



# Our Family

*by*

**Heinz and Thea Ruth Skyte, née Ephraim**

## THE ALTERTHUMS OF SCHWERIN AN DER WARTHE

The family originated in Schwerin an der Warthe in the former Prussian Province Posen (now Skwierzyna, Poland), the town not to be confused with Schwerin in Mecklenburg.

Great-great-great-grandfather

MICHAEL (WOLF) JOSEPH

is the earliest Alterthum ancestor traced. He died after 1815 probably in Schwerin. Michael Joseph was married to BRAEUNCHEN PINCHUS, who was born in 1764 and died on 24 October 1810 in Schwerin. Their son:

WOLF MICHAEL ALTERTHUM

according to one document was born on 10 September 1778 or 1779 in Schwerin. If his age of 38 years on his naturalisation entry in 1834, however, is correct, he would have been born around 1795/6, though an earlier date seems more likely. On 26 May 1815 he married SARA (6 March 1791 - 7 August 1873) (1), daughter of HESSEL MICHAEL (1751-14 June 1815 Schwerin) and his wife GOLDE ARON.

Wolf became a naturalised Prussian citizen on 10 June 1834. He was then married with seven children. His occupation is given as horse dealer (2). He may then have lived in Prittisch, a village a few miles south east of Schwerin. His name is on a list of Jews, "who live in villages affiliated into our corporation". Another document lists him as "trading in Prittisch".

In the late 1850s Wolf Michael appears to have moved to Berlin, where several of his sons had settled. He died there on 23 December 1860 and is buried on the old Jewish cemetery, Schoenhauser Allee. A family tree in the Rudolf Simonis Collection gives the date of death of Sara Alterthum as 7 August 1873 in Schwerin. If this is correct it would be the same day as the death of her daughter Bertha Levy née Alterthum.

The children of Wolf and Sara:

- Aron
- Michaelis (? died young)

- Siegfried
- Hessel (8 August 1816 Prittisch - 11 November 1873 Berlin)
- Bertha (27 February 1818 Schwerin - 7 August 1873 Gottschim)
- Julie (m. Heinrich Schleich)
- Friederike (m. ? Alexander)
- Paul (1 January 1821 Schwerin - 2 March 1880 Berlin)

## ARON ALTERTHUM

was probably the eldest of the eight children of Wolf Michael Alterthum and his wife Sara Hessel. Little is known about him. Some Schwerin records state that he moved to Leipzig and Erfurt. Aron was found in the membership books of the Jewish community of Berlin (1883 -1889) (3).

His son

Benny ALTERTHUM was also found in these books (1886-1910). His address was then Schleswiges Ufer 6. Benny was married to Doris Michaelis (1846 - 1920) (4) and died sometime before May 1919.

Benny and Doris had at least two sons

Leo Alterthum was probably born in Berlin. Leo, married to Else Dresel, had a publishing house in Berlin, still recorded as "Leo Alterthum, Juedischer Buchverlag Berlin, - Charlottenburg, Kastanienallee 17" in 1938. Leo and Else managed to emigrate from Berlin to Tel Aviv in 1938. Leo died there in 1968. Else saw her days out in an Old Age Home and died in 1981 aged 91 years.

Paul Alterthum is also listed in the 1929-1930 Berlin Address Book at Kastanienallee 17.

## SIEGFRIED ALTERTHUM

Little is known about him. He was married to Elise and settled in Magdeburg. The family lived on Breiter Weg. They had at least two children Ernst Alterthum (5) who was married to ? Schreiber and Martha Alterthum.

## HESSEL ALTERTHUM AND HIS DESCENDANTS

Hessel was born 8 August 1816 in Prittisch near Schwerin an der Warthe. On 8 September 1843 he married Friederike Schoenfliess, born on 5 December 1819 in Landsberg an der Warthe. They settled in Schwerin, where their children were born:

- George (Schwerin, m. Mina Blumenthal)
- Ludwig (Louis) (Schwerin, died in childhood)
- Max (Michaelis) (8 December 1845 Schwerin - 20 March 1920)

- Emma (Schwerin, m. ? Frank, died young)
- Siegfried (4 April 1850 Schwerin - 18 February 1903 Berlin)
- Adolph (21 October 1858 Schwerin - 1 March 1940) (6)

According to a family history written by his grandson Willy Alterthum in the 1940s (7), Hessel had followed a variety of occupations, e.g. road building, transport and manufacturing of sweets. In the 1860s he moved with his family to Berlin. He died in Berlin on 11 November 1873 and, according to the family history, is buried on the old Jewish cemetery Schoenhauser Allee, where his father Wolf Michael is also buried. No records of them were found, but not all records of this cemetery have survived. After Hessel's death his widow Friederike moved to Brandenburg an der Havel, where her youngest son Adolph had settled and had established himself as a trimmings manufacturer and trader. Adolph was married to Luise Breest. Friederike died in Brandenburg on 25 May 1886 and is buried next to her husband on the old Jewish cemetery in Berlin, Schoenhauser Allee.

GEORG ALTERTHUM, born in Schwerin an der Warthe, was married to Minna Blumenthal. They had two daughters Elsbeth and Toni, but nothing is known about the family.

MAX (MICHAELIS) ALTERTHUM was born on 8 December 1845 in Schwerin an der Warthe. After his schooling in Schwerin he served an apprenticeship at a bank in Coethen, followed by further training with the firm of his uncle Siegfried Alterthum in Magdeburg before moving to Berlin. There he worked for Alterthum and Josky, the firm of his uncle Paul Alterthum. On 3 November 1878 Max married Mathilde Blumenthal, born in Oranienburg on 18 July 1854. They lived in Berlin An der Spandauer Bruecke 14. Mathilde was the sister of Minna, the wife of his elder brother Georg. Georg and Max founded the haberdashery and drapery business (Kurz- Weiss und Wollwaren) H. Alterthum Soehne in Berlin, Rosenthalerstrasse. Georg looked after the retail side of the business, whilst Max took charge of the book keeping and the wholesale business. Max spent several weeks each year in Beneckenstein in the Harz mountains, where H.Alterthum Soehne had an outlet. Max died 20 March 1920 and Mathilde 18 September 1940.

Children of Max and Mathilde:

Willy ALTERTHUM was born in Berlin on 5 December 1879. On 14 November 1909 he married Gertrud BOHM, born 28 November 1884. Willy was a solicitor in Berlin, who in 1934 emigrated with his family to Brazil. In November 1939 the family lived in Fazenda do Sertão Grande, Est. S. Paulo.

Their two children were born in Berlin:

Heinrich Alterthum, born 20 October 1910, on 4 February 1937 married Ruth ROSENFELD . They had two children: Thomas Alterthum (10 January 1938 Brazil) and Flavio Alterthum (27 June 1940 Brazil).

Maria Alterthum, born 23 September 1916

Rosa ALTERTHUM (21 April 1881 Berlin - 13 October 1938 Berlin) married Max DOMBROVSKY, who died in Berlin in May 1932.

Gertrud ALTERTHUM, 1 April 1884 Berlin, deported and murdered in Auschwitz.

SIEGFRIED ALTERTHUM, born 4 April 1850 in Schwerin an der Warthe, married Therese LOOSE, born 21 October 1858, died 7 March 1940. They lived in Berlin, where Siegfried died on 18 February 1903. He is buried on the Jewish cemetery Berlin-Weissensee. Their children were born in Berlin:

Hans ALTERTHUM born 30 September 1890. Dr. Hans was a chemist by profession and lived at Kurfuerstendamm 112 (8) and married Grete MITWITZ, his first wife. His second wife was Grete ROTHENSTEIN, born 8 October 1904. They seem to have emigrated to Argentina. Their daughter Elsa Rosa ALTERTHUM was born on 15 June 1941 in Argentina. Hans died in Buenos Aires.

Fritz ALTERTHUM, born 1 December 1891, was married to Meta FRANZ.

Charlotte ALTERTHUM, born 2 December 1891. (Were Charlotte and Fritz twins or is the year of their births wrong?) Charlotte was deported on 14 November 1941 from Berlin to Minsk (9).

ADOLF ALTERTHUM was born 21 October 1858 in Schwerin an der Warthe. He was married to Luise BREEST, who was born in Brandenburg an der Havel (10).

#### BERTHA ALTERTHUM

great-grandmother of Thea Skyte née Ephraim, was born on 27 February 1818 in Schwerin. In the early 1840s she married Meyer Joseph Levy of Birnbaum/Warthe. Bertha died on 7th August 1873 at Gottschimer Muehle near Driesen.



**Bertha Alterthum**

(photo: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

## PAUL (PINCHUS) ALTERTHUM AND HIS FAMILY

PAUL ALTERTHUM, son of Wolf and Sara was born in Schwerin on 1st January 1821/2. He settled in Berlin and was a partner in Alterthum & Josky, a clothing firm with premises at *Molkenmarkt*, in the centre of Berlin's clothing industry. Paul was married to Johanna née Ahrend, born in Magdeburg on 1 March 1830/1. Paul died on 2 March 1880 and his widow Johanna 12 December 1889. They are both buried on the Old Jewish Cemetery in Berlin Schoenhauser Allee.

Their children were Fanny Alterthum ( m. ... Cohn) and Max Alterthum (3 July 1856 Magdeburg - 8 November 1926 Berlin)

MAX ALTERTHUM, son of Paul, was an architect/builder in Berlin, married to Else Isaac (born 17 October 1867 in Berlin). The family lived in Kuestrinerstrasse 17. Max is buried on the Jewish Cemetery Berlin-Weissensee. His widow Else (Elsbeth) survived him and was deported on one of the many "Alterstransporte" (transports of older people) from Berlin to Theresienstadt, where she died in February 1944. Their son Dr. Paul ALTERTHUM (born in Berlin on 10 August 1887) was a publisher in Berlin. He lived in Berlin-Halensee Albrecht Achillesstr.58. Nothing is known about their son Kurt ALTERTHUM (11).

The following Alterthum names were found in various documents, address books, registers memorial books etc., but can at present not be connected:

Jewish Cemetery Schoenhauser Allee, Berlin: Sophie Alterthum née Phillipsohn (3 December 1835 Vietz - 1 June 1917 Berlin).

Jewish Cemetery Berlin-Weissensee: Siegfried Alterthum (4 April 1850 Schwerin - 18 February 1903, Neue Friedrich Strasse 50, Kurfuerstenstrasse 42), Adolf Alterthum (13 September 1858 Schwerin - 14 November 1910, Berlin, Nussbaumallee 38, Adolf lived in Bernburg).

Berlin 1929/1930 Address Book: Erich (Michaelkirchstrasse 28, S.O.), Leo (Reichstr. 102, Charlottenburg), Paul (publisher, Albrecht Achilles St. 58, Halensee, son of Max & Else Isaac?), Paul (Kastanienallee 17, address of publishing firm Leo Alterthum), Paul (banker, Uhlandstr. 189 bei Niemann), Kurt (Kuestrinerstr. 17, Wilmersdorf, son of Max & Else).

Berlin "Gedenkbuch":

- Carla née Joseph (15 March 1903 Tilsit - 17 March 1943 Theresienstadt)
- Felix (10 November 1891 Chemnitz (Tilsit), 4. large "Alterstransport" 17 March 1943 Theresienstadt)
- Hans-Werner (24 August 1924 Tilsit, dept. 2 March 1943 Auschwitz)
- Joachim (4 February 1931 Tilsit, dept. 17 March 1943 4. large "Alterstransport" from Berlin to Theresienstadt, died Auschwitz)
- Henriette née Lieberthal (28 June 1890 Stettin, deported 13 June 1942 east, died Maidanek)
- Rudolf (26 July 1900 Berlin, deported 12 January 1943 Auschwitz)

## Alterthum Members of Jewish Congregation Berlin

Name	Occupation	Year	Address
Alterthum Aron	Kaufmann	1883	Elisabethstr. 24
Alterthum Aron	Kaufmann	1886	Kaiserstr. 46
Alterthum Aron	Kaufmann	1889	Kurzstr.13
Alterthum B.	Kaufmann	1886	Holzmarktstrasse 62
Alterthum Benny	Kaufmann	1907, 1910, 1913	Schleswiges Ufer 6
Alterthum Georg	Kaufmann	1883, 1886	Rosenthalerstr 45
Alterthum Georg	Kaufmann	1889	Rosenthalerstr 11/12
Alterthum Georg	Kaufmann	1892	Weinbergsweg 15b
Alterthum Leo	Kaufmann	1913	Michaelkirchstr.13
Alterthum Max	Kaufmann	1883	Rosenthalerstr 45
Alterthum Max	Reg. Baufuehrer	1886	Schoeneberger Ufer 41
Alterthum Max	Architekt	1889	Alexanderstr. 1
Alterthum Max	Architekt	1892	Potsdamerstr. 131b
Alterthum Max	Architekt	1898, 1904, 1907, 1910	Passauerstr. 12
Alterthum Max	Kaufmann	1910	Guenterstr 4 , Friedrichsfelde
Alterthum Max	Architekt	1913	Kuno Fischerstr.14, Charlottenburg
Alterthum Max	Kaufmann	1913	Peter Bischerstr. 7, Schöneberg
Alterthum Paul	Kaufmann	1910	Schleswiges Ufer 6
Alterthum Siegfried	Kaufmann	1892	Koenigstr. 6
Alterthum Siegfried	Kaufmann	1898	Gr. Praesidentenstr. 2

### Footnotes

- (1) Date of death given on family tree in Rudolf Simonis collection, the date is the same as date of death of her daughter Bertha Levy née Alterthum.
- (2) Naturalisation records, Leo Baeck Institute, New York.
- (3) Archives - Centrum Judaicum, Berlin Oranienburgerstrasse.
- (4) Information Philip Lewin.
- (5) The German Gedenkbuch has an Ernst Aterthum 23 May 1872 - 28 July 1944 "Freitod" (suicide - Herrenalb).
- (6) Family tree of Willy Alterthum.

- (7) Leo Baeck Institute, New York.
- (8) Berlin Address book 1929/1930.
- (9) Berlin Gedenkbuch.
- (10) Family tree Willy Alterthum.
- (11) Name on Burial records Cemetery Berlin -Weissensee.