

## "Reservierung"

By Rabbi Shlomo Bistrizky

Landesrabbiner der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg



I always knew about our family connection to Hamburg – I knew that my grandfather Yehuda Leib (Loeb) Bistrizky was born in Hamburg in 1926. Not much more than that. He never shared much else. For him, Germany was taboo. He never bought any product made in Germany. It wasn't until 2004, a year after my wife Chani and I arrived on our mission to Hamburg, that he agreed to visit again. Only then did he open up and share – but unfortunately, not enough.

I didn't know that here in Hamburg lived my aunt on my grandmother's side - Leib's wife, Ita née Travis – who was also born in Germany. She was born in Frankfurt in 1929. I found out that my great-aunt, Isabel Steindecker, is buried in the old Jewish cemetery in Langenfelde. When I went to visit her grave, I saw that she was buried in a double plot, and the place beside her – reserved for her husband, Moshe Steindecker – remained empty, because he was murdered in Theresienstadt.

My grandmother's great-grandfather, Giacomo Yaakov Tedesco, was born in Venice on August 27, 1799, and married on June 12, 1833, in Paris to Yirat Cerf, who was born in

Lisdorf, Saarland, on November 16, 1811. He was a highly respected Jew in Paris, and his name was known even in Germany. He was one of the founders of the famous synagogue on Montevideo Street in Paris and ran an art business, "Tedesco Brothers," on the Boulevard de l'Opéra in Paris. He was a wealthy man with a big heart who helped and supported the poor.

The couple had eleven children, most of whom married into prominent Jewish families in Germany:

- Their eldest daughter, Adalaide (born 1834 in Paris), married Rabbi Simon Simcha Bamberger (born 1832 in Weissenbrunn), he was the son of Rabbi Seligmann Baer Bamberger, the Rabbi of Würzburg.
- Their daughter Rosalia Rivka (born in Paris, May 18, 1836) married Rafael Binyamin Sanger (born April 25, 1834).
- Their daughter Anna Miriam (born in Paris, April 6, 1840) married Karl Kalman Kalonymos Bing (born in Offenbach, July 26, 1830).
- Their daughter Julie (born 1842 in Paris) married Moritz Wechsler (born September 19, 1842, in Schwabach, Bavaria).
- Their daughter Gitel Clementine (born in Paris, March 13, 1844) married Dr. Marcus Mordechai Hirsch (born in Oldenburg, December 15, 1838), he was the son of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch.
- Their son Yosef (born in Paris, December 16, 1846) married Theresa Steindecker (born in Frankfurt, August 15, 1860).
- Their daughter Emma (born in Paris, 1847) died at age 26.
- Their son Arthur (born in Paris, 1848) died in Paris at age 25.
- Their son Leon Yehuda (born in Paris, February 1, 1854) married Helena Leah Rivka Goldschmidt (born in Frankfurt, February 28, 1856), daughter of Selig Meir and Clementine (née Fuld) Goldschmidt, from the noble Goldschmidt family of Frankfurt.
- Their daughter Isabelle Gella (born in Paris, October 6, 1854) married Moshe Steindecker (born in Wertheim, February 5, 1853).
- Their youngest son Abraham (born in Paris, June 1, 1856) married Sophie Shprintze Cramer (born in Würzburg, May 23, 1864), from the Cramer family who helped establish and lead the Jewish community in Thundorf, near Würzburg.

Avraham and Sophie are my great-grandparents, their daughter Julie Leonie married Samuel Sam (Shlomo) Rabinowitz Travis, and their daughter Ida (Ita) married my grandfather Yehuda Leib Bistrizky.

One year, on Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) – a day that always stirs in me a need to read, study, and learn something new about the day and the fate of the Jews murdered in the Holocaust – I entered the archive room of the Jewish community.

The room contains cabinets filled with folders of documents about current community members and those who have passed away or left Hamburg. In that room, there's also a wooden drawer cabinet with drawers containing index cards. These drawers hold the cemetery plot cards of the Ohlsdorf, Bornkampsweg, and Langenfelde Jewish cemeteries.

You can easily distinguish the cards written and placed there before the Holocaust from those created after the community was reestablished post-Holocaust – both by the type and quality of the paper, and by the colour of the cards.

I approached the drawer cabinet. What I didn't know until that moment – or simply hadn't paid attention to, and I'm probably not the only one – is that there are several drawers labelled "**Reservierung**". These contain alphabetically ordered index cards of people who reserved burial plots and even paid for them in the aforementioned cemeteries. Some reserved a plot next to their spouse – like my uncle Moshe Steindecker – and some bought a plot for themselves, as is customary among many Jews.

<i>M.</i>		Jahr		Nr.	
<i>Steindecker, Isabella p.b. Tedesco</i>		<i>1928</i>			
Reihen- Gitter-Grab	<i>L</i>	Nr. <i>239</i>	Feld	Reihe	Nr.
Freigehalten am	Nr.	Einäscherungsverzicht		Jahr	Nr.
K. B. am	Nr.	unterschrieben am		-	
Grabstein genehmigt am:		K. B. Stein-Erlaubnis erteilt am		<b>L</b>	
Inscription genehmigt am:					
Grab in Pflege der Gemeinde seit			gegen Zahlung von		<i>P.M.</i> für
			Grabstellen. Grabpflegeakte Nr.		

**Chills.** I was gripped with chills as I flipped through the cards and found the card for my uncle Moshe Steindecker. Suddenly I realized how haunting this was! Hundreds of cards for Jews who bought burial plots and never used them. No one from their family or the Jewish community handled the card or the burial. And these hundreds of cards still sit in the “Reservations” drawer, as if one day someone will come and fulfil the reservation!

### Chills.

As days went by and I tried to digest and understand the meaning of all this, more and more questions arose – from both historical and religious perspectives:

What became of the Jews who reserved burial plots? Did they survive or were they murdered?

Do they have family members who might be interested in this data?

How many such unused plots still exist in our cemeteries?

And is it even permissible to use them for someone else’s burial?

As a first step, we decided to document all the Cards, and we are pleased to present the data to you in an organized table.

Our goal is to make this material and story accessible and, together with you, to fill in the gaps. If you know what became of anyone on the list, or if you are family members who want a photo of the card or can provide us with more information – we would be grateful to hear from you.

(Stumbling stones were laid next to the Steindecker family home at Moorweidenstraße 22.

You can find a detailed biography of Moses Steindaker on the initiative's website:

[https://www.stolpersteine-hamburg.de/?&MAIN\\_ID=7&r\\_name=Steindecker&r\\_strasse=&r\\_bezirk=&r\\_stteil=&r\\_sort=Nachname\\_AUF&recherche=recherche&submitter=suchen&BIO\\_ID=4502](https://www.stolpersteine-hamburg.de/?&MAIN_ID=7&r_name=Steindecker&r_strasse=&r_bezirk=&r_stteil=&r_sort=Nachname_AUF&recherche=recherche&submitter=suchen&BIO_ID=4502))

