

## **Maastrichterbrugstraat 31**

### **Abraham and Hannchen Löwenstein**

#### **The Six talented Daughters Löwenstein**

Between 1899 and 1914, in the German village of Ahaus, Alfred and Hannchen

Löwenstein bring seven children into this world: six daughters named Bertha, Martha, Else, Regina, Lydia, and Ruth, and one son named Max. Their only son, Max, dies at the age of two in 1911, but their six daughters remain both healthy and smart. The Löwensteins provide for their family by running a tannery and a wholesale business in leather and shoemaker materials.

Unlike most other parents at the time, Alfred and Hannchen Löwenstein value their daughters' education very highly. All daughters receive the opportunity to study whatever they want, resulting Else obtaining a PhD in chemistry and Bertha doing a secretarial course in England.

#### **Moving to Maastricht**

When the war begins, father Alfred still responds rather laconically to the warnings of some of his neighbours in Ahaus. The Löwensteins have always been very committed to the community in Ahaus, and thus Alfred assumes that his family can rely on the city for protection – an assumption that could not have been more off. In 1938, during the night of November 9 to November 10 – Kristallnacht – the family's shop



is destroyed. From then onwards, all Jews are expelled and prosecuted, leading to the imprisonment of 30.000 German Jews during the weeks that follow. In response, the family decides to move to Maastricht. In the spring of 1939, daughter Bertha sells the house and the family business. She and her sisters move abroad, but their parents settle in the Maastrichterbrugstraat 31, where they live until their arrest in the summer of 1943.

Once arrested, the couple is transported from Westerbork to Sobibor, where they are murdered upon arrival on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1943.

### **Two Stumbling Stones**

On the Maastrichterbrugstraat, one can find two Stumbling Stones for the Löwenstein. Though the family's history is as tragic as most other stories, the Löwenstein monument is quite exceptional: Alfred and Hannchen Löwenstein were the only ones who did not make it. Their six daughters survived the war.