

THE JEWS OF STANISŁAWÓW PROVINCE

by

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Since 1989, I have been the rabbi of Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast. In that role, I have traveled to towns and villages throughout the region, meeting with local Jews in their homes, prayer houses and synagogues. Many Jews have had questions or problems, and I have tried to help them. During our conversations, people frequently have mentioned old Hebrew books they have in their homes, often handed down through several generations. Also, when people were ready to emigrate, they left their family books with friends and neighbors.

Since many of the Jews in Ukraine today do not read Yiddish or Hebrew, they asked me about the handwritten notes on some of the pages. After seeing so many of these books, it was clear that grandparents and great-grandparents had studied from these books and recorded family data in them, in neat and meticulous notes. In one book, I found notes made by the book's owner during 1941–1943, recording the birth of a daughter in January 1941 and a son in January 1943. These events were recorded when the Jews of Stanisławów were imprisoned in the ghetto, probably at a time when they did not have money even for bread. As of today (December 1998), I have more than 1,000 unique books.

When the word spread that I was collecting prayer books, the Jews of Ivano-Frankovsk region began giving me documents and photographs, some concerning very well-known and prominent individuals.

Former residents of this region or people with ancestral roots here write letters to me asking for help in tracing their family history. I try to help these people, and if I do not find information in my collection, I often go to the archives and do research there. For example, once I looked for Holocaust documents for someone, and when I realized how interesting and important the archival documents were, I began making copies of as many documents as possible.

Sometimes old houses are destroyed in order to build new ones. I remember one situation where I received a telephone call explaining that during the demolition of the house, the person had found many Hebrew documents but did not know what they were. The documents had been sent to the local garbage dump. When the caller told me the location, I immediately rescued these papers, consisting of passport applications for Jews planning to emigrate. Many of these documents include photographs of the entire family.

When I travel in Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast, I visit many Jewish cemeteries that are unfenced, devastated and devoid of tombstones. I speak with the local people about the cemeteries, and with this information I have drawn maps of many cemeteries. Of course, these maps are incomplete, but the information includes the earliest and most recent burial date, size of cemetery, number of tombstones, names of prominent personalities and rabbis, and what happened to the cemetery during World War II.

During these village visits, many people tell me about Jewish cultural and religious life. I note this information and mark the location of Jewish sites on maps. I also photograph these sites as much as possible. As a result, I have detailed information about Ivano-Frankovsk and nearby towns.

Editor's Note: Rabbi Kolesnik does not speak English. He welcomes visitors and may be contacted at the synagogue (see above).



Rabbi Moishe Leib Kolesnik, with sample passport documents discovered during the reconstruction of a house in Ivano-Frankovsk and rescued by him from discarded trash (photo, 1998)

Selected Items (by Town) from the Archive of Rabbi Moishe Leib Kolesnik

BOLEKHOV

- List of Jews killed in Bolekhov Ghetto, 1941–1944 (8 pages)
- Photocopy of synagogue photo, 1957

BOLSHOVTSY

- General correspondence from synagogue members, 1934
- Testimonials from survivors after the Holocaust, 1945
- List of victims, 1945 (20 pages)

BUKACHEVTSY

- Testimonials from survivors, 1945

BURSHTYN

- Testimonials from survivors, 1945
- Protocols (memorandums) from the Jewish community, 1935
- Private documents of Rabbi Gersh Landau, 1933

DELYATIN

- Announcement in Hebrew from the Talmud Torah
- List of people killed by the Nazis (31 pages and 1,748 names) from Delyatin, Yaremche and Stanisławów (c. 1945)
- Holocaust documents, 1941–1943

DOLINA

- Correspondence from Rabbi Osias Halberstam to the education minister in Warsaw regarding voting procedures for electing rabbis, 1937
- Photo of synagogue from the village of Broshnev Osada, 1954

GALICH

- KGB report listing number of Jews killed in Galich, 1944

GORODENKA

- Voters' list in Polish (9 pages and 1,168 names), 1938
- List of victims (11 pages)

GVOZDETS

- List of taxpayers, 1937
- Map of Jewish cemetery (no names)

KALUSH

- Metrical book, 1832–1848 (987 people, 72 pages)
- Map of Jewish cemetery (no names), 1977
- Map of Kalush, including Jewish cemetery
- Map of Kalush, in Polish
- Photographs of the Jewish cemetery (1990, 1993); Holocaust monument; destroyed tombstones; the 1995 dedication of a Holocaust monument to 6,000 Jews killed in Kalush District, including photograph of attendees

KOLOMIYA

- Local newspaper article, 1997: the government returned the synagogue to the local Jewish community (formerly a sports center and now a prayer house)
- Agreement regarding the rental of a house to be used as an office for the Jewish community, 1997
- Letter from the Jewish society Merkaz Ruchanee about voting procedures, 1933

- General correspondence from the Jewish society Agudath Israel, in Polish, 1938
- Autobiography of Rabbi N. L. Jeczes from Kuty, 1933
- Family tree of Orenshtein
- Architectural drawing of synagogue at 19 Asha Street
- Many private documents from individuals
- Letter from the chief of the Jewish community to the Stanisławów local government, including a list of workers in the Jewish hospital and their salaries, 1936

LANCHIN

- Map of Jewish cemetery, 1997

NADVORNAYA

- Metrical book in Polish, 1850–1865
- Topographical plan of the electric plant, 1937
- Map, 1860
- Map in Hebrew (region of Jewish cemetery)
- List of taxpayers (Jewish community, 333 names), 1932
- Maps of the Jewish cemetery, 1947 and 1996
- Topographic map of Nadvornaya and surrounding towns, 1950
- Map of Jewish cemetery (in Polish), late 1800s
- Map of stadium (adjoining the Jewish cemetery)
- Aerial photograph of Nadvornaya, 1969
- Aerial photograph of Nadvornaya, 1947; the Jewish cemetery is visible
- Map showing property lines, late 1800s
- Map of Nadvornaya, 1847
- Documents from the Jewish community, 1933, 1935
- Correspondence from Jewish community to Stanisławów local government regarding taxes, 1936
- Correspondence from Nadvornaya to Stanisławów local government regarding voting in the Jewish community, 1933
- Voters' list, 1933
- Correspondence from Jewish community to Stanisławów local government regarding a protest of the Jews from Nadvornaya about a tax; court documents on this dispute, 1934
- Documents from Rabbi Kolesnik and the Nadvornaya mayor's office regarding the Jewish cemetery (erecting a fence)

OBERTYN

- List of people who were sent to German labor camps for work
- Holocaust documents: postwar lists of property and list of victims

OTTYNIA

- Jewish community documents (budget, salaries), 1926
- Private documents

ROGATIN

- Local maps

SOLOTVINA

- Letter from the rabbi to the president of the Polish Republic, 1936
- Letter from Jonas Olivera, a merchant, to the local government, objecting to the rabbi's assistant, 1934
- Letter from the Jewish community to the Nadvornaya local government requesting that the villages of Maidan and Prislop be combined with the Solotvina Jewish community, undated

STANISŁAWÓW**Stanisławów and Stanisławów Province**

- Documents from Agudath Israel Society (7 pages)
- Documents relating to the towns of Galich, Mariampol, Yezapol (now Zhovten) and Stanisławów, in Polish, 1927
- Report from the police department with a list of members of the Jewish community and a list of Jewish buildings (synagogues, schools, etc.)
- Correspondence from the Stanisławów Jewish community to the Starostat (government office), listing which Jewish communities in surrounding towns were a part of the Stanisławów Jewish community (giving statistics from 1921 and names)
- Letter from the Yezapol Jewish community to the Starostat office listing the Jews (statistics) in their region, 1923
- Documents including statistics about the number of Jews in surrounding villages, in Polish, 1924
- Passport applications of individual rabbis (22 files)
- Numerous twentieth-century documents and photographs relating to individuals; maps of towns; plans of synagogues; correspondence between the Jewish community and the local government; photos of Jewish sites and town views

Holocaust Period/Document Copies

- List of 1,086 Jews killed in Stanisławów in August 1941
- List of 4,911 Jews who died in Stanisławów with ages, names of family members and addresses
- Numerous survivor testimonies from the period 1941–1944
- Report from the Jewish community to the local government listing losses (people killed; synagogues and homes destroyed)
- Witness testimonials (methods of killing and destruction)

- Concentration-camp documents in Stanisławów about medical experiments on November 29, 1944
- Map of Stanisławów Ghetto, 1942
- Photographs of ghetto entrance
- Newspaper articles
- Photograph of monument in the Jewish cemetery commemorating where 120,000 Jews died

Jewish Cemetery

- Map of cemetery, dated 1994 (more than 4,500 graves documented by Rabbi Kolesnik)
- Plan of cemetery, showing size
- Alphabetical list of those buried in the cemetery and date of death
- Map showing the location of graves
- Correspondence between the Jewish community and the mayor's office, 1996
- Letter from the Jewish community to the mayor's office requesting a new Jewish cemetery; correspondence continued from 1913 to 1924 until the new cemetery was established

TATOROV

- Private documents of Rabbi Gersh Matus Fischer, consisting of correspondence to the local government regarding his application for examination in a foreign language
- Correspondence between Rabbi Fischer and the local government about voting, 1936

TLUMACH

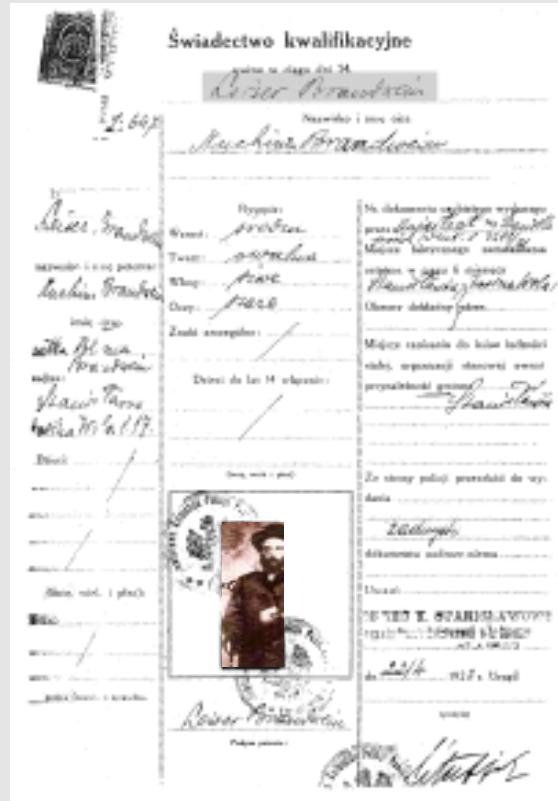
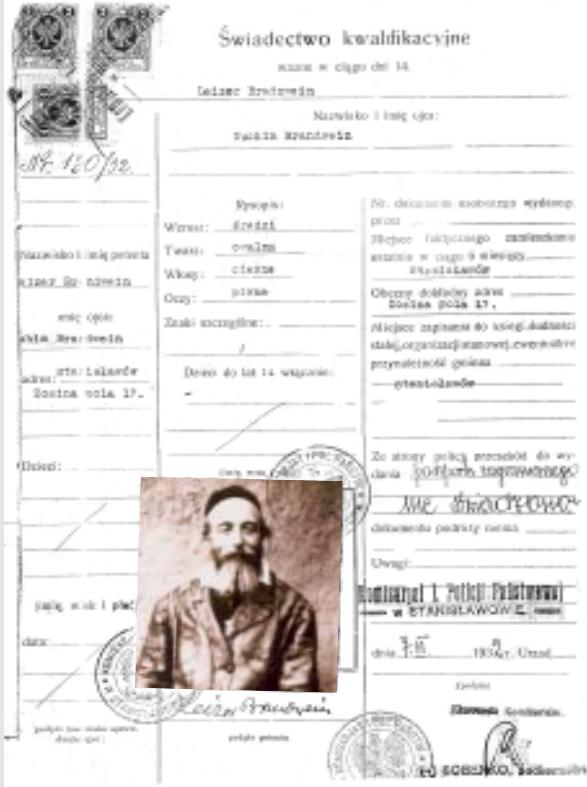
- List of 200 contributors to the Jewish community, 1936
- Photographs of the dedication of the Holocaust monument

	Mother	Father	Birth Day	Baptismal Day	Age at Baptism	Age at Birth	Gender	Notes
1. 281	Chava Leib	Abraham Leib	1	8	10 months	—	♂	Bar Mitzvah
2. 67	Leah Leib	Leib Leib	1	—	10 months	—	♂	Bar Mitzvah
3. 286	Leiba Hora	Abraham Hora	1	—	10 months	—	♂	Bar Mitzvah
4. 666	Leibke Hora	Abraham Hora	1	6	10 months	—	♂	Bar Mitzvah
5. 127	David Hora	Abraham Hora	1	8	10 months	—	♂	Bar Mitzvah
	Zeech	Chava	1	8	10 months	—	♂	Bar Mitzvah
	Hend Billich	Yitzchak Orlitzky	1	8	10 months	—	♂	Bar Mitzvah

■ Birth record from Kalush metrical book, 1832–1848 (Yiddish version recorded on right-hand page)

THE RABBI IN IVANO-FRANKOVSK

In the early 1990s, I visited Ivano-Frankovsk (formerly Stanisławów), where I met Rabbi Moishe Leib Kolesnik. Rabbi Kolesnik spent hours showing me his remarkable archival collection of documents, photographs, maps and books. Through the years, Rabbi Kolesnik has continued to seek out, preserve, copy and collect material about the Jews of Ivano-Frankovsk region. Throughout the area, people know of his work and make valuable contributions to his collection. He is a remarkable man with infinite patience and dedication to his projects and goals.



Three-page passport application, dated 1922, for Rabbi Leizer Brandwein (born 1868), son of Nuchim and Malka Blima Brandwein, residing at Zosina Wola 17 in Stanisławów