

# Jewish life in Oberlauringen

Vilmar Herden from Bad

Neustadt in October 2012



Foto Vilmar Herden

Oberlauringen celebrated his 1200-year existence in 2011. For many centuries Jewish families lived in the village, some were found as merchants with optical equipment in Göttingen in 1763/64. With Jew protection Carl August Truchsess of Wetzhausen. Sir on Oberlauringen brought money to the village. So he settled 28 Jewish merchants in the village. Therefore he built a village quarter of its own costs. The municipality had all important facilities: Synagogue, ritual bath, kosher butchers shop and Madsen bakery. Common events were celebrated and one helped each other. To hallow the Sabbath, farmers wives lit the stoves in Jewish households, in turn fresh rolls hung on the front doors of them Sunday morning. The Jewish people were represented by the mayor Isaac Hirsch in their interests in this time.

The well-known poet and linguist Friedrich Rückert, who has grown up in the village at that time later taught in Erlangen and Berlin as a professor, described in his "Memories of a Dorfamtmannssohn"

In the poem: „**The farmers and their graceful patron**”

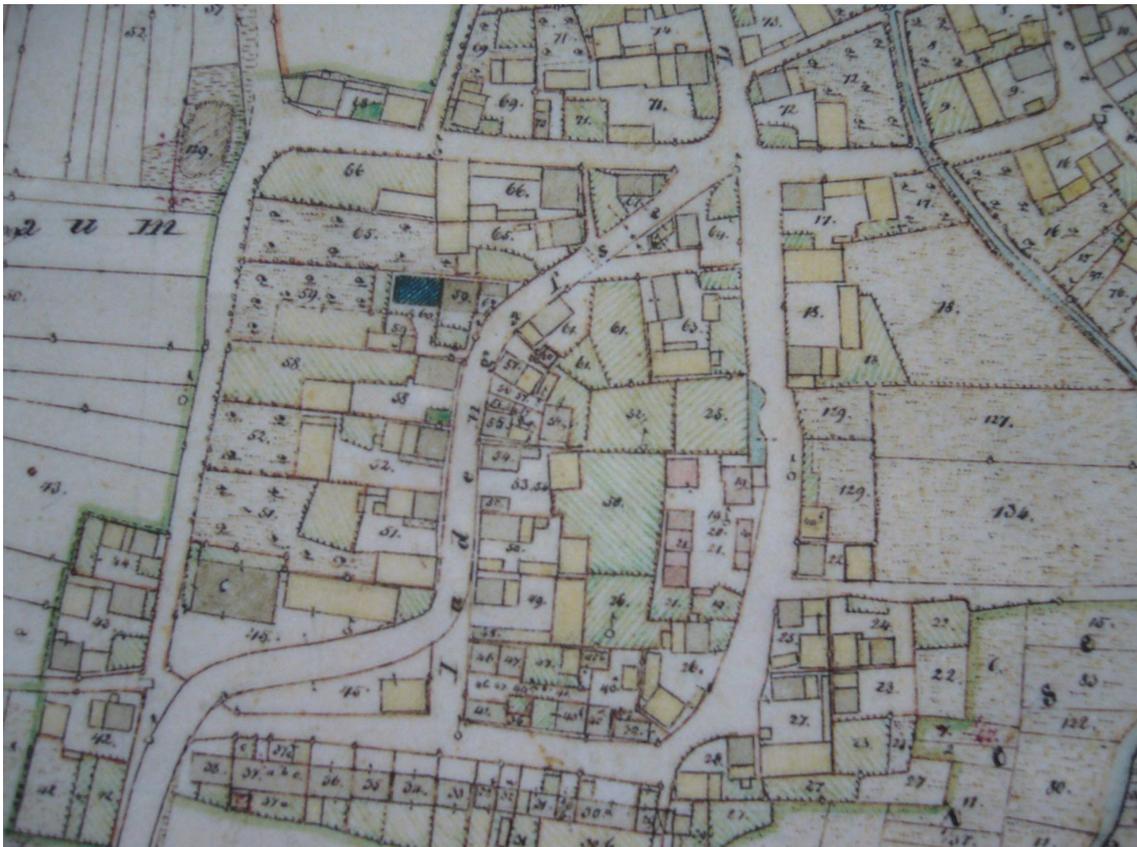
**It's known in Jerusalem and Babylon,  
That you can comfortably live at our little stream's border**

**And everyone collects himself here now  
Who was destroyed in all the world.**

From the parish priest of the village Johann Kaspar Stepf, doctor of the worldly wisdom and Rückert's teacher in Latin and Greek we know, that the enlightened baron Carl August organized balls in his castle for Jew girls and tried to take advantage by playing cards with their parents.

**1810** after death of the last village nobleman the office Oberlauringen was dissolved. In that time in the village lived **501 Protestants, 143 Jews and 27 Catholics**.

In 1825 the Bavarian King allowed an elementary school for all pupils who had to follow the Sabbath duties, where they could be informed. After the construction of the Israelite cemetery and a rabbi house everything seemed to be perfect.



The Jewish quarter around the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century built by Carl August Truchsess from Wetzhausen, Sir of Oberlauringen.

Then life ( with three flourishing inns) was based on farming, viniculture and quarries. Every year 8 livestock markets in the village were acted superregional. 1900 the Jewish cattle wholesaler Louis Strauss brought 120 cattle with the train from Bad Neustadt to Berlin for example every 14 days and took 100 horses along the return from East Prussians to Meiningen.

Unusual is, that a buyer community of 9 Jewish an 3 German inhabitants bought the castle farm in the village (called the 12 apostles) and that 2 Jewish farmers lived in the village.

They engaged themselves in choral society, sports and took executive duties. Their teachers were thought highly also highly in the teachers association. In the first World War they tried to show special bravery. Because of gratitude a war memorial for them was erected after 1918 in the neighbouring town Kleinbardorf.

With the National Socialists this tolerance disappeared. Many Jews left the village. 30 Jews could leave the place and emigrate between 1937 and 1940. The last 13 of them and two from Stadtlauringen had to live in a ghetto house of the family Seegen very cramped. On April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1942 they were collected and deported to Lublin via Wurzburg with the general transport Nr, DA 49. **Nobody survived.**



The well known Jew of post-war period, like Prof. Dr. Dr. Leo Trepp, the last rabbi trained in Nazi German country and the son of Lilly Jahn, grandson of the family of the cattle merchant Schloss, Attorneys General Gerhard Jahn had their roots in the place.

Further there is the once Jewish village quarter with synagogue, rabbi house. Sabbath house, ghetto house and cemetery, changed only. The Israelite school building was used as school room until 1957.

Today, the girl orphanage from Altdorf at Pleß in Oberschlesien is located in the castle ground. It could escape under Miechowitzer Diakonissen's management to Bavaria. Oberlauringen became their new native country in 1946 in 1945. Today, it still helps handicapped young people, named "Jugend- und Behindertenhilfe e. V." and is important employer in the place.

Since 1978 Oberlauringen is incorporated to the market Stadtlauringen. It doesn't have any duty or mayor now. The district capital is Schweinfurt. The farmers have sold their

cows. They are working as employers and workers in the near industrial centre Schweinfurt or Bad Neustadt.

Only Friedrich Rückert still reminds in his poem and sayings of the great time and is still advertising for the village and its activities.





Postcards of Oberlauringen about 1900