

MAX KOPPEL & SONS IN NÖRDLINGEN

reminiscence of a formerly well-known natural stone factory

narrated by Rolf Hofmann - English version by Yehuda Schenef

Max Koppel was born in 1840 at Kleinerdingen, a small village next to the former Imperial City of Nördlingen, as son of the modest living master glazier Joseph Koppel. In 1868 he advertised for the purchase of shards of glass in the local newspaper. Until early 1870s Max Koppel continued the business of his father. Conceivably at this time he may have dealt with the glass industry of Fürth near Nuremberg and realized that the process of cutting and polishing of glass had much in common with the processing of the surfaces of natural stones.

Thus Max Koppel soon had an incipient interest in sculpture and in the processing of natural stone. The earliest known head stones designed by him are from 1871 for the nearby Jewish cemetery of Pflaumloch, another example from 1875 at the new Jewish grave yard in Augsburg. In either instance he used rather simple sandstone easy to work with without extensive machinery. As abrasive Koppel used sand from Wörnitz River.

Bavarian natural stone industry during the 1900s

Max Koppel obviously had a sense of occasion to realize and anticipate the revolutionary development of industrial stone processing, also King Ludwig I of Bavaria already had shown interest for. The king repeatedly visited the granite quarries at Fichtelgebirge and was in contact with Erhard Ackermann, a renowned quarryman and owner of a granite quarry at Weissenstadt, who dealt extensively with the development of machines for extremely hard stone like granite, until then arduously processed by hand only.

Ackermann with his self developed machines laid the foundation for the Bavarian stone industry on a grand scale. King Ludwig I commissioned him with the production of granite columns for the Hall of Liberation at Kelheim ("Befreiungshalle"), which round-cut wasn't by hand anymore but already by grinder machines. Much to the development of stone industry was added by the increasingly dense railway network, tracing back on the "King Ludwig Railroad".

The foundation of the German Empire in 1871 also contributed a share to the development of the natural stone industry, not at least because France had lost the war and was forced to settle enormously high reparation payments to Germany. The following "Founding Period" brought along a building boom within the German Empire with a huge number of pompous industrial palaces, chateau like factory buildings and grand urban villas which characteristics were fastidiously featured façade elements made of natural stone. The Empire had a sound grasp of contemporary developments and demonstrated it even in opulent splendor. From that benefited the natural stone industry and since 1898 also the marble, granite and syenite processing works of Koppel.

After promising early success in 1876 Koppel established in Nördlingen at Kammgasse B 76 (now Kämpelgasse 5) near Berger Gate with his partner Abraham Mehring as sculptor and stone mason. In addition to natural stone for construction works of all kind Koppel and Mehring made highbrow grave monuments. When Mehring in 1880 died at the early age of 57, Koppel continued the business with some helpmates. One of them was Hieronymus Müller, born 20 July 1863 in Utzmemmingen, who started as an apprentice of Koppel. In 1895 he became an independent stone mason in Utzmemmingen where he died on 24 August 1929, a couple of weeks after he had chosen Vohenstein Castle as retirement home. His great-granddaughter Karin Müller until today in 2011 operates the family business in its fourth generation. She is one of the few female master-masons in a profession that is actually still essentially a male domain. The traditional designed monument of her great-grandfather still exists and highlights the cemetery of Utzmemmingen. It is the most beautiful among randomly shaped grave markers that now have come into vogue at cemeteries everywhere.

Max Koppel makes a fortune

Koppel's natural stone business in Nördlingen was quite successful from the beginning, probably because of a close cooperation with contractor Carl Heuchel in Nördlingen, since with grave stones alone it was not possible to make a fortune. The main business essentially was the manufacture of custom-made components of natural stone for the construction industry. Once implemented, nothing indicated the origin of those components, in contrary to the tomb stones with the "Koppel" signature engraved. From 1885 the number of head stones by Koppel at the Jewish cemetery of Augsburg increased considerably. Until today the markers of black syenite stone with sophisticated engraved gold lettering are impressing. Due to the fact that Jewish gravesites according to religious laws in general may not be terminated, many grave monuments with the "Koppel" signature bear witness on the skills and virtuosity of the Koppel masonry.

Notable in this context also are the five large head stones at the center of the Jewish cemetery of Wallerstein, the "Rabbi graves" as they are called in the vernacular, which at the base have the signature of Max Koppel. One of these tomb stones is that of the Rabbi David Weisskopf who died in 1888. He was the last head of the venerable district rabbinate of Wallerstein. The assessment of these monuments by stonemason Karl Löffler of Nördlingen was that they were made of Rosenheim granite, a limestone from the area of Rosenheim, which because of its fine grained structure was easy to process, but could not be polished. For work pieces of this kind the material today is no longer used.

Max Koppel's sons became active business partners

Max Koppel was lucky because his two sons Emil and David engaged in his business. At least one of the brothers, probably Emil, could have received his education at the "State College for Stone Processing" which in 1886 was established in the Bohemian town of Saubsdorf (now Supikovice in Czechia), which in German speaking countries was of central importance for the training of stone masons. Since 1890 both sons worked with their father at a humble workshop near Berger Gate. About 1897 plans were made for a factory outside Löpsinger Gate right behind the railroad gate. The considerable extent of the construction suggests that Max Koppel and his sons at this time already were well replete with orders.

The buildings were designed by architect Max Gaab, who in the 1880s already had drawn the plans for the synagogue of Nördlingen. The plant was conducted as traditional brick construction by Carl Heuchel, the local constructor who also in the future had "Max Koppel & Sons" as supplier of natural stones. When the buildings were accomplished Max Koppel ceded the daily business to his sons.

Amazing technical details of the construction plans

Original historic construction plans of the Koppel factory show amazing details. A great number of stone saws, grinding and polishing machines were powered by a steam engine moving a transmission linkage and leather belts. A tall chimney was a visible token of the plant activities. Separated from the wet working area was the section of the stonecutters who were occupied with the elaboration of the shaping. As connector inbetween was the administration building with the management office, the engraving shop and the forge at ground floor. Max Koppel lived upstairs and after he had passed away his son Emil with wife and daughter moved in.

A natural stone factory of this size was something special for Nördlingen and correspondingly praised by the magistrate of the city. With some 40 to 60 employees Koppel ran one of the largest businesses in Nördlingen. In 1900 in the course of the Trade Exhibition of Nördlingen, as duly noted in a report of the German Sculptor Journal, Koppel's factory found sympathetic consideration by His Royal Highness Prince Ludwig of Bavaria. The medals acquired at the exhibition as well as the ones Koppel received in 1906 at the Nuremberg Trade Exhibition were effective in advertising. The Nuremberg exhibition commemorated the centennial of the Bavarian Kingdom. For Koppel this exhibition was a good opportunity to gain country-wide attention for his factory, however economically his participation did not pay out.

Railway siding with the Bavarian State Railroad

The immediate connection of “Max Koppel & Sons” with the railroad system of the Bavarian State Railroad was very useful in order to supply customers throughout Southern Germany. Weighty components this way could be brought directly by narrow-gauge wagons to the freight cars of the State Railroad and transferred by cranes. Using the railway at this time also was necessary and favorable since back then the usual transport by horse and cart at generally poor road conditions was a high risk for fragile natural stones. The wording of the building application from 1897 directed to the Royal State Railway Board in Augsburg was due to the fact of the outstanding authority of the institution in a rather obedient tone, but then again Koppel also pointed out very confidently that he expected an annual transport volume of some 120 carloads. An overview of the Koppel plant provides a depiction from 1910 by lithographer Wilhelm Zeitrög of Nördlingen. His bird’s eye perspective shows technical details and also an extensive storage of still unprocessed natural stones at an open air site.

Grave monuments of black syenite

The black head stones with golden lettering known from many cemeteries often mistakenly are referred to as “black marble”. However the stone actually is syenite, an extremely hard and difficult to process primary rock, which is even harder than granite and at this time for most parts was imported from Sweden. Syenite came in blocks and was sawn in swing frame saws for slabs and plates. The sawing was performed by toothless iron blades. As cutting granulate carborundum (silicon carbide) powder was used which in hardness was similar to diamond and was discovered only in 1890 by Edward Goodrich Acheson in the USA when he tried to make artificial diamonds. Nevertheless then it took several days to saw through a block of syenite, what today a diamond saw does in a few hours. Back then the steam engine was running without interruption and a machinist in charge had to provide the cut surface with carborundum as well as with cooling water round the clock.

Head stones from Koppel were from finest quality and still exist in large numbers at Jewish cemeteries in Southern Germany, for instance in Augsburg, Munich, Nuremberg, Ingolstadt and at Jewish cemeteries around Nördlingen. Just in Augsburg there still are 135 head stones with the Koppel signature. Grave markers by Koppel also can be found in Stuttgart, in Schopfloch (Franconia) and at Neustadt an der Saale, where Max Koppel’s daughter Henriette married the manufacturer Otto Isidor Franken, what obviously allowed to deliver the local Jewish cemetery, which was established in 1887. Henriette Frank died in 1927 age 60. Her grave marker still exists as well as 27 others with the signature of Koppel.

First-class machinery from Emil Offenbacher

For further processing the stone plates were carried from the saw to the workshops with grinding and polishing machines, where the plates were treated lengthy and carefully, much of it however finally hand-made. Worn chisels were sharpened continuously in a separate blacksmith shop, and in the engraving shop the ornate and gilded inscriptions on the grave stones were created. By quality and size with its extensive equipment of modern machinery Koppel’s industrial plant for the Nördlingen region and beyond was of exceptional importance.

A floor plan with a detailed list of all machines in the building, which survived in the archives of the building department of Nördlingen, proves that the basic equipment was supplied by the renowned engineering works of Emil Offenbacher in Marktredwitz (Upper Franconia). Especially impressive are the joint-grinding and polishing machines. Emil Offenbacher also produced important carborundum grinding and cutting discs for the processing of natural stones, of which he had received several patents. Offenbacher started his machine factory around 1885 and from that time until 1920 he supplied the Koppel works in Nördlingen with all necessary machines and tools for stone processing, especially with carborundum grinding wheels. This follows from the shipping directory as well as from a letter of thanks from Koppel to Offenbacher.

The Offenbacher machine factory in the 1920s became a major global manufacturer of machines for stone and glass processing. In 1937 Emil Offenbacher immigrated at the age of 74 with wife Sadie and daughter Lola to New York City. His wife died there in 1941, he himself died in 1962 just months before his hundredth birthday. His firm in Marktredwitz was sold in 1940 to Heinrich Fickert and after a number of ups and downs today in the year of 2011 still exists under the name “Fickert & Winterling”. The firm still has the same spectrum of

products, however of course computer-controlled at highest technical level. The historical factory buildings of Offenbacher do no longer exist, since they were replaced by modern manufacturing facilities. There is no substantial memory to Emil Offenbacher and his factory in Marktredwitz; however a still existing shipping register and a machinery catalogue from 1902 have a wealth of details and a historical view of the factory.

Successful business operations until World War One

The time until World War One certainly was of great economical importance for the industrial company of the Koppel brothers Emil and David. Both referred to themselves rather as “marble goods manufacturers” than as “masons”, likewise their father Max understood himself as “sculptor”. Probably Emil Koppel was in charge for craftsmanship issues, and he also was fellow assessor at mason journeyman exams of the Chamber of Handicrafts in Nördlingen. David was likely in charge for commercial and logistical requirements.

The demand for natural stone in the construction industry was great, as the establishment of a branch in Munich in the proximity of the old Jewish cemetery in 1905 shows. The Munich based transactions were managed by Koppel's agent Max Guggenheim who was born in Ichenhausen. For the most part marble, granite and syenite was processed. The wide range of offers included complete shop fittings (for instance for hairdressers), wall coverings of all kind, table tops for restaurants and bars, technical switch panel mountings, stairs and other components for the construction industry and thus also particular high quality grave monuments affordable only for wealthier clients. At the old Jewish cemetery of Munich there still are some thirty large sized grave monuments with a Koppel signature on them.

Labor dispute at Max Koppel & Sons

In 1906 Koppel participated at the Bavarian State Exhibition in Nuremberg, which was launched to celebrate the centennial anniversary of the Bavarian Kingdom. The local newspaper in Nördlingen reflects this event but at the same time mentions a strike by the Koppel syenite masons in response to the changeover from hourly wage payment on piece rates, what inevitably resulted in more strain and loss of wages for the workers.

Nördlingen city archive has some information about the dispute in the inventory of the local Commercial Court. At the beginning of November 1906 the Koppel company ordered the changeover for stone workers from hourly wage to piecework. Affected from the decision were eleven men who refused to accept the new ruling since they assumed it as unfavorable shortage of their salary. All of them got laid off. Mentioned by name at that time were the workers Johann Moll and Johann Schautz as well as the power house mate Christian Wiedemann, additionally Balthas Neher, Samuel Hohberger, Victor Schill, Hanns Schurrer, Ferdinand Breitsamer, Friedrich Vogelsgang, Georg Wald and Karl Rollwagen.

The case was brought up before the Commercial Court, where critical issues were discussed in details, among others a piecework opinion by the granite stone and grinding mill company "Franke & Reul" in Kirchenlamitz at the Fichtelgebirge mountain range (northern Bavaria), which aim was to underline the legal demand of piecework salary. One argument was that the previous rule of hourly wage payment tempted some of the workers to laziness and improper work.

The workers on the other hand found support by the German Stoneworker Union. Finally the dispute was settled by Balthasar Ritter von Reiger, the chairman of the Commercial Court. The workers now had to accept an only moderately decreased demand for piecework. Regarding the settlement of the piecework there now was an extensive catalogue of all conceivable shapes and profiles of stone processing which thus inevitably led to an equally large bureaucratic overhead when reporting the performance of the stone workers.

The controversy of 1906 had been only one of several of its kind. Already in 1903 the stone workers downed tools because of deteriorating working conditions. The employer frowned upon a membership at the Association of German Stonemasons, occasionally there even were threats of notice. Also in 1911 and 1914 there were strikes. Repeatedly the situation had worsened critically when workers of the Koppel firm outside the factory gates intercepted jobseekers and warned them against applying. The workers complained of "starvation wages" at extremely harsh working conditions at Koppel's factory. Of course it was not everybody's taste to expose

oneself 10-12 hours a day to the noise, cold and wet of grinding and polishing workshops. Eventually, after all strikes, unavoidably they agreed. Jobs in rural areas were essential and thus the workers necessarily contented to accept lower payment. Some people left and chanced their luck elsewhere. The harsh demeanor of the Koppel brothers at these times seemed to appear somewhat odd. Factory owners elsewhere in the German Empire seemed to understand the advantages of taking care for the social needs of the workers. Social peace and satisfaction increased the quality of the products and thus benefited the reputation of the company

The Oettingen-Spielberg vault in Oettingen

A very special order for Koppel was the production and delivery of syenite plates for the vault of the Princely House of Oettingen-Spielberg in the Crypt Church in Oettingen (today next to the local museum). On November 4 in 1911 hereditary Prince Moritz Richard of Oettingen-Spielberg, son of Prince Albrecht of Oettingen-Spielberg, died at early age of 26 in Munich. Due to space restrictions, the expansion of the crypt was necessary. The construction work was done by contractor Carl Heuchel. The syenite plates sealing the grave chambers were made by Koppel, including the gilded inscription on the grave cover plate of hereditary Prince Moritz Richard.

A strange coincidence at the Princely Archive at Harburg Castle brought to light a bill of costs from Koppel for the work at the crypt in Oettingen from 1912, which also mentions stone mason helper Gögelein. Fritz Gögelein was born in 1882 in Wiedelbach near Dinkelsbühl. He got married in 1907 and moved with his wife Babette to Nördlingen, where he held a position at "Max Koppel & Sons" until the end of the company in 1935. In 1914 Fritz Gögelein acquired a house at Basteigasse 1, where he lived until his death in 1963, while his wife had already died in 1936. When Gögelein had left Koppel he found another job with stonemasons Gottlob + Hermann Löffler in Nördlingen until he retired in the 1950s.

The War of 1914 – 1918

At the outbreak of the war against France in September 1914 the whole German population with the exception of leftwing part of the Social Democratic Party was quite enthusiastic. The people took up arms rapturously looking forward to have the enemy defeated until Christmas - which had proven fallacious. The fury of "modern" attrition warfare (the first one in grey uniform instead of the picturesque colorful coat of old days) with all of its terrible brutality and previously unknown killing machines such as tanks, planes, poison gas shells or machine guns was not anticipated.

Military industry on all sides triumphed at the price of all who suffered on the battlefields. Also workers from the Koppel factory moved to the front and of course reduced the production volume. Even David Koppel himself went to war (photos show him in crisp uniform and in combat) where in 1918 at the Western Front he became a British prisoner of war. Only two years later he was released from captivity and returned to Nördlingen.

An even more tragic fate had suffered Christian Fröhlich, a native from nearby Löpsingen, who worked at Koppel's company as syenite polisher mate and on July 6 in 1918 died in combat as "hero for emperor and fatherland". He was buried in Petit-Rombach near Malkirch in Alsace next to Sélestat (Schlettstadt). Karl Mayer from Kleinerdingen, another stone grinder from the Koppel company, on March 25 in 1918 was mortally wounded by shelling and was laid to rest at the military cemetery of Mulsach in Lorraine (now Moussey near Sarrebourg). Sympathetic obituaries in the newspaper of Nördlingen underline the tragedy of unexpected victims of war.

The euphoria of the first weeks of the war meanwhile had turned into deep sorrow of the families concerned. Also "Max Koppel & Sons" recalled its employees killed in the war with newspaper ads. Besides all the war events also the death of the founder of the company was bemoaned. Max Koppel had died on April 17 in 1917 at age 77 in Nördlingen. Also Max Gaab who had once planned the Koppel factory had died. As a veteran of the 1870 war he wanted to make his contribution to national defense. He didn't die on the battlefield but in a hospital in Noerdlingen. His grave still exists at Emmeransberg cemetery.

The ladies at Koppel's office

Another personal story derived in 2011 from a call at the local Nördlingen newspaper. About 1915 at age 15 Julie Bub from Nördlingen started her apprenticeship at the Koppel company, after she had spend a training year at the trade school in Ulm. Her daughter Martha Meyer (once owner of Meyer cardealershop at Wemdingen Strasse) still recalls many episodes her mother had told her from her time at Koppel's factory. Senior partner Max Koppel was a devout Jew, perfectly shaped and correct, just an old school patriarch and generally appreciated by the workers. His son David Koppel however was quite different, agile and very demanding towards his employees and workers. From Friday afternoon with the onset of the Shabbat all his business activities rested until the end of the weekly holiday on Saturday evening, when the ladies in the office reluctantly had to carry out some extra writings.

Typewriters were used at the Koppel company only after the First World War. Handwriting was regarded as more favorable and customer pleasing. After the war the economic conditions were so bad that "Max Koppel & Sons" had to reduce their staff. Thus Julie Bub in 1921 left for the Sparkasse (savings bank) in Nördlingen, where she was employed by intercession of bank director Lämmerer's wife, who years earlier also had worked for Koppel. At the office now only Friedel Hilsenbeck did the daily paperwork. A photograph from 1919, taken by David Koppel's son Justin, shows the two office ladies.

The 1920s and the death of David Koppel

The war between 1914 and 1918 and the social turmoil thereafter caused an economic crisis in the "German Reich". In 1917 Max Koppel had died, who not only was the founder but also the driving force of the company. He left a painful gap. Unlike some war profiteers in big business and high finance the majority of the population after the war had become extremely poor. Also Koppel's natural stone company now had to face hard times since the demand for all kind of their products declined. Additionally there also were more and more artificial stones on the market which were much cheaper to produce in large extends and would replace natural stones in buildings. After a brief business upturn in the mid twenties followed the time of the Great Depression after "Black Friday" in 1929. Since then only a few stone laden freight cars moved to customers at other places, but the railway connection was still maintained. About 1930 a number of grave markers for the new cemetery of Nuremberg were delivered. However, since 1933 there actually were no more deliveries.

Comforting for Emil Koppel in social respects probably was the fact that he still was assessor at the journeyman examination board of the Chamber of Handicrafts in Nördlingen, along with another local stone mason Hans Übelacker as master assessor. From 1929 there still exists the original journeyman certificate of Hermann Löffler, signed by Emil Koppel and Hans Übelacker. Grave markers at the cemetery of Emmeransberg today still remind of Hans Übelacker. His simple house next to the cemetery with the workshop, built in 1883 by his father, today has a florist shop. It is likely that Koppel and Übelacker had a good collegial relationship.

On May 3 in 1934 David Koppel died at his company site in presence of his employee the marble grinder Ludwig Grasschopp, who announced the decease at the local registry office. According to the opinion of one of David Koppel's grandchildren he already might have been seriously ill for some time. The death of David Koppel loomed the inevitable end of the company, all the more so because his widow and her sons couldn't foresee any future for a Jewish business in Nazi dominated "German Reich". They therefore pushed for the sale of the Koppel company's land with its buildings and structures.

The liquidation was carried out by Hans Karrer, an accountant from Nördlingen. The quest for prospects was not very successful. Finally in 1935 David Koppel's heirs applied for compulsory auction and the owners of shoe factory "Steinacker & Hartmann", until then in Vordere Gerbergasse, as only bidder won the auction. Thus some forty jobs for shoe workers were created, a boon for the city in economically difficult times. The extensions needed for the purposes of the shoe factory were conducted by contractor Carl Heuchel, the same company which in 1898 had erected the original buildings. The railway siding was removed as it was no longer needed.

What happened to the machinery and the stone inventory ?

As a result of the downturn of Koppel's business activities it may be assumed that the large stone stock as well as the machinery had been gradually dismantled over years and acquired by other stone processing companies. One specific reference interestingly comes from a written statement on the outcome of the foreclosure of the Koppel factory in spring 1935. It mentions the claim of master bricklayer Ignatz Abele of Ebnat (between Aalen and Neresheim), who claimed two saw gates in the sawing room, as well as of the water basin on the roof and a drilling machine. Another claim was asserted by the well-known natural stone dealer Karl Bergmann of Weissenstadt (Fichtelgebirge), who apparently had passed used machinery to the Koppel company, which however was not paid so far or was only at loan.

In question were two grinding machines with a motor, another two older grinders, a carborundum saw, a drilling machine, an iron wagon with carborundum wheel and transmission, finally a workshop stove with pipes. Karl Bergmann's same-named son in his 1948 dissertation on "The Granite Industry of the Fichtelgebirge" described the essentials of granite stone quarrying and processing as an industrial sector which flourished by the use of the railroads supported by the Bavarian Royal Administration.

It is quite certain that Max Koppel from the beginning was in close connection with the stone processing companies in the Fichtelgebirge region. One of his stone workers, Samuel Hohberger, was the son of a stone mason from Schwarzenbach (Fichtelgebirge). In the 1930s Hohberger settled as self employed stone mason in Nördlingen, where he died in 1963. His workshop was next to the cemetery at Emmeransberg.

The tragic end of Emil Koppel

The inevitable breakup of his life's work certainly had been very difficult for Emil Koppel, all the more so because he also had to give up his apartment in the administration building of the Koppel factory and had to move to Reimlinger Strasse 9 (in the house of bookstore Sommer at Reimlinger Gate). From this time there still exist another two grave markers at the Jewish cemetery of Augsburg with the "Koppel" signature. It therefore might have been that Emil Koppel still had some orders to carry out. When in 1940 all Jews in Nördlingen had to scrape together in so called "houses for Jews" in order to prepare their deportation, Emil Koppel approached the sad end of his life.

Already in previous years he had suffered greatly from the harassment of the Nazi *government*. At latest they had taken away everything what had a meaning to him, including all securities, even his silver ware and his watch. Most of all he was hurt from the ostracism by the townsfolk of Nördlingen, who mostly cut him on the street when he was passing. Only his housekeeper Martha Schelkopf remained devoted to the last.

Emil Koppel died lonely and mortified on November 23 in 1941. Leastwise this way he was spared the cruel fate of deportation. His wife Sophie already had died in 1914, his daughter Hedwig had married Siegfried Plaut in Burggreppach and had emigrated early enough to Dallas, Texas (USA), where Siegfried called himself Fred Plaut and established himself as jeweler. From the belongings of her father Hedwig received nothing, since everything got "lost" through official channels. Emil Koppel's grave marker at the Jewish cemetery of Nördlingen, set up by his daughter after World War II, is kept as modest as that of his brother David. What a contrast to the elaborately decorated grave monument of their parents Max and Peppi Koppel from better times.

However, the simplicity of their own grave markers also reflects accurately the lifestyle of the brothers David and Emil Koppel who did not flaunt their status of factory owners. They had no mansion and also no lavish lifestyle. This was rather atypical at the time after the war against France was won in 1871 and the proclaimed German Empire experienced a tremendous boom, especially profitable for all kinds of entrepreneurs. The Koppel brothers however came from humble beginnings and felt connected to these modest conditions for a lifetime. Emil Koppel lived at the factory compound above the office; his brother David had a small semi detached house outside Löpsinger Gate in close neighborhood to livestock dealer Heinrich Guldmann from Harburg. There was no further kind of luxury.

David Koppel's widow Jenny in 1934 moved to her son Norbert in Hamburg where he was working for the music publishing house "Benjamin & Company", as long as it was possible to do so for Jews. Jenny Koppel died in Hamburg already the following year, and she also was buried at the Jewish cemetery of Nördlingen. The memorial plate of her tombstone still exists, but meanwhile lies on the ground. Jenny's sons Justin, Norbert and Kurt managed to outmigrate timely to Tenerife and the United States.

What might bring the future to the Koppel factory ?

In 2011 much of the still existing factory structure of "Max Koppel & Sons" reminds of the once prominent natural stone company. After 1935 there was the shoe factory "Steinacker & Hartmann" until in 2010 the theater project "Schauspielmanufaktur" by Nico Jilka found a temporary home. Now a housing project is on its way preserving most of the historical buildings. Thus Max Koppel and his sons hopefully will not fall in oblivion.

* * *