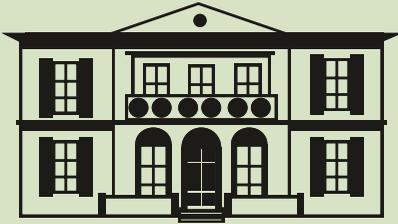


In Touch

ISSN: 1559-4866 • December 2021

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE
JEWISH MUSEUM HOHENEMS, INC.



www.afjmh.org

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Letter from the President

TIMOTHY L. HANFORD

Dear Friends and Supporters of AFJMH:

It is my honor to share this year-end newsletter with you. For all of us, 2021 has been a somewhat mixed year with the optimism of vaccines and boosters bumping up against stubborn COVID outbreaks. Life has not yet returned to pre-COVID “normal.” People, businesses, and institutions across the globe are trying to adapt to new realities including reduced travel, volatile economics and politics, and general uncertainty. The Jewish Museum Hohenems has done an amazing job of continuing its educational mission against this backdrop but make no mistake, it has been affected.

Museum Director Hanno Loewy tells us in this issue about the ongoing impact of the pandemic and how the Museum has nonetheless been able to reopen and continue and expand its activities. One exciting development is the formation of the Viennese Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems which supports guest presentations by our *Museum in Vienna*. The successful “*Last Europeans*” show that closed in October will reopen in Vienna (at the *Wiener Volkskundemuseum*) in January.

Hanno also tells us about this year’s Museum activities and exhibitions which coincide with the 30th anniversary of the Museum. He also gives us a preview of the Museum’s future plans. As you know, this is a difficult time for cultural institutions, so even though our Museum has reached a respectable three decades, its future can hardly be taken for granted. And that’s why AFJMH’s continued support is so important. The Museum is especially dependent on our contributions this year and next.

As you know, the mission of the AFJMH is to provide additional financial support for the Jewish Museum Hohenems. The AFJMH also provides financial assistance for maintaining the Hohenems Jewish Cemetery. Your support for the museum’s exhibitions, its publications, its research, and its events is indispensable. **I am aware that the pandemic continues to create economic uncertainty for many Americans, but if you are able, I would like to encourage you to continue your financial support.**

The AFJMH is proud to have so many American Hohenems descendants as members. But we are always looking for more! Please alert your siblings and cousins and urge them to take a look at the AFJMH website (www.AFJMH.org) and consider joining AFJMH.

I also want to take this opportunity to extend our best wishes to all for a happy and productive year in 2022. Your past generosity to AFJMH is deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,

Tim Hanford
President



A Letter from the Director to Friends

DR. HANNO LOEWY

Dear friends of the Jewish Museum!

Our lives have been informed by the pandemic for almost two years now. But the crisis we experience today is not only one of being exposed to a formerly unknown virus. It is a crisis of trust and the advent of “fake news,” the split between conflicting “realities” in which those who never did anything but to lie about everything present themselves as the prophets of “truth.” But it is also a crisis of forces we know very well: the looming neglect of our health systems and social security safety nets and the increasing grip of nationalism and competitive interests, forces that challenge the fabric of the European Union as well as the United Nations. Our exhibition, *The Last Europeans*, which opened in the midst of these tides a year ago, was closed shortly thereafter for many weeks due to the next official shut down. It successfully reopened in the spring, attracting more visitors than we ever expected who filled our galleries again demonstrating their vivid interest in our museum and in cultural life at large. In October, 2021 this exhibition in Hohenems came to its end, but will soon restart in the *Wiener Volkskundemuseum* (the Viennese Museum of European Ethnography) on January 20, 2022. On this occasion, a new association will start its activities: the Viennese Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems will support future guest appearances in Vienna from our museum.

The Jewish Museum Hohenems opened its doors to the public in April, 1991. It became the center of contemporary discourse in the region as well as a center of family networks and historical consciousness in the cosmopolitan community which Mark Brunner proudly called the “Hohenems Diaspora”.

Different from our previous “jubilees,” a great public event on the occasion of our thirtieth “birthday” was unthinkable under the conditions of this spring. So we decided to produce a pictorial guide through thirty years of exhibitions, events, reunions and educational programs that made Hohenems a “brand” in the museum world. And we gave that the broadest possible reach by publishing this in a new edition of our newspaper “old liberties of Ems.” We also devoted this new edition to our exhibition, *The Last Europeans* and to the biographies of Jewish pioneers of European unification, to the accounts of the inspiration and the

crises of the European idea, to interviews and essays about the crossroads of European realities today.

If you would like more copies of the newspaper—i.e., if you would like to let your friends know about this very special museum you take part in—please let us know. We are happy to deliver.

Again and again, Jewish museums have become the subject of political debates. The presentation of Jewish history and culture is a symbolic field of discourse, questioning notions of belonging and otherness in many countries, from the United States to Europe, from South America to Australia. They have become a laboratory of the query: “How do we want to live together in this world?” Curated by Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek and Hannes Sulzenbacher, our upcoming show “Taxidermied Jews:“ History, Present and Future of Jewish Museums in 2022 will explore the philosophy and practice of an institution that exists in a liminal space, open for contemporary debate and nostalgia alike—by examining the collections that define the core of their rationale. The exhibition will be accompanied by a seminal catalogue that will include essays from various points of view in today’s world. Please help us to make this ambitious project possible. Your donations are more than welcome!

Please stay firm in your support of our common enterprise as we continue to discover the timeless diversity of Hohenems’ Jewish past, its repercussions for our present and the richness and particularities of Jewish life and its universal meanings in a complex world. It is good to know you are by our side.

Please stay firm in your support of our common enterprise that so timely discovers the diversity of Hohenems’ Jewish past and its repercussions in our present, the richness and particularities of Jewish life and its universal meanings in a complex world. It’s good to know you are at our side.

With Love from Hohenems,
Hanno Loewy



News from the Museum:

Our new exhibition:

*On the edge. Living together in the Untergass'
Until April 18, 2022*

The Jewish Quarter in Hohenems has received increasing public attention since 1991. Many buildings have been renovated and lovingly restored, in large part in close cooperation with the monuments protection authorities. This urban development has had a strong impact on the entire Hohenems center, especially on the neighboring former “Christengasse.” By now, the ensemble of the former “Judengasse” and “Christengasse” (Jew’s and Christian’s lane) is considered a unique gem in the country.

By contrast, the busy road leading northward from the center still ekes out an existence on the margins.

After legislation in the early 19th century—under Bavarian/Napoleonic rule—also allowed Jews to acquire land and homes outside the Judengasse, numerous Jewish families also settled in the “Untergasse” (the “Lower street”), as the former road to Dornbirn was then called, before it was much later renamed Radetzkystrasse. A new form of coexistence with the Christian population of Hohenems emerged.

Mainly Jewish families on the social fringes of the Jewish community lived here together with their Christian neighbors: peddlers, servants and simple tradesmen, inn-keepers, distillers and craftsmen.

Many of them have left only few traces, except for their correspondence with the authorities who, not least, curtailed the Jewish peddlers’ living conditions through oppressive restrictions. Some of the families eventually achieved prosperity and professional advancement by emigrating elsewhere, others remained what they were: simple folks.

Many of the houses on this street where Jews and Christians lived alternately or even at the same time are still extant today. Some are in poor condition. Others have since been renovated. This neighborhood, which adjoins the center of Hohenems, will be subject to drastic changes in the coming years. A new town hall is planned, and new residential development and commercial buildings will densify the area. Some existing, unprotected buildings will give way. The center will expand northward, and the old “Untergasse” on the city’s edge will receive new attention and a new social mix. A process of gentrification is imminent, and critical questions have to be asked related to urban planning and municipal housing policy.

The exhibition *On the Edge. Living together in the Untergass'*, curated by Anika Reichwald, explores the history of the buildings and Jewish biographies associated with the street. As portrayed by the Hohenems-based photographer Dietmar Walser, it sharpens the contemporary perception of the urban space and the transformation of its fabric today—and the value and dignity of the existing buildings.

As it did in the 1990s, when the Jewish quarter was explored by means of installations and illuminations in the public space, the museum opens itself to be the arena of a discussion of the social consequences of the planned changes and its further directions. Interviews by Johannes Inama with residents of the Untergass' become part of a participatory renewal process of this quarter, opening up new perspectives on a development that represents opportunities and challenges for this part of the city and beyond. Illustrations by Milan Loewy enable our phantasy to immerse into the biographies of the Jewish residents of the Untergass, those who slipped attention for so long, living on the edge...

—Continues on Page 4



Opening exhibition Am Rand/ Anika Reichwald speaking - Photo by Dietmar Walser



Opening exhibition Am Rand/ Mayor Dieter Egger speaking- Photo by Dietmar Walser

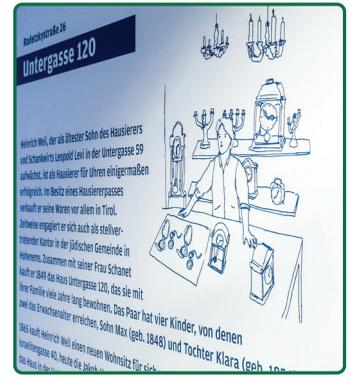
**On the edge.
Living together in the Untergass' (Cont'd)**

An illustrious program of events, organized in cooperation with the Vorarlberg Institute of Architecture and the Hohenems "Visionscafe," will open a broad debate about urban development in the small cities of the region, the social tensions provoked by the real estate market, and the urgent questions of preservation and public space. The "Visionscafe," an ambulant public space where to meet and talk, currently and for the past seven months situated in a vacant shop on the former "Untergasse," will be maintained jointly as an annex of the museum.

We are working on a (German) catalogue which presents all these elements as a tool for the ongoing discourse about the future of the town: *Am Rand. Zusammen leben in der Untergass'*. Edited by **Anika Reichwald**, with photographs by **Dietmar Walser** and illustrations by **Milan Loewy** as well as Interviews by **Johannes Inama**, will be published in Hohenems by **Bucher Verlag**, 2021, 12,80 €



Photos provided by Dietmar Walser



**Travelling exhibitions:
Other exhibitions of the Jewish Museum Hohenems continue travelling:**

Other exhibitions of the Jewish Museum Hohenems continue travelling: All About Tel Aviv-Jaffa--The Invention of a City is now on display until the end of January at the Alte Synagoge Essen. Haus jüdischer Kultur, and our show on Mikvah Entirely pure, Total immersion with photographs of Peter Seidel is right currently shown at the old Mikvah of Friedberg until January 9, 2022.

"End of Testimony?," our travelling exhibition on the history and future of Holocaust testimony, just opened again (following expositions in Hohenems, at the Concentration Camp Memorial Flossenbürg and at the Munich NS-Documentation Center) in the Kriegshaber location of the Jewish Museum Augsburg where it will be open until June 5, 2022, followed by its presentation in Berlin in the prestigious Centrum Judaicum on Oranienburger Straße, starting on June 30, 2022.

Together with our partners in Flossenbürg and Munich we finally were able to hold our long planned conference on the "Future of Testimony" on June 21-23 in Munich, but only in form of an online event, attended by more than 100 experts and other interested participants from the fields of museums, memorials, universities, education and media.

News from the Museum: Exhibitions (Cont'd)

Projects of our Educational department:

While regular school visits were rarely possible during many months this past year, we were able to develop intensive cooperation projects with schools and other partners, collaborating on issues of Europe and its future and on the probing questions of borders, security and asylum, migration and family heritage. Together with the middle school in Hohenems and another in the neighboring Swiss village of Diepoldsau, we were able to organize a week-long workshop, together with Felix Kalaivanan, graduate of the Filmakademie Wien, a journey of encounter with the history and presence of the border between Austria and Switzerland. Marked by a long history of smuggle, climaxed by Jewish and political refugees between 1938 and 1945, stuck in a limbo between integration and disintegration, there is much to talk about.

With schools in Feldkirch and Dornbirn we explored the urban space and the traces of human rights and the struggle for their implementation. Each class designed a walking tour through their city, in which they linked human rights with a concrete place. At the same time, they acquired basic working methods of education and experimented with them in a creative way. The highlight was the final presentation of the newly designed walking tours for the peers from both schools.



News from the Museum: (Cont'd) Projects of our Educational department:

With Collini, the major company in Hohenems, we hosted an inspiring film workshop in cooperation with Sonja Wessel, who specializes in digital storytelling. The young apprentices were encouraged to explore their family stories, leading back into several countries, and to present a highly personal account of their own upbringing and position in the world; an account of their “self”.

A project strongly connected with our show, *The Last Europeans*, recently gained particular visibility. Together with Berlin based Swiss artist Yves Mettler and a diverse ensemble of twelve local groups from Hohenems (including the chamber of commerce as well as a group of asylum seekers, the local choir and kids from the Youth Center, employees of Collini and members of the local “Cultural Association,”) we created a net of public “Europe Squares” in the urban fabric of Hohenems – a collaboration with Europe Direct Vorarlberg (EDIC) and the City of Hohenems.

If you took a walk through Hohenems this summer, from the border into the center, you likely noticed unusual “construction site protections” at various places. Each of them consisted of three barrier slats painted in rich colors. A metal base held the slats in place and at the same time allowed them to rise skyward. A slender construction, yet impossible to miss. If you then combined your walk with a visit to the Jewish Museum Hohenems, you recognized the colors of the slats in the current exhibition “*The Last Europeans*.” This connection between the exhibition and the construction site in the public space is also a content-related one—a discourse on Europe.

At the beginning of the intervention in the urban space was a participatory project with a central question: “At which places in Hohenems can Europe be located and what European stories are behind these places?” The individual answers of the local groups developed into a polyphonic, inspiring tour through the town including twelve locations, marked by the twelve stars of the European Union.



News from the Museum: (Cont'd)

Activities of the Collections department:

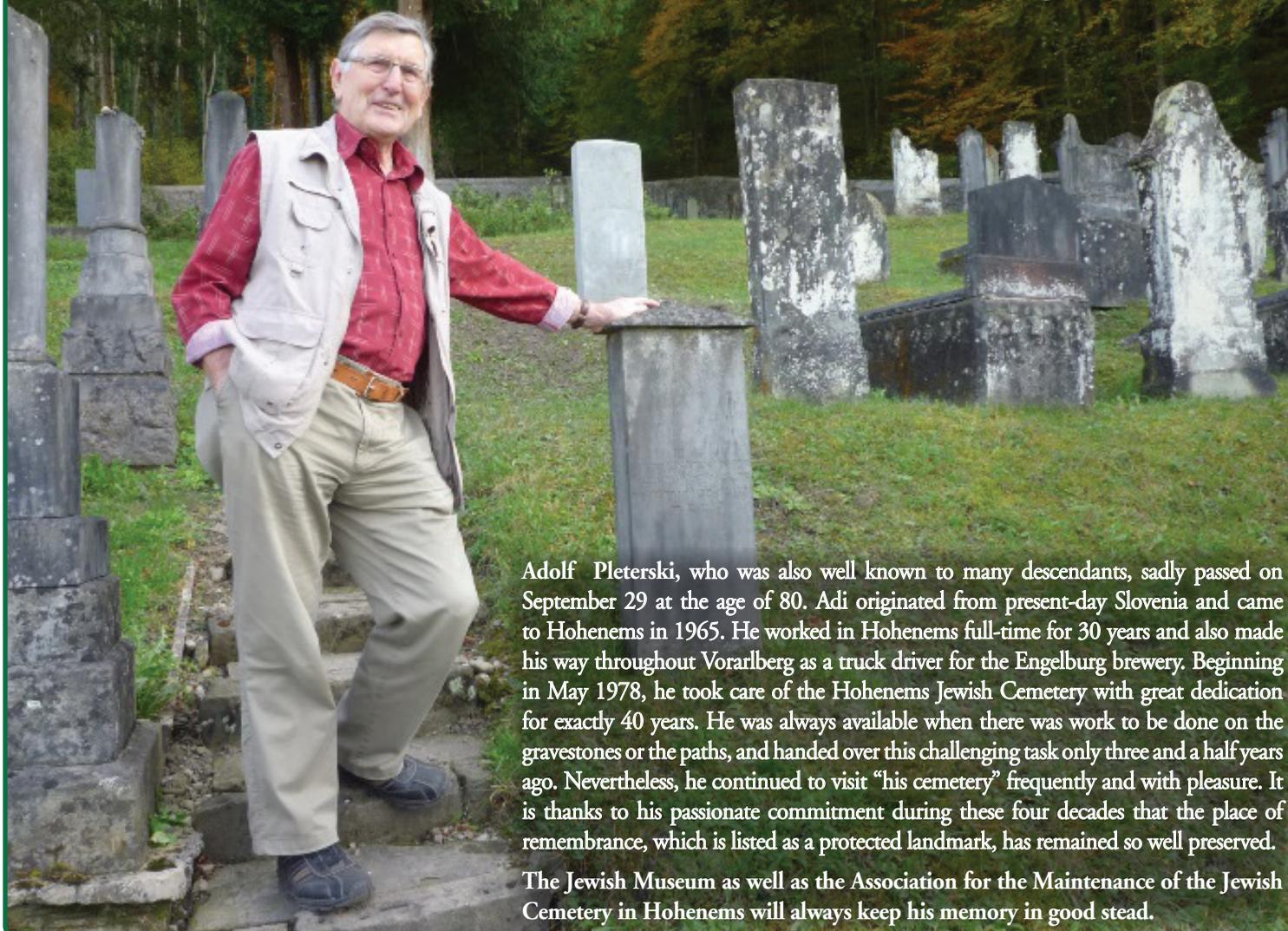
The Museum is continuously working on the hohenemsgenealogy.at project, the database presenting the genealogy and the family networks of Jews from Hohenems, Vorarlberg, Tyrol, Liechtenstein and various Alpine regions. In the course of the last years we were actively integrating data from Merano, Bolzano and Southern Tyrol-at-large into the database. Together with the Jewish Museum of Gailingen and the Swiss Association for Jewish Genealogy we completed a preliminary project with Gaby Knoch-Mund as a preparatory stage of measures aiming to integrate the rich

genealogical information about Jewish families in Switzerland and Southern Germany – mostly connected with the Hohenems community anyhow – into our database as well.

The lively network of Hohenems descendants would not be possible the way it exists today, without the persistent and energetic input of personalities like Felix Jaffé or Stefan Rollin, who were also pioneers of the American Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems, joined soon by Sue Shimer and Uri Tänzer and many others. This summer, the Museum

had the opportunity to receive a part of the legacy of Felix Jaffé, who died in 2012. Besides letters, postcards and other written documents, it also includes patent certificates, portraits, paintings and books. Thanks to his children, the Museum's collection now preserves Felix Jaffé's legacy in the memory of the Hohenems community. Raphael Einetter is currently adding the individual objects to the collection databases, for which he had active support by Lisa Gmeiner and Francesco Loriani, who worked this fall as interns at the Museum.

Adi Pleterski (1941 - 2021) —Former cemetery gardener



Adolf Pleterski, who was also well known to many descendants, sadly passed on September 29 at the age of 80. Adi originated from present-day Slovenia and came to Hohenems in 1965. He worked in Hohenems full-time for 30 years and also made his way throughout Vorarlberg as a truck driver for the Engelburg brewery. Beginning in May 1978, he took care of the Hohenems Jewish Cemetery with great dedication for exactly 40 years. He was always available when there was work to be done on the gravestones or the paths, and handed over this challenging task only three and a half years ago. Nevertheless, he continued to visit “his cemetery” frequently and with pleasure. It is thanks to his passionate commitment during these four decades that the place of remembrance, which is listed as a protected landmark, has remained so well preserved. The Jewish Museum as well as the Association for the Maintenance of the Jewish Cemetery in Hohenems will always keep his memory in good stead.

Your Donations At Work

It's been my honor to serve the American Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems since shortly after the 1998 reunion of descendants when, with the guidance of the late Stefan Rollin and Sue Shimer, we formed the organization primarily to help support the JMH financially. Our Board of Trustees, whose names appear on the front of this publication, carefully consider and independently approve of every proposed Hohenems project before AFJMH provides financial support. It is important that we follow IRS regulations as, absent an autonomous IRS-approved tax-exempt entity, charitable gifts by Americans to a foreign institution would be disqualified for income tax deductibility. Suffice to say, all gifts will also have to conform to the charitable purposes set forth in our bylaws, namely "to promote the perpetuation and preservation of the religious and cultural history and heritage of the former Jewish inhabitants of Hohenems, Austria and surrounding region by (a) providing financial support for the educational or literary objectives of the Judisches Museum Hohenems (Jewish Museum Hohenems) located at Villa Heimann-Rosenthal, Schweizer Strasse 5, A6845 Hohenems, Austria; (b) supporting and promoting the preservation and restoration of religious sites which comprise the ancestral legacy of the former Jewish Community of Hohenems, Austria, and (c) other charitable, educational and literary purposes which serve to foster and preserve the heritage of the former Jewish community of Hohenems, District of Vorarlberg, Austria and to foster public interest in, and knowledge and understanding of the rich and vibrant heritage of the various Jewish Communities of the region known as Tyrol."

Our bylaws include the Corporation's empowerment "to contribute toward the continued development and vitality of museums, synagogues or similar facilities, to display historical objects, documents, records, works of art and the like owned by, loaned to, or otherwise held by the said Judisches Museum Hohenems, to advance and promote the publication and

distribution of books and scholarly works relating to the history of the Jewish people of the Vorarlberg and Tyrol region of Austria and Hohenems in particular." Finally, our bylaws include the authority to "contribute toward the preservation of the historic Jewish Cemetery of Hohenems."

Our annually contributing membership has varied from 28 in 2002 to 36 in 2021. Eighty-two members have made contributions over the years. In all probability, due to Covid-19, the number of donors and average gifts have declined recently. Since December, 2018, AFJMH Trustees have approved a total of \$27,300 toward funding of various JMH projects, including the Tel Aviv-Jaffo Exhibition, the preservation of the Cemetery, visitor audio-guides, future exhibitions, the Brunner Exhibition and the 30th Anniversary publication. In addition, thanks to a particularly generous donation, installment payments totaling approximately \$19,000 are held in reserve for completion of a new book about the historic Jewish Cemetery.

There is no requirement for our members to be "American" friends of the JMH. We welcome the support of descendants from around the globe. If you and/or your loved ones have not already joined AFJMH please consider doing so. The annual membership dues have remained at a nominal \$25 since inception with no intention for an increase.

In conclusion, I am in possession of nine copies of *"At Home: Diaspora. The Jewish Museum Hohenems"* edited by Hanno Loewy and published by BUCHER Verlag in 1998. I will gladly send this wonderful book to anyone interested on a first-come-first-serve basis.

With sincere gratitude for our members' continuing support and with my warmest wishes for a wonderful holiday season and a happy and healthy 2022.

Uri Taenzer

Your tax-deductible donations are welcome; please make donations payable to AFJMH, and mail to: AFJMH • P.O.Box 237 • Moorestown, NJ 08057-0237

The Collections: The Memory of Hohenems Community and its Diaspora

The holdings of the Jewish Museum Hohenems represent 400 years of Jewish history. The focus of the collections lies in the history of the Jewish community, the surrounding regions in Tyrol, Switzerland, or Liechtenstein, and the Hohenems Diaspora, that has gained growing significance over the course of time.

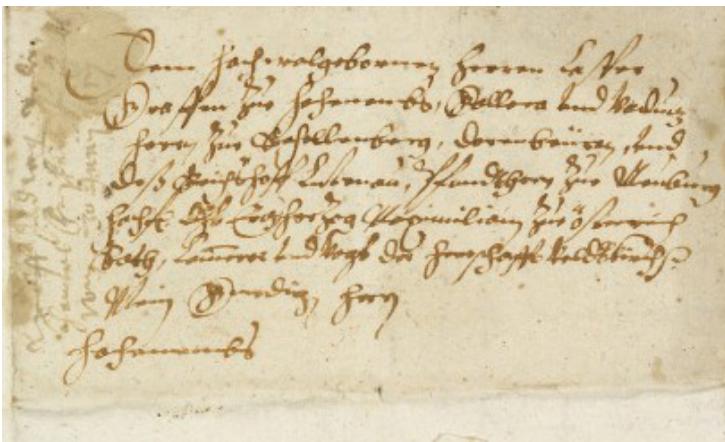
The records of the communities history are fragmented. The archives of the community were lost in 1938, as were the interior of the synagogue and the ritual objects. Very few artifacts survived the Holocaust and the war, mostly in private collections and museums elsewhere. Some of the documents from the community archives are in Jerusalem today and could be reintegrated into the Museum's collections as reproductions.

Documents: *Collecting and Securing Archivals of the Hohenems Diaspora*

The archive of the Jewish Museum Hohenems collects documents related to the Jewish community or the Hohenems diaspora, that is, Jewish families of Hohenems and their descendants. The actual archive of the Jewish community no longer exists. Some parts were destroyed, some key documents are now in Jerusalem, and numerous files regarding the Hohenems community are in the municipal and regional archives as well as in Innsbruck or St. Gall.

The Jewish Museum Hohenems' own holdings have continuously expanded ever since its establishment, whether through private donations, findings in the Jewish Quarter, or research of specific topics.

Thus, the archive includes fragments of official nature (such as construction records, school documents, etc.), private correspondence since the 18th century, and personal documents (passports, certificates, etc.) that provide insight into the life of the Jewish community and of families originating there. The entire holdings can be researched by accessing the online database and viewed on site by prior appointment.



Beyond that, the JMH has relied on other archives and some private collections, in order to reconstruct the history of the Hohenems community. Reproductions of important sources therefore fill some of the gaps the collections, helping to form a basic stock of documentation.

The rapidly growing collection of documents related to the Hohenems Diaspora is owed to the descendants of the Hohenems families, who have provided the JMH with many artifacts and personal documents, both originals and reproductions, since the opening of the museum in 1991. These collections are divided in the following holdings. Some of them can be searched online in the databases on the Museum's website:

Photographs: *Visual Traces of the Hohenems Diaspora*

Thanks to the Jewish Museum's close contact with Hohenems descendants, its photographic collection has rapidly grown in recent years and covers mainly three areas:

- The history of Jewish families and their descendants in the Hohenems diaspora.
- The history of the Jewish Quarter in Hohenems and its significant structures.
- The history of Jewish life in Vorarlberg and Tyrol.

The museum collects original photographs, namely photo albums as well as backup copies of important historical photographic holdings that are privately held. This way, they are maintained at a centralized location for the benefit of the descendants spread all over the world.

The photographic holdings are collected and tagged in a digital database. They can be researched and viewed online. This project was greatly supported by the Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) in London.



The Collections:

The Memory of Hohenems Community and its Diaspora (Cont'd)

Artifacts:

Memorabilia and Lost

Today, memorabilia from Jewish families constitutes the core of the Jewish Museum's artifacts collection and not, regrettably, the major collection of ceremonial objects the Jewish community in Hohenems had owned until 1938. Among the community's property were precious Torah scrolls, Torah decorations, and textiles. Over 400 Torah binders (wimpels) alone were kept in the Hohenems synagogue. Following the complete confiscation of the community's property in the days following the November Pogroms, there is nothing left of the entire holdings. The silver and other metal objects were likely melted down and transferred to the Reich. At that point in time, some of the Torah scrolls had already been moved to Innsbruck; there are no traces left of them either.

Thus, today's collection consists for the most part of donations and loans from private individuals from the region and, most notably, from descendants of Jewish Hohenems families. These are mostly everyday objects that remember individual people or social, cultural, political and familial events and experiences.

Time and again, particular objects are newly incorporated into the museum's permanent exhibition.



Art:

The Graphics and Art Collection of the Museum

The Jewish Museum's art collection includes graphic art and paintings from the property of Hohenems Jews and their descendants, who wish their family memorabilia to be kept at a centralized location. The Jewish Museum Hohenems also collects contemporary works that deal with Jewish Hohenems. Moreover, the museum preserves traces of its own exhibition activities and of the works of art presented in that framework.



Rare Books

from the Property of Hohenems Jews

In its collection of old books, the Jewish Museum preserves rare editions from the family property of former Hohenems community members as well as from their descendants. Among them, in particular, are books with autographs as well as religious works used by the Jewish community in Hohenems, which were rediscovered by chance. In addition, the Museum collects rare books relating to Jewish life in Hohenems, Vorarlberg, and Tyrol.



Audios and Videos:

Interview Projects and Media Documentation

The Jewish Museum Hohenems has carried out various oral history projects that have generated audio and video documents dealing with the Jewish history of Hohenems and Vorarlberg. These interviews include topics such as Jewish life in Hohenems, Vorarlberg, and Tyrol, stories of escape, the postwar period, family memories, and the experiences of the descendants as well as accounts of ways of dealing with historical heritage. Furthermore, the museum collects audio and video documents concerning Jewish history in Vorarlberg and Tyrol, Liechtenstein and Eastern Switzerland. Among them are the relevant holdings of the "Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation" concerning the topics of escape and DPs in Vorarlberg.





ARE THERE STORIES YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN YOUR NEWSLETTER?

Please email us (jennsp500@gmail.com) and offer suggestions or even better yet, let us know that you want to write a story. We would appreciate your work!



Your tax-deductible donations are welcome; please make donations payable to AFJMH, and mail to: AFJMH • P.O.Box 237 • Moorestown, NJ 08057-0237