

# NEUHAUS, Flora,

13 Kapellenstrasse

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*DR . ANTJE KÖHLERSCHMIDT*

**Flora Neuhaus, née Heumann**, born on 18 May 1858 in Laupheim, died on 20 February 1937 in Gailingen. [Dr. Hugo Neuhaus, born on 26 April 1885 in Ellwangen, OO Marie Röschen, née Siegheim, born on 27 December 1891 in Georgenberg.

- Gottfried Neuhaus, born on 28 August 1926 in Ulm
- Barbara Neuhaus, born on 21 January 1928 in Ulm]

Flora Neuhaus, née Heumann, was the first of five daughters of the economist Jacob Heumann (1821–1909) and his wife Babette, née Eppstein (1825–1899).<sup>1)</sup>

Flora grew up in Laupheim and went to the Jewish grade school there which – at that time – was housed in a building that was also used as the rabbinate, a school and parish house opposite the synagogue. und Gemeindehaus genutzten Gebäude gegenüber der Synagoge untergebracht war. As one of the 128 pupils, Flora experienced the move from the constricted room to the newly furnished school building in the upper Radstraße in 1868.<sup>2)</sup> She most likely went to the Jewish grade school for six years. Secondary schools were only just being established in Laupheim and were exclusively for boys. From 1872 to 1873 she completed the “Anna Barbara von Stettensche Institut” in Augsburg. Up to the present this educational institution has been funded by the Protestant Church and was an all-girls school. Her mother’s brother Adolf Epstein lived in Augsburg. Adolf Epstein’s daughter died at the age of 12 in 1870. It only seemed likely that Flora stayed with her uncle’s family while going to school in Augsburg. Certainly it also meant consolation for the loss of their daughter who had the same name and was of the same age.<sup>3)</sup> In the “von Stettenschen Institut” Flora could choose between two modern languages. “She chose the French language as she found (at the age of 14!) the lisped TH-sound in English too affected. The nasal sounds in French also appeared in her Swabian mother tongue!”<sup>4)</sup> Flora spent the following five years up to her wedding at her parents’ house in Laupheim. We can assume that she was helping in her parents’ household and that she was busy sewing, knitting and crocheting for her dowry.<sup>5)</sup>



*Flora Heumann in  
Augsburg 1873.*

## The time in Ellwangen

On 5 February 1878 Flora Heumann got married to the 26-year old merchant Emanuel Neuhaus in Pflaumloch.<sup>6)</sup>

They moved to Ellwangen where Flora's husband ran a retail and wholesale stationery shop with his brother-in-law and associate Louis Ballenberger. The Ballenberger and Neuhaus family lived on two floors of the same house. As common at that time, Flora became a housewife after her wedding. In Ellwangen, the Neuhaus couple had three sons: Siegfried (born in 1881), Hugo (born in 1885) and Max (born in 1888). The successional death of their two sons Max in March and Siegfried in April of the year 1889, as a



consequence of an inflammation of the middle ear, was a painful loss for the family. Flora also worried about her remaining son. "Hugo crossed the frozen Jagst river in winter on his way to school in order to avoid the longer way across the bridge. Once the ice broke and he was saved from drowning because his wide coat that was filled with air."<sup>7)</sup>

The relationship between Flora and her son Hugo was loving and heartfelt throughout their whole lives. "He was her one and only. The fact that he completely turned away from her beloved Jewish religion caused her major worries but she did not reproach him but only herself."<sup>8)</sup> On 21 October 1899, her husband Emanuel Neuhaus died from pulmonary tuberculosis.<sup>9)</sup>

## Back in Laupheim

In the following year, in 1900 Flora Neuhaus returned to her parents' house in Kapellenstraße 13 in Laupheim. At the beginning of the same year her mother Babette had died. Flora kept her 78-year old father's house for the next ten years and she took care of him until he died in 1909. She inherited the house which was located on the southern corner

of the Judenberg and moved into an independent flat on the ground floor while her sister Clara, married Lammfromm, and her husband lived on the first floor with her husband. [\(page 332 ff.\)](#)

*"Her widow's pension and her thrifty lifestyle allowed her (Flora Neuhaus – the author.), a simple but comfortable life." <sup>10)</sup> "She kept busy working and praying. I (Gottfried Neuhaus –the author) think she was keeping chicken. She was always cleaning, mostly on her knees. She knitted and crocheted and mended and embroidered. Of course, she had social contacts to the many relatives in Laupheim and she went to the synagogue as often as she could. The synagogue had a gallery on the first floor where women prayed behind a curtain. Only men were allowed on the ground floor. Flora was very religious and strictly adhered to the complicated Shabbat and dietary laws" <sup>11)</sup>*

Flora Neuhaus was well integrated in the Jewish congregation due to her membership in the Jewish Women's Club, which was founded in 1838 and addressed issue of women considering questions of the religious and social life.<sup>12)</sup>

## **The Career of her Son Hugo**

As there was Gymnasium in Laupheim yet, Flora's son Hugo stayed with her husband's sister Sophie Ballenberger, née Neuhaus, in Ellwangen. He obtained his Abitur (university entrance qualification) there in 1904. Then Hugo studied medicine in Munich, Kiel and Freiburg and graduated in 1910 with his approbation as well as his dissertation in Freiburg. After his military service in 1911, he continued his professional education as a physician in the Städtischen Waisenhaus Berlin (municipal orphanage) from 1912 and from October 1913 to August 1914 in the university hospital Heidelberg. During World War I Hugo served as a physician both at the eastern front/Russian front and the western front from 1914 to 1918 and was awarded the Iron Cross First Class as well as the Wound Badge.



*"The next four years (1914–1918) her daily life (that of Flora Neuhaus – the author) focused on practicing her strictly orthodox belief which told her that her son would come back from war. She fasted and prayed every day and worked during the time she had left. She bought war bonds. The fact that her son returned home was proof to her that that her attitude was right. Even though religious in Jewish faith, grandma was a metaphor for Christian work ethics. She could not sit around doing nothing."<sup>13)</sup>*

In the time to follow, Flora's son practiced medicine and from January to April 1919 he was head of the infants' ward of the university hospital in Heidelberg before he opened a paediatric practice in Ulm on May 1, 1919, which he ran from the beginning of 1934 to his emigration in the summer of 1936, with a break of four months. The practice had an excellent reputation in and around Ulm. Dr. Hugo Neuhaus was also the physician of Laupheim children such as Heinrich Steiner. From 1926 he also worked as a school paediatrician at the Jewish School Camp Herrlingen near Ulm.<sup>14)</sup>

On 15 August 1920 Dr. Hugo Neuhaus married Marie Röschen Siegheim, born in 1881 in the registry office in Laupheim. His great cousin from Laupheim, Otto Heumann, and his mother, Flora Neuhaus, acted as marriage witnesses. She promised her daughter-in-law: *"I know my son and all his weaknesses. If there should ever be disharmony between you, I'm on your side!"* She never broke that promise.<sup>15)</sup> On the same day Rabbi Leopold Treitel wed the couple in the synagogue in Laupheim following Flora Neuhaus's special request.<sup>16)</sup> Marie and Dr. Hugo Neuhaus had two children: their son Gottfried Emanuel Wolfgang was born on 28 August 1926 and their daughter Barbara Eva was born on 21 January 1928 in Ulm.<sup>17)</sup>

*"In the house in Neu-Ulm Flora had her own room and then also in the flat in the Neutorstraße in Ulm . . . Flora and my mother Marie got along wonderfully even though they had completely different world views. There was never even the smallest fight. However, Hugo told his mother off because she kept insisting on doing most exhausting physical work despite her heart condition without treating herself with. Flora was loving and worried about her only grandchildren. She admired our little achievements a lot. Never a hint of strength or criticism. Her hands were never empty – either her prayer book or the knitting needles kept her busy. Her son Hugo, however, had a downright aversion against religion. Even though he loved his mother dearly, he did not allow any concessions even when she visited us for a longer time. No kosher food was cooked and he regarded Saturday as a workday. She suffered badly from this sinful behaviour and doubled her prayers and the fasting."<sup>18)</sup>*

*"I (Barbara Neuhaus – the author) remember that he (Hugo Neuhaus – the author) told me, when I was still rather small, that he lost his faith during his four years at the front. After that he referred to himself as an*

*agnostic. Even though he never gave up his Jewish faith, he didn't practice any of the traditions and joined the millions of other Jews who pledged allegiance to Germany."*<sup>19)</sup>

Her grandson Gottfried remembers the many visits with his grandmother Flora Neuhaus and his relatives in Laupheim where he found play mates of almost the same age in Willy Bergmann (born in 1925), Willy and Julie Bergmann's, née Steiner, son. His grandmother had one single toy: a small yellow tin bus.<sup>20)</sup>

## **The changes after 1933**

Already in December 1933, Dr. Hugo Neuhaus travelled to the USA in order to prepare the family's emigration. He early realised the dangerous changes in Germany after 30 January 1933. Therefore, he passed a medical language test in New York and obtained both a permission to practice medicine in this state and an immigration visa. During that time Marie Neuhaus had sold the house by the Jahn timer in Neu-Ulm and closed the practice at the Ehinger Tor. Flora Neuhaus, however, suffered from a heart attack at the beginning of the year 1934 and was consequently in need of care. She was no longer capable of running her own household alone in Laupheim. Due to his worries about his mother and his sense of responsibility as her only son, Hugo Neuhaus returned to Germany and successfully reopened his practice in Ulm.

*Children's Fest Laupheim  
1932:*

*Gottfried Neuhaus, Willy  
Bergmann, Ernst Bergmann,  
Bärbel Neuhaus.*







*Flora and Gottfried Neuhaus, 1930.*



*Hugo Neuhaus with his mother Flora and his wife Marie, Ulm, 1932.*

However, the threat by the Nazis increased steadily, particularly after passing the Nuremberg Racial Laws, so that the Neuhaus family decided again and definitely to emigrate to the USA while being forced to leave old and ill Flora Neuhaus behind in Germany. This was due to both her bad health condition and the immigration regulations of the USA. In order to make sure that his mother was well taken care of – as far as possible considering the circumstances of that time – Hugo Neuhaus accommodated his mother in the Jewish hospital in Gailingen/Baden in June 1936.<sup>21)</sup>

Memories of Gottfried Neuhaus:

*"After leaving Ulm on the first stage of our emigration, we visited my grandmother Flora in the Jewish hospital in Gailingen at the beginning of August, when I was nine years old. That was the last time for us to see her. She felt well and was particularly happy to comply with the Jewish dietary laws which was impossible for her when staying with us in Ulm or Neu-Ulm. Of course, saying good-bye was painful for all family members for my father was Flora's only child who had survived. And her age and heart condition made us worry that it would be a farewell forever. Nevertheless, my parents talked about their plans to visit grandmother in May 1938 for her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. She died peacefully in her sleep in February 1937."*<sup>22)</sup>

Her death saved her from the prosecution of the Nazis. Flora Neuhaus, née Heumann, was buried at the Jewish cemetery of her hometown Laupheim, grave S 28/5.<sup>23)</sup>

Excerpt from a letter of Hugo Neuhaus of 2 March 1937 to the Lörsch family in Neu-Ulm who they were friendly with:

*„ . . . Eight days ago, the news about our mother's death whom you knew caused us great grief. The full tragedy of our fate as emigrants hit us again. Mother died in the Gailinger hospital where she had been cared for well but far from her loved ones ever since we left. I am putting the fact of a mother's lonely death whose only son was forced to leave his beloved home country at the beginning of my message, in order to show you what it has meant to the likes of us to leave behind a mother who would have deserved to be cared for by her loved ones until her dying breath. Seen from our children's point of view, this major emigration was right and necessary. Whether we old ones will still be able to cope with the requirements of this alien new world with its new language, will only be answered correctly in a couple of years."*<sup>24)</sup>

On 22 August 1936 the family of four had left Europe leaving from a ship called "Westerland" from Antwerp. Despite having progressed in years, 51-year old Dr. Hugo Neuhaus managed to establish a well-running



practice in Freeport, New York State, against all odds. From the beginning of his stay in the States, his striving was geared to helping Jewish relatives and friends. For 17 he assumed surety for being granted a visa, a so-called affidavit, until the authorities banned him from doing it again. In addition, Dr. Hugo and Marie Neuhaus supported many German emigrants in order to facilitate their start in their new home country. After their emigration neither of them have set foot on German ground again. Dr. Jugo Neuhaus died in Freeport in 1959, his wife Marie Neuhaus in Yonkers, New Jersey in 1974.

Flora Neuhaus's grandchildren have succeeded in their new home country. Prof. Dr. Barbara Neuhaus became a faculty member of the School of Occupational Therapy am College of Physicians and Surgeons an der Columbia University and was dean of the faculty. Today she lives in New Jersey. After studying at Harvard College, Gottfried Neuhaus worked in a pharmaceutical enterprise. He has now retired and lives with this wife Helen, née Bull, in New Jersey. They have five children and four grandchildren.<sup>25)</sup>



*f.l.: Helen and Goeff Neuhaus, their daughter Itty Neuhaus*

*and her husband at the opening of the exhibition:*

*"Itty Neuhaus: Home for Haus" on 9 September 2007 in the Ulmer Stadthaus.*

Remarks:

- 1) Registry Office Laupheim, family register volume V/95.
- 2) Schenzinger, August: Illustrierte Beschreibung und Geschichte Laupheims samt Umgebung (Illustrated description and history of Laupheim incl. surroundings). Laupheim 1897 Photo reprint of the town of Laupheim (ed.) 1987. p. 254; Schenk, Georg: Die Juden in Laupheim (The Jews in Laupheim). From: Stadt Laupheim (ed.) Laupheim. 1979. p. 296.
- 3) E-Mail from Gottfried Neuhaus dated 16 June 2003.
- 4) E-Mail from Gottfried Neuhaus dated 10 June 2003.
- 5) Ibidem.
- 6) Registry Office Laupheim, family register volume V/295.
- 7) Remark 4.
- 8) Ibidem.
- 9) Letter from Gottfried Neuhaus dated 22 May 2003; Registry Office Laupheim, family register volume V/295.
- 10) Essay "OMA" (granny) by Barbara Neuhaus from the year 2000.
- 11) Compare remark 4.
- 12) District archive Biberach Az 6104/1.
- 13) See remark 10.
- 14) Carmen Stadelhofer (ed.): Ehrung für Dr. Hugo Neuhaus (tribute for Dr. Hugo Neuhaus). ZAWiW of Ulm University. January 2003. p. 62 ff.
- 15) Registry Office Laupheim. Marriage-Main-Register 1920.; Essay "OMA" (granny) by Barbara Neuhaus from the year 2000.
- 16) Compare remark 3.
- 17) Carmen Stadelhofer (ed.): Ehrung für Dr. Hugo Neuhaus. ZAWiW der Universität Ulm. January 2003. p.11–12.
- 18) Email from Gottfried Neuhaus dated 10 June 2003.

- 19) Compare remark 10.
- 20) Compare remark 3.
- 21) Compare remark 14.
- 22) Email from Gottfried Neuhaus dated 10 June 2003.
- 23) Hüttenmeister, Natanja: Der Jüdische Friedhof (The Jewish Cemetery) . Laupheim 1998. p. 515.
- 24) Compare remark 14.
- 25) Ibidem.