

# The Jewish Community of Laupheim and its Annihilation

Book Pages 209 - 212

## FRIEDBERGER, Berthold, 25 Radstrasse

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*ROBERT EB / KARL NEIDLINGER*

**Berthold Friedberger**, born May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1866 in Laupheim, Tradesman, death January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1941, married to **Elise so-called Liesel n<sup>è</sup>e Löwenthal**, born May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1876 in Laupheim, murdered May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1944 in Auschwitz

-[Leopold, born January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1903 in Laupheim, Tradesman, emigrated to Great Britain]



*Berthold Friedberger.*  
(Leo-Baeck-Institution, NY)



*Elise Friedberger, née  
Löwenthal.*  
(Archive: Ernst Schäll)

The source situation concerning Berthold and Elise Friedberger is rather poor. Still there was an unusual lucky chance to discover some facts. In their circle of friends, around 1895, to a time where they weren't married yet, both of them betook themselves to a photographer for a group picture. One of the two existing pictures was found in the "John Bergmann Inheritance", the other one in the "Ernst Schell Archive". A few years later Berthold Friedberger and the ten years younger Elise Löwenthal got married and built a stately house in Radstreet.

Berthold Friedberger was a member of City Council and also of the Railroad Committee, which had been recently established in 1895. This institution campaigned for the construction of the light railway from Laupheim to Schwendi. The Royal Government didn't accept the Railroad Committees intention until the sixth request had been handed in on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1899. In January 1902 the first financial resources were approved. The official opening was on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1904.

There is not much known about Leopold, Berthold's and Elise's son, who was born on January, 10<sup>th</sup>, 1903. In the year 1933 he didn't live in Laupheim anymore. According to records from John H. Bergmann, Leopold immigrated to Great Britain during the NS period and after that to Canada, where his tracks get lost.

The rather general job title "tradesman" normally stands for a cattle tradesman. Therefore it is quite likely that Berthold Friedberger earned his money by trading cattle. His passport photograph is taken out of his business license issued by the district office.

In February 1939 Berthold Friedberger had to sell his house to the unskilled worker Georg Leibling for 13 000 Reichsmark. In the so-called "dejewishing contract" comparable to a sales contract, the reason for the sale was quoted as a leak of financial resources. Besides it had been recorded that the couple didn't plan an emigration to another country in the near future. The contract also frankly quoted, that the average estimated value of the Friedberger residence was 15200 Reichsmark. Where the couple lived after the sale is not clear. It may be possible that the Friedberger's were still able to live in the sold house for a while.



**Passport photograph** of Berthold Friedberger

*(District Archive Biberach)*



Southern Radsteet, odd-numbered house numbers 17-25

In the foreground you can see the house of Berthold and Liesel Friedberger, according to today's numbering it is Radstreet 25. The next four houses all belong to the Bergmann family. Some of them were employee apartments for the business. In house number 23 Gugenheimers lived, next to that in the Bergmann main residence (number 21) Emma und Gretel Gideon lives and in number 17 Lina and Maier Wertheimer (Photograph: K. Neidlinger / Michael Schick)

On January 18<sup>th</sup> , 1941 Berthold Friedberger died at the age of 74. He got a grave at the Jewish graveyard in Laupheim. After that his wife Elise, who was always called Liesel, had to move to another apartment. In the letters of Lina Wertheimer, out of the Jewish senior residence, addressed to Emma and Gretel Gideon in Wintherthur, Liesel Friedberger, who was their former neighbor, is named a number of times. For example Lina writes on August 26<sup>th</sup> , 1941:

*"Liesel Friedberger, who is doing well again, (...) got used to her new apartment well. I see her and the other friends at least once or twice a week when they come to the prayer room, located downstairs in the house. But otherwise I don't meet her."*

In another letter dated October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1941 it gets clear that Liesel meanwhile had to move to a barrack in the "Wendelinsgrube" and that her mother Lina Löwenthal had died in a nursing home in Heggbach:

*"I suppose that you, dear Emma, meanwhile got the message from Liesel Fr. herself and that you know that her highly talented mother died shortly before her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday completely unexpected. She went to sleep in peace and quiet. The day before Liesel had visited her and they had been happy together and her mother had had good conversations with her. When Liesel left in the evening, she was tired and wanted to go to sleep. She slept till the next morning and passed away without a cramp - an enviable ending! I have to say that Liesel is a brave and upright person. She had proven that in recent times. You probably heard from her sister-in-law that she moved again. She lives together with the "Meinsteins" in the Old Bahnhofstreet, with all the others who weren't accepted in home."*

In a letter from February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1942 it is written:

*"We don't meet our local friends a lot because the winter is very rough. A whole lot of snow and I don't want to take such long ways. My gall is getting worse. But the old friends come and visit us here in the home often, especially Liesel, she is very clingy."*

Out of a letter from August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1942 it arises that Liesel herself is in letter contact with the Gideons, here you can read:

*"I don't know if Liesel answered herself already; recently she had a little accident. She fell, but she recovered well and goes out again."*

Unfortunately Liesel Friedberger's letters were not preserved. The last letter is dated to July, 15<sup>th</sup> 1942. In it Lina Wertheimer writes:

*"Liesel comes to our house frequently. She also directed me your greetings and we are happy together when we talk about the old times. She works in the kitchen. We help her peeling potato skins, arranging vegetables and so on. This way the work gets done quite easily. Even more I like to visit her in her nice and cozy little home. And she knows just how to make it quite comfortable for guests so that the visit mostly takes longer than planned. (...) It's so good that Liesel is close friends with Bertha Heilbonner and also with the few other neighbors. They keep together very well."*

Elise Friedberger was deported to Theresienstadt on August 19<sup>th</sup>, 1942 with the fourth and final deportation. Here she was able to make it about two more years. On May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1944 she was taken to Auschwitz with the liquidation transportation where she was murdered.

Literature:

Josef Braun: Alt-Laupheimer Bilderbogen, Band 1, S. 118/119.

Cornelia Hecht/Antje Köhlerschmidt: Die Deportation der Juden aus Laupheim, S. 86.

Quellen:

John H. Bergmann: Handschriftlicher Stammbaum Friedberger im John-Bergmann-Nachlass, Stadtarchiv Laupheim.

Kreisarchiv Biberach, WÜ034, Bü 3. Archiv Ernst Schäll.