



Drohobycz



Muzeum i Miejsce Pamięci
w Bełżcu

HISTORY



DROHOBYCZ. Widok ogólny.

View of the town

Source: Biblioteka Narodowa

The first mention of the town dates back to the 11th century and the era of Kievan Rus. The city experienced the first period of dynamic development when King Kazimierz Wielki joined the Kievan Rus to the Kingdom of Poland.

First accounts of Jews in Drohobycz date back to 1404. Only Jews who leased salt mines were allowed to settle in the town. The others members of Jewish community resided in the suburbs. Drohobycz was one of the most important trade centre of the entire region.



View of the town

Source: https://dzieje.pl/sites/default/files/201704/widok_drohobycza2.jpg

In 1772, after the First Partition of Poland, Ruthenian Province fell under the rule of Austrian Habsburgs as part of Galicia and Lodomeria. It was the third largest town in Galicia, after Lwów and Kraków. In 1869, 4,000 Poles, 5,000 Ukrainians, and 8,000 Jews resided in Drohobycz. Since 1874 – and until WWII – the deputy mayor of Drohobycz was always Jewish man. Drohobycz became part of independent Poland in 1919. There were approximately 12,000 Jews residing in Drohobycz in the interwar period (44% of the total population).

BRUNO SCHULZ



Bruno Schulz, Self-portrait
Source: Wikimedia Commons

In Drohobycz was born and lived Bruno Schulz (1892-1942). He was a Polish Jewish writer, fine artist, literary critic and art teacher. He is regarded as one of the great Polish-language prose stylists of the 20th century. On November 19, 1942, Bruno Schulz was shot to death by a German SS officer.

SECOND WORLD WAR

Drohobycz from September 1939 to June 1941, was on territory occupied by USRR. In the summer of 1941, the Germans entered the city. Since then it has been administratively located in the District Galicia – the fifth district of General Government.



July, 1941 - Germans inspired pogroms; over 400 Jews were murdered

November, 1941 - approximately 300 Jews were shot in Bronicki Forest

25 March, 1942 - first deportation to the Nazi German extermination camp in Bełżec; approximately 1000-2000 Jews were taken to camp

6-8 August, 1942 – deportation to the Nazi German extermination camp in Bełżec; approximately 25 000 Jews were taken to camp

23/24 October, 1942 – deportation to the Nazi German extermination camp in Bełżec; over 2000 people were taken to camp

November, 1942 - a few hundred Jews were deported to Bełżec, the other to Janowska concentration camp in Lwów

1943-1944

February, 1943 – about 800 Jews
were shot in Bronicki Forest

June, 1943 - ghetto was
liquidated.

Till April 1944 only small Jewish
group worked in Drohobycz

Mates Heilig testified:

"After this Aktion we came to realize what was happening. After the previous pogrom, in which some 800 people, including my mother, were taken from their homes, we still deluded ourselves that they were taken to a labor camp somewhere. It was hard to imagine the murder of innocent people for no reason, just because they were Jews. We wanted to believe they were alive ... After the Aktion in August, we had no more illusions. It was hard to imagine that small children and the elderly were taken away for work. News about the existence of death camps started to reach us. The victims of August were transported to Belzec".

Source: <https://www.drohobycz-boryslaw.org/en/drohobycz-boryslaw-and-vicinity/holocaust-and-survival-2>



First deportation to Belzec death camp on March 1942

Source: Ullstein Bld



Abraham Hauptman testified: "The ghettos were emptying. Only 'essential' employees with the surviving members of their families were moved to a labor camp in the city that was now under heavy guard. Along with preparations for the liquidation of the ghetto by the SS, the Beskidian Oil Company started to select workers needed for the German war effort.[...] Selected Jews received a protective document called "R ... (Ruestungsindustrie - armaments industry). The "R" symbol together with an ID bearing the same number, promised those who managed to get them a chance for survival in the near future. The selection was carried out by Herr Keller. ... the kind of people able to receive the coveted letter "R"... were wealthy people with much money".

Source: <https://www.drohobycz-boryslaw.org/en/drohobycz-boryslaw-and-vicinity/holocaust-and-survival-2>



Ways of surviving:
Mordechaj Marakel
testified:

"Dozens of Jews were in the forests. The bunkers were dug by different groups. Individuals from the bunkers would go to the villages to buy food. Overall, it was very difficult and dangerous. Occasionally they were caught by the Germans or the local Gentiles (people) would catch them and give them up. The Germans would torture a captured Jew to force him to disclose the group's hiding place and sometimes, after severe torture, the person had to lead the Germans to the bunker".

Source: <https://www.drohobycz-boryslaw.org/en/drohobycz-boryslaw-and-vicinity/holocaust-and-survival-2>

Bernard Mayer who survived in bunkier (showing below) testified: "We knew each other from the labour camp. [...] The bunker was only ten feet wide, and the stove, shelves, and beds took up most of the floor space. The pathway to the toilet was only a foot and a half wide. [...] The bunker was intensely hot.[...] On the wooden platform where we sat and slept, every four feet a pole supporting the ceiling separated each family or group. [...] Everyone received exactly the same amount of food not a drop more a less, so there shouldn't be fighting. [...] Because of our great anxiety about our fate, all of us were getting restless and irritable.[...] The radio played an important par in our survival. It Kept our hope alive until liberation. The Germans knew that was a bunker somewher in the Ghetto, but they didn't know where. When they liquidated the Ghteto, they tried hard to find the bunker, but during the weeks before we had worked hard on an escape exite to the sewers".

House under which was built bunkier. In this place survived 45 people. House still exists in Drohobycz



Source: Entombed: My True Story: How 45 Jews Lived Underground and Survived the Holocaust, 1996



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