

# GEHAUS

Kreis Bad Salzungen  
Fernruf: Stadtlengsfeld Nr. 8114

6221 Gehaus, den 14. 3. 1991  
über Vacha/Rhön

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Werter Herr Grayson!

Wir bestätigen den Empfang Ihres Briefes vom Januar 1991. Wir waren bemüht, Ihnen bei der Auffindung Ihrer Vorfahren, namens Mandelbaum, behilflich zu sein. Leider aber bisher ohne Erfolg.

Nach vorhandenen Unterlagen in der Chronik unserer Gemeinde haben sich in unserem Ort Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts die ersten jüdischen Familien angesiedelt. Da die jüdischen Bürger recht zahlreich in unserem Ort vertreten waren, gab es eine Synagoge, eine Schule sowie einen Friedhof.

Die Synagoge ist im Jahre 1975 durch einen Brand zerstört worden.

Der Judenfriedhof ist in seiner ursprünglichen Form noch vorhanden und steht unter Denkmalschutz.

Zahlreiche Grabsteine sind verwittert, so daß die eingehauenen Schriften nicht mehr erkennbar sind.

Eine schriftliche Unterlage über die Grabstätten ist nicht vorhanden.

Die letzten jüdischen Mitbürger mußten während der Nazi-diktatur unser Dorf verlassen.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Gemeindeverwaltung  
Pfarr  
Kreis Bad Salzungen  
Bürgermeister

14 March 1991

Gehaus

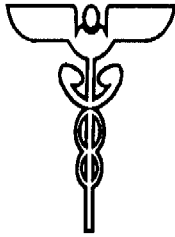
Dear Mr Grayson!

We confirm the reception of your letter from January 1991. We have tried hard to help you in connection with your request about your ancestors named Mandebaum. Unfortunately but without success. According to existing evidence in the chronicles of our community, the first Jewish family settled in our town at the end of the 16th century. Because the Jewish citizens were numerous in our town, they gave the a synagogue and a school as well a cemetery. The synagogue was destroyed in a fire in the year 1975. The Jewish cemetery is in its original shape yet present and standing under [reason mal protection]. Numerous gravestones are smudged, so that I cannot recognize the writing. Written evidence about the gravestones is not available. The last Jewish fellow citizens were lost under the Nazi dictator.

With friendly greetings,

Community administration entrance

Mayor



*Richard R. Grayson, M.D., S.C.*

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To: The Mayor  
Gehaus East  
Germany

3 April 1991

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your reply to my letter about my genealogy research.

You state that according to the records of Gehaus the first Jewish family settled in your town at the end of the 16th century.

I would like to hire someone at \$10.00 per hour to photocopy such records for me.

Perhaps there are probate, real estate, and other court records mentioning the Jews.

I am interested in these names: Mandelbaum, Schild, Gottgetreu, Epstein, Blau, and Appel, and their relatives.

Thank you for your help,

Doctor Richard R.

Grayson

Dem Gehaus  
Der Bürgermeister  
Deutsche  
Demokratische Republik

3 April 1991

Lieber Herr,

Danke für Ihre Antwort meinen Brief über meine Forschung der Genealogie.

Sie legen dar, daß nach den Urkunden Gehaus der ersten Jüdischen Familie in Ihrer Stadt am Ende des 16th Jahrhunderts sich.

Ich würde mögen, Photokopie jemand an \$10.00 pro Stunde zu mieten solch Urkunden für mir.

Vielleicht sind es [probate], wirklicher Nachlass, und andre Urkunden des Hofes erwähnen die Jude.

Ich werde in diesen Namen geinteressiert: Mandelbaum, Schild, Gottgetreu, Epstein, Blau, und Appel, und ihren Verwandten.

Danke für Ihre Hilfe,

Doktor Richard R.

Grayson

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Village history background

## The Village of Gehaus and some Nearby Villages - their Geography and History in Brief

### *Gehaws. bai Vacha / Gehaus, bei Vacha* ("Gehaus, near Vacha")

[[Map showing the village of Gehaus, S.W. Thuringia](#)]

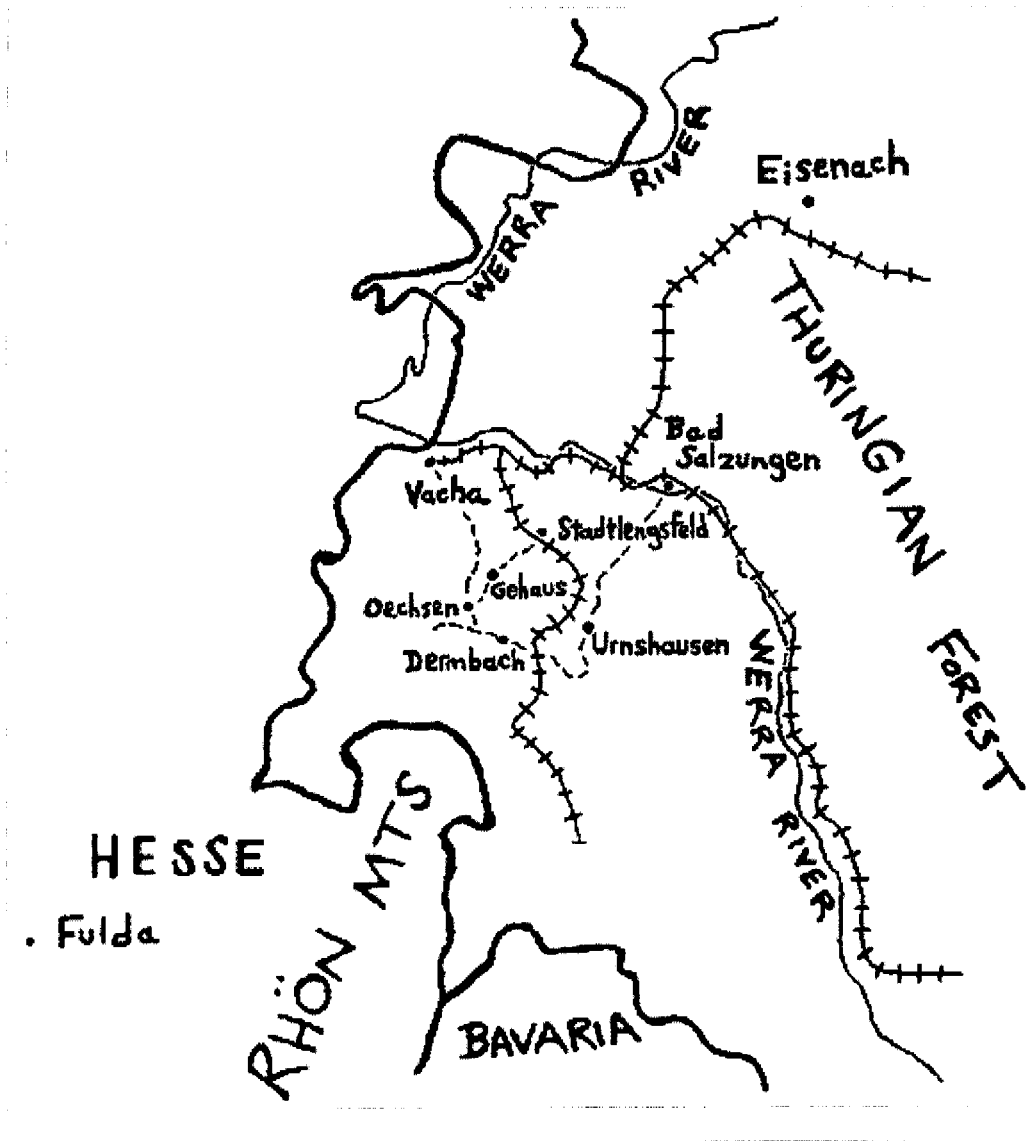
#### **Gehaus in East Germany**

Town (municipality), population 1,107. *Postanstalt* [postal establishment]: Gehaus *über* [via, by way of] Vacha (Rhöngeb [geb=*Gebirge*, mountains]). *Krg* [=*Kreisgericht*, district court]: Bad Salzungen. Nearest railroad station 3 miles away at Stadtlengsfeld; nearest town, Oechsen, 1.2 miles away. *Bz* [=*Bezirk*, district]: Suhl [East Germany].

**Source:** *Müllers Grosses Deutsches Ortsbuch: vollständiges Gemeinde-lexikon*. Wuppertal-Barmen, 1958. [Gazetteer of the German Republics]

#### **Gehaus in the German Empire**

*T.* [Thüringen], *Sn.-W.-E.* [Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach], *VerwB.* [administrative authority] Dermbach, *AG.* *Pw* [*Personenpostwagen* = passenger-carrying postal van]: 6 km *E* [*Entfernung* = distance] Stadtlengsfeld [= railroad station 3.6 miles away at Stadtlengsfeld, to which there is transportation from Gehaus], *Bkdo.* [administrative authority] Eisenach; 774 *E.* [*Einwohnerzahl* = population, in 1910], **P** [*Postanstalt und Posttelegraph* = post office and telegraph], *StdA.* [*Stadtamt* = municipal office (town hall) / *Standesamt* = civil registry office], *ev. Pfk.* [*evangelische Pfarrkirche* = Protestant parish church]; *SpDrl.* [banking office]; *Viehhdl.* [*Viehhändler* = cattle dealer] -- *Dazu* [= forming part of the municipality of Gehaus is the] *Wlr.* [*Weiler* = hamlet of] Hohenwart, *E* 3 km [= 1.8 miles away], 48 *E.* [= with a population of



### Vacha

Town, population 4,383, in Thuringia, at the north foot of the Rhön Mountains, on the Werra River, and 17 miles southwest of Eisenach. Stone quarry. Has remains of medieval walls. [1910 Population: 2,240]

**Source:** based on *Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer of the World*, 1962. Population figures are from East Germany's 1946 census. [*Meyers Orts-und Verkehrs-Lexikon*]

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### Rhön Mountains

Range in western Germany, extending about 35 miles along the borders of

Bavaria and Hesse; highest point 3,117 feet. Noted for harsh climate and heavy rainfall. Of volcanic origin.

**Source:** *ibid.*

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## **Bad Salzungen**

Town, population 7,878, in Thuringia, at the south foot of the Thuringian Forest [mountains], on the Werra River, and 12 miles SSW of Eisenach. First mentioned in the 8th century. Spa and salt works. [1910 Population of Salzungen: 5,134]

**Source:** *ibid.*

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## **Werra**

River in western Germany that rises in the Thuringian Forest, meanders 170 miles generally north, and joins the Fulda River to form the Weser River.

**Source:** *ibid.*

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## **Stadtlengsfeld**

Town, population 2,580, in Thuringia, at the north foot of the Rhön Mountains, and 15 miles southwest of Eisenach. Sometimes called *Lengsfeld*. [1910 Population: 1,593]

**Source:** *ibid.*

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## **Eisenach**

City, population (1989 est.) 48,361 [1910 Population: 38,362], in Thuringia, at the northwest end of the Thuringian Forest, and 30 miles west of Erfurt. Founded about 1150 by the landgraves of Thuringia. Residence of Martin Luther when he began his translation of the Bible into German [about 1521]. Birthplace of J.S. Bach [1685].

**Source:** based on *New Britannica Encyclopaedia*, 1993. [*Meyers Orts=und Derkehrs=Lexikon.*] *Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer of the*

*World.*

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## **Thuringia**

(German, *Thüringen*). German state (*Land*), population (1990 est.) 2,684,000, area 6,275 square miles. Traversed northwest to southeast by the Thuringian Forest. The Rhön Mountains extend into western Thuringia. Mostly hilly, fertile region (grain, vegetables, fruit).

The Germanic Thuringians appeared about 350 AD. They were conquered by the Franks in the 6th to 8th centuries, and reconverted to Christianity by St. Boniface [died 755, buried in the abbey of Fulda, Hesse, which he founded]. In the 13th century Thuringia fell to the margraves of Meissen, who in the 15th century divided the territory into several duchies; when the margraves became electors of Saxony (that is, princes with the right to participate in choosing the Holy Roman emperor), the name of Saxony (German, *Sachsen*) was prefixed to their holdings. In the 16th century Thuringia was a center of Protestantism. (The region was greatly devastated in WWII.)

**Source:** based on *New Britannica Encyclopaedia* [Englebert. *Lives of the Saints*. 1951]

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## **The Administrative Regions Gehaus Has Belonged To**

From at least 1641 to 1918, Gehaus was in the territory of the grand duchy of *Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach* (English, Saxe-Weimar, or, Saxony-Weimar), in the historical region of Thuringia. The grand duchy was from 1807 in Napoleon's Confederation of the Rhine, from 1815 in the German Confederation, from 1867 in the North German Confederation, and from 1871 in the German Empire.

Following the German revolution of 1918, the territory of the former duchy was made part of the new German *Land* (state) of Thuringia, which had Weimar as its capital.

In 1952, when East Germany dissolved its *Länder*, Gehaus fell into the new district of Suhl. But in 1990, just prior to the Reunification of Germany, the *Land* of Thuringia was reconstituted, and Gehaus is now in the German state of Thuringia, the capital of which is Erfurt.

**Source:** based on *New Britannica Encyclopaedia*

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## Saxe-Weimar

(German, *SACHSEN-WEIMAR EISENACH*). The largest of the seven states that were merged into Thuringia in 1922 with Weimar as their capital. Saxe-Weimar consisted of three large divisions: Weimar [to the east of Gehaus], Neustadt [still farther east], and Eisenach; and 24 smaller divisions; with a total area of 1,388 square miles.

The main occupation of the state was agriculture, with some stock-raising. Weimar was the largest of Saxe-Weimar's divisions, followed by Eisenach. Eisenach yielded the poorest crops of the state, but it had fine forests; its only large town was the city of Eisenach, which was a trading center. Most of the inhabitants of Saxe-Weimar were Lutherans.

The reign of Charles Augustus was the cultural high point for Saxe-Weimar. This duke brought Goethe [in 1775], Schiller and Herder to Weimar, and made the University of Jena a center of learning; he granted his Grand Duchy a constitution and allowed freedom of the press. In 1866 Saxe-Weimar joined Prussia against Austria. In 1919 it adopted a republican constitution.

**Source:** based on *Encyclopedia Americana*, 1954

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## Central and Southwest Germany



**Alsace, France  
and Lorraine**

[Map showing Alsace and Lorraine]

With the Franco-Prussian War, the Unification of Germany in 1871 made the French provinces of Lorraine (some) and Alsace (almost all) part of the German Empire. They remained there until after World War I.

Alsace is a broad plain between the Rhine River (east) and the Vosges

Mountains (west). Lorraine is mountains and hills. Both are principally agricultural. Their people are almost all Roman Catholic, although some villages are Protestant [Note]. French is spoken in large towns and in Lorraine. The Alsatians speak a German dialect.

**Source:** based on "Franco-German War" and "Alsace-Lorraine" in *Encyclopedia Americana*, 1954

Margarete Kiehl was born in a place that was part of France during the 1870 U.S. Census, part of Germany during the 1880 Census, and again part of France when her daughter Margaret died in 1948. Where would that place be other than the French province Alsace or the French province Lorraine. Because of language, it seems likely that Margarete was from Alsace rather than from Lorraine.

**Note:** Rather than descending from Martin Luther and the main current of the Reformation, the Protestants of Alsace "had descended from Zwingli and the radical wing of the Reformation, the Free Church movement". **Source:** Marshall and Poling, *Schweitzer: A Biography* (1971) page 3. The church of Wilhelm Becker, the husband of Margarete Kiehl, however, in Philadelphia was Lutheran. From what I know of them, the Schlectweg family's religious beliefs were not orthodox. "I only belong to Jesus," that is, not to any formal confession of faith (established church), my grandmother said to us. [Back]

## Baden

[[Map showing Baden, S.W. Germany](#)]

With the Unification of Germany, Baden -- formerly a constitutional grand duchy -- became a state of the German Empire. Except for the Rhine plain, it is completely mountainous (Black Forest, Swabian Jura). Northern Baden is mostly Protestant; southern Baden is Roman Catholic.

**Source:** based on "Baden" *ibid.* "Baden" in *Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer of the World*, 1962

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