

Jews in Limburg

Limburg - a town in the Wiesbaden District, Hessen Germany

Some of the French Jews who had come to Germany in 1190 at the invitation of King Philip II settled in Limburg. At the end of the 13th Century there was still a Jew street there under the protection of the Duchy of Limburg. In a document dating from 1278, a Jew, Abraham of Limburg is mentioned. From the end of the 13th century till the Pogroms following the black death plague (1348-49) there were ups and downs in the position of the Jews. In 1350 there was a massacre and the property of the murdered Jews was sold by the duke to the inhabitants who had taken part in the Pogrom. The community was renewed at the end of the 14th century but only a few Jewish families lived there. In 1680, the son of Lipman Beharnes, a court Jew from Hannover, received permission to settle in Limburg. He was followed by other privileged Jews. In the first half of the 14th century there was a Synagogue. After the renewal of the community till the middle of the 19th century prayers were conducted in a private home. In 1867 the congregation bought the chapel building of the monastery of Eberbach from the Evangelical Church and converted it into a synagogue. It served the community till 1902. When the Jewish population grew a new synagogue was built seating 300 worshippers. The synagogue was orthodox and the Head of the community objected to installing an organ. The community had a cemetery which was used till the beginning of the 19th century. From the middle of the 19th century till the beginning of the 20th century the new cemetery was then consecrated which was in use till 1939.

At the end of the 19th century Jewish Social Welfare agencies were founded, among them a women's group organized in 1899. In 1905 there were 237 Jews in Limburg. The economic situation of the Jewish families who lived in Limburg in the middle ages was fairly good. In the middle of the 19th century there was a surge of economic development. During this period there were a few large Jewish owned clothing and shoe stores. There were also Jewish artisans and craftsmen, doctors and lawyers. In 1933 there were 296 Jews.

The Holocaust Period

In 1933, when the Nazis came to power, Jews began to leave the town. Most of them emigrated to the United States, other countries in central Europe and a few to Eretz Israel. Some left for the large towns in Germany, usually Frankfurt/Main. On October 30, 1938 the last public service in the synagogue was held. The synagogue was destroyed in the Kristallnacht November 9, 1938. In December 1938 only 86 Jews remained in Limburg. In September 1939 only eight Jews were in the town. Their fate is unknown. Three Jews returned to Limburg after the war.