Husiatyn

Name in Polish: Husiatyn

Name in Ukrainian: Гусятин

Name in Hebrew: הוסיאטין

Population Data:

Jewish Population	General Population	
1208	(?)	
3782	5214	
4197	6060	
3648	5736	
3288	5799	
368	2104	
388	(?)	

Remarks:
Husiatyn is located on both banks of the Zbruch River, about 65 km. south-east of Ternopil. This location had a significant effect on the development of the city in general, and on the lives of its Jews in particular.

Husiatyn was established in 1559, initially as a royal town. Its location in a fertile agricultural region led to the fast development; however, various disputes and wars led to its destruction at several times. In 1594 Severyn Nalyvaiko, the commander of a regiment of Cossacks, burnt and razed the city in retaliation for his father's execution at the hands of the city's lords. In 1645 Kalinowski, the ruler of the city, fortified the eastern bank of the city and his castle and built a wall around the city. However, in May of 1648, Kalinowski was captured by the Tatars and Cossacks in the battle of Korsun, and his castle was ransacked. The city succeeded in withstanding a number of attacks during the years 1651-1655, but in 1672, following an Ottoman attack against the Polish kingdom, it moved into Ottoman hands for about thirty years, until the Podole region and parts of the Ukraine were returned to the Polish kingdom following the Treaty of Karlowitz. During the period of Ottoman rule the city was developed, and several magnificent buildings were built.

Read more...
In 1729 the city was transferred to the well-known noble family of Potocki, and in 1772, with the Austrian occupation and the division of Poland, the Zbruch River became the border between the Austrian and the Russian empires, and the city was thus divided into two parts. The Galician (Austrian) part of the city became a center of trade between the two countries, and merchants from all across Galicia, as well as Ottoman merchants and merchants hailing from Saloniki, attended its trade fairs. In 1870 the city suffered a cholera epidemic and many of its inhabitants fled. In 1882 the train track from Stanislau to Husiatyn was laid down, and this aided in the preservation of the city's status as a trade center, despite the fact that an additional trade center developed concomitantly in

Podwołoczyska. With the outbreak of the First World War, the city was captured by the Russian army, which destroyed it. Residents of the city who returned to it about a year later were routed from it by the Russians.

The Jews of Husiatyn

From the moment of Husiatyn's transformation into a city, we know of Jews who settled there. Already in 1577 we know of a Jewish poll tax in the city, and we know of a Jewish synagogue that was built in the city at the end of the 16th century. In 1623 three Jewish brothers were executed on claims of having murdered Christian children. The lords of the city sentenced the three brothers after they were brutally tortured, but had nevertheless not confessed, and without any witnesses tying them to the murder of the children, and executed them immediately upon sentencing. We have no testimonies regarding the fate of Husiatyn's Jews during the massacres of 1648-9, but it is likely that they suffered following the capture of the castle by the Cossacks.

Following the Ottoman occupation, the Jewish community flourished, and a magnificent and fortified synagogue was even built in the city, which – due to its architectural important – was later maintained with the aid of the Austrian and Polish rulers. With the return of Polish rule, Archbishop of Kamieniec Podolski wanted to destroy the synagogue, due to claims that it had been built on top of a Christian cemetery, and a protracted trial, which passed through several legal courts, commenced, with the lord of the city, Mikhael Potocki, defending the Jewish community and rejecting the archbishop's suit. This legal battle between Potocki and the archbishop developed into a fierce battle, which reached all the way to the High Court of Lublin. Potocki ultimately lost the suit, but the archbishop was transferred to a new position in Przemyśl, so the sentence was never carried out. Under Potocki's patronage the Jewish community of Husiatyn flourished, and by 1765 its members owned 160 homes in the city, 54 of them in the 'Rynek', the city's market square.

The activity of Jacob Frank in nearby towns around the year 1755 led many of Husiatyn's Jews to join the Frankist sect. Representatives of the Jewish community were invited to a dispute in Kamieniec but, on the recommendation of the Council of the Four Lands no-one from the community attended the dispute. However, the bishop under whose patronage the Frankists were operating demanded that a representative be sent, and in the second such meeting a representative from Husiatyn's Jewish community attended, although he did not take an active role in the dispute. Following this dispute, volumes of the Talmud were burnt in Podole, and the Jewish community of Husiatyn was forced to compensate members of the sect. With the mass conversion of the Frankists, the Jewish community of Husiatyn managed to rid itself of the last remnants of Frank's followers.

As mentioned above, with the Austrian occupation and the division of the city, Husiatyn became a center of trade between Galicia and Russia, a status which did well by the Jewish merchants and community. By the second half of the 19th century, the Jews comprised about 70% of Husiatyn's Galician residents. On the Russian side of the city, however, the Jews were a relative minority. In 1861, Rabbi Mordechai Shraga Baer Fridman, the youngest son of Rabbi Israel of Ruzhin, settled in Husiatyn, and his followers even purchased the court of the destroyed castle in the city and constructed a magnificent *beit midrash.* The good relations the Rebbe of Husiatyn had with the count Adam Gołuchowski also led the Polish administration to take the rabbi's various opinions and needs into consideration. The throngs of Hassidic followers who visited the rebbe's court in Husiatyn also opened up new sources of revenue for the city's residents, such as hostelries and inns. The status of the rebbes of the city also overshadowed the official rabbinic leadership of the city.

During this time Husiatyn was significantly developed by the Polish authorities. Factories were built in the city, it was connected to an organized sewage system, electric lighting was introduced and eleven banks operated in it. In addition, the Jewish community ran a publishing and printing house, a hospital, an old-age home, a library, a synagogue and several *batei midrash.* In addition, a secondary school for general studies and a private Jewish gymnasium were founded in the city. Among the Jews of Husiatyn were great merchants, owners and leasers of agricultural estates in the lands surrounding the city, tradesmen and independent professionals such as lawyers, doctors, veterinarians, accountants and pharmacists. In addition, a variety of Zionist activities began to flourish in the city.

With the Russian occupation of Husiatyn at the beginning of the First World War the city, including the Hassidic court and its magnificent edifices, was destroyed. The rebbe escaped the city to Vienna before the occupation. The synagogue was turned into stables and a garage, and the remaining Jews were banished from the city and their property plundered in 1915.

At the end of the First World War, Husiatyn moved from hand to hand, beginning with a transfer to the Ukranian national authority, which launched a short period during which bands and regiments of Cossacks came in and out of the city and terrorized its Jewish residents. During this period the Jews left the city and moved to other cities in the region. The city then passed into Polish hands, followed by the Bolsheviks, and was recaptured by the Poles in 1920.

Between the two World Wars, during the Polish rule, a small number of Jews returned to Husiatyn and operated groceries or engaged in different crafts. The mercantile status of the city never returned to its former glory, and it was not possible to maintain ties with the Russian half of the city, across the river. The Jews no longer composed a majority of the city's inhabitants, but they were still respectably represented in the administration of the city. In addition, the arousal of Ukranian national sentiment and the anti-semitic trends which accompanied it, as well as the general sentiment which characterized the Polish rule of the time, led to tensions between the Jews and the Ukranians, which at times found expression in violent incidents. The unionization of Ukranian and Polish merchants against the Jewish ones made the earning of their livelihood much more difficult.

The Second World War

With the outbreak of the Second World War the city passed into Soviet hands and began to operate under the influence of communist rule. With the German occupation, some of the city's inhabitants attempted to retreat eastward with the Soviet forces, but very few survived the attempt. The city was captured on 06.07.1941, and immediately following its capture the local Ukranians began burglarizing and murdering the Jews of the city. By the end of July 1941 the Nazis and Ukranians had killed about 200 of Husiatyn's Jews, mostly men, and the rest of the community was subject to heavy fines and forced labor. Throughout the winter of 1942 many of Husiatyn's Jews died of hunger, cold and disease, and the remaining Jews were transported, in March 1942, to the ghettos of Kopyczyńce and Probuzna.

Sources:

אברהם בקר, קהילתיים: הוסיאטין וקופיצ'ינצה, תל אביב 1977.

אברהם יצחק אביטוב, מבית אבא: פרקי זכרונות מימי ילדות בעיירת מולדתי הוסיאטין, תל אביב 1965.

פנקס הקהילות, ב, הושיאטין עמ' 184-181.

Historical-cultural region: Eastern Galicia

Items relevant to the community

Title	Type of item	Years
"О местах водворения лиц,	CAHJP Cards	1915

Title	Type of item	Years
высылаемых из преде...		
"О неблагонадежном элементе Галиции", в т.ч. ...	CAHJP Cards	1915
1. Okólniki, sprawozdania, korespondencja i inn...	CAHJP Cards	1882
1. Okólniki, sprawozdania, wykazy, korespondenc...	CAHJP Cards	1882
1. Okólniki, sprawozdania, wykazy, korespondenc...	CAHJP Cards	1882
1. Okólniki, sprawozdania, wykazy, korespondenc...	CAHJP Cards	1882
1. Okólniki, sprawozdania, wykazy, korespondenc...	CAHJP Cards	1882
1. Protokoły, sprawozdania, korespondencja i in...	CAHJP Cards	1882
1. Protokoły, sprawozdania, korespondencja i in...	CAHJP Cards	1882
1. Rozporządzenia, sprawozdania, korespondencja...	CAHJP Cards	1888

More items

Source URL:http://www.jgaliciabukovina.net/node/110873?order=title&sort=asc