

(Words underlined in the original text are underlined here.)

N.Y. December 10th, 1965

Re.: Commemoration Work
Jewish Community ECHZELL

Dear Dr. Arnsberg,

The letters you addressed to Siegfried Nauman and Adolf Kaufman were forwarded to me to be answered.

I have lived for many years in Echzell, because my mother was born there.

The (Jewish) Community was founded approximately 300 years ago in Bisses, a small village on the edge of the forest near Echzell. The small synagogue there was remodeled into a residence. Up until I emigrated in 1938, there was still a cemetery there. Most of the Jews gradually settled in Echzell, where they founded a community. They built a beautiful, large synagogue; the building is still standing. There were approximately 25 families in the community, living in Echzell, Gettenau and Bisses. They had their own cemetery, located at the edge of the forest near the forester's house. It is said that the cemetery is still in good condition. The community also had a horse-drawn hearse.

The synagogue was taken over by someone named Otto Weizel. The interior, including the Torah scrolls, was burned by the Nazi hoards. The above mentioned Weizel operates a lumber cutting business in the former synagogue.

I do not know if he appropriated it, or bought it.

The last, and longest serving teacher was someone named Joseph Stern. He died in 1936. Some members died in concentration camps. Most of the Jews were able to emigrate to Israel, the USA and South America. Many are no longer living. Among them, the family of the teacher Strens has totally died out. The last was the son Arthur, who committed suicide.

The last to be buried in the cemetery were Mr. and Mrs. Fettman of Berstadt, who hung themselves because they could no longer tolerate living under the Nazi criminals.

I would also like to mention the large matzo factory in Bisses, which was operated by Mr. Nauman.

The members were mostly grain and cattle merchants, along with a few butchers and small storekeepers. My father z"l was the only craftsman – plumber and pipe-fitter.

The community had no members who were particularly prominent.

I would be happy to be of further assistance.

Respectfully yours,

Kurt Schreiner