

SULZBURG - Memorial Former Synagogue

History of the Jewish Community

The history of the Jewish community in Sulzburg dates back to the 16th century. Jewish inhabitants of the town were referred to by name for the first time in 1528. A Jewish cemetery was established at the same time and, for about 50 years, was the burial place for many Jews from the “Badische Oberland”. As early as 1546, Margrave Ernst permitted the Jews of Sulzburg to open a school, or a “sinagog”, and to engage a cantor or schoolmaster for it.

Expulsion of the Jews started in 1577. It was not until 1716 that four Jewish families again lived in the little town. They received permission to lay the foundation for a new and larger cemetery. From then onwards until well into the 19th century, Sulzburg was a spiritual and cultural centre for the Jews in the Margraviate of Baden. Later, in 1887, the rabbinate which until then had had its seat in Sulzburg, was moved to Freiburg.

A number of renowned personalities, including several learned rabbis, such as David Blum (mid 16th c) known as Sulzburg, Isaak Kahn (1744 – 1797), Emanuel Dreyfuss (1832 – 1886) as well as Gustav Weil (1808 – 1899) were born or lived in Sulzburg. Gustav Weil, a professor of Oriental Languages in Heidelberg, translated “The Tales of a Thousand and One Nights” into German.

In 1864, the Jewish community - with its 416 members – made up a third of the town’s population. In 1933, there were still about 100 Jews living in Sulzburg. They were “abandoned without protection” - thus the inscription on the memorial stone at the Jewish cemetery of Sulzburg. The persecution they suffered under the Nazi regime led the greater part of them to leave Germany between 1933 and 1940. In October 1940, the remaining 27 Jews were deported to Gurs. According to recent reviews, at least 30 of those who lived here in 1933 perished in the internment camp of Gurs or were murdered in extermination camps.

The Synagogue

The synagogue of Sulzburg was the third synagogue built in the Grand Duchy of Baden, after Karlsruhe and Randegg. Today it represents the only surviving such structure in Baden-Württemberg built in the style of Friedrich Weinbrenner’s architectural school. It was built in 1821-1822 by Johann Ludwig Weinbrenner in the neoclassical style with neo-baroque elements, and was designed to harmonize with the town’s overall appearance.

Next to the large Jewish community centre in the same street (Gustav Weil-Straße), the synagogue was the hub of Jewish community life and was of major importance to the entire Jewish community of Southern Baden. After its redecoration in 1879, all of Sulzburg’s citizens joined the Israelite community in celebrating the restoration of this House of God. It was desecrated and demolished during the infamous “Reichskristallnacht” on 10 November 1938, but was spared from being set alight due to its proximity to the houses next door.

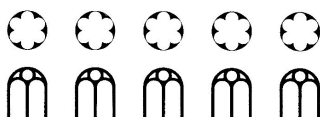
After 1938, the former synagogue served as a repository for the Freiburg University Library, then a stable and a small factory, similar to the fate of other synagogues in Germany. Thanks to a joint initiative by the Conservation Bureau of Baden, a former Jewish citizen of Sulzburg who had emigrated, and the town’s mayor of the time, the building was purchased by the town in the mid-1970’s and restored as a cultural monument and memorial.

The “Freundeskreis Ehemalige Synagoge Sulzburg e.V.”,

founded in 1989, organizes functions, lectures and exhibitions in the memorial. The former synagogue can be visited by appointment, and guided tours are offered. Please apply to the tourist office.

The synagogue is open to visitors every first and last Sunday of each month from 4.00 pm to 6.00 pm.

Contact: Rathaus / Hauptstr. 60, 79295 Sulzburg, Tel.: 07634/5600-40, Fax: 07634/560050, Internet:
<http://www.sulzburg.de/>



Ehemalige Synagoge Sulzburg