

This is the only letter correspondence with former residents of Gunzenhausen that has been found. We read that Fred now is married and has two children.

Ten years after the war, he discovers of the things his parents left behind. In 1954 he receives a small sum of money from his parents estate, but the contents of this suitcase probably meant a lot more to him.



Fred becomes secretive about the fate of his family. He never speaks one word of German. He never speaks of his relatives, so his children know very little about their family. None of them speaks German today. He will never come back to Gunzenhausen.

On Juli 5th 1986 Joel Fredi Dottenheimer dies as Fred Dottheim in the USA.

The Present

The Breastplate leads the way to Reconciliation

In early 1990, a man from Nürnberg went to the city museum of Fürth, and handed over some Jewish ritual objects. He said that his father in law has bought them as a private salesman in Gunzenhausen in the early thirties.

Only years later, in 1997, when the new museum in Fürth was being built, did they clean these objects. For the first time, they saw the beauty of the breastplate. And a further surprise: In a hollow inside the unicorns the restorer found a small slip of paper, saying „hineingelegt a. 3. Okt. 1901/21. Tischri 5662 als hier Sali Haas Schiur hatte. Gerolzhofen, 3. Okt abends 7 Uhr – Julius Godlowsky.“

Gerolzhofen in is Frankonia, but it is about 130 kilometres north west of Gunzenhausen. The solution came from art historian Theodor Harburger, who had photographed the ritual objects of the Gunzenhausen Synagogue in 1927. The breastplate was named private possession of Sigmund Dottenheimer.

In the city archive, we were able to find a connection between the Dottenheimer family and Gerolzhofen quickly. Sigmund's wife came