

KIRSCHBAUM, Sali, Jette, and Therese,

Grocery store, 61 Kapellenstrasse

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[Leopold Kirschbaum, 1815–1884, OO Berta Kirschbaum, née Oberdorfer, 1832–1896, from Heinsfurt]

- [Jacob Karl, born 1858, died December 1, 1913 in Ulm],
- **Sali Sara**, born December 29, 1859 in Laupheim, died February 13, 1941 in Laupheim,
- **Jette**, born January 15, 1861 in Laupheim, died February 12, 1941 in Laupheim,
- **Therese**, born November 26, 1862 in Laupheim, died February 11, 1941 in Laupheim,
- [Max, born 1863],
- [Flora, born 1865, died 1871],
- [Lina-Rika, born 1866],
- [Louis, born 1871].

Leopold and Berta Kirschbaum had eight children, all of them born in Laupheim. The family owned a small house at 61 Kapellenstrasse. Leopold was a merchant and ran a small store on the ground floor of the property. Merchandise included, tobacco, sweets and specialty groceries. In the purchase agreement, the shop is labelled as selling herbs and spices. The shop door at the center of the house faced the street.

Jakob Karl, the eldest son of the family, never married and worked at Lazarus Moos' store in Ulm. Max and Louis both emigrated to the U.S. and relinquished their Württemberg citizenship in 1880 and 1887, respectively. Flora passed away when she was six years old. Her younger sister, Lina-Rika, lived in Bavaria, married the horse trader Joel Eppsteiner, and then moved with him to Peoria, Illinois.

The siblings who lived abroad stayed in contact with their sisters in Laupheim. The sisters treasured the letters from abroad. And as for the stamps - they were a must-have for the neighbor boy, Bernhard Burkert. Every time he ran errands for the Kirschbaum sisters he received one of the sought-after stamps. He later said that the stamps were very exotic and marked the starting point of his collection. Every evening, Bernhard picked up milk from the dairy at the Laupheim castle for the townspeople, including the three Kirschbaum sisters who continued to run the little store after their father's death.

Bernhard Burkert picked up the goods from Isidor Adler, a wholesaler who also lived in Kapellenstrasse. "The sisters entrusted me with everything and I was free to walk about the house as I wished. I worked in the garden behind the house; I gathered fruit when I was twelve or thirteen years old. At times, I was also allowed to have lunch with them when they had prepared something special. Every now and then they served delicious roast goose they had raised themselves. I wasn't allowed to watch them feed the birds, but I still caught a glimpse of how they fattened them. "

Bernhard Burkert was also sent to Mr. Dworzan, the cantor, who lived in the Jewish school house and was a kosher butcher. The goose, chicken, or rooster was brought alive in a little bag or basket to Mr. Dworzan and he would butcher the animal behind the school building so that it could bleed out. Afterwards, Bernhard would bring the dead animal back and he was allowed to help pluck the feathers. The sisters also allowed him to light the fire on Sabbath. "Yes, the three sisters were very religious; many times I witnessed them praying the Hamalach Hagoel, which means that they used to pray in Hebrew."

The three Kirschbaum sisters were considered rather poor, "but they had what they needed to survive. There was the house and the garden." Bernhard Burkert also alludes to financial aid from relatives, presumably from the brothers living abroad.

However, the racial laws of the Nazis forced Sali Sara and her sisters to sell their parents' house and garden on November 19, 1940. The sale included:

Building no. 61 incl. the residence, outhouse, barn and yard 2 by 258.33 ft² (24 m²)

Tree garden behind house 1 by 936.46 ft² (87 m²)

Tree garden in the Judenäcker (Jewish Fields) 2 by 688.89 ft² (64 m²)

The sale also included all items that are "tethered, screwed, bolted, or nailed to the wall", as well as electric lighting and light fittings. Excluded from the sale were the few remaining elements from the former shops furniture, which the sellers were allowed to retain.

Royalties to be deducted from the selling price of 8500 Reichsmarks included:

a) The sum of 3000 Reichsmarks for the Württemberg subsidiary of the Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland (Reich's Association of the Jews in Germany) to redeem the registered mortgage in favor of the Israelite Community of Laupheim (Israelite Care Foundation)

b) The remaining sum for the Jüdische Kultusvereinigung Württemberg e.V. (Jewish Cultural Association Württemberg), section for retirement homes.

Sali Sara also sold her stamp collection, which had been appraised before, to Bernhard Burkert for 800 Reichsmarks. However, neither Bernhard nor Sali and her sisters got anything out of it. The fiscal authorities claimed the album to be subject to an official estimate. After that, Bernhard Burkert, who later became a Catholic priest, had to pay an extra amount of 300 Reichsmarks, and Sali had to turn over all proceeds to the authorities.

After the property sale the three elderly sisters were forced to move to the rabbinate, which meanwhile had been turned into a Jewish retirement home.

Waltraud Kohl reported this incident in her thesis „Die Geschichte der Judengemeinde in Laupheim“ (The History of the Jewish Community in Laupheim), dated May 22nd, 1965. She quotes the old cemetery keeper stating: "I can still see the three sisters, after closing their tobacco shop for good, walking up the street to the rabbi's house, all of them slowly and

hunching, with one hand resting on an umbrella, and the other pressed against an old shabby cushion.”

On February 11th, 1941, 6:00 p.m., Therese passed away, unmarried and unemployed, at the age of 79. The doctor certified the cause of death to be heart muscle degeneration. On February 12th, 1941, 6:45 p.m., Jette died, unmarried and unemployed, at the age of 80, due to arteriosclerosis. On February 13th, 1941, 7:45 a.m., Sali Sara’s life came to an end, likewise unemployed and with arteriosclerosis listed as the cause of death. In all three cases Else Sara Weil, administrator of the Jewish retirement home testified to their death.

The three sisters are buried at the Jewish cemetery. The triple gravestone with its distinctive profile calls the visitor’s attention to the rare incident of three sisters having passed away only within a few hours.



(Foto: Michael Schick)

Sources:

Family register, vol. V, page 102, Registry Office Laupheim; death certificates nos. 22, 23, 24; Registry Office Laupheim. Documents about property sale: first certified copy of the Minutes from the Official Estimate on Real Estate, Laupheim, Volume X; section 102

Interview by Dr. Benigna Schönhagen with Catholic priest, Bernhard Burkert, dated March 8, 1995. Waltraud Kohl: Die Geschichte der Judengemeinde in Laupheim (On the history of the Jewish Community in Laupheim), dated May 22, 1965