



Our Family

by

Heinz and Thea Ruth Skyte, née Ephraim

THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS OF NEUSTADT NEAR PINNE

Records of the Ephraim family can be traced back to Neustadt near Pinne as far as the end of the 18th century.

Neustadt near Pinne, in Polish formerly Lwow but, since the end of the 16th century Lwowek, was a "unmittelbare" town, i.e. it was under the direct rule of nobility of the area.



The market place in Neustadt, 1994

(photo: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

A Jewish community was known to have existed here certainly at the beginning of the 18th century. On 20 June 1725 a "Privileg", a licence, was granted to the Jews of Neustadt by the local Lord of the Manor Adam Casimir von Werbno Pawlowski, which laid down the following:

1. *dass sie alljaehrlich Aelteste waehlen duerfen.* - Jews shall be allowed to annually elect their Elders
2. *es wird ihnen erlaubt mit Eisen, Tuch, Stricken, Leder, Spitzen, seidenen Schnueren und Schleifen, Wolle usw. zu handeln; ausgenommen sind Kirchen= und Hof=sachen. Ferner soll ihnen freistehen, Ochsen, Kuehe, Kaelber, und Schoepfe zu schlachten und zu verkaufen.* - They will be allowed to trade in iron, cloth, rope, leather, lace, silk ribbons and

bows, wool etc. but not in church and court items. They shall also be allowed to slaughter and sell oxen, cows, calves and "Schoepfe".

3. *es ist ihnen gestattet, fremde Juden, welche auf den herrschaftlichen Guetern Ochsen, Kuehe, Kaelber, Hammel oder anderes Vieh kaufen, zu pfaenden, ausgenommen an Jahrmaerkten* - They are allowed to charge foreign Jews who buy oxen, cows, calves, wether or other animals from the landowners' farms, except during the annual fair.
4. *In Kleinigkeiten sollen sie nach ihrer Gewohnheit schw hoeren* - In trivial matters they shall swear an oath according to their custom.
5. *am Ende des Vorwerks sollen sie einen Begraebnisplatz bekommen.* - They shall be given a site for a cemetery behind the farmstead.
6. *zur Stadtwache haben die Juden zu gehoeren, auch muessen sie fuer die Soldaten einen Beitrag leisten; befreit hiervon sind nur die Aeltesten. Feuerspritzen und Wasserzuber muss jeder Wirt bei 5 Mark Strafe haben.* - They have to belong to the town watch; they have also to make a contribution to the army, only the Elders shall be exempt. Each Jewish landlord must have a fire hose and a water tub or pay a fine of 5 Mark.
7. *klagt ein Christ einen Juden an, dann sollen die Aeltesten die Sache entscheiden, doch steht ihnen die Berufung des Grundherrn frei.* - If a Christian sues a Jew, the Elders shall judge the case, although they can appeal to the Lord of the Manor.
8. *klagt ein Jude gegen einen Christen, dann entscheidet der Buergermeister oder Stadtrichter, doch darf ebenfalls an den Grundherrn appelliert werden.* - If a Jew sues a Christian, then the Mayor or the town judge has the decision, although there can also be an appeal to the Lord of the Manor.
9. *sollen die fremden Juden, sowie die in anderen Staedten, von Leder und Fell 3 Groschen pro Stueck bezahlen, Futter aber duerfen sie nicht kaufen, weder in der Stadt, noch in den Vorstaedten noch auf den Stadtgruenden.* - Jewish strangers or those from other towns have to pay 3 Groschen per piece of leather or pelt, however they are not allowed to buy feed in the town nor in the suburbs or "Stadtgruenden".
10. *den juedischen Schneidern and Kuerschnern ist es erlaubt, sich in den Zuenften einzukaufen, diese sollen aber 4 Pfd Wachs geben und bei der Zunft die gewoehnliche Auflage entrichten.* - Jewish tailors and furriers are allowed to buy into their guilds, but shall give 4 lbs of wax and pay the usual dues.
11. *mit Salz und Heringen duerfen sie bei einer Strafe von 30 Mark nicht handeln.* - They are not allowed to trade in salt or herrings or pay a fine of 30 Marks.
12. *Schneiderhandwerk duerfen sie betreiben und einen Rabbiner sich erhalten.* - They are allowed to work in the tailoring trade and to keep a Rabbi.
13. *die Judenschule und die juedischen Haeuser sind von Schlosszinsen befreit.* - The Jewish school (synagogue?) and Jewish houses are exempt from Court taxes.
14. *eine juedische Obrigkeit ist ohne Approbation des Schlosses ungiltig.* - A Jewish authority must have the approval of the ruler.
15. *bei Hochzeiten duerfen sie Musik haben, doch muessen sie den Probst darum bitten.* - They are allowed to have music at weddings, though they have to apply to the Provost for this.
16. *Dem Cantor der Neustaedter Pfarrkirche haben sie jaehrlich 10 Gulden zu zahlen.* - They have to pay annually 10 florins to the Cantor of the Parish Church of Neustadt.
17. *einen Kirchhof duerfen sie in der Breite bis an den Zaun bauen.* - They are allowed to build a cemetery to the width of the fence.
18. *kein Jude, auch nicht die herrschaftlichen Faktoren, die zur Neustaedter Synagoge gehoeren, sind von juedischen Abgaben frei "ausgenommen Jacob Beer (?), welchem meine Neustaedter Juden selbst in meiner Gegenwart als einem alten verdienten Manne Respekt zu bezeugen versprochen, bleibt mit meiner Bewilligung hiervon ausgeschlossen".* - No Jew, not even the Court Jews, who belong to the synagogue of Neustadt are exempt from Jewish

- taxes "except Jacob Beer (?) to whom my Jews of Neustadt have in my presence promised to show respect, as an old deserving man, and who with my agreement is exempt from this".
19. *fremde Juden, die der Gemeinde nicht zusagen, brauchen nicht aufgenommen werden.* - Foreign Jews of whom the community does not approve, need not to be accepted.
 20. *fremde Juden sollen an Werktagen den Neustaedter Juden auf dem Markt beim Einkauf nicht hinderlich sein, doch duerfen sie Wolle vom Schlosse und den Vorwerken kaufen, desgl. Ochsen, Kuehe etc. und jede dem Schlosse gehoerenden Sachen; auch duerfen sie Kruege und Brantweinbrennerei pachten und sind von den Abgaben zur Neustaedter Synagoge befreit.* - Foreign Jews shall on weekdays not hinder the Jews of Neustadt in trading at the market, although they shall be allowed to buy wool from the castle and surroundings, also oxen, cows, and all items belonging to the castle; they may also lease potteries and distilleries and are exempt from taxes to the Synagogue of Neustadt.
 21. *Neustaedter Juden, die bauen wollen, bekommen unentgeltlich das Holz hierzu.* - Any Jews of Neustadt who wish to build, shall get free wood for this.
 22. *die Neustaedter Juden haben an das Schloss Fleisch gegen Bezahlung zu liefern, doch die Herzen von dem geschlachteten Vieh haben sie unentgeltlich fuer die Voegel zu geben.* - Jews of Neustadt have to supply the castle with meat against payment, however the hearts of the slaughtered animals have to be given free for the birds.
 23. *Leder und Felle wird das Schloss den Neustaedter Juden abnehmen, doch sollen diesen keine Tiere, als Baeren, Woelfe, Fuechse wie auch Voegel zu fuettern und zu halten gegeben werden.* - The castle will accept leather and pelts from the Jews of Neustadt, although they shall not be given any bears, wolves, foxes or birds to feed or keep.
 24. *Hammel, Schafe, Laemmer u. a. Hornvieh sind sie nicht verpflichtet vom Schlosse zu nehmen.* - They are not obliged to take wethers, sheep, lambs and other horned cattle from the castle.
 25. *das Schloss wird ihnen keine Pferde verkaufen und auch nicht von ihnen nehmen.* - The castle will not sell them any horses nor buy these from them.
 26. *Fische wird ihnen das Schloss nicht zum Verkaufe geben, doch soll es ihnen freistehen, soviel sie brauchen, davon zu kaufen.* - The castle will not give them fish for resale, although they are free to buy as much as they need from there.
 27. *Kaelber und Talg brauchen sie an das Schloss nicht zu liefern.* - They do not have to supply the castle with calves and tallow.
 28. *von Advent bis Palmsonntag duerfen sie bei Strafe von 20 Mark von den Bauern in den Doerfern oder von Personen, die wenig Vieh haben, solches nicht kaufen.* - Between Advent and Palm Sunday they are not allowed to buy cattle from farmers in the villages or from people who have few or pay a fine of 20 Mark.
 29. *die Neustaedter Juden, die Pferde haben, duerfen einmal in der Woche am Montag, sich unentgeltlich Holz zum Bauen holen.* - Jews of Neustadt, who have horses, are allowed once a week on a Monday to get wood for building.
 30. *selbst wenn die Anzahl der Juden in Neustadt 100, 200 oder mehr betragen solle, brauchen sie keine groesseren Abgaben als die genannten zu entrichten.* - Even if the number of Jews in Neustadt shall be 100, 200 or more, they shall not have to make any larger payments than these.

Fuer die erwahnten Freiheiten und den Schutz verpflichten sich die Neustaedter Juden gutwillig und ohne Zwang, alljaehrlich 2000 Gulden in 2 Raten zu zahlen. - For the said freedom and protection the Jews of Neustadt undertake voluntarily and without any compulsion to pay 2,000 florins annually in two instalments.

After Neustadt had come under Prussian rule in 1793 there was disagreement between the then local Lord of the Manor, "Rittmeister" Melchior von Lacki of Bolewice, and the Jewish Community of

Neustadt, regarding various taxes. Though these had been levied for some time, but which had not been part of the "Privileg" of 1725. There were also some other increases and certain other complaints. The Jews had appealed to the Prussian Government resulting in a court case. On 30th November 1797 a settlement was agreed between representatives of the Jewish Community and "Rittmeister" von Lacki, whereby the latter agreed to cancel:

1. the annual taxes of 200 florin (old gold coin), which the Jewish Community had paid for many years for the trading in horses and for the pasture, however, they would no longer be allowed to keep their horses on the pasture belonging to the Baron. The trading of horses was still permitted.
2. the annual tax of 7 ducats for a licence for the grocery trade.
3. the annual tax of 10 ducats or the delivery of 10 sugar loaves for trading in this.
4. For the paying off of arrears for these the Jews were granted an extension of two years (in 6 monthly instalments without interest).

It was further settled that in future the amount of beer to be purchased from his Lordship should be limited to two barrels a week; besides their need for weddings, circumcisions and other festivities and for their weekly Sabbaths; any contravention would result in a fine of 5 Talers.

The Jewish Community was also promised the delivery of free wood, bricks, stones and clay, for building of a house for their Rabbi. Shingle for roofing would be prepared against payment.

This agreement had to be personally signed by every single member of the Jewish Community, which took nearly two years to complete. Some members ignored instructions and only attended after being summoned under threat of punishment. The settlement was eventually finalised on 20th May 1799, after 110 members of the community had signed it or been accounted for. It contains the signature of the Levin Schmul, a forefather of the Ephraim family.

In 1832 the Jewish Community had owed the Catholic Church a total sum of 9,600 Gulden (florins) and 20 Groschen. An agreement was drawn up on 14th August of that year, between the Church and the Jewish Community that interest of 5% would be paid on this debt and instalments of 50 Talers annually on May 1st. These debts were stated to have resulted from long standing debts of the Jewish Community as follows: -

1719 1000 Tymphen (1) to the altars of St Fabian and St Sebastian of the Catholic Church. This sum had been given as an endowment to the Catholic Church by the then Lord of the Manor Adam von Verbno Pawlowski. If and why the community owed this money was not clear.

The debtors lists included further debts of the Jewish Community:

1) For the altar of St. Barbara

3.3.1728 200 Tymphen

1730 500 Gulden (2)

17.9.1753 380 Gulden

2) For the altar of St. Adalbert:

1730 2000 Gulden

3) For the preacher of the Catholic Church:

1755 4000 Gulden

4) For the altar of Maria Dolorosa:

5.11.1762 1266 Gulden and 20 Groschen (3)



The Church in Neustadt, 1994

(photo: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

Still further money was said to have been owed by the Community to:

- a. Since 1737 1000 fl at 7% interest to the Burgrave of Poznan, Anton von Bolesza.
- b. 23.6.1779 3000 fl
- c. 11.4.1780 659 fl to the Guardian of the spinster Catharina Kronowicz
- d. 25.5.1818 500 fl to Johann Flieger of Posadowo.

In 1819 receipts of the "Krupka" were given as security for this

A law suite in 1832 by the landowner Joseph von Kiersch of Poznan, an heir of the Burgrave, was decided in favour of the Community on two counts. If and how these debts were finally paid off is not clear.

The "Salary" of the Rabbi

At the beginning of the 19th century the Rabbi of Neustadt, according to a contract of the time, had a weekly salary of 2 Taler. On top of that he got "Festival presents" from members of the community five times a year and three times a year from the funds of the Community and that of the "Chevra Kadischa" (Burial society). He had free accommodation and received flour and wine for Passover, an Essrog for Tabernacle and one pound of wax for the Day of Atonement. For engagements and weddings he was entitled to 16 Sgr.(*Silbergroschen*) for the first 100 fl and then 8 Sgr.for each further 100 fl.of the dowry. A couple without a dowry had to pay the Rabbi 8 fl.

In 1813 a huge fire had raged in Neustadt, which had destroyed most Jewish houses and also the synagogue. Many Jews left the town and the community suffered poverty. The then Assistant Rabbi, Hirsch Saul, claims to have travelled about for two years around 1817, raising donations of money and building materials from other communities for the re-building of the synagogue. The synagogue was reconstructed in 1858 and consecrated in 1859.

When in 1856 Deputy Wagener tried to have "the enjoyment of civil and civic rights irrespective of religious creed" deleted from article 12 of the Charter of Constitution of 1850, the Jewish Community of Neustadt was one of the 264 petitioners against this. The petition read as follows:

"Das, was die Cultur und das weitere Fortschreiten auf dem Wege des Erkenntnisses fuer uns Juden gethan, was auch Se. Majestaet unser allergeliebtester Koenig, durch die Verleihung der Verfassungs-Urkunde mit dem unversehrten Artikel 12 uns Juden zu schenken geruht, dessen sollen wir nun einemmale wieder verlustig werden.

Wir, die wir ebenfalls die Lasten, die das Staatswohl jedem Buerger auferlegt, zu tragen haben, wir, deren Soehne gleich denen des christlichen Glaubensbekenntnisses in die Armee eingereiht, und die bereit sind, fuer Gott, Koenig und Vaterland zu streiten und zu sterben, wir, die wir durch das eben allgemeine Fortschreiten der menschlichen Bildung und Gesittung dahin gelangt sind, gleichfalls aus den Bahnen der Unwissenheit herauszutreten; wir, die wir ebenso gute and loyale Preussen sind, als unsere Brueder christlichen Glaubens, wir sollen urploetzlich und durchaus wieder in den buergerlichen Zustand, in dem wir vor Jahrhunderten gedrueckt, gepainigt, verfolgt, schmachen mussten, zurueckgestossen, und so die Parias der jetzigen buergerlichen Gesellschaft werden, und nur darum, weil wir nicht christlichen sondern juedischen Glaubens sind. Dass dies der Zweck des vorgedachten Antrages, geht aus demselben evident hervor.

Wir enthalten uns jeder weitem Eroerterung der Consequenzen dieses Antrages, aber wir koennen denselben nicht mit Stillschweigen uebergehen, wir muessen, wie schwach auch unsere Stimme, doch entschieden und laut gegen denselben protestieren."

"Any easing of our conditions and any progress on our way to recognition that we Jews have achieved and which His Majesty, our dearly beloved King was also gracious to grant through his bestowal of the Charter of Constitution with its Article 12, shall now again be taken from us.

We, who have to carry the same burden as every citizen has to bear for the public good, whose sons serve in the army along with those of the Christian faith, and who are prepared to fight and give their lives for God, King and Fatherland, we, who through general advance, human development and civilization have also managed to escape from the path of ignorance; we, who are good and loyal Prussians, just like our brothers of the Christian faith, we shall now very suddenly have to return to the civil conditions, under which we had to languish for centuries, oppressed, tormented, persecuted, repulsed, and thus become the pariahs of the present civil community, and only because we are not of the Christian but of the Jewish faith. That this is the reason behind this application, is self-evident.

We refrain from any further disussion of the consequences of this application, but are unable to pass it over in silence and, however weak our voice may be, we must nevertheless decidedly and openly protest against same."

The Jewish School

A Jewish Elementary School existed in Neustadt in 1834. The administrative official of the community reported on 22nd July 1835, that all Jewish schoolchildren were now enjoying education in the Jewish elementary school. He further reported that the law, that Jewish youths had to learn a profession or to devote themselves to some further education, had been publicised and that the administration was strictly observing it. In 1872 there had been 106 members paying school taxes, but by 1899 only 66 remained, owing to the migration of people out from the Province to the west. The two classes were reduced to one in 1878, and the number of pupils went down further from 45 children in 1898 to 17 in 1907.

In 1904 the synagogue of Neustadt came under the District Rabbinate of Pinne. So far it has not been possible to find any further information about Neustadt.

POPULATION OF NEUSTADT

Year	Inhabitants	Jews
1756	336	-
1799	1681	443
1840	2460	815
1856	715	98 families
1871	2456	540
1890	-	400 (80 families)
1895	2600	280
1905	2644	225 (68 households)
1907	2731	180
1911	-	186

Footnotes

- (1) Tymphen, an old monetary unit. 1000 tymphen = 1266 Gulden and 20 Groschen or 211 Taler 3 Silbergroschen and 4 Pfennig.
- (2) Gulden an old German gold coin in the 17th century, later silver, superceded by the ducat and taler in parts of Germany. Different types of different values in different parts of the country.
- (3) Groschen an old German silver coin, 1 Groschen = 12 Pfennig, 1 Taler = 24 Groschen (Guter Groschen) and later 30 (New Groschen).