

Łańcut לנצוט

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Name in Polish: Łańcut

Name in German: Landshut

Name in Hebrew: לנצוט

Name in Yiddish: לאנצהוט

Population Data:	Year	General Population	Jewish Population
	1765	(?)	
	1865	(?)	
	1880	3483	
	1890	4486	

1900	4850	
1910	5378	
1921	4518	

Remarks:

Łańcut is located east of the Wisłok River, about 14 kilometers east of Rzeszów and 50 kilometers northwest of Przesmyśl. The city was founded in 1349 by Casimir the Great, who enlisted German and Polish settlers and granted the city Magdeburg rights. Already in 1376 the city was populated and included the seat of Prince Władysław Opolski. During the reign of Władysław II Jagiełło, the city was transferred to the noble family of Pilecki. Already in its early stages, the city developed a clear financial character, with weaving as its dominant economic field.

Read more... In 1406 the city already boasted a weaver's guild, and during the second half of the 15th century a number of conventions of German city trade cooperatives took place in the city. The Pilecki family managed to obtain a privilege allowing a week-long fair in Łańcut once a year during April (a week before Svatý Vojtěch Day), and they continued to develop the city, constructing a Catholic church and a Dominican abbey as well as a wooden castle. At the end of the 15th and beginning of the 16th century, the city was attacked several times by the Valachs and the Tatars, who attacked and were routed in 1489 and 1498, but succeeded in destroying the city in 1502. In order to enable the city's resurrection, King Sigismund I permitted the use of the city's tax money for the fortification of the city's fortress. The city was attacked again by the Tatars in 1523. A religious-political crisis struck in the city in 1549, when Krzysztof Pelecki, the city owner, turned to the Lutheran religion, chased away the Dominican friars and turned the city church into a Protestant one. Most of the inhabitants of the city joined Krzysztof Pelecki in his religious conversion, and those who didn't began holding their prayers in churches in the surrounding villages. At this time, Łańcut became a religious center for protestants throughout Poland, although following an extended legal battle in the High Court in Lublin, the Dominicans were permitted to return to the city in 1620. During the 16th century the development of the city continued, and its branches of economic activity expanded.

In 1579 there were 115 artisans in the city, and in addition to weavers (37), who occupied their own dedicated street, furriers, cobblers, coopers, butchers and tailors are mentioned. At the end of the 16th century the city was sold to the nobleman Stanisław Stadnicki, who was an adventurer and an aggressive man. In 1622 and 1624 Łańcut was attacked by the Tatars, who killed men and took women and children captive. Following Stadnicki death, his son found himself in financial straits and sold the city to the noble family of Lubomirski in 1629. Stanisław Lubomirski, who was a devout Catholic, drove the Lutherans, accompanied by the German inhabitants of Łańcut, out of the city. He began fortifying the city, erected walls and dikes, and in 1641 completed the construction of the palace-fortress in which he resided. In this fortress he placed a garrison force of 400 soldiers, and he placed 88 cannons on the walls of the city. Lubomirsky also continued the financial development of the city, enhanced the production capacity of various textile products and constructed a workshop for metal casting, which produced bells, lamps and chandeliers and a factory for rope weaving, and granted different trading privileges. During the 1656-7 war with the Swedes, Lubomirski aided the king, John Casimir, in founding a confederation to fight the foreign forces, but it was also under his influence that Jews were accused of aiding the Swedes and the Jews of Kazimierz were looted. At the same time Rákóczi, Prince of Transilvania, attempted to capture Łańcut, causing significant damage to the city, but failed to capture the fortress and lost about 800 soldiers in battle, and therefore retreated. Towards the end of the 18th century the city suffered twice – once at the hands of the Swedes and once at the hands of King August II – following political mistakes made by the owner of the city, Hieronim Lubomirsky, but passed into the hands of his brother Theodor, who led the significant growth of the city.

At the end of the 18th century, the city passed to the Potocki family through inheritance, and they built a factory for sugar production in the city in 1870. With the transition to Austrian rule in 1772, the city suffered greatly until 1848. In 1829 a fire broke out in the city, causing much damage, and it

was only in 1848 that a significant financial turning point occurred, with the opening of a railway which passed through the city. At the beginning of the 20th century modern infrastructures were developed in the city, roads were paved, electric and lighting systems were set up and an organized sewer system was put in place. In addition, a gymnasium was built in the city in 1907, and additional Polish cultural and educational structures were built at the end of the 19th century. With the outbreak of the First World War, the city was captured by Russians, who remained in power until the middle of October 1914. The city was then captured again in November and remained under Russian rule until 12.05.1915, when it was recaptured by the Austrians.

The Jews of Łańcut

There is no conclusive evidence as to when an organized Jewish community first existed in Łańcut. Jews are first mentioned in historical documents from 1563, and in municipal and church documents we find more and more Jewish names during the first half of the 17th century. In 1646 we have evidence of a real estate deal undertaken by Aharon Jakubowitz, from which we learn that Jews were permitted to buy and sell land and houses. Another family by the name of 'Fas,' who were probably Spanish Jews expelled in the Alhambra decree, descendants of Antonio Enrico Gomez da Fas, a Spanish doctor and author and returned converso, also lived in the city at this time. In 1673 we find a protest lodged by the dues collectors of the Przemyśl community, who complained that members of the communities under their jurisdiction were not paying their taxes to them, including the community of Łańcut. In 1679 we find about 8 Jewish tenants living in rooms adjacent to the city gates and in fortresses, together with 37 Catholics. We know of Jews who were captured during the Tatar attacks of 1624, and of Łańcut Jews who participated in protecting the city against Rákóczi, the abovementioned prince of Transilvania, and against the Swedes. At the same time, in 1657 the Jews of Łańcut, along with many other communities in the region, were required to pay a special tax to cover the costs of the war. In the 18th century, the Jewish community began developing, particularly under the rule of Theodor Lubomirski, who granted the Jews the right to build houses in the city and made various concessions on taxes for them. Lubomirski also obligated the Polish guild of blacksmiths and silversmiths to accept Jewish artisans, and in 1761 allowed the rebuilding of the old wooden synagogue, which had been destroyed. He even contributed trees for the rebuilding of the synagogue, and allowed the Jews to use the brick furnace in his palace. The Jewish community of Łańcut operated as an organized community during the 18th century, with seven community elders, who managed the community's registry, in which the protocols and the various decisions reached, both within the community and in its dealings with the secular authorities, were recorded, beginning in 1730. During the years 1757-1759 the Jews were required to pay a special tax. Additionally, in 1743 the bishop of Przemyśl began to implement special laws and restrictions on the Jews during Christian holidays, in order to hinder friendly relations between Jews and Christians.

With the Austrian conquest various laws, taxes and limitations were placed on the Jews of Galicia, the structure of the community changed from seven board members to three, and even the authority of the community rabbi changed. The new taxes that were placed on Galician Jews – the tax on kosher meat, the candle tax and the heavy marriage tax – were added to the limitations placed on their activities in the realm of alcohol production. In 1786 the Jewish community of Łańcut, as part of the initiative to build a Jewish agricultural town, called 'the New Bablylonia,' sent 8 families for resettlement, but the initiative failed and fell apart already in 1793. An additional obligation placed on Galician Jews was the building of a Herz Homberg school, with the goal of 'Germanizing' the Jews. The Łańcut community was also required, in 1788, to found such a school and raise the money to pay its teachers, but this idea, too, was tabled in 1792. During this period, following the various decrees against the Jews, the Jewish population of the Rzeszów region shrunk significantly. Toward the end of the century, however, new trade opportunities developed, which began to ease the financial difficulties of Łańcut's Jews. The merchants of Łańcut began trading in grains and exporting their produce via barges to the ports of Danzig (Gdańsk).

During this period, a number of personages operated in Łańcut whose influence spread to Galician Jewry in general, and in particular to the Hassidic movement, which saw significant development in the city at the beginning of the 19th century and throughout it. During this period, students of R. Menachem Mendel of Rimenov (Rymanów) – R. Naftali of Ropshitz and R. Yaakov Yitzchak Horowitz, who later moved to Lublin, where he became known as 'the Seer of Liblin' – resided in the city. R. Aryeh Leibush, a student of the Maggid R. Yisrael of Kozenitz (Kozienice), author of 'Gevurat Aryeh' and 'Chomat Ariel,' served as rabbi of the city for many years. It is said of R. Aryeh Leibush that he was also accepted by the Christian inhabitants of Łańcut, who would come to him to receive Torah judgement on legal matters, and even that he was friendly with Graf Potocki. In 1857, R. Elazar Shapira, son of R. Zvi Elimelech Shapira of Dynów, was appointed rabbi of Łańcut, followed by his

son, R. Simcha, who held the position from 1865 and until the First World War. Beginning in the second half of the 18th century, the condition of the Jews of Łańcut began to improve, among other things thanks to wool factories, for the processing of flax and for tanning that were built in the city, but also thanks to its status as a center for many Hassidic devotees, who came to Łańcut in order to visit R. Naftali of Ropshitz's grave, to see R. Yaakov Yitzchak Horowitz, 'the Seer of Lublin's' room, where he grew up in Łańcut, as well as the Hassidim of R. Simcha Shapira, R. Zvi Elimelech of Dynów's grandson, who set up a Hassidic court in the city, or regular Hassidim who passed through Łańcut on their way to the additional Hassidic center of nearby Leżajsk. The number of Jews in Łańcut reached around 45% of the general population of the city in 1870, and the needs of the community grew as a result. The old cemetery was expanded, and a new plot was dedicated for this purpose. The community operated various societies to fulfill communal needs, such as 'the Society for the Support of the Poor', 'the Society of Pallbearers', 'the Society of Just Sleep' and 'the Society for Visiting the Sick', as well as a building that was dedicated to housing poor passersby. The community even built a modern bathhouse. Enlightenment Jews also began operating in the city, and private libraries, which later became partially public, were established, and in 1894 a branch of 'Agudath Zion' was established in the city, through the efforts of R. Leibush Mendel Landau, the rabbi of Botoșani, Dr. Avraham Saltz and others. The city also hosted some assimilated Jews, 'Poles of the Faith of Moses'.

At the end of the 19th century, antisemitic activity began, and it grew stronger at the beginning of the 20th century. In 1905 an old Jewish man was accused of killing a Pole in a village adjacent to Łańcut, and he was sentenced to death. The Jew appealed the verdict in the regional court in Rzeszów and was partially cleared of the charge, and his sentence was lightened to four years of prison time; however, he died in jail. During the First World War the Jews suffered similarly to other Poles, and many of them retreated with the Austrian forces out of fear of the Russians. Between the two world wars, the condition of the Jewish community of Łańcut was bad, following the complex political and economical situation of Poland during that time. With the collapse of the Austrian rule, a national Jewish committee was formed in Łańcut in order to represent the Jews before the new authorities. In addition, a Jewish militia was formed by former Jewish soldiers of the Austrian forces, whose purpose was to protect the Jews from rioters – the occasional rabble who might choose to attack the Jews as well as the soldiers of the reemerging Polish army. Leading up to the elections for the city council of 1919, the different Jewish parties in Łańcut formed a coalition and won 18 of the 40 seats on the city council. A similar number of votes was garnered in this manner during the 1928 elections as well.

During the elections of 1933 the various parties had separated again, and therefore garnered only 4 of the 16 seats on the council. In 1921 there were 71 Jewish-owned factories in Łańcut, primarily in the fields of clothing and food, but the city's standing as a trade city took a hit as a result of changes in markets, the deteriorated state of the local market and the harsh battle against the Polish cooperatives, who fought the Jewish merchants for control of the market. Many of the Jewish inhabitants of Łańcut depended on financial support from family members in other countries, and on government aid. The Joint Distribution Committee operated in Łańcut as well, providing aid in rebuilding the destroyed homes and factories. The community also organized various charity funds and, with the support of the Joint Distribution Committee, a 'popular bank' and a 'cooperative for credit lending' were also established. The Jewish merchants' union and the 'Yad Haruzim' artisans' union also established their own charity funds. During this period the Zionist activity continued in the city. A group of Zionist women was established, as well as a 'Hashahar' union, with cultural activities – a choir and a drama club – taking place nearby, and even a group of pioneers was formed, who moved together to Palestine in 1925. In addition, a secondary school for Hebrew was established, a public library was founded, and a 'community center' was built. At the same time a chapter of 'Agudath Israel' operated in the city, alongside which could be found youth movements, a 'Beit Yaakov' girls' school and a 'Beit Yaakov' kindergarten. During the 1930s antisemitism was on the rise in Łańcut as well, and included a boycott on Jewish businesses, with 'boycott sentinel' stations at the entrances to Jewish shops, and even violent attacks on Jewish businesses.

Second World War

Łańcut was captured on 09.09.1939, about a week and a half after the outbreak of the Second World War, and Nazi German soldiers immediately began kidnapping Jews and using them for various forced labor projects, all the while humiliating and degrading them. Jewish businesses were marked, and the Germans used to take merchandise from them without payment. The synagogue was set on

fire, but the Jews managed to control and put out the fire, and even, later on, to renovate the section that had been damaged in the fire. On 22.09.1939, the Jews were commanded to leave the city that same day, moving eastward, and the following morning the German police searched the city to find any Jews who had ignored this command. Only 300 Jews, of the former Jewish population of 2,700, were permitted to remain in the city, for various reasons. At the beginning of November 1939, some of the Jews who had been banished from the city, who had not gone over to the Soviet side of Poland, returned to the area and hid out in the villages between Łańcut and Jarosław. A Judenrat was instituted in the city and charged with supplying the manpower for forced labor projects. The Judenrat also organized a public kitchen, which operated until the spring of 1942, a bakery and an infirmary. At the beginning of 1942, Jews were forbidden to leave their place of residence, on pain of death. Executions, on various pretexts, became more and more common. The Jews of Łańcut were taken out of the city on 03.08.1942 on the pretext of 'settling in the East,' but were in fact banished to Pelkinia Camp, about 14 kilometers from the city, where the old and infirm were separated and killed on the spot, and the remainder of the Jews were sent to the Belzec extermination camp. Only about 50 Jewish youngsters returned to Łańcut, where they were employed by German companies. On 17.09.1942, all of the remaining Jews of Łańcut were sent to the Sieniawa ghetto, where they were killed in May 1943 together with the other Jews in the ghetto. Some Jews managed to hide in Łańcut itself and in the villages and forests surrounding it, either in the forests or with Poles who hid them, but most of them were eventually caught and killed as a result of Poles who informed against them. 900 survivors remained of the formerly thriving Jewish community, primarily from those Jews who had been transferred to the heart of the Soviet Union. Those Jews who returned to Łańcut were met with hostility from the locals, and one survivor was even killed by Poles. The remaining survivors settled in Wrocław in Western Poland, and from there moved to other countries and to Israel. (Roe Goldschmidt)

Sources:

.1963. מיכאל וולצר ונתן קודיש (עורכים) , לאנצוט: חיה וחורבנה של הקהילה היהודית, תל אביב
.226-231 פנקסי הקהילות, ג, לאנצוט, עמ'

See detailed information about the community of Lancut on the site [Massa le-Galicia](#) (in Hebrew)

Historical-cultural region: Western Galicia

Items relevant to the community

Title	Type of item	Years
Akta dot. organizacji zatwierdzenia statutow gm...	CAHJP Cards	1846
Korespondencja w sprawach nieprawnego poboru za...	CAHJP Cards	1900 to 1901
Korespondencja w sprawach zażaleń i protestów c...	CAHJP Cards	1905
Korespondencja w sprawie wykazów i sprawozdań...	CAHJP Cards	1905
Korespondencja w sprawie zażaleń i protestów pr...	CAHJP Cards	1900
Korespondencja w sprawie zażaleń i protestów pr...	CAHJP Cards	1895 to 1900
Korespondencja w sprawie zażaleń i protestów pr...	CAHJP Cards	1899 to 1900

Title	Type of item	Years
Korespondencja w sprawie zażaleń na zawyszony p...	CAHJP Cards	1900
Korespondencja ze starostwami w sprawach gmin w...	CAHJP Cards	1898
Korespondencja ze starostwami w sprawach gmin w...	CAHJP Cards	1897

[More items](#)

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