

# Hilchenbach, Elsoff, Westphalia



## Jewish Congregations in Westphalia in 1932 [Aschoff]

As the map shows, Westphalia had a large number of Jewish congregations, particularly in the region between the Ruhr river (the centre of the former industrial heartland of Germany) and the Ems river further north. Aside from a few congregations with a membership greater than 250, they were mainly small and medium-sized. Notice that the smallest density was in the south where Hilchenbach and Elsoff were located.

The following is a collection of specialized references, together with material of interest that is contained in them:

Meyer, H. 1962. *Aus Geschichte und Leben der Juden in Westfalen / Eine Sammelschrift*. Frankfurt am Main: Ner-Tamid-Verlag.

In 1932 there were 21,600 Jews in Westphalia out of a population of 4,811,000 so that they represented less than 0.5% of the inhabitants.[p. 159] [See below under Aschoff and Herzig.]

Hilchenbach had 24 Jews out of a population 2220; just over 1% of the population. The community was not associated with the Siegen synagogue, but they

had their own prayer room in the *store* and there was religious instruction for four children in 1932. [p. 177] *they went to Siegen for the high holidays*

Siegen had 100 Jews out of a population 31,000; less than one-half of a percent of the inhabitants. There was a synagogue (destroyed in 1938) and there was religious instruction for ten children in 1932. [p. 181]

Elsoff had 12 Jews in 1932. They did not have their own congregation, but rather were associated with the Berleburg congregation, which was about 13km away. [p. 173]

Berleburg had 44 Jews out of a population 3000; just under 1.5% of the population. There was religious instruction with four children. [p. 173]

Aschoff, D. 1995. *Juden in Westfalen*. Münster: Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe.

Additional population statistics for Westfalen; see above under Meyer and below under Herzig:

1825: 11,100 Jews ; 1881: 17,200 Jews. [p. 17]

In the period from 1803 to 1815 (the French period) various emancipation edicts appeared. In the Prussian period from 1815 to 1847 five of these edicts remained in principle in effect, but in 1826 the provincial parliament asked that the citizenship rights of Jews be withdrawn. In 1847 the laws for the Jews were standardized throughout the Prussian empire (except for Posen in the east), but they still had fewer rights than the Christians. Finally, in 1869, the Jews were granted equal rights. [p. 14]

Zimmerman, M. 1998. *Die Geschichte der Juden im Rheinland und in Westfalen*. Cologne: Kohlhammer.

A 300 page history of the Jews of the region from antiquity to destruction of the communities in WWII. The chapter starting on [p. 141] discusses the struggle for rights, as well as the social and religious changes that took place in the nineteenth century.

Lennarz, U. 1973. *Die Territorialgeschichte des hessischen Hinterlandes*. Marburg: Hessischen Landesamt fügeschichtliche Landeskunde.

Of interest because the maps show that the territory around Battenberg has been completely separate from Wittgenstein, and in particular Elsoff, since at least the mid 1600s.

Herzig, A. 1973. *Judentum und Emanzipation in Westfalen*. Münster: Provinzialinstitut für westfälische Landes- und Volkskunde. A very complete study of the various laws and restrictions faced by the Jews of Westfalen. of particular interest to us is his discussion of the countship of Wittgenstein where Elsoff is located. In 1563 a police order prohibiting the settlement of Jews came into effect, and In

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1816, when the countship came under Prussian control, it was stated that this order was still in effect. In 1842 the Ministry of the Interior declared that this rule was no longer applicable. In 1840 two Jews from Berleburg and Laasphe were given permission to settle and it was stated that no Jews that previously no Jews had settled in the countship. [p.17]

The above may be an instance of theory vs. practice, because as the chart [p.62] indicates there were 282 Jews in Wittgenstein in 1821 and the Elsoff ancestors were already there in **♣Joseph?, father** and most likely even earlier

Die Entwicklung der jüdischen Bevölkerung von 1825 bis 1925

Jahre	Regierungsbezirke			Provinz Westfalen
	Münster	Minden	Arnsberg	
1825	2 611	4 667	3 864	11 142
1834	2 884	5 320	4 685	12 889
1843	3 215	5 782	5 408	14 405
1852	3 364	6 126	5 987	15 477
1861	3 535	6 164	6 932	16 631
1871	3 403	5 949	7 893	17 245
1880	3 466	5 849	9 495	18 810
1890	3 593	5 402	10 177	19 172
1900	3 743	5 095	11 802	20 640
1910	4 040	4 609	12 387	21 036
1925	4 315	3 890	13 380	21 595

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