

There was a city

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Pages of the history of the Jewish community Friedrichstadt – Jaunjelgava

Introduction

A historical heritage of any nation is invaluable. One of the purposes of every new generation is to hand over the heritage of the fathers to their sons. Repeating this process for centuries creates the pillars of the unity of any nation.

Destruction of the Jewish nation during the Second World War has put an immeasurable obstacle for further inheritance of the culture. Millions of victims were left in the roadsides of smaller and bigger cities; they were burned in the ovens of crematories. Meanwhile survivors fled and again were spread around the world.

Jewish communities in the smaller cities have often become an unfamiliar fact in the history. Today only few are living nearby graves of their grandparents and great-grandparent were buried, not mentioning even earlier generations.

Reminiscence of those people and their lives has many reasons to be kept in mind. For some of us, who still live in this country, it is one of the ways to find their roots heading back in the centuries. For others, who are now far away, an existence of the actual family and historical roots in Eastern Europe still is one of the most important parts self-definition. For an interested reader not connected to the Jewish culture, knowledge about Jewish communities, who have lived in Latvia for centuries, can become a newly discovered in their knowledge of their country.

My ancestors moved into the city now called Jaunjelgava in the first third of the 19th century. Therefore the history of this city's community was especially appealing to me. For several years I was researching and collecting materials related to Jewish culture in Jaunjelgava and tried to conserve the monuments that up until now have given us memories of that Jewish city.

I am grateful to all the people and organizations, which for several years have helped me in my conservation work of the Jewish cemetery in Jaunjelgava, as well as preparation of this book. My great thanks go to religious community "Shamir" and rabbi Menahem Barkagan, the city council of Jaunjelgava, "Antonia", Maija Udre, Janis Avotnieks, Ilga Bruniniece, Ilmar Kiblis, Sergey Lipanov, Grigoriy Grigoryev, Rita Bogdanova, Elena Polovceva, Batiya Valdman.

Author

The history of the Jewish community

Already in the early years people preferred to place their houses in close proximity to rivers. Water gave an additional safety and was important trade route with neighbors and foreign countries. It is no wonder that in the vicinity of nowadays Jaunjelgava castle of the ancient Baltic nation Seli was located. It has been mentioned in the historical evidences since 13th century (*castrum Selonum*, 1208). Castle was destroyed by the crusader, who built their own castle on the spot in 14th century.

In a while even the old hamlet was renovated. Records on the existence of palace estate in this area date back to 1450. After the Livonian war (1558-1583) lands on the left bank of the river Daugava became a part of the newly created Duchy of Courland and Semigallia. The first palace estate of the Duke was only 30 km up the river – in the old castle of Selpils. In 1567 the Duke Gotthard Kettler founded a hamlet in the spot of nowadays Jaunjelgava, which was named Neishtadt (the New Town). In the 1596 it had population of 60 families.

Although this was another hamlet short to live – soon after 1600 it was destroyed during Swedish-Polish war. In 1646 the widow of the Duke Friedrich, Elizabeth Magdalena ordered her people to renovate the hamlet again. In the January of the next year she gave it the city status and named it Friedrichstadt in the memory of her husband. By her order city was given an area of 2830 acres (around 40 km²). It was the biggest city of that time in Courland. Later on the 14th July 1647, Polish king Vladislav IV (dukedom was under his allegiance) approved the decision of Elizabeth Magdalena by his own order naming the Friedrichstadt and its privileges.

Several examples show that the dukes of Courland always considered development of their town as one of their main priorities. Thus the nephew of the duke Friedrich, the duke Jacob, was a supporter of the idea to renovate the city. Thus already in 1652 a massive stone church was built and stayed there until 1950s. The Friedrichstadt was one of the first cities of Courland to modernize juridical and financial relations – already in 1744 town introduced the land and mortgage reference book system.

By the end of 1750s over-execution of the power by heads of the city was a reason for local uprising. The duke started investigation, found deputies guilty and fired from their posts. To reimburse the troubles locals had faced, they were given a range of privileges. They had a special price for fire-wood that was prepared in the woods owned by duke. Moreover, the deputies of the city council were required to help all newcomers, who proved their loyalty to the city. Each local resident could get 200 free logs for building works from the duke's own woods. This quantity was enough to support the new family – build a one-storey middle-sized house and all needed house keeping buildings. These privileges were held for almost one hundred years until 1858 and played a major role in the development of the city and attraction of the new citizens. Probably even now it is possible to find buildings, which are built from the duke's woods.

The name given to the town by Elizabeth Magdalena did not become widely used immediately. In the 17th and 18th century in the maps of the region city was still named as Neishtadt, while Friedrichstadt only appears in 1772 – 125 years after official change of the name. Moreover, in line with two official names in different times other synonyms were used. Latvians often called town Serene, while Russian old-style-believers called it Orehovka. Other names like Jelgavina (little Jelgava), Nairi (short of Nairige – New Riga) were made similar big city names and in a way showed the ambitions of locals.

The role of the Friedrichstadt as an important centre in the east of the duke's lands is also despicable in the administrative boundaries of the Courland, which existed until 1926. The city was a centre of the vicinity, whose population in the beginning of the 20th century was around 65 000 inhabitants, which is much more than same area has nowadays.

Since the times of the duke Friedrich, Daugava was an important factor in the development of the Friedrichstadt. The river route from the depth of the Baltics towards the Baltic Sea was especially favored for trade between Russia and Europe through the port of Riga.

Most commonly goods were transported on boats and rafts. These trade routes were crucial throughout many centuries and many cities on the rivers have developed exactly as a result of advances in navigation.

However in the case of Friedrichstadt there was an additional natural obstacle, which worked in favor of locals. River Daugava was not sailable in its entire length – on the way from Jacobshtadt (now Jekabpils) and Friedrichstadt there many stone thresholds. Boats could sail down the river only during spring and high water and even then it required masterful skills, while sailing up the river was absolutely impossible. Therefore goods were moved on the tracks in Jacobshtadt and delivered to Friedrichstadt by land, turning it into a major transit point. There parts of goods were moved back to boats and sailed down to Riga, while others were delivered to Lithuania, Courland and Livland. It is known that in the first half of the 19th century there were around 8000 tracks transporting goods Jacobshtadt to Friedrichstadt. This situation was very favorable to local residents. Some became involved in transportation, others operated storages and became mid-traders, and others served merchants, sailors and other people traveling through. Craftsmen also could sell their goods not only to locals, but foreigners. Some figures say that in 1820 town had 24 traveler inns.

There are two versions on origins of Jewish communities in the Courland. One, supported by several biographies of rabbis and other notable figures, describes Jewish culture coming mostly from Prussia and Northern Germany, the second argues some of the Jewish families immigrated from Poland and Lithuania.

As Courland, where Friedrichstadt was located, in the 17th and 18th centuries was part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, it had quite delicate rules on settlements and jobs Jews could take on. The most favorable periods for Jews were during the ruling time of the duke Ernst Johann Birons (1737—1741, 1763—1769). At that time Jews of Courland were enjoying quite a few privileges and rights. Although generally it improved their status, implementation of those rights and privileges were quite complicated and not consistent. In the 18th century Courland became politically dependent from Russia and at times orders to limit rights of Jews or even deport them, were issued by Saint-Petersburg.

During times of Ekaterina II some of Courland Jews were given passports for travel to Livland, Riga and Saint-Petersburg.

When lands of the duke officially came under the rule of the Russian Empire (1795), Courland was not incorporated in the borders of the Jewish inhibited lands, that is why Jewish community life here was regulated with special orders. As a result situation was slightly better than in other parts of the Empire.

It is still unclear when Jewish community in Friedrichstadt was founded. The well known scientist and writer German Rozental from Friedrichstadt argued that community was found already in the end of the 17th century, mainly as a result of immigration from Lithuania and Belorussia. On contrary other sources mention the appearance of Jews only after 1790.

At the same time existence of Jewish merchants in Latvia in 18th century was confirmed by historical order of the Emperor Elizabeth in the 1742. It was ordering all Jews to leave the territory of Russia. The execution of this order could heavily influence the trade in Riga, and Riga city hall members were afraid Jewish tradesmen will alternatively choose Vindava (Ventspils), Libava (Liepaja) and Keninsburg. A special request was sent to the Emperor to cancel the order and while a response was considered by the Senate the deputy chairman of the Livland allowed Jewish merchants to settle in Friedrichstadt.

By the beginning of the 19th century the city was an important trading centre, where several Jewish companies were working as mid-traders for Russian goods exported to England, Germany and USA. The main export goods were fur, leather, wood, linen and grain. Income of the local merchant were founders of local production companies, and as a result beginning of the 19th century saw tobacco, soap, needles and chocolate produced in the city.

An economical downfall started after the opening of the railway Riga – Dvinsk in 1862. River trade lost its importance and economic situation in the city worsened. This, as well as the

wider possibilities for Jews to live and get education in Riga, was reason for many to leave the city. However statistics show that until 1881 population of Friedrichstadt was growing and so did numbers of Jews. Only later, when the mass immigration of Jews from Russia started, population of the town and Jews subsequently decreased.

In the 1858 Jewish school was opened in the city.

Year	Population	Number and proportion of Jews
1850	1513	...
1881	5820	4128 (71 %)
1897	5175	3256 (63 %)
1935	2153	530 (25 %)
1959	3344	Меhee 5 (0,1 %)

In the description dated by 1892 it is mentioned that Friedrichstadt lost a lot in its development and population became extremely poor. Trade and craftsmanship has sharply decreased, earlier successful trade of linen and grain utterly lost its importance. The census data of the 1881 says that city had 498 building, 10 of those owned by the city itself and creating only loses to the local budget.

Life of the local residence was highly influenced not only by economic situation, but also by consequent natural disasters. Several times floods Daugava destroyed most of the buildings in the town. Most destructive floods were in 1740, 1743, 1837, 1941—1957. In 1771 after the breaking ice most of the city was flooded and destroyed, while in 1778 approximately 100 houses were demolished.

In 1710 city was overtaken by the black plague epidemic, and after in 1848 had cholera.

The town was built with wooden houses closely next to each other. Roofs were covered by straw, therefore when fires occurred, they immediately took over big parts of the town.

The location of the Friedrichstadt on the border with water grew its importance as a military and strategic object. During the Livonian war Russian army decided to locate nearby, after the North war (1700-1721) Daugava became a border between Poland and Courland and Livland, which was incorporated in Russia. In 1812 nearby this area battle with Napoleon army took place and huge fire destroyed all apart 45 houses in town.

The situation in the city in 1890s can be best described by the figures of address book for 1892/1893.

In this period there were 498 properties that were taxed and brought 2000 rubles into the town budget annually. It is also noted that in the previous decades Friedrichstadt had great loses. Multiple fires and other disasters greatly disrupted grain and linen trade. Only the wealthiest merchants could save their business in this period. As a result the tax income decreased from 3500 rubles in mid-80s till 2000 in 1891.

A decrease of population is also noted comparing to 1881, especially due to Jew emigration.

The town was ruled by the town hall and forum, which was made up from speakers (members) of Duma. German community, who made up 15% of population, had approximately 50% seats. Jewish speakers were second major group – in 1891 Friedrichstadt town hall had 28 speakers, 11 of which were Jewish, while in the forum out of 6 staff members 2 were Jews. The deputy chairman and staff mostly were from the same communities. Therefore proportion of each community's representation was stabile even if any of members were out of lists or did not take part in meetings.

The structure of comities and parts of the Duma were depicting various parts of the life of the town: some comities worked on taxation, some building, trade, farming, supply, revision and even sanitation issues. Town had a judge, orphanage court, procurator, prison, lawyers, as well as telegraphing post.

Moreover Friedrichstadt had vicinities secondary school of Emperor Alexander II, elementary school, state Jewish school of the first level and girls' school.

The head town rabbi in the 1891 was Levin Kan; it had working Great Synagogue, 'old warm' prayers house, synagogue for strong believers and synagogue of Heiman. Also there were two cemeteries – unified and for cholera victims.

There was fire safety commune set up from 3 columns, one of which was headed by Aron Kan.

Friedrichstadt had around 10 different bank and insurance company branches, three doctors, hospital, around 7 various specialist medics – nurses, pharmacologists and birth givers.

27 owners, 21 of those were Jews, owned 60 trading companies. From 94 small scale trading companies 48 were owned by Jews.

There were 23 production and crafting companies, producing mineral water, tobacco, also two windmills. Half of those were owned by Jewish locals. In addition there were 12 working bakeries and confectionaries, six butchers, typography, many little craft shops, eg. jewelers, four watch shops, photo studio and even musical instrument studio.

The four out-of-town court, 23 inns and pubs – hardly any owned by Jews.

Changes that took place in Friedrichstadt by the start of the First World War, can be tracked by books of the 1912.

Level of technical equipment of the town has certainly grown. Electrical plant was built powered by the fuel engine. Town hall, school and pharmacy, many trade companies and hotel were all having benefits of electricity. Street lighting was changed to electrical in 1911. Telegraphing post was expanded into telephone one, which had 32 clients. Apart from local clientele it was connected to Remersghof (Skriveri) and Alsvig health centre (Alsviki). In 1909 telephone line with Riga was set up. The special telephone lines were connecting post, police of the Friedrichstadt with Mitava and Bausk.

The address book also contains information about places for relaxation that shows improvements in the lives of locals and interests of the government in the attraction of visitors. For example in the hotel Ashaka was a theater and concert hall, the park in the centre of town founded around 1865. There were walks along the bank of Daugava and hills outside the city. Recommended trips were Gaupstmanberg and also a beautiful wood on the deserted island down the river. Other significant places were woods of the old Serene two kilometers west from the town and hills on the opposite bank of Daugava, and unusual church built in 1652.

The town hall consisted of 19 members still with majority by Germans, but having more Latvians; with only one Jew – Urias Shatz. In the different comities of the Duma names like Aron Katz, Heiman, Gitelson and Aron Kan were noticed.

In the 1908 Jewish charity organization was founded. It was headed by the council of 11 members lead by Robert Vilkov. The head of the community "Talmud-Tora" founded in 1909 was Urias Shatz.

Synagogues opened in 1892 were still working, rabbi was Jankel Abraham Flexer, cutters were Israel Gozioski, Iosel Fridman and Shaja Glezer.

The list of education authorities was impressive. The most important still was school named by the emperor Alexander II, then followed by state elementary schools for boys and girls, church school, mixed German elementary school, mixed school of trade, college of the commerce, Talmud-Torah and five malamutes.

Social benefits were realized by two insurance and hospital points, hospital with 36 beds and shelter for poor.

Town still had several branches of insurance companies and banks as well as branch of the Courland city building society.

The list of streets and homeowner of Friedrichstadt has 419 properties, which is close to the number 20 years ago. 251 of these belong to Jews.

In the part "Professions, skills and crafts of the Friedrichstadt local" 284 people are mentioned, approximately half of those are Jews. The town had two doctors, 10 bakeries, 20

bars, two hotels, nine changing yards, eight butchers, four photographers, two lemonade factories, mist mill and windmill, three sewing machine shops, two restaurants, four pubs and tea house, eight watch makers and jewelers, armor store and wood producers.

In 1912 town had a new school opened. It had an impressive building by famous architect Eizhen Laube, imitating the pompous modern style buildings in Riga, which is still dominant in the architecture of Jaunjelgava.

This means that by the beginning of the First World War Friedrichstadt got over the economic downfall of the end of 19th century and local Jewish community had a relatively successful life. There are no signs of the disappearance of the Jewish religious and social life; however the representation of the Jews in governmental bodies sharply decreased.

Of course, this address book data represents life of Jewish community in Friedrichstadt only from a certain angle. During the last third of the 19th century industrialization and development of transport greatly destabilized economic basis of the Jewish communities in small towns, who mostly consisted of crafting and trading. Although number of Jewish population at this time increased in general. This processes also catalyzed social differentiation, disagreements amongst the wealthy groups, as well as conflicts amongst the locals and newcomers. All of these issues are represented in the complained of Elias Abraham Kagan that was given to head of the Courland in 1890.

Political instability of the beginning of the 20th century did not leave the Friedrichstadt out. Already in 1902 the daily paper printed in Vena said "Friedrichstadt (Courland). Here was just found a sionic unity headed by Regensburg. Thanks to its influences well known sionist Shatz has opened sionist library with free reading hall by the order from duke of Courland. Its council consisted of more than 100 people. Library has the most lively atmosphere by the attention of the readers." Yours truly, Shatz, the earlier mentioned one, the son of Urias Nohum.

A few local Jews even took part in the events of the 1905 revolution. It was said that in the December of that year Friedrichstadt was taken over by повстанцами. Some of the participants of the revolution had to immigrate in a timely manner.

The First World War immeasurable disrupted the town life. In the 1915 all Jews of the Courland and Lithuanian lands, had to leave their towns and move deepened into Russian in-lands. One of the refugee destinations was Riga. Press of that time was telling that Jewish places on the streets of the city at times for a short term camps, reaching numbers as high as 30 000. Later most of them were transported into Russian in-land. Only few came back to their towns after the military or revolutionary actions there. After the Civil war the size of the Jewish community in Friedrichstadt decreased several times.

Apart for loses due to migration, important role was a financial reasons. Friedrichstadt was an important place strategically, because only there on the whole length from Riga till Jacobshtadt on the Daugava was a good geographical condition for crossing the city.

German army occupied Friedrichstadt already in the summer of 1915. From that moment until the fall of 1917 city was a platform for many attempts to cross river Daugava. Both sides used the military aircrafts in this area, which was the new advancement in technology. Amongst other places, fortifications were built just on the hilltop f the Christian and Jewish cemetery.

On the 5th December 1918 German army left the town and soon it was headed by the Bolshevik government of Latvia, who stayed there up until May 1919.

16—19 October 1919 saw the military action to return in the vicinity of the town. This time it was the national forces of Latvia defeating the army of the P. Bermont-Avalov. According to the memories of ones, who took part, battles were taking place in the area of the cemetery.

As a result of the military action the town was almost completely deserted, around 1000 houses were destroyed. On the photos of the market place in 1917 one could see untouched fresh snow, uncut grass and broken rooftops. People had deserted it.

After foundation of the independent Latvian country, city was given name of Jaunjelgava. In the beginning of the 1920s population stated to move back in the city slowly

reaching 2000 people. However only few hundreds of Jews (which is only one fifth of pre-war numbers) returned there. In the complicated post war situation population started to rebuild their lives. Nevertheless economical and administrative importance of the town was lost not to return.

During the time of German occupation in 1916 the monorail was built to support military that connected Jacobshtadt (Jekabpils) with Lithuania. Built as a temporary construction it soon was damaged by the war action, however in 1926 major reconstruction works took place and since then it became an important transport connection in the region. Therefore the role of Jaunjelgava as a transit centre decreased even more. In the same year the administrative centre of vicinity was moved from Jaunjelgava to Jekabpils.

Industries of the town were in the sharp decrease as well. According to the Census of 1935, town had only few small businesses – windmill, meat preparation factory, sewing studio, wood cutters and carpenters. Simultaneously there were 100 sales businesses (52 of those belonged to Jews), seven tea houses and six barbers. There was no active transit of good and people through the city therefore it was logical to suppose that most of the companies were not in the best situation or even existed only on papers.

Only two schools were working at this time – elementary school and college of commerce. In 1926—1927 with support from the Jews immigrated to USA new Talmud-torah school was built, probably in the place of one destroyed during the war.

Three Jewish communities were still active; same was Jewish library and saving society. Out of the four town doctors, two were Jewish.

The town hall had 16 members and was working until 1934, with such members as Aron Kan, Ruben Perelman, Mairim Tabaksman, P. Spelman, Iasaac Gulak, Haim Shloma Vesterman. In 1934 after the change of power and reorganization of the local governments, the head of town was a committee of three members, all of them Latvians. First time after 100 years there was no representation of the ethnic communities in the governing bodies of the town.

In the summer of 1940 the independence of the republic of Latvia was destroyed and country again was occupied by military. Some of the Soviet army parts were located exactly in Jaunjelgava. The new regime included nationalization of all property, reorganization of the education system in a Soviet way. As a part of it was liquidation of the schools for ethnic minorities. It was known that the new year of 1941 students of Latvian and Jewish schools were celebrating in the unified event.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF JAUNJELGAVA DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR. HOLOCAUST

On the 14th June of 1941 Soviet forces deported several thousands of families from Latvia. Mostly those were representatives of the wealthy and educated social class, however often people were deported only based on neighbors, street cleaners, co-workers provided information formed by jealousy or complexity of own social situation.

12 families were deported from Jaunjelgava, four of those were Jewish families of Kratish. They were called guilty for owning a store, several properties, as well as had a laborer – housekeeping lady. The heads of the four families were put in the labor camps, where two of them died. Other family members were deported to Krasnojarsk area.

After a week after deportation the Nazi Germany went in attack on USSR. The front line was rapidly coming closer to Jaunjelgava. Logically Jewish community understood that German occupation would not favor them. Their memories still were fresh on the damage of many clashes in various countries throughout times. However only few could guess that enemy had a different aim this time - not only to loosen their anger, rob Jews and make them leave the area, but this time – to completely destroy the whole Jewish nation.

Detailed analysis of the elimination of the Jewish community of Jaunjelgava is given in the article by Uldis Lasmanis “*Nairi pilsētas ebreju kopienas gals (holokausts Jaunjelgavā)*” (“The end of the Jewish community of the Nairi town (Holocaust in Jaunjelgava)”), published in the 12th book of the Latvian historians commission report. The further description of the tragedy will be mainly based on this truthful and detailed publication.

However, before going into detail, the data collected by Hay Gordon in the first after war years has to be mentioned. It is a list of the families, who were victims of the Holocaust in Jaunjelgava, the list of Jews of Jaunjelgava, who died in the battle with Nazi army on the front line of the Second World War, and brief information on the situation in Jaunjelgava in 1941 and after the war. It is possible that this information collected by Hay Gordon is not precisely documented from the archive methodical point of view; however their value lies in other hands. It is the only known attempt to describe the tragedy from the point of view of one of the few survived members of the community. This woman most probably was a daughter of Mairim Tabaksman, the active member of the Jaunjelgava in the 30s, who published something similar to the magazine on the Jewish everyday life in town. The Hay Gordon materials were most probably put together in 50-60s based on the evidence of the locals and Jews coming from Jaunjelgava. Nowadays they are kept in the archives of kibuca Shfaim in Israel. One of the full abstracts is given here:

«The destiny of 600 Jews killed by Nazis in Jaunjelgava on the 7th August 1941.

The locals of the Jaunjelgava (Latvians) told us a following story.

When the Hitler's army was coming closer to Jaunjelgava in 1941, all Jews were trying to vacate the city. Some were going on foot; some on horses were crossing the river Daugava and moved passing Skriveri towards the old boundary of Latvia and USSR. However the local Nazi groups moved them back to Jaunjelgava before even army arrived.

When Germans arrived, all of the Jews were cluttered in Synagogue, hit and starved, creating a ghetto there afterwards.

On the 7th August 1941 they chose the strongest young Jews, took them to the Screen woods (8km from the city) to dig a whole. When the huge whole was done, all Jews were moved there. There they were shot and buried, even though some of the buried were still alive. As a local land workers were telling even on the next day soil above the hole was slightly moving.

In the 1949—1950 we, the locals of Jaunjelgava, who survived and escaped from Latvia, gathered and decided to move the remains of those, who died to the Jewish cemetery in Jaunjelgava. With support of locals and donated money, we hired workers, opened the grave,

moved the remains of killed in the big boxes and buried them in the brotherly grave in the Jewish cemetery. Most of the shot were dressed; some were recognizable by the cloth and hair.

We place a memorial and every year on the day of tragedy we came together with our families to the ceremony to mention namely every citizen of Jaunjelgava who died, and separately all soldiers of Jaunjelgava, who died on the front line of as a part of Soviet army in the battles against Nazis.»

The research of U.Lasmanis that was published more than 60 years after this Disaster could have been based on the memories of people who saw only to a small extent. He based his research mainly on the thoroughfull analysis of the 30 criminal cases that took place in 40-50s, where locals were accused in helping Nazis. The complete researched material was 12 000 pages long. Of course both accused ones and witnesses were trying to decrease their personal input in elimination of the local Jews, therefore details of several witnesses differ and sometimes even oppose to each other. Nevertheless, putting many of the evidences together has given the best possible depiction of the tragedy.

The Nazi army took over vicinity of Jaunjelgava in the last days of June 1941. Soon all Jews were ordered to register in the local police station. 430 people were gathered including children. Two synagogues were cleared out and Jews were moved there. All men were cluttered in one, women – another. They were secured all the time. Probably this ‘ghetto’ was created in so called Great Synagogue and Great Prayers house, which were in the close proximity of each other. Other synagogues and prayer houses in Jaunjelgava were more scattered and were too small to house 500 arrested.

Men were daily moved to the fortification works on the banks of Daugava, women were occasionally exploited as cleaning ladies. This was a short time action, after which the plan of full elimination of Jewish population of the town came into action.

Meanwhile, other city’s synagogues were destroyed. The history of the shown photo is very interesting. Firstly it was published in Internet on the web pages dedicated to Jewish community of the Friedrichstadt (Shlezwig-Holstein, Germany), with a note that possibly this synagogue was located not in their city, but in the Friedrichstadt of Courland.

On the lower photos you can see the general view and windows of the Old Prayer house in Jaunjelgava. The obvious similarity of the window shape can suggest that synagogue on the top photo indeed is located in Jaunjelgava not Germany. In additional consultation with dr. Ioachim Han, it came to our knowledge that there were not synagogues in German Friedrichstadt that had similar architectural form. Therefore there are enough evidences to consider that building on the top photo in the Old Prayers house in Jaunjelgava and it is the only left photo that tells about the tragedy of the Jewish community of Jaunjelgava.

The first murders of Jews took place on 11th July 1941 in approximately 10 km from Jaunjelgava towards the Serene vicinity, half kilometer after the crossroads of the Jaunjelgava-Jekabpils-Nereta road, on the left side in so called Beck’s wood, next to the river Laucese behind the Mazbeichani farm. They were mostly executed by police and military groups made from local citizens. There around 80 Jews were killed, mostly men, and later also 20 Soviet activists.

Most active part in the execution of murders was by the head of police, captain Oscar Balodis, his deputy lawyer K. Kalnins and the head of the ‘aizsargu’ units A.Ikaunieks, Karlis Svarens the local farmer, first head of the self-defense unite. Some witnesses say that murder of the Jews was not executed as simply as planned. It is possible that there were cases when it was refused to shot helpless people.

The second mass murder took place on the 2nd August 1941 in 7km from the town next to Totan cemetery and Ozoli farm. It was executed by unfortunately famous unit of Viktor Arajs – the main war criminal of Latvia. 430 people were murdered.

There are also witnesses that part of the Jews of Jaunjelgava (around 50 people) were killed in the woods of Likvertene. Moreover there are data that smaller murders of Jews were possible in the places mentioned and others.

Data from the cases mentioned is stating that in the summer of 1941 the power in the city was executed by local administration. At this time there were only few German soldiers, possibly not even permanent. There are rather few evidence that they were personally involved and present during the trials. Almost all criminal action was done by the local supporters of the Nazis.

For the participation in the Holocaust in Jaunjelgava in after war years 44 citizens of the town and vicinity of Serene were accused, two died during the process and one performed suicide. At least 16 leaders and participants of the Jew trials managed to escape from court.

The total number of the victims in Jaunjelgava exceed 500 people. U.Lasmanis based on the Census data of 1935 and analysis of changes that happened till mid-June 1941, reconstructed the list of the people died – 509 people in total, which are named as follows:

Jews of Jaunjelgava, victims of the Holocaust

Surname	Name	Y/b	Surname	Name	Y/b
Abramovich	Girsh	1929	Kruger	Matla	1916
Abramovich	Bate	1882	Kruger	Minna	1875
Abramovich	David	1874	Kruger	Motl	1894
Abramovich	Haim	1877	Kruger	Mozus	1922
Abramovich	Ichak	1927	Kruger	Paula	1901
Abramovich	Lote	1921	Kruger	Rive	1918
Abramovich	Nehama	1922	Kruger	Rohe	1884
Abramovich	Rohe	1885	Kruger	Rohe	1927
Abramovich	Sheina	1873	Kruger	Shmuel	1859
Atlas	Ida	1863	Kun	Fanja	1896
Ahrein	Bune	1903	Kurland	Beila	1863
Ahrein	Hane	1892	Levinson	Fraude	1864
Ahrein	Hane	1931	Leizerovich	Liba	1855
Ahrein	Yankel	1893	Lindan	Dobe	1916
Ahrein	Peisel	1902	Lindan	Haim	1874
Ahrein	Sora	1883	Lindan	Lazar	1909
Ahrein	Shaja	1873	Lindan	Meise	1911
Ahrein	Shneier	1925	Lindan	Shmol	1921
Band	David	1895	Lindan	Zara	1880
Band	Ida	1928	Lurje	Leya	1903
Band	Peisel	1923	Makovchik	Nikolay	1893
Band	Sora	1925	Maler	Фейн	1869
Bando	Taube	1896	Maler	Gena	1877
Baruh	Sharje	1927	Maler	Iosel	1906
Becka	Lazar	1905	Matison	Iete	1878
Becka	Matla	1932	Meierovich	Jankus	1853
Becka	Rebecca	1900	Meierovich	Sime	1925
Berelson	Liba	1879	Meierovich	Fruda	1885
Berzon	Isaac		Milkin	Aba-Jankel	1898
Berzon	Jazep	1940	Milkin	Grish	1902
Berzon	Muse		Miljkin	Boruh-Leib	1922
Birzen	Ozer	1880	Miljkin	Dora	1900
Blauveis	Menuha	1862	Miljkin	Ginesa	1930
Bloh	Hane	1913	Miljkin	Haim	1925
Bloh	Zelda	1882	Miljkin	Haim Iosel	1921
Brauer	Faivish	1864	Miljkin	Icik	1930

Brauer	Lina	1914	Miljkin	Rahil	1900
Bremer	Taube	1870	Miljkin	Sora-Mera	1925
Brin	Rael	1907	Mihalovich	Dmira	1940
Vainshtein	Abraham	1917	Mihalovich	Elza	1923
Vasserman	Aba	1902	Mihalovich	Hode	1924
Vasserman	Abraham	1872	Mihalovich	Ichak	1904
Vasserman	Abraham	1915	Mihalovich	Ida	1927
Vasserman	Amalia	1890	Mihalovich	Liba	1894
Vasserman	Aron	1905	Mihalovich	Menoh	1874
Vasserman	Basya	1902	Mihalovich	Selde	1866
Vasserman	Basya	1927	Mihalovich	Siman	1933
Vasserman	Beible	1875	Mihalovich	Shaya	1930
Vasserman	Beila	1886	Mihalovich	Zalman	1863
Vasserman	Beines	1913	Mihelson	Aba	1919
Vasserman	Bercus	1878	Mihelson	Faiver	1921
Vasserman	David	1931	Mihelson	Gelel	1878
Vasserman	Dina	1867	Mihelson	Gita	1884
Vasserman	Dveira	1896	Mihelson	Maryashe	1870
Vasserman	Elias	1906	Mihelson	Shmol	1920
Vasserman	Esfir	1910	Morein	Ester	1906
Vasserman	Feitze	1926	Morein	Eta	1900
Vasserman	Feinuss	1902	Morein	Iosel	1878
Vasserman	Fruma	1931	Morein	Leiba	1909
Vasserman	Fruma	1884	Morein	Merry	1895
Vasserman	Hanne	1923	Morein	Tamara	1903
Vasserman	Henny	1898	Morein	Taube	1868
Vasserman	Girsh	1914	Naishul	Gerson	1886
Vasserman	Iccik	1871	Naishul	Naishulj	1921
Vasserman	Ite	1877	Naishul	Rebecca	1923
Vasserman	Isaac	1903	Naishul	Rozalia	1887
Vasserman	Israil	1904	Nemzer	Frida	1935
Vasserman	Ente	1930	Nemzer	Leya	1931
Vasserman	Leiba	1930	Nemzer	Ozer	1904
Vasserman	Leib	1887	Nemzer	Rohe	1906
Vasserman	Lazer	1881	Niselson	Lazer	1875
Vasserman	Meilah	1899	Paulj	Aron	1871
Vasserman	Meice	1892	Paulj	Gira	1917
Vasserman	Mendel	1926	Paulj	Haya	1880
Vasserman	Mendel	1938	Paulj	Nehuma	1915
Vasserman	Merrt	1937	Pekver	Shlaume	1928
Vasserman	Menuha	1865	Pekker	Taube	1930
Vasserman	Motl	1874	Perelman	Sprince	1891
Vasserman	Moze	1874	Popel	Feiga	1908
Vasserman	Nicer	1905	Popel	Haim	1907
Vasserman	Pese	1924	Popel	Isaac	1907
Vasserman	Rephole	1928	Popel	Sheina	1860
Vasserman	Riva	1862	Popel	Sholem	1859
Vasserman	Robert	1888	Price	Faive	1930
Vasserman	Rohe	1877	Price	Fanya	1925
Vasserman	Rohe	1932	Price	Goda	1904
Vasserman	Sima	1927	Price	Liba	1937
Vasserman	Sora	1936	Price	Morduh	1885

Vasserman	Shaya	1852	Price	Mihel	1928
Vasserman	Vulf	1873	Price	Sora	1935
Vasserman	Zahariya	1917	Preil	Feiga	1881
Veis	Gabriel	1875	Rode	Codik	1894
Veis	Iete	1870	Rode	Feya	1871
Verchovsky	Hane	1876	Rode	Israil	1867
Vesterman	Aron	1918	Rozenkevich	Aron	1918
Vesterman	Basheva	1935	Rotbart	Anna	1918
Vesterman	Calel	1869	Rotbart	Ester	1926
Vesterman	Ebele	1873	Rotbart	Gerson	1874
Vesterman	Gaile	1882	Rotbart	Ginda	1910
Vesterman	Gita	1906	Rotbart	Haya	1873
Vesterman	Haim	1900	Rotbart	Minde	1920
Vesterman	Haya	1929	Rotbart	Rahel	1886
Vesterman	Girsh	1933	Samsonovich	Hode	1920
Vesterman	Girsh	1923	Samsonovich	Jacob	1924
Vesterman	Ita	1914	Samsonovich	Rive	1922
Vesterman	Israil	1872	Secen	Israil	1902
Vesterman	Merry	1880	Secen	Lazer-Zep	1922
Vesterman	Minna	1907	Secen	Paula	1903
Vesterman	Sulamif	1930	Secen	Rohodevra	1919
Vesterman	Shmul	1880	Secen	Roze	1888
Vesterman	Shmul	1899	Secen	Sara	1917
Vesterman	Shroel	1935	Simhovich	Laib	1875
Volpert	Male	1852	Srubichek	Hanna	1906
Vulfson	Eva	1894	Srubichek	Hanna	1930
Vulfson	Jazep	1885	Srubichek	Zamuel	1909
Geker	Ella	1898	Strunskij	Frida	1894
Gens	David	1880	Tabaksman	Elia	1922
Gens	Libke	1879	Tabaksman	Liba	1916
Gerson	Asna	1918	Tabaksman	Mozus	1880
Gerson	Hane	1911	Tabaksman	Zente	1885
Gerson	Rohe	1883	Feldhun	Berta	1900
Gercberg	Isaac	1857	Feldhun	Haya	1870
Gercberg	Zara	1862	Feldhun	Feiga	1858
Glikman	Hasya	1876	Feldhun	Fuvya	1934
Glikman	Rahil	1908	Feldhun	Gita	1914
Glikman	Riva	1882	Feldhun	Heina	1904
Glikman	Siman	1920	Feldhun	Leiba	1861
Glincik	Gabriel	1929	Feldhun	Motl	1874
Glincik	Haya	1932	Feldhun	Ozriel	1906
Glincik	Girsh	1927	Feldhun	Rasa	1888
Glincik	Merry	1903	Feldhun	Regina	1910
Glicin	Aba	1935	Feldhun	Sima	1936
Glicin	Icik	1903	Feldhun	Sora	1935
Glicin	Yese	1935	Feldhun	Sheina	1905
Grasfeld	Fein	1930	Feldhun	Shmulj	1904
Grasfeld	Keyse	1926	Feldhun	Velve	1934
Grasfeld	Hane	1883	Feldhun	Zuze	1871
Grasfeld	Hanna	1893	Fridberg	Hanna	1879
Gulsmann	Minna	1873	Fridberg	Frida	1919
Gulyak	Ber	1882	Fridberg	Hava	1853

Gulyak	Haim	1903	Fridberg	Taube	1914
Gulyak	Henrya	1915	Fridberg	Tule	1886
Gulyak	Ilva	1892	Fridland	Faivishi	1876
Gulyak	Isaac	1905	Fridman	Abraham	1904
Gulyak	Leya	1876	Fridman	Iosel	1868
Gulyak	Minna	1922	Fridman	Leya	1871
Gulyak	Minna	1909	Fraser	Frida	1904
Gulyak	Musya	1914	Fraser	Samuel	1929
Gulyak	Shlom	1873	Frisher	Basya	1929
Gurvich	Musha	1899	Frisher	Shlaya-Sora	1927
Gut	David	1875	Frisher	Roza	1926
Gut	Fruma	1872	Frisher	Raina	1924
Gut	Iosel	1882	Frisher	Sharje	1922
Gut	Zara	1876	Hait	Hanna	1938
Gutman	Kelle	1906	Hait	Itzhak	1932
Gutman	Max	1908	Hait	Yankel	1928
Gutman	Motl	1904	Hait	Leivi	1936
Davidovich	David	1904	Hait	Maria	1903
Davidovich	Ella	1904	Hait	Shlom	1931
Davidovich	Hertz	1902	Heiman	Dveira	1876
Davidovich	Henne	1864	Heiman	Golda	1906
Davidovich	Lazer	1938	Heiman	Itzhac	1912
Dvon	Elias	1862	Heiman	Yehok	1891
Dvon	Giva	1870	Heiman	Leya	1922
Deift	Pese	1895	Heiman	Mendel	1876
Dishler	Leya	1935	Heiman	Motl	1921
Dishler	Miha	1932	Heiman	Rahimel	1911
Dishler	Sora	1911	Heiman	Sholem	1924
Dishler	Shmol	1900	Heiman	Sheina	1884
Dolgopolsky	Anna	1896	Heiman	Sher	1877
Dolgopolsky	Ilya	1880	Heiman	Sholem	1873
Jekabson	Haya	1867	Heiman	Taube	1897
Jekabson	Leya	1872	Shen	Aba	1905
Zak	Golda	1897	Shen	Golda	1874
Zak	Movsha	1852	Shen	Haya-Rivka	1934
Zalgaberg	Israil	1895	Shen	Ente	1907
Zalgaler	Abraham	1865	Shen	Leibe	1909
Zalgaler	Dveira	1921	Shenberg	Hackel	1883
Zalgaler	Eta	1884	Shenberg	Israil	1859
Zalgaler	Glinda	1901	Shenberg	Lazer	1872
Zalgaler	Hael	1923	Shenberger	Elias	1905
Zalgaler	Rose	1925	Shenberger	Ester	1877
Zandberg	Haim	1927	Shenberger	Golda	1880
Zandberg	Girsh	1894	Shenberger	Itzhok	1876
Zandberg	Icik	1865	Shenberger	Leiba	1917
Zandberg	Shmol	1929	Shenberger	Lina	1909
Zandler	Musha	1925	Shenberger	Roha	1890
Zandler	Rohe	1897	Shenberger	Siman	1915
Zilberman	Icik	1892	Shenberger	Sheina	1880
Zilberman	Isaac	1892	Sherman	Abraham	1898
Zilberman	Liba	1891	Sherman	Abraham	1918
Zilberman	Roza	1898	Sherman	Anna	1895

Zilberman	Sheina	1926	Sherman	Braina	1904
Zolger	Yaha	1930	Sherman	Dina	1936
Ioffe	Abraham	1909	Sherman	Dveira	1927
Ioffe	Berka	1903	Sherman	Haya	1863
Ioffe	Frida	1919	Sherman	Hane	1931
Ioffe	Siman	1915	Sherman	Hene	1928
Ioffe	Zalman	1871	Sherman	Girsh	1931
Kalzneper	Girsh	1895	Sherman	Yete	1914
Kalcner	Abraham	1896	Sherman	Liba	1901
Kalcner	Abraham	1927	Sherman	Maryashe	1893
Kalcner	Bera	1926	Sherman	Markus	1869
Kalcner	Faive	1933	Sherman	Mere	1925
Kalcner	Haya	1887	Sherman	Motl	1892
Kalcner	Efraim	1865	Sherman	Motte	1933
Kalcner	Meise	1931	Sherman	Sora	1880
Kalcner	Rahil	1906	Sherman	Sora	1885
Kasselhaim	Aba	1938	Sherman	Sholem	1897
Kasselhaim	Yude	1940	Shetzen	Elizer	1878
Kasselhaim	Pese	1937	Shleimovich	Hanemaria	1920
Kasselhaim	Zlata	1896	Shleimovich	Riva	1855
Katz	Alte	1912	Shleimovich	Rohe	1888
Katz	Aron	1873	Shleimovich	Sharye	1923
Katz	Beila	1921	Shleimovich	Zelda	1915
Katz	Benjamin	1912	Shneiberg	Dana-Leya	1895
Katz	Tzilya	1892	Shragis	Paule	1927
Katz	Elia	1915	Shugalskiy	Ginda	1881
Katz	Etlya	1889	Shugalskiy	Girsh	1906
Katz	Geya	1883	Shugalskiy	Motte	1907
Katz	Gerson	1900	Eliason	Dveira	1893
Katz	Henrya	1901	Eliason	Etlya	1898
Katz	Itzik	1873	Eliason	Fonya	1934
Katz	Ita	1874	Eliason	Hane	1883
Katz	Markus	1861	Eliason	Leib	1873
Katz	Meier	1872	Eliason	Leya	1931
Katz	Pere	1870	Eliashtam	Feiga	1905
Katz	Shmulj	1861	Eliashtam	Girsh	1933
Kit	Shloma	1905	Eliashtam	Izrah	1908
Kleiman	Ella	1870	Elman	Benno	1936
Kleiman	Itzik	1866	Elman	Fanya	
Kleiman	Meise	1905	Elman	Zamuel	
Kleiman	Musi		Erlih	Haim	1865
Klein	Beila	1933	Erlih	Sora	1882
Klein	Elias	1901	Yudelson	Ella	1877
Klein	Hane	1931	Yudelson	Ida	1911
Klein	Ida	1896	Yudelson	Matla	1877
Korno	Sheina-Mere	1865	Jacobson	Aron	1868
Kratish	Haim	1933	Jacobson	Asna	1922
Kratish	Girsh	1935	Jacobson	Dobra	1877
Kratish	Isaac	1903	Jacobson	Faivish	1897
Kratish	Simha	1903	Jacobson	Henrietta	1934
Kruger	Abraham	1881	Jacobson	Girsh	1903
Kruger	Betty	1874	Jacobson	Hode	1926

Kruger	Boruh	1927	Jacobson	Idel	1864
Kruger	Tzilya	1912	Jacobson	Ite	1898
Kruger	Dveira	1870	Jacobson	Yashe	1939
Kruger	Gesya	1922	Jacobson	Meria	1906
Kruger	Haya	1923	Jacobson	Movsha	1893
Kruger	Hesya	1910	Jacobson	Sora	1896
Kruger	Hon	1921	Jacobson	Sheina	1911
Kruger	Israil	1911	Jacobson	Sheina	1923
Kruger	Yeruhlem	1924	Jacobson	Zoroh	1902
Kruger	Yudel	1881	Yakubovich	Dora	1896
			Yakubovich	Mozus	1888

This list has 59 people older than 70 and 63 in the age of several months to 10 years.

According to the list of Haya Gordon immediately after war there were 167 families killed, altogether 542 people. Generally lists of U.Lasmanis and H. Gordon are same. Some of the differences in the lists probably can be explained by not considerate data on migration of population in 1935-1941. Also it is possible that in the list of H.Gordon included several people born in Jaunjelgava, however killed in other places, most probable Riga.

Apparently around 20 citizens of Jaunjelgava managed to escape to the East where part of the later joined the Red army and in their line were fighting against Nazis.

According to H.Gordon data 27 Jews from Jaunjelgava died in the battles in Red army (see table below).

Jews from Jaunjelgava who died fighting Nazis

Armerman Ieguda	Gelman Iosel
Ahrein Meier	Katz Shmuel
Ahrein Leib	Katz Abe
Brauer Haim	Lindan Vulf
Vasserman Sharye	Mihelson Meier
Vesterman Sharye	Mihelson Haim
Gershon Azriel	Mihelson Gercel
Glikman Abe	Mihelson Rahimiel
Gutman Gavriel	Mihelson Shmuel
Gelman Motl	Rotbart Meier
Gelman Nison	Shenberg Simon
Gelman Ilya	Shenber Meishe
Gelman Itzig	Shenberger Sharye
Gelman Abe	Shrage Elya

Apart from these victims the book by Eva Vater about Latvian Jews who took part in Second World War also mentions other citizens of Jaunjelgava: Armerman Yudl, son of Venjamin (1908) who dies during the war, also ones who survived – Vasserman David, son of Samuel (1913), Vasserman Zaul, son of Vulf (1907), Vasserman Hackel, son of Michel (1909), Veide Genoh, son of Yefim (1920), Gutman Moshe, son of Israil (1913), Kan Leib, son of Isaac (1910), Katz Abraham, son of Moishe (1913) and Katz Yakov, son of Iosif (1908).

From the Jews of Jaunjelgava, who were deported to Siberia, 14 returned back. Rahmiel Kratish with family and Motel Kratish in the mid-40s moved back to Jaunjelgava, however were again deported in 1950.

From the Jews of Jaunjelgava the only alive who stayed in Latvia were Solomon Vesterman and possibly Frizim (Fridman) family.

From all pre-war community there was only Shrol Berman's family still living in Jaunjelgava, whose ancestors are still living there up to now. From other place arrived Simhovich family, who lived in the town up to 70s and family of rabbi Natan Barkan, who lived there for several years.

Today the complex of the Jewish cemetery still stays as a memory for thriving community that lived there and guiltless victims of Nazis.

Jewish cemetery in Jaunjelgava

The first Jewish cemetery of Friedrichstadt was opened in 1803 and was located seven versts from the city. It was used for at least 50 years, and possible some burials happened even until the end of the 19th century. Now this place is heavily grown into bushes and woods. Elders of the area remembered that all the epitaphs were destroyed during the war. The remains of rock fence are well distinguished only in winter, while in summer they are hidden under the vegetation. Numerous tracks of vandalism - revealed graves, some of them opened just recently.

The funeral society "Hevra-Kadisha" ("the sacred community") in Friedrichstadt was found in 1847. The cemetery was laid in year. It was named "the new" and seems that this designation remained in the public for a very long time, moving on from generation to generation. To this day some elders keep calling it "new".

In 1848, when town was flared up in the epidemic of cholera, the dead were buried in the separate section. Existence of Jewish cholera cemetery was noted already in the reference books of 1892. This fact still to this day is in the memories of local residents - supposedly cholera burials are located in the southeastern corner of the "new" cemetery.

Systematic burials in the "new" cemetery were executed until the Nazi occupation in 1941.

At the end of 19th or beginning of 20th century work were carried to improve the site – wooden fence was set on the concrete posts, stone gates were added and Beth -tohora - building for preparation of the body for burial was put on.

In the period of the First World War hill, where the cemetery was located, was an active battlefield. There are at least two photos of that time left.

After the Second World War the remains of the Jaunjelgava's Jews killed in 1941 were reburied in the Northeastern part of the cemetery. The place was marked by a monument in memory of the victims and separated by a small fence.

As far as it is known, after war only two new graves appeared in the cemetery – one of Berman family another of Ilya Simhovich.

During the first after-war decades, annually in August a group of Jews met in Jaunjelgava, to pay a tribute to ones who were killed. However with years passing by this tradition faded away with members of the group getting older or emigrating.

The author first saw this Jewish cemetery of Jaunjelgava in the end of 50s. At this time it was already grown through with bushes and grass. Its borders were hardly visible, and it seemed almost as part of the surrounding woods. In the following years there were no attempts to preserve either cemetery or its monuments. By the end of 80s trees in its territory were grown to the diameter of 20-30 cm, while some graves had 70 cm wide pine trees growing in their middles.

Restoration works of this Jewish cemetery as a historical and cultural monument started around the summer of 1985, when with support of local scholars little area surrounding monument of Urias Shatz, the active worker of Jewish community and local council, was cleaned up from the wood. Since than this person's relatives were regularly visiting the cemetery cleaning up few more meters of territory every time.

Systematic conservation works begun in the middle of 90s, when local council cut down dead and dangerous trees and did the first major clean up of the area. Only at that point the real size of the cemetery became apparent and was found that many monuments were not heavily damaged by years.

Approximately at that time historian Alexander Feigmanis decoded part of the inscriptions on the monuments. His work was heavily obstructed by nowadays heavily faded inscriptions engraved in the stone.

Since the end of the 90s author with a group of relatives started inventorying and conserving the cemetery. Works started with all monuments being numbered and mapped on the scheme of the cemetery. The state of epitaphs was estimated. During 2000-2008 around 90 fallen, lopsided or sunk into soil monuments were re-stated. The next stage of works was to take photos of all preserved epitaphs.

The main problem of documenting all the monuments is in their almost faded engraving that mostly can be seen only under specifically angled lighting. Moreover, image is even worse on the photos. Therefore before photography all monuments were coated in various methods. General requirement is that effect of any coating to be only temporary, long enough to take a picture and not destroying natural state decades old epitaphs. Depending on the texture of the stone several types of methods were found to be best:

— taking photos in the dark with the searchlight focused to head light along the surface of the stone;

— filling deepening in the stone with a wet mass of natural reddish sand, which was brightly colored. Dried out excessive mass can be removed with flat brush, while in the deepening the wet mass would stay long enough to be read;

— “trowelling” of the monument – it involves attaching paper sheet to its surface and rubbing the sheet with object (e.g. sponge) covered in paint. The deepening in the stone as a result would stay blank and readable;

— coating stone with bubbly foam (e.g. shaving foam) and removing excess with paper towel. After such coating foam stays in the deepenings of the letters for around 5-20 min which is long enough to take pictures.

As it was discovered some of the epitaphs were decorated by ornaments as well as pictures of plants and animals.

By the summer of 2008 workable set of data was created, including map with 700 epitaphs, 450 photos and decoding of most of them. The end of these conservation works is planned in 2009.

Under the systematic influence of precipitations the memorial to the victims of Holocaust, built soon after war, was to a great extent damaged as was found in the end of 90s. Ancestors of Urias Shatz in co-operation with Jaunjelgavas town council performed complete reconstruction of the monument in 2002.

The ritual building Beth –tohora, which was located in the northwestern part of the cemetery, lost its roof presumably already during the war. In the following years its walls were gradually destroyed, thus by the autumn of 2006 ruins were dangerous and almost completely gone.

Trees and bushes that were grown into the walls of the building were removed and during the clearing ruin of the fireplace for boiling water and heavily damaged stone floor tiles. In 2007 Jewish religious community “Shamir” (Riga) ordered company “Jaunums” from Jaunjelgava to execute preservation works of those ruins and open up this monument with information sheets in memory of the earlier thriving Jewish community.

In 2008 as part of the conservation works, the borders of the cemetery were emphasized by the row of fur trees along it.

They lived here

Biographies of several Jews connected to Friedrichstadt – Jaunjelgava

Berman Lazar, son of Yakov (26.09.1830, Friedrichstadt — 27.04.1893, Saint-Petersburg). Public figure, teacher, writer. Was educated in Friedrichstadt, in the heder, state school and private teacher. In 1854 he moved to Mitava, where in 1861 opened a private school for Jewish boys. In 1864 he is invited by the Jewish community of Saint-Petersburg to open the first Jewish school, which he leads for almost 30 years. At the same time (1869-1882) he taught Jewish religion in the female lyceum in Saint-Petersburg. In 1879 he founded daily newspaper “Russkij evrej” (“The Russian Jew”). He was also the author of official Judaism textbook “The basics of the rule of Moses” that was approved by the Ministry of Education for all schools where Jewish religion was taught.

Erlih Adolf (Abraham Abele). (20.09.1837, Mitava — ?) — rabbi, enlightener. In 1858 he started to work as a teacher of Hebrew and religion in the state Jewish school in Friedrichstadt. In 1861–1871 he lived in Germany, where he worked as a teacher and got doctors degree in Hall University, also was a rabbi. In 1872 he was elected the fiscal rabbi of Riga; however this election was not approved by government. In 1876 he was appointed the head of the Jewish school in Riga and worked there for 20 years.

He wrote analytical work on Greek philosophy (Berlin, 1872), elementary level textbook on Hebrew (Vilno, 1883) and other works on the history of the state Jewish education in Riga.

Rozental German (Friedrichstadt, 6.10.1843 — 1917) — writer, editor and bibliographer. He was educated in Bauska and Jacobshtadt. In 1859 he translated in German several poems by Nekrasov. Since 1869 was a publisher in Kremenchug. He published “*Gedichte*” (“Poems”). During Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878 he was serving in the Red Cross and earned a medal for special deeds. Up until 1881 he was doing publishing in Kiev and Smeleye (Ukrain), afterwards taking part in founding daily newspaper “Zarya”. In 1878 he was elected the member-journalist of the Society of the Enlightenment of Jews in Russian (S.-Petersburg).

In 1881 he went to USA to found farming colonies of Jewish immigrants from Russia. He founded colonies in Louisiana and South Dakota, and later took part in governing Woodbine colony (New Jersey). At time he was selling books, as well as became the head of statistics department of the Edison’s “General Electrics” company. In 1892 company of the Northern Railways moved him to China, Korea and Japan to find out economical and trade possibilities. Upon return he was elected the secretary of German-American reformers union in New-York. In 1894 he was appointed the head of division of immigration office on the Allis Island – the main entrée for Jewish immigrants.

Since 1898 he had headed division of Slavic in New-York public library. From 1900 took part in writing of 12 volume Jewish Encyclopedia, heading the Russian division. He was also closely connected to Hebrew literature and enlightenment movement in Russia. Publishing his won in “*Ha-Meliz*” (1856-1867), in 1901 took part in writing of monthly magazine “*Ha-Modia’ le Hodashim*”, was the head of the “*Ohole Shem*” community. Finally he has translated in German Bible books Ekkleziast and Song of the Songs, to English – book of German journalist H.Gantz about Russia “The country of riddles”, and from Russia – memories of the knyaz Urusov.

Shatz Urias, son of Isaac (1843, — 1913, Friedrichstadt). Tradesman and public figure. At the beginning he was trading leather articles, later – owned a store of pharmaceutical goods. He was a merchant of the 2nd guild. Beginning with 1880s for 30 years he repeatedly was elected a deputy of the town council of Friedrichstadt. At different times worked in revision, trade, sanitation commissions and taxation administration.

In 1900s he was head of the council of Talmud-tora, deputy chairman of the burial society “Hevra-Kadisha”. For the long years of work for the benefit of Friedrichstadt, town sponsored the epitaph for his grave in the Jewish cemetery.

The active attitude towards happenings in life, U.Shatz gave also to his children, who later were seen as known producers, public figures, scientists and politicians.

Paulj Aron Betzalel (1871, Dvinsk — 1941, Riga) — rabbi. He studied in secondary school in Lomzhe (Poland), then in Ieshivah in Lomzhe, Kovno, Volozhine. Knowledge of rabbi he got at 17. In 1891 gozhu ws accepted to University of Kenninberg, where he studied philosophy and philology. In 1906 he took on rabbi duties in Rozenovo (now Zilupe). During the First World War organized help for refugees from Poland and Courland. For the short time he was heading the town council of Rozenovo. In 1919-1941 was a rabbi in Jaunjelgava. With support from descendants from Jaunjelgava, who earlier immigrated to USA, Jewish religious school was built. Also he was serving as a member of the town council, deputy of the head of town council, headed the Jewish elementary school and was a member of Red Cross unit in Jaunjelgava.

Lipman Jacob Gudeil (1874, Friedrichstadt —1939, New Jersey) — the well known scientist, microbiologist and soil specialist. He was educated by a private tutor, later n the secondary school or Orenburg. Since 1888 lived in USA, studied in the agricultural college, which was founded by baron de Girsh in the Woodbain colony (New Jersey). Graduated with bachelors degree from Ratgers University and doctors degree from Cornwell (1903).

In 1901 he founded agricultural college of the Ratger University and headed it until 1939. The head of experimental agricultural station in New Jersey (1916—1939). He initiated foundation of the magazine “*Soil Science*”. Lipman’s research in the nitrogen absorption by soil bacteria was a beginning for the new scientific field – soil microbiology, and gave an international recognition to his work and laboratories. Bacteria were found in the meteoritic material, studies of pesticides and hydroponics were organized, new type of tomatoes was selected; one of the research groups even started the work on so far one of the most influential antibiotic – streptomycin. In 1928 dr. Lipman took part even in expertise of the Palestinian economic perspectives.

Shen Moshe Aron (1884, Friedrichstadt —1938, Paris) — biochemist and microbiologist. He was born in Friedrichstadt and graduated local school. Took par in the Revolution of 1905, and then immigrated to Germany, where graduated with bachelors degree of engineer. In 1908 he started to work in the August Fernbach laboratories in the Institute of Paster in Paris. The major topic of his research was on processes of alcoholic fermentation and industrial microbiology. Before the First World War his laboratories conducted research of the plant material transformation into tribromo-tert-butyl alcohol mixture – a prototype on the modern processes of obtaining biofuels. Haim Veicman, the future president of Israel, was working in these labs. However this co-operation of Institute of Veicman and Institute of Paster was compromised by the disputes on scientific and patent priorities. The microbiological production of acetone and butanol took place in England and made a huge impact on the supply of raw materials for production of synthetic rubber and explosives during the war.

In 20s M.A.Shen was awarded the title of professor and in 1934 becomes head of the fermentation division. At the same time he manages to head the magazine “Issues of fermentation”, read the course in biochemistry and microbiology in the Institute of Paster and State Institute of Industrial Fermentation in Brussels. He has published tens of scientific articles, while his main work “Issues of fermentation. Facts and hypothesis” (1926 was translated to English and Russian.

M.Shen was a brilliant scientist, enthusiast, person with encyclopedic knowledge in questions of biochemistry and microbiology and a true admirer of Luis Paster. For his unique scientific success he was awarded with order of the Honorary Legion (France). Until the end of his life, he did not lose contact with his fatherland, had Latvian citizenship, was awarded the Latvia order of Three Stars and supported education and career of the fellow citizens.

Shac-Anin Max, son of Urias (Friedrichstadt, 1885 — Riga, 1975) – lawyer, public figure of the Jewish Labour movement, publisher, historian, philosopher, literary critic. He was the son of well known Urias Shatz. Graduated secondary school in Mitava, studied in University of Petersburg, for participation in Revolution of 1906 was expelled from Russia. In 1908-1911 worked in Paris, Beline and Wien. During the First World War he actively worked in Riga and

Petersburg helping refugees. Was actively involved in activities of Jewish socialist party and organizations. During the February Revolution – member of the Petersburg's Soviet of worker and soldier deputies, one of the leaders of Unified Jewish Socialist Labor party.

Since 1919 he moved to Latvia, where founded and headed several cultural organizations and publications for Jewish workers. In 1921 he was arrested for active involvement in movement of Left Unions. During the several months in prison he became blind on one eye and in 1928 was completely blind. Nevertheless he continued active and full professional and artistic life. It was possible only with support and love of his wife Fani Samoilovna, who was next to him for almost 50 years. Literary, educational and public work of M.Shac-Anin was well known amongst Jewish upper class in Latvia and outside it. His most important works were “National freedom and socialistic parties” (1906), “The ways of Jewish Labor” (1918), “Temporalizm. Experiments on philosophy of the Jewish culture” (1919), “Jews-socialists from 1848 till 1917” (1919), “From space to time” (1921), “Revolution as a psychological process” (1923), “Social opposition in the Jewish history” (1927), “Public movements in the Jewish history until 1917” (1930), all of them dedicated to various social aspects of the Jewish history, relationships of Jewish culture with developments of the world cultures.

During the Second World War, behind the Soviet lines, M.Shac-Anin was moving on with scientific and educational work, was member of the Jewish ant-fascism committee, who consisted of the times major art, literature and science figures. His articles were published in the USSR and USA Jewish press. After the end of the war in Riga he continued to write and read lectures. Was one of the initiators for regeneration of the Jewish culture in the post-war Latvia. In the February 1953 he and his wife were arrested by Soviet forces of national security. He was accused to be member of “Jewish nationalist centre” as well as for hi activities in 1917-1918 as a member of the Unified Jewish Socialist Labor party, who stood against the Bolshevik's taking the power. After death of Stalin, M.Shac-Anin and his wife were freed.

Until the old age he continued dictating his articles, read lectures and published works on Jewish, Latvian, Russian and Western-European literature and music.

Barkan Natan (1923—2003) — rabbi, public figure. He was born in Livani, graduated Ieshive in Riga and Lubaviche. During the war he evacuated to vicinity of Ivanovo, where he worked in the wood cutting, later moved to Middle-East. From 1949 to 1954 he worked in various administrative and operational positions in Jaunjelgava, but after 1954 in Riga, also was doing under-cover religious work. Since 1969 moved to Israel, where was working for government, founded religious school for boys in Lode. Volunteered in the war of the Sudnij day (1973). One of the co-founders of the religious organization “Shamir”. In 1989 on order of Rebe of Lubaviche and in accordance to Head Rabbi of Israel he started work as a head rabbi in Riga and Latvia. The author of “Memories” (Riga, 1998) and “The roads of destiny. Watch and remember. Selflessness” (Riga, 2003).