

Pasvalys Jewish social life, customs and traditions

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In 6 December 1497, The Grand Duke of Lithuania, Alexander II, in memory of his predecessor, authorized the building of a parish church at the confluence of the Svalis and Levens, and to create a new town, Pasvalys, around it.

For a long time only Lithuanians lived in the town. In 1600, of the 90 registered townspeople, only 2 families of Jews. In the second half of the 17th century, their numbers were steadily growing.

Gentile townsmen, having lost their share of income, showed their dissatisfaction. In 1671, the Jew Josephovich, was killed and thrown into the river. The suspicion fell on the Gentiles, the same group who, probably, also stirred up H. Palubinskas' caretakers to desecrate the Pasvalys church (the walls were sprinkled with the blood of goats and sheep), and then accuse the wicked Jews. However, the capital defended the Jews and prevented them from protesting in the regional court in Trakai.

By 1727 the Jews had taken over all the parcels to the marketplace, although their center was, as before, in Svalia g.

In 1775 there were 430 Jews in the Pasvalys parish and township, which has a large synagogue in Pasvalys. In the aftermath of several fires, the population in the town dropped by half.

In 1791 - the inventory states that the Pasvalys estate had a brickyard and a new mill next to Lėvens and an old mill on the Svalis River.

There was a big tavern-covered tavern in the town market. In addition, Jewish shops were located on the market near the tavern. There were 18 farmsteads in the four markets (1 Catholic, 17 Jews), Biržų str. - 38 (31 Catholics, 7 Jews), Palėvens g. - 28 (21 Catholics, 7 Jews), Vilniaus g. 19 (12 Catholics, 7 Jews), Svalia St. - 18 homesteads (15 Catholics, 3 Jews), in addition there were Jewish shaft houses, a synagogue, Pumpėnų g. 27 (25 Catholics, 2 Jews). So there were 164 (121 Catholics, 43 Jews) in total.

Wars and invasions of foreign troops in the 17th century to the end of the 18th century undoubtedly touched Pasvalys. The capital lost part of its income. Many of the population died during an epidemic after a flood, Some moved out to other areas.

The city and parish records also say that the building of the stone church in Pasvalys was damaged and that the Jews and Christians did not repair it in due time. After the war and plague, there were so few inhabitants in Pasvalys, that there was no need to repair the mansion building. Those who wanted to settle in the town were exempted from tax for eight years

The townsmen started to build the Pumpennia highway. Here the Pasvalys Jews built a new mill with their own funds. Although it is precisely undiscovered where the mill was built, it can be assumed that this was a smaller mill near the Svalis River. In later inventories, it is recorded that the Jewish religious center was later established near it and a synagogue and other communal buildings, including a cemetery (Svalia St.) were built.

On 8 July 1835 at eight o'clock in the morning, at the home of the Jewish mansion Faivelovich, where his wife Rėvka and the peasants Rozalija Petrauskienė were making candles, the fat caught alight and a large fire ensued. The mansion and 4

houses of neighbors were burnt, and fire was shifted to another shore of Lenev (because there was a big wind) - the laying of a rectory, a barn and the laying of a farmer Abrakasius. The Women's Upyte court did not enjoy it, only ordered to be more careful with fire.

In 1839 there were 55 Christian and 25 Jewish homesteads.

In 1854 schools in Pasvalys and Ramygalas was planned and built. A fair was held in the town, where dishes, wheels, leather, cattle and other goods were traded. A market was held on Thursdays. 1186 people now lived in Pasvalys, 521 of them were temporary residents, 559 were Catholics, and 598 were Jews, (Karaites), 824 were farmers, 78 were traders, 55 were craftsmen, 219 were doing something else.

At the beginning of the 1900, buildings in Pasvalys were required to be built according to approved projects. 1911 Abraham Girniūnas, planning on building a brick house on the old wooden house on Biržai street, had to submit a project for the house. 1923 Jews accounted for 7.58% of the total population of Pasvalys district, and Lithuanians - 83, 88%. In Pasvalys, 300 Jews lived before the war.

The Jews mostly deal with photography, photography, horseback riding. There were lawyers, doctors. In addition, the Jews held stores (only one of the 15 shops registered was not Jewish), taverns (the best Pasvalys tavern belonged to Jew Elijah).

Many Jews traveled in villages with horse-drawn carriages, and those who did not have a horse, did not eat food or ran a little stroller themselves. They sold needles, buttons, yarns, utensils, comb, spoons, knives, soaps, perfumes. If the hostess took more goods than he had to waste (wearing clothes, shoes, bones, metal waste, etc.), she would have to add cheese or even a scythe. The money was hardly used in this trade.

These merchants were elderly Jews. Being called "skarmalniks". In prewar times peasants did not build houses. Because there was no case for a Jewish skarmalninkas" to catch a glimpse. Familiar "Shkarmalninkus" peasants considered their own people.

There were no devious Jews. They had nothing to do with the court. Pasvalys Jews were very united. They set the prices for the bills at the synagogue on the eve of the Monday.

Many Jews were wealthy. Lithuanian girls worked for them, helped them in the domestic work while Jewish girls did not work with foreign people. The Jews were quite proud, albeit modest, friendly, humble, very sincere people. Among them there were few drunks, smokers, hooligans. Jews are often referred to as hard-working, intelligent, educated people. They have a high culture. Since most Jews were

merchants, they often helped people. Fish from Latvia were brought to Pasvalys and sold there. If buyers did not have the money, the Jews sold the goods "on the bark", ie, the debt (sometimes it was not necessary to return). They really trusted people - not as they are now. Now people are closed, do not trust others. In the past, the Jew was a friend and priest.

Jewish houses were made from wood and stone, surrounded by flowerbeds. Inside was nice furniture. Everywhere the order is clean. Appearance: black hairs, brown hairs, hips. Clothes are beautiful. The jewels were very beautiful. They kept themselves clean, with expensive and fragrant soap,

There was also a synagogue in Pasvalys. At their prayers, only men attended as women and children were forbidden.

Once a year, the Jews went to "cast out" all their sins, going to the streams, they emptied their pockets on the bridge, hoping to get rid of their sins.

On Saturdays, no Jew would work. They would not light a candle or unlock a door of the office or store. It was not asked by people of Jewish origin to do this. On Saturdays I could not bring water from the well. So they respected and forgot the traditions.

The Jews never ate pork. There was no begging, but not like the Catholics with rosary, and wrapping on the arms of their hands. Jewish children, like Lithuanians, went to schools. At first, they went to primary school (1-4 divisions), continued to study with Lithuanians at Pasvalys P. Vileišis school (now gymnasium), and who wanted to go to Panevezys Jewish Gymnasium.

Jewish wedding rituals, traditions differed significantly from Lithuanian. Jewish girls were still underage for older guys. The young girl was dressed in bridal clothing and had to walk through the threshold of the room, decorated with jewelry. Before the wedding the bride had to sit in one room for a long time. When the guests come together, the wedding begins. Guests and young people go to the synagogue and pray. Later the groom breaks the glass and the more subtle it is, the more everyone is happy. So young people will be happy. The gourmet dish was chicken. The Jews sing songs, and shocked the foxtrot.

The Jewish Easter was a celebration not only for the Jews themselves, but also for the Lithuanians, because the Jews macaes and nuts were distributed to all the citizens. Macus - baked in flour and water. The Jews, before Easter, bathed in Svalia and Levens, and there was great deeds.

Another great feast was Sukkot. A wooden booth was installed in the yard or in the garden, and the roof was covered with pebbles. They ate and prayed here. Jewish youth together with Lithuanians were preparing various performances, participating in carnivals. Appeared skillfully and ingeniously.

No matter how much celebration of happy holidays, farewells and dear people come from everyday life. When the Jews drowned a close friend, the heat was always uncovered, and the man was removed. He put his head on his jaw, so that he would not return to the soul, and then he was batting. When leaving the cemetery, women rubbed the grass and wandered over their shoulder or head that the soul of the deceased would not return. If the girl was dying, she would look married. If the girl is not married, it is said that she has no soul. Men buried in the cemetery, and women cried.

The Jews lived in Pasvalys happily, genuinely communicating with all the inhabitants of the city.

The most famous Pasvalys Jews

Leiba Aizikovičius was a flax and grower.

Boris Bumšlak was a doctor

Jochenon Feldman - had an electric station, traded iron

Chait Ickas - engaged in photography, radio business

Kirchon David was a lawyer, a teacher, a public figure

Samuel Utiansky was a forest purchaser

Meyer, Barsel, Slioma and Leila Zakai - 4 brothers merchants

Samuel Traube is a forest buyer who bought grain from people. He trained people who took them to Panevėžys Railway Station .

The Second World War broke out, which disrupted the peaceful life of the peoples of the world. The old men remember the tragic fate of the Jews with a teardrop rolling cheek. During the massacre in Žadeikiai forest, the roads were awash in red.

By storing the Pasvalys Jewish memory, we will collect the ethnographic materials and record human stories about the Pasvalys Jews. We will look at the words of Isaiah to the United Nations building in New York, a prophecy about peace on earth:

"They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."