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Ottensoos (Central Franconia/Bavaria)

The village is one of the oldest known places in the eastern Middle Franconia.

In the 18th and in the first half of the 19th century, the Jewish community in the village with almost 35 families represented around a third of the local population. The Jewish local history of Ottensoos is closely linked to the local history of Schnaittach.



View of Ottensoos – engraving around 1760 (Fig. from: commons.wikimedia.org, in public domain)

In the village of Ottensoos, a small Jewish community developed from the beginning of the 16th century, which increased over the

centuries and whose relatives at times accounted for more than a third of the villagers. The settlement of Jews in the Middle Franconian villages, including Ottensoos, was probably closely related to the expulsion or. Expulsion of Jews from the Imperial City of Nuremberg 1498/1499. The Ganerben in Rothenberg offered the families mostly living from the small trade and the domestic hunting house in their villages of Forth, Hüttenbach, Ottensoos and Schnaittach, but demanded considerable protection fees for permission to settled; in addition, some landlords also claimed the creditworthiness of "his" Jews. The letters of protection usually had to be renewed every 15 years. The Jews from Ottensoos formed a community together with the Jews from Schnaittach in the 17th century; a cemetery ground was available for the deceased in Schnaittach, for which the Ottensoaint Jews had to pay fees.

A disease rampant around 1710 among the Otten-Sosoose Jews temporarily led to a separation from the Christian inhabitants.

Around 1810 there was a very high Jewish population in the village of Ottensoo; according to the "Jewish matriculation" of 1813, 26 families were set for Ottensoos. The living spaces of the Jews were located in a central location. Their life situation was quite difficult, as a report from 1823 shows: *"The Jewish families in Ottensos are overseed in Ottensoos with regard to the Edict ... in Ottensoos, because only a few of them can drive such distinctive hand-thic cation in the community. In Ottensoos there is a lack of construction sites and other things to become cultivated states. From this cause, the Jewish families cannot inhabit house houses alone, and operate such a lander as the peasant man does, and therefore have to dwell several Jewish families in a house, and pursue the main food in foreign other distant places."*

After a large fire in 1871, in which the old synagogue from 1686 was destroyed, the Jewish community had a new building built at the same location. He was annexed to the school building and a mikvah; the synagogue building, which was inaugurated in 1872, was co-financed by collections in the synagogue communities of Middle Franconia.

On the ground floor there was the large prayer room, on the upper floor there was a gallery destined for the women; the annex on the west side housed the religious school and above it the teacher's home.



Synagogue of Ottensoos

Synagogue model (municipality of Ottensoos)

From the end of the 1820s, there was a Jewish religious school in the village; the Jewish children received elementary lessons in the Protestant elementary school. With the brain drain, the number of students continuously decreased; in 1924, the religious school was abandoned; a teacher from Schnaittach now taught the few Jewish children.

Vacante Stelle.

Bei der hiesigen israelitischen Cultusgemeinde ist die Stelle eines Religionslehrers und Vorsängers, womit auch zugleich das Schächteramt verbunden ist, in Erledigung gekommen.

Der Jahresgehalt für den Lehrer- und Vorsängerdienst beträgt 300 Gulden fix. Der Ertrag für das Schächteramt dürfte sich, incl. der nicht unbedeutenden Accidenzien, auf 300—350 Gulden und darüber belaufen.

Reflectanten belieben ihre Gesuche mit den nöthigen Zeugnissen versehen innerhalb

vier Wochen

portofrei an die unterzeichneten Vorstände einzusenden.

Ottenssoos an der bayr. Ostbahn,

26. November 1871.

German Prager.
Wolf Sehdörfer.

Offene Lehrerstelle!

In der hies. isr. Kultusgemeinde ist die Stelle eines Religionslehrers u. Vorsängers, womit auch die Schächterfunktion verbunden ist, in Erledigung gekommen. (11172)

Das fixe Jahresgehalt beträgt M. 600.— mit einer jährlichen Steigerung von je M. 50.— auf drei Jahre; das Nebeneinkommen aus dem Vorsänger- u. Schächteramte etc. beläuft sich auf ca. M. 700 bei freier Wohnung im neubauten Schulhause.

Seminaristisch gebildete, gut qualifizierte u. mit guten Stimmmitteln begabte Bewerber wollen sich unter Einreichung der nötig. Zeugnisse bis längstens 15. Nov. an die unterzeichneten Vorstände wenden. Ausländer finden keine Berücksichtigung.

Ottenssoos, d. 19. Okt. 1908.

Die Isr. Kultusverwaltung:

Sonja Reibter,
Max Sehdörfer.

two advertisements from the magazine "Der Israelit" from 20. Dec. 1871 and from the 22nd of the oct. 1908

The municipality initially belonged to the rabbinate district of Schnaittach, until 1932 to the district rabbinate of Schwabach, after which it was assigned to the district rabbinate Ansbach.

Jews in Ottensoos:

--- 1577 a Jewish family,

Details from:

and

The Jewish inhabitants of Ottensoos, who until the 20th century, who *sanctify* their "sabbath embarrassed exactly sanctified" are said to have been largely integrated and tolerated in the predominantly Protestant place. The main branches of the Ottensooser Jews were mainly the hop, cattle and cut goods trade; in addition, there were also some small craftsmen. The Jewish tradesmen played an important role not only for Ottensoos, but also for the villages of the surrounding area.

As a result of the emigration, especially younger families belonged to the Jewish community around 1925/1930 almost only older members. Immediately after the Nazi takeover in 1933, the local Jewish villagers were subjected to anti-Semitic-motivated acts of violence; in 1934, numerous windows were hammered by private houses, and in 1936 the windows of the synagogue were also found. Signs with the inscription "*Jews undesirable!*" had been placed at the entrance to the village. As a result of the economic boycott, the Jews of Ottensoos became increasingly impoverished, so that they had to be financially supported by the Jewish community of Nuremberg.

At the November Pogrom of 1938, the interior of the then no longer used synagogue was completely destroyed, the building itself remained almost undamaged. Shortly afterwards, the synagogue plot and other Jewish land were transferred to municipal and private hands.

In 1948, the indictment against the winnings in Ottensoos can be read in the indictment against the presumed ringleaders: "... *The Jews were taken out of their homes, first rounded up at the village well and then taken to the schoolhouse, where they were released after several hours. In the synagogue, after violent intrusions, the chandeliers were torn down, the windows were smashed, and prayer chairs and other furnishings were demolished. The riots were primarily involved foreign, but also local SA people and party members. However, the latter was prevented from burning the synagogue. ...*" In 1939, all Jewish residents - obviously put under massive pressure - abandoned the village and had migrated to nearby towns.

According to the Yad Vashem/Jerusalem memorial, 30 Jewish inhabitants of Ottensoos, who were resident in the town for 30 natives or longer living in the village (*the victims' namental mentioning the victims see: alemannia-judaica.de/ottensoos synagogue.htm*).

Since 1988, a memorial plaque on the former synagogue building has commemorated the lost congregation; the inscription reads:

Former synagogue

the Jewish community resident since 1531

1698 mentioned in a document, built in 1867 after fire, desecrated on 9.11.1938

The community of Ottensoos remembers its Jewish fellow citizens

1988



Since 2003, the building, which had been used as a residence, has been used to commemorate the Ottenso community. After the exterior renovation of the building with a high cost in 2011/2012, the former prayer room on the ground floor is to be used as a "public space" after its final completion (2015): With the creation of a cultural center by the "Friends of Former Synagogue Ottensoos", the synagogue building has now become a new use.



Synagogue building in Ottensoos: left before the renovation (Aufn. M. Ohmsen, 2004) - right after the renovation (Research: [ottensoos.de](https://www.ottensoos.de), 2015)

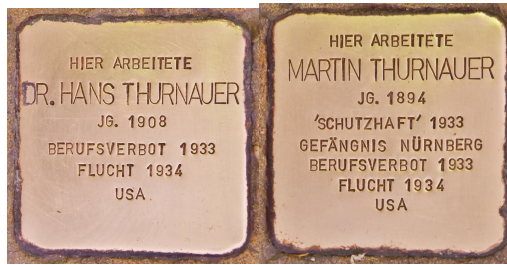
A lintel of a "Jewish house" - a relic from 1723 - was transferred to the Jewish Museum Schnaittach as a permanent loan. There is also a Torah curtain donated in the same museum in 1863 by the Ottenso synagogue.

In 1952, a memorial stone was erected in the Schnaittacher Jewish cemetery in memory of the deceased from Schnaittach, Hüttenbach, Ottensoos and Forth. The tombs were destroyed during the Nazi era.

[cf.

In the 19th and 20th century, very few Jews were in course living; they belonged to the Jewish community of Ottensoos.

Since 2014, two so-called streets in Luitpoldstraße have remembered. "Stolpersteine" to the two Jewish entrepreneurs Hans and Martin Thurnauer, who were formerly active in Lauf, who were expropriated and forced to emigrate.



Up. Chr. Michelides, 2020, from: [wikipedia.org](https://www.wikipedia.org), CC BY-SA

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Impressum

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