

STUMBLING STONES CEREMONY, 11 JULY 2019

HEINRICH-STAMME-STR. 3

**DAGOBERT 'DAVID'
MEYER**

LIVED HERE
BORN 1864
FLIGHT 1938
SOUTH AFRICA

**MINNA MEYER
NÉE THALHEIMER**

LIVED HERE
BORN 1877
FLIGHT 1938
SOUTH AFRICA

**EDITH GOTTSCHALK
NÉE MEYER**

BORN 1901

**FRIEDA 'FRIEDEL'
SCHORSCH
NÉE MEYER**

BORN 1903

ERWIN MEYER

LIVED HERE
BORN 1911
FLIGHT 1935
SOUTH AFRICA

LOCATION

The location of the stumbling stones at Heinrich-Stamme-Str. 3 is the last address of Erwin Meyer in Hannover. The stumbling stone was sponsored by Deborah and Lukas Thielen.

FAMILY

Erwin Meyer was born in March 1911 in his parents' apartment at Heinrich Stamme Strasse 3. He was the youngest child of the Jewish merchant Dagobert "David" Meyer and his wife Minna Meyer née Thalheimer, who was also Jewish. He had two sisters, Edith (born in 1901) and Frieda "Friedel" (born in 1903).

His father Dagobert Meyer was employed as an accountant with Thalheimer Bros. Ltd. in Hannover from 1912 on. The firm, a plywood wholesaler, had its own plywood factory in Rheda-Wiedenbrück from 1926 on. The co-owners Isaak and Gustav Thalheimer were brothers of Minna Meyer and thus Erwin's uncles.

EDUCATION

Erwin Meyer attended the secondary school on Wolfstraße in Hannover until 1927. He then completed a two-year commercial apprenticeship at a silk store in Hannover, Seidenhaus Seidenhaus Koopmann (owned by Eduard Koopmann; the business was "aryanized" in 1935 and continued as Seidenhaus Wichmann). From mid-1929 to the end of 1930, Erwin Meyer worked as a clerk for Alsberg Bros. department store in Bochum. He later went to England and France, working in similar positions and learning English and French.

After the Nazis came to power, the French government tightened the conditions of residence for German citizens in France. Erwin Meyer lost his residence and work permit in France. He returned to Hannover in February 1933, but moved to Rheda-Wiedenbrück a few months later, where he worked in the office of his uncles' plywood factory, Thalheimer Bros. The persecution of the Thalheimer Bros. business increased continually. In 1935 criminal proceedings were initiated against them because of alleged infringements of foreign currency regulations. This led to the "aryanization" of the factory in 1939 by sale to the West German Plywood Works (owned by Hugo Bresser and Christian Franke).

EMIGRATION

The growing persecution of Jews by the Nazi regime led Erwin Meyer to decide to emigrate late in 1935. Probably after a short last visit to his sister Frieda Friedel Schorsch at Brahmstrasse 4 in Hannover, he emigrated to Cape Town in South Africa in December 1935. He travelled by train from Hannover to Southampton in England. On 6 December 1935 he sailed from Southampton to Cape Town on the "Balmoral Castle", arriving in Cape Town on 23 December 1935.

LIFE AND MARRIAGE IN SOUTH AFRICA

In Cape Town he worked at first for the L. Raphaeli & Son import agency, which had helped him to get his visa and ship passage, and then for a short time for a similar firm in Captetown. After living for a year in Cape Town he moved in August 1937 to Germiston/ Transvaal, where he worked as an agent for eiderdowns until August 1939.

On 10 September 1939 Erwin Meyer married Rena Hurwitz from Ceres (South Africa) in the Great Synagogue in Cape Town. Shortly afterwards and with the help of his wife he opened a haberdashery and lingerie shop in Vereeniging/ Transvaal. After initial difficulties he earned enough to keep his family in some comfort from 1944 on.

PARENTS, SIBLINGS AND CHILDREN

At this time Erwin Meyer's parents Dagobert and Minna Meyer were also living in his household. They had emigrated from Germany to South Africa early in 1939. His father died in 1943. His mother Minna later emigrated to Louisville/Kentucky to be with her daughter Frieda, and died there in 1948.



Erwin's sister Edith lived with her husband Paul Gottschalk in Halberstadt, where he ran the Hermann Helft drapery store at Schmiedestrasse 20. They emigrated to Montevideo in Uruguay in 1938. His sister Frieda had married Joseph Schorsch, the brother of the well-known rabbi Emil Schorsch in Hannover. Joseph Schorsch also worked for Thalheim Bros. in Hannover arbeitete. They emigrated to the USA in 1938.

Erwin Meyer, 1930s. Photo: Family collection

Erwin and Rena Meyer had two sons: their son Henry was born in 1945, Michael in 1948. Erwin Meyer and his wife moved to Cape Town in 1966, where he died in 1983.

Florian Grumblies, 2019

