron and Henny had three children, born in Barsinghausen:

- (i) **Hedwig**, b. 14 Apr 1893.
- ↓ (ii) **Käthe**, b. 14 Jan 1899.
- (iii) **Walter**, b. 14 Jan 1899 (Käthe and Walter were twins).



Hedwig LEVISOHN



Walter LEVISOHN

As mentioned above, around 1890, Aron, together with his twin brother Josef, founded a grain business on Berliner Street under the name 'Brothers Levisohn'. They had the first telephone in Barsinghausen. In the mid 1930's the firm was sold to the Agricultural-Cooperative. According to documentation in the author's possession, they also founded a bank, which existed for a while across the street from the railway station.

One might assume that a grain business mostly supplied farmers. But one of the papers in the author's possession gives a list of their customers, and it is noteworthy that many of them lived in town – and for each customer is listed a number of chickens. These were probably the chickens that the people kept in their back yards – and the Levisohn brothers presumably supplied them with chicken feed.



The photograph at the left, taken in 1996, shows the building that was formerly the Levisohn Brothers' grain business in Barsinghausen.

Aron LEVISOHN was leader of the Barsinghausen Jewish Community from 1887 – 1922 and was also a leader within the broader community. He was a member of the Barsinghausen Town Council, and also served for a while as head of the School Board. In 1921 he brought to the attention of the Council the fact that the Protestant school was receiving substantial support from all the taxpayers in the town, and he pointed out that this was an unfair burden on the Jewish taxpayers who did not send their children to this school. In order to treat all citizens equitably, he argued that Council's grant to the Jewish school should be increased from 1,000 Marks per year to 2,500 Marks. It is not known whether he was successful in making this argument.

Josef and Aron were successful in their business and became, relatively speaking, wealthy citizens of Barsinghausen. They were not the wealthiest Jews in Barsinghausen - that distinction goes to Adolf LEHMANN – but according to a list of dues payable to the Jewish Community in the year 1920, assessing the members based on their income, Josef and Aron were second and third in terms of wealth. Their siblings who lived in the town had substantially lower incomes.

All three children married but only Käthe had further descendants.

Daughter Hedwig (who was also known by the nickname Hete) married a doctor named **Joseph FEILCHENFELD**, born 11 Mar 1877 in Frankfurt and der Oder, and after he died on 22 Aug 1936, she married **Fred (Fritz) SCHLESINGER**. Neither marriage produced any children. Hedwig and Fritz emigrated to the United States in the late 1930s, and she died in Dec 1983 in New York City. Son Walter married **Hilda HERZBERG** and also had no children. It is recorded that Walter emigrated to Lynbrook, N.Y. in 1937. Walter, who modified the spelling of his surname to LEVISON, died in Florida in March 1977.

## Magnus LEVISO(H)N

**Magnus LEVISOHN**, son of Levi LEVISOHN and his wife Jeanette, was born on 8 Aug 1858 in Barsinghausen. He emigrated to the United States before 1890, and on 25 Dec 1890, in New York City, he married **Julia DAVIDSON**, born 18 Jul 1863. In the United States, Magnus modified the spelling of his surname to LEVISON. He made his living selling pipes (the type that you smoke), and did an extensive amount of traveling.

They had three children:

- ↓ (i) **Leo**, b. 1891
- (ii) **Jerome**, b. 30 Dec 1893.
- ↓ (iii) **Clarisse**, b. 8 Aug 1901.

Jerome (Jerry) served with the American forces in World War I as an ambulance attendant in France. He was regarded by the family as a sweet man, who was not too bright. He apparently wrote dreadful poetry, which he liked to read aloud to the family. Nonetheless, he is warmly remembered for his good nature. Initially he worked for his brother Leo, but when that business failed during the depression he went to work selling toys for infants and toddlers.

On 20 Feb 1938 he married **Frances FEINGOLD** (born 26 Dec 1893). A family story is that Jerome almost married the wrong person. The bride, Frances, was in one room getting ready for the wedding. In another room was the groom, Jerome, the rabbi and all the guests. The rabbi proceeded to start the wedding ceremony, until everyone yelled for him to stop. Apparently, he had started the ceremony because he thought the bride had arrived - one of Frances' cousins looked a lot like her. The mixup was quickly straightened out, but the story was told many times.

Jerome and Frances had no children. She worked with her husband going from store to store selling toys. Despite the fact she had to work hard and never had much money, she maintained a bubbly personality and was always happy. Jerome died on 18 Mar 1986, at the age of 96. Frances died in May 1992, at the age of 98.

Julia died on 6 Jul 1916 at the relatively young age of 53. Magnus died on 24 Jul 1939, at the age of 81, in New York City.

## Ben LEVISO(H)N

**Ben LEVISOHN** (who was also known as Benjamin or Bendiza), son of Levi LEVISOHN and his wife Jeanette, was born on 1 Feb 1860 in Barsinghausen. On 2 Feb 1890 he married his first cousin **Alice COHN**, born 23 Oct 1869 (Alice Cohn's father, Emanuel COHN was the brother of Ben's mother, Jeanette COHN). He emigrated to the United States in 1895 and, according to one source, in the 1920's he was a wealthy man with business employing more than a thousand employees. According to another source, his business was the

Lynbrook Department Store on Long Island, plus he owned a substantial amount of real estate in the Lynbrook area. During the Hitler period, he apparently helped more than 100 Jewish families flee from Germany to the USA. In the United States Ben modified the spelling of his surname to LEVISON. He died in 1955 in New York City. Alice died in Mar 1968, at the age of 98.

Ben and Alice had two children:

- ↓ (i) **Helen,**
- ↓ (ii) **Lawrence,** b. 30 Oct 1887.

The discrepancy between the date of Lawrence's birth and the date of his parents' marriage is unexplained. One of the dates is probably incorrect.

Daughter Helen married **Jesse MORRIS** from Chicago. The parents did not approve of the marriage because they felt that Jesse was involved in questionable business activities. The marriage lasted less than two years and produced no children. Following the failure of the marriage, Helen moved back to her parents' home. But the ill feeling continued, and mother and daughter did not talk to one another for forty years. They maintained separate residences in the same house, and if they needed to communicate, they wrote notes to each other.

## Elise LEVISOHN

**Elise LEVISOHN**, daughter of Levi LEVISOHN and his wife Jeanette, was born on 20 Aug 1861 in Barsinghausen.

In later life she told how she remembered, when she was 5 years old, seeing the entry of the Prussian troops into Barsinghausen in the year 1866 (the Kingdom of Hannover was absorbed into Prussia in that year). All the children stood in front of the door of the house with their mother, and Elise was so taken with the bright colours of the soldiers' uniforms that she expressed her enthusiasm out loud. This caused her mother to hold her mouth closed, because other Barsinghausen citizens, who had been loyal to Hannover, did not see it as a happy occasion.

She married **Ernst TRAUBE**, a banker. It is not known where Ernst was born, but after he came to live in Barsinghausen he became a prominent man in the community, a co-founder and first leader of the *Schützengesellschaft*. The latter is a German institution that confers considerable status in the community. Its roots that go back hundreds of years - the *Schützengesellschaft*, at one time, was the town's militia. In modern times the function of the organization would have been to hold ceremonial and social events.

Elise and Ernst had two sons:

- ↓ (i) **Adi (Adolf),** b. 17 May 1901
- ↓ (ii) **Werner,** b. 2 May 1902

The family lived comfortably and had a house and servants. But in approx. 1909 or 1911 Ernst's bank failed, and he committed suicide. For Elise and her children this led to a major reversal in their fortunes. They became objects of shame and dependent on the support of relatives.

Elise went to live with her unmarried sisters Marianne and Rosa, and assisted them in their business. She was frequently ill, because of an allergy to artificial flowers that were sold in their shop.

In 1937, at the age of 75, and with the help of her American relatives, Elise, together with her 73 year old sister Rosa, managed to escape Nazi Germany and move to the United States (Marianne had died a few years earlier).

Elise lived on in New York City for another quarter century. She remained mentally very alert, and until her death she went out to the cinema twice a week, and continued to be keenly interested in what was going on in the world

Elise died in New York City in Nov 1961, at the age of 100.

## **Bertha LEVISOHN**

**Bertha LEVISOHN**, daughter of Levi LEVISOHN and his wife Jeanette, was born on 6 Nov 1862 in Barsinghausen. On 11 Apr 1888, she married **Joseph HERZBERG**, born 19 Feb 1845 in Kleinen Marpe. They lived in Gütersloh, where Joseph was a kosher butcher to the tiny Jewish community, and he also sold non-kosher meat to the broader community.

They had four children, all born in Gütersloh:

- ↓ (i) **Helene**, b. 27 Jan 1889
- (ii) **Paul**, b. 29 Jan 1890
- ↓ (iii) **Leopold**, b. 22 Sep 1891
- (iv) **Käthe (Kate)**, b. 25 Feb 1895

Paul was killed in action on 15 Jun 1915, in the battle of Arras, France.

On 3 October 1926 Käthe married **Karl MENDELS**, born in Harsewinkel. Following their marriage, they lived in Harsewinkel. In 1939, they emigrated to Sydney, Australia, arriving on 24 Apr 1939. Käthe subsequently changed her name to Kate. She worked as a shop assistant, both in Germany and in Australia. Karl was a cattle dealer in Germany (selling under ten cattle at a time) and he was also a shopkeeper selling Manchester hats, and material. In Australia he had confectionary shops and a factory. They are not recorded as having any children.

Joseph died in Gütersloh on 1 Jan 1917. Bertha emigrated to Sydney, Australia with her son Leopold and daughter Käthe and their families. She died on 31 May 1950, at the age of 87, in Sydney.

## **Meyer LEVISO(H)N**

**Meyer LEVISOHN**, youngest son of Levi Levisohn and his wife Jeanette, was born on 11 Dec 1867 in Barsinghausen. He married **Adele DAVIDSON**, who died in 1897, and following her death, he married his first cousin **Mathilde (Tillie) COHN**, born 1867 (Tillie COHN was the sister of his brother Ben's wife, Alice COHN).

Meyer also emigrated to the USA, where, like his brothers, he changed the spelling of his surname to LEVISON. He died in 1958, at the age of 90, in New York City.

Meyer and Tillie had two children:

- ↓ (i) **Hortense**, b. 24 Sep 1892
- ↓ (ii) **Herbert**, b. 3 Oct. 1897

## Grandchildren of Levi LEVISOHN and Jeanette COHN

### Leo BALLIN

**Leo BALLIN**, son of Ruben BALLIN and his wife Johanne LEVISOHN, married **Martha** (surname not known). They had one daughter:

↓ (i) **Gertrude.**

### Oskar BALLIN

**Oskar BALLIN**, son of Ruben BALLIN and his wife Johanne LEVISOHN, was born on 14 Feb 1888. He married **Marie** (surname not known), born around 1900, and they had two sons:

↓ (i) **Rudi.**  
↓ (ii) **Günter.**

According to Friedel HOMEYER, Marie was born a Christian and became a convert to Judaism. That her ancestry was non-Jewish is confirmed by wartime records identifying her two sons as half-Jews. Homeyer claims that, during the Hitler years, Marie renounced her conversion in an attempt to protect her husband and children. The two sons were formally baptized as Christians, possibly around this time.

Oskar was among the 100,000 German Jewish men who were arrested following *Kristallnacht* in November 1938. He was sent for a few weeks to Buchenwald concentration camp. He returned to live in Barsinghausen and was not deported in 1942/43 when most of the Jews in this region were removed and sent to concentration and death camps in the east.

Under the Nazis, the treatment that was meted out to those of Jewish descent varied according to whether a person was a “full Jew” (i.e. had four Jewish grandparents) or was of mixed “Jewish-Aryan blood”, as well as other factors. Oskar would have been regarded as a full Jew, but he presumably avoided the deportations because his wife was regarded as Aryan.

As the war neared its end, the few remaining Jews who had managed to avoid deportation, including those of mixed blood, were finally rounded up. According to his daughter-in-law, Oskar and his sons were sent to Theresienstadt concentration camp for a period of time towards the end of the war. Oskar and

his sons survived and returned to Barsinghausen after Germany's defeat. Oskar died in 1959. Marie died in 1979.

## Henny LEVISOHN

**Henny LEVISOHN**, daughter of Josef LEVISOHN and Julie WEINBERG, was born on 2 May 1898 in Barsinghausen. She married **Alfred KAUFMANN**, born 19 Aug 1890, and they had two children, a daughter and a son:

- (i) **Lisa.**
- (ii) **Hanclos.**

Henny died on 15 Mar 1934 and was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Barsinghausen.

## Käthe LEVISOHN



Käthe  
LEVISOHN

**Käthe LEVISOHN**, daughter of Aaron LEVISOHN and Henny DANIELS, was born on 14 Jan 1899. She married **Emil S. FRANK**, born 7 May 1891 in Westerstede, in northwest Germany. He was dealer in clocks and watches. They had one child, a daughter:

- (i) **Hannah.**

Käthe and family fled Germany before World War II. Their intention was to go to the United States to join Käthe's brother Walter LEVISOHN who had emigrated to New York earlier. First, they went to England, but because of the war, they were not able to proceed, so they remained in London. During this time, Emil worked as a gardener. They were finally able to leave England in May 1946 on a ship from Liverpool to New York. However, Käthe became very sick on the voyage – she had cancer – and she died a few days after their arrival in New York.

Emil died in New York on 16 Mar 1965. Hannah grew up in the United States and married **Harry LOWENGART**.

## Leo LEVISON

**Leo LEVISON**, oldest son of Magnus LEVISOHN and Julia DAVIDSON, was born (probably in New York City) in 1891. Around 1916, he married **Janet STERN** and they had one child, a son:

- (i) **Julian.**

Leo set up a business manufacturing aprons. When the United States joined World War I, he was drafted, but it was arranged that his younger brother Jerry went off to war in his place, as an ambulance attendant in France. The reasoning



behind the switch was that Leo was newly married and had a business to look after, while Jerry had no responsibilities. Leo's business failed during the depression and he became an apron salesman.

Julian became a CPA. He married **Ruth NEWMAN**.

## Clarisse LEVISON

**Clarisse LEVISON**, daughter of Magnus LEVISON and Julia DAVIDSON, was born on 8 Aug 1901 in New York City. She was just 14 years old when her mother died in 1916. At this point, Clarisse went to live with the unmarried brother and sisters of her mother (Joe, Elise and Klara DAVIDSON). Joe DAVIDSON was an unmarried doctor, and his rules were rigid and strict – it was not a warm environment for an adolescent girl.

In 1929 she became engaged to, and in 1934 she married (the long gap was due to the Depression), her first cousin, **Werner TRAUBE** (see below), who was the son of her father's sister, Elise LEVISOHN. He was born in Germany and came to the United States in the early 1920's. They had two sons:

- (i) **John**, b. 1937
- ↓ (ii) **Robert**, b. 15 Mar 1944

Clarisse died on 6 Jan 1972.

## Lawrence LEVISON

**Lawrence LEVISON**, son of Ben LEVISON and Alice COHN, was born on 30 Oct 1887. On 30 Sep 1923 he married **Rae BIEL** and they had one child, a daughter:

- ↓ (i) **Joan**, b. 19 Jun 1927

Rae died in Nov 1984, in New York City.

## Adi Traube



Adi TRAUBE

**Adi (Adolf) TRAUBE**, son of Ernst TRAUBE and Elise LEVISOHN, was born on 17 May 1901, and he grew up in Barsinghausen.

The photo at the left was taken in Barsinghausen in 1924. He married **Grete SCHÖNFELD** and they had one daughter:

- ↓ (i) **Eva**, b. 17 Aug 1934

Adi TRAUBE and his wife and daughter emigrated from Germany to the United States in the mid 1930's. Unfortunately, Adi died in 1939, not long after arriving in America, of a brain tumour. He was 38 years old.

## Werner TRAUBE



Werner Traube

**Werner TRAUBE**, son of Ernst TRAUBE and Elise LEVISOHN, was born on 2 May 1902. He was short (5' 5"; 165 cm), blind in one eye, a good student and a poor athlete, with a quiet disposition. His blindness and short stature kept him out of World War I. Initially, he worked for the Warburg Bank in Hamburg, but in 1923 he lost his job as a result of the post war economic crisis in Germany. Thus, with help from his uncle Ben LEVINSON, he moved to the United States. His uncle paid for his passage, got him a job with a bank, and gave him a place to live. Later, Werner lived for a while with his uncle Meyer LEVINSON and his aunt Tille. He eventually worked for the Chase Manhattan Bank, until his retirement.

Werner married his first cousin, **Clarisse LEVINSON**, daughter of his mother's brother Magnus LEVINSON and Julia DAVIDSON, and they had two sons (see above)

He died in New York on 14 Feb 1985.

## Helene HERZBERG

**Helene HERZBERG**, daughter of Joseph HERZBERG and Bertha LEVISOHN, was born on 27 Jan 1889 in Gütersloh. On 18 Jun 1911 she married **Emil LEVY**, born on 27 Jul 1882, a butcher, and they subsequently lived in Lünen until 1939, when they emigrated to New York, NY. In the USA they changed their surname to **LIND**.

They had three children:

- (i) **Inge**, b. 15 Mar 1912
- ↓ (ii) **Hans (John)**, b. 27 Feb 1913
- ↓ (iii) **Paula**, b. 9 Feb 1915

Inge emigrated from Germany to New York in 1933. On 22 Jun 1946 she married **Moritz SCHWEITZER**. He had spent the war years in camps in Europe and the marriage took place in Canada as he did not yet have a permit for the USA. When Moritz got a permit they moved to Chicago. He died on 16 November 1982 in Miami, FL. It is believed Inge died in 1998 in Miami. They had no children.

In America, Hans became known as John.

Emil died in Dec 1969. Helene died on 16 Nov 1988

## Leopold HERZBERG

**Leopold HERZBERG**, son of Joseph HERZBERG and Bertha LEVISOHN, was born on 22 Sep 1891 in Gütersloh. On 8 Aug 1926 he married **Ella MENDELS**, born 19 Jul 1896, of Harsewinkel. Leopold was a shopkeeper who dealt in stoves and housewares, including china crystal and cutlery. Ella was a shop assistant.

They had two children:

- ↓ (i) **Walter Joseph**, b. 2 Jan 1928
- ↓ (ii) **Ursula**, b. 30 May 1930

In 1939, the family emigrated to Sydney, Australia, arriving on 24 Apr 1939. Leopold became a factory owner, making childrenswear and aprons. In Australia, Ella was a housewife.

Leopold died on 4 Aug 1957. Ella died on 21 Jun 1989.

## Hortense LEVISON

**Hortense LEVISON**, daughter of Meyer LEVISOHN and Adele DAVIDSON, was born on 24 Sep 1892. She married **Rudolph DERY**, a physician. They had one adopted child:

- (i) **Robert**

It is believed Robert Dery was married and had 2 sons.

Hortense died in Nov 1967 in NY.

## Herbert LEVISON

**Herbert LEVISON**, son of Meyer LEVISOHN and Adele DAVIDSON, was born on 3 Oct 1897. On 21 Oct 1923 he married **Beatrice STRASSNER**. They had one child:

- ↓ (i) **Floradelle**, b. 7 Jul 1925

Herbert died on 10 Apr 1983 in NY.

## Great-Grandchildren of Levi LEVISOHN and Jeanette COHN

### Gertrude BALLIN

**Gertrude BALLIN**, daughter of Leo BALLIN and his wife Martha, married a man named **SCHOLZE** (first name not known). They had one daughter and resided in Germany.

### Rudi BALLIN

**Rudi BALLIN**, son of Oskar BALLIN, married **Gerda** (surname not known) in 1955 and had a daughter and a son.

After the war, Rudi BALLIN became a successful retailer in Barsinghausen. He owned several stores, including a large department store that bore the Ballin name. After he died in 1993 his widow Gerda ran the business for a while, and then sold it.



The photograph at the left, taken in 1996, shows Ballin's Department Store in Barsinghausen.

Rudi was formally baptized, and later on in life, preferred to distance himself from his Jewish past. While conducting his research, Friedel HOMEYER found records of Rudi's barmitzvah at age 13, but Rudi was not happy when these records were shown to him. This may have been because Rudi identified strongly with his adopted faith, or it may have been a defensive reaction. HOMEYER said that when his first book about the history of Jews in Barsinghausen was published in 1980, it took only a short time before swastikas were daubed on the doors of Ballin's store. He added that this unpleasant incident blew over fairly quickly and was not repeated.

## **Günter BALLIN**

**Günter BALLIN**, son of Oskar BALLIN, married **Ursula** (surname not known) and had a son and a daughter:

## **Robert TRAUBE**

**Robert TRAUBE**, son of Clarisse Levison and Werner Traube, was born on 15 Mar 1944. He was a Certified Public Accountant. On 9 Jul 1967 he married **Laura COHEN**, born 23 Feb 1945. They have two sons.

Robert and Laura divorced in 1998. Robert died on 16 Dec 2009 in Utica, NY.

## **Joan LEVISON**

**Joan LEVISON**, daughter of Lawrence LEVISON and Rae BIEL, was born on 19 Jun 1927. On 27 Jul 1952 she married **Emanuel SPITZER**. They resided in Pennsylvania and had two children.

## **Eva TRAUBE**

**Eva TRAUBE**, daughter of Adi TRAUBE and Grete SCHÖNFELD, was born on 17 Aug 1934 in Barsinghausen. On 23 Nov 1958 she married **Robert HESS**, born 19 Feb 1934. Eva was an attorney, Robert was a Certified Public Accountant. They had four children.

## **John LIND**

**John LIND**, son of Emile LIND and Helene HERZBERG, was born on 27 Feb 1913 in Lünen. He emigrated to the United States prior to World War II, and he served in the US Forces during the War. On 12 Mar 1949 he married **Claire MAAS** and they had two daughters. John LIND died in 1977 in Flushing, NY.

## **Paula LIND**

**Paula LIND**, daughter of Emile LIND and Helene HERZBERG, was born on 9 Feb 1915. She emigrated to the United States in 1933. On 12 Jun 1942, she married **Dr. Nat ADELMAN**, born 21 May 1911, an Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist. Paula was a Nurse. They lived in New York City and had four children.

Nat ADELMAN died on 15 Jan 1995 in New York City. Paula died on 1 Jun 1997 in New York City.

## **Walter HERZBERG**

**Dr. Walter Joseph HERZBERG**, son of Leopold HERZBERG and Ella MENDELS, was born on 2 Jan 1928 in Gütersloh. He emigrated from Germany to Sydney, Australia with his parents, arriving on 24 Apr 1939. On 16 Mar 1958, in Sydney, he married **Miriam COHN**, born 31 Oct 1934 in Mainz (later she lived in Bad Ems) Germany. She emigrated to Australia in 1946-7 having been hidden in Holland during the War. They subsequently migrated from Australia to the United States in 1962. An organic chemist by training, Walter worked as a bilingual translator. Miriam was a Registered Nurse. They had three children and resided in New Jersey.

## **Ursula HERZBERG**

**Ursula HERZBERG**, daughter of Leopold HERZBERG and Ella MENDELS, was born on 30 May 1930 in Gütersloh. She emigrated from Germany to Sydney, Australia with her parents, arriving on 24 Apr 1939. On 29 Dec 1955 she married **Dr. Ivan CHER**, born 22 Nov 1927 in Wellington, New Zealand. Ivan, an Ophthalmologist, migrated from New Zealand to Sydney, Australia in May 1959. Ursula is a Couture Dressmaker. They had three children, all born in Sydney.

## **Floradelle LEVISON**

**Floradelle LEVISON**, daughter of Herbert LEVISON and Beatrice STRASSNER, was born on 7 Jul 1925. She married **Bert KALISH**. They had two children.

Bert and Floradelle lived in Jacksonville, FL. Floradelle died on 5 Jun 1986.