

# Jewish Timeline of Bardejov

*Events from more than two hundred and sixty years of continuous Jewish presence in Bardejov that ended in 2005 with the death of the last Jew of Bardejov*

**Medieval Period** Jews trade in the market town but must pay a special tax and leave at sunset

**1526** The Battle at Mohac – The Jewish inhabitants in all the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy are expelled and must live outside the limits of towns

**1599** In the list of taxes for Bardejov, the names of two Jews are registered. One is a goldsmith and the other is a poor renter who probably was a wagoner

**1631** Jews expelled from Bardejov

*Beginning the first century of continuous Jewish presence*

**1716** Two Jewish families live in Bardejov

**Circa 1750** Jews from Galicia (Southern Poland) resettle in Bardejov. They live northeast of the marketplace and work initially as farmers in nearby villages. They are descendants of the Galician Hasidic dynasty founded by Rabbi Chaim Halberstam

**1787** Jewish Population of Bardejov is 42

**1788** Jews first begin to use fixed surnames when a royal degree (Hungary) requires them to adopt and use German surnames

**1796** Headstone in the Jewish cemetery marks Menashe, son of Rafael, who dies in the Hebrew calendar year of 5556, (1796), grave marker 1082, on Bardejov Jewish Preservation Committee's website:  
[http://bardejov.org/cemetery\\_pictures/lq\\_htmls/cem\\_1082.html](http://bardejov.org/cemetery_pictures/lq_htmls/cem_1082.html)

**1806** Jewish community buildings begin to be established in the area of the Jewish Suburbia which is located outside the walls of the city due to legal restrictions placed on Jews

## Jewish Timeline of Bardejov - continued

### *The second century of continuous Jewish presence*

**1828** There are 148 Jews in Bardejov

**1830** Big Synagogue (Old Synagogue) in the Jewish Suburbia is consecrated and remains today one of only two surviving nine-bay synagogue Jewish buildings in Slovakia.

**1848** “Jewish Emancipation” The revolution of 1848 brought equal rights for the Jews. They were no longer restricted to living in designated ghettos. However, the Jewish emancipation was followed by a number of violent anti-Jewish protests

**Circa 1850** Beit Hamidrash, mikvah (ritual bath), and ritual slaughterhouse are built in the Jewish suburbia

**1851** The Jewish population of Bardejov is 181

**1862** The Jewish population of Bardejov is 480

**1895** Bardejov Spa is visited by the Austrian Empress and Queen of Hungary, Elizabeth, popularly known as “Sissi”. Many of the hotels at Bardejov Spa are owned by Jews and many of the doctors who popularize spa treatments are Jewish

**1900** Two Hebrew printing presses, Blayer and Horovitz, are established publishing over 100 volumes in Hebrew between 1900 and 1938

The Jewish population triples in 40 years bringing the total to 1,710

**1905** Chevra Mishnayot Synagogue is built by the Jewish community’s Mishnah study association on Stocklova Street

### *The third century*

**1919** Jewish population of Bardejov reaches 2,119, with 40 settlements surrounding the Jewish quarter united under the local rabbinate

**1921** 90 percent of all the stores in Bardejov are Jewish-owned businesses, including stores that sell shoes, clothing, textiles, jewelry and clocks, iron and metal goods, furniture, wine and alcoholic drinks, wood and fuel, and paper and books

## Jewish Timeline of Bardejov – continued

**1921** The Jewish population of Bardejov reaches its highest historic percentage at 33.5 percent of the overall population with 2,206 residents

**1929** The Chevra Bikur Cholim Synagogue is established on Klastorska Street by a Jewish charitable association that assists sick community members

**1930** The Jewish population of Bardejov is 2,264

**1935** Most Jews in Bardejov are shopkeepers with stores on the main square, and there are a few doctors, two veterinarians, some lawyers, and officials. They trade in lumber, grain, and wine

**1938, September** Munich Agreement paves way for dismemberment of Czechoslovakia

**October 1** Hitler invades the Sudetenland area of Czechoslovakia

**October 6** Autonomous Slovakian government is set up in Zilina under the protection of Hitler's Germany with Josef Tiso as the leader

**1939, April** Jews in Slovakia are dismissed from Civil Service

Ordinance 63, first of Slovakia's anti-Semitic laws, is enacted defining who is a Jew and restricting the number of Jews allowed in certain professions like law and medicine

**June** Law passed in Slovakia that says Jews cannot comprise more than 4 percent of total student body in public schools. Later law forbids Jewish students from attending public schools

**September** Series of new laws further restrict Jews including inability to get a passport and being forbidden to drive motor vehicles

**1940, March** Jews wishing to emigrate are no longer allowed to take part of their assets with them

**April** First Aryanization Law, Law 113, all Jewish businesses ordered to "volunteer" to take on an Aryan partner and Jews cannot retain more than 40 percent of the profits of their businesses

Ordinance 303 authorizes the Central Economic Office to arrange for the mass liquidation of Jewish enterprises, voluntary Aryanization is abolished

Some Bardejov Jews flee to Hungary where deportations seem less likely

## Jewish Timeline of Bardejov – continued

**1941, July** Jews between the ages of 18 and 60 are subject to forced labor service by proclamation of the Slovak Ministry for Internal Affairs

**September** Bratislava ghetto is liquidated and many Jewish refugees come from there to Bardejov

All Jews over the age of 6 must wear a yellow Star of David

**1942, February** Mandatory registration of all the Jews of Bardejov. The census of the Jews or “Supis Zidov” is done in three sections and lists 2,498 Jews in the City of Bardejov and 3,589 in the region of Bardejov

**March** Young Jewish women of Bardejov slated for transport are prevented from having to go at scheduled time by typhus injection of several women and subsequent quarantine of town

**April 7** 413 young Jewish adults transported from Bardejov, 267 young men and 146 young women

**May 15** Largest of the forced evacuations and transports from Bardejov’s Jewish community with 2,401 Jews of all ages forced to turn over the keys to their homes and transported via 2 trains to Ghettos in 148 Naleczow and Konskawoly (Ople Lubielske) in Poland

**June** Roundup and deportation of 67 Jews from Bardejov

**July** Two more days of roundups and deportations of Jews from Bardejov

**October** Five more Jewish families deported from Bardejov

**November** Only 386 Jews left in the district of Bardejov

**Circa 1943-45** A Christian woman lives in the Chevra Bikur Cholim Synagogue building during the Nazi occupation bricking up the windows to hide the appearance of the synagogue and refusing entry to soldiers. It is the only synagogue in town that is not violated

**1944, March** Germany occupies Hungary endangering 7,000 Slovak Jews who fled there

**September** Soviet troops reach the Slovak border and the remaining Jews in Bardejov flee from Eastern sections of Slovakia or go into hiding

## Jewish Timeline of Bardejov – continued

**1945, January 19/20** Bardejov liberated by Russian troops, seven Bardejov Jews come out of two hiding places in cellars under stores on the Town Square

**April** Buchenwald and Bergen-Belsen concentration camps are liberated by American troops

Jews from Bardejov, as well as other Jews, return to Bardejov from concentration camps, hiding places, and the resistance movement. Bardejov becomes a center for immigration to Israel

**1947** June, Jews are attacked without being protected by the police

384 Jews, including 79 children, live in Bardejov

**1948** Israel's establishment as an independent country is celebrated at Synagogue Bikur Cholim and the whole city of Bardejov is invited to the occasion, Jewish population is around 250 people

**February** Communists take power and Czechoslovakia is declared a "people's democracy" a preliminary step toward socialism and, ultimately, communism

**1949** Socialist government effectively bars further immigration from the country and many Jews seeking to immigrate to Israel and other countries are stuck inside the country

**Circa 1963** Chevra Mishnayot Synagogue on Stocklova Street is converted into a secondary school for business studies

**1968** "The Prague Spring" political reform movement that takes hold in Czechoslovakia tries to give socialism "a human face". People gradually start to take interest in the government after 20 years of little public participation

**August** Anti-Soviet demonstrations in Czechoslovakia start period of harsh repression. The 1970s and 1980s are known as the period of "normalization," opposition to the conservative regime is stopped by all means possible

## Jewish Timeline of Bardejov – continued

- 1980** A hardware store and plumbing supply business is established in the property of the Jewish Suburbia. Supplies are warehoused in the Old Synagogue. The beit hamidrash is used as a store. Pipes, metal, and large tools are stored in the yard of the suburbia
- 1989** The “Velvet Revolution” of dissidents in both the Slovakian and Czech regions of the country leads to the eventual downfall of the socialist/communist regime
- 1989 – 1992** Czech and Slovak Republic are united in a free Czechoslovakia
- 1990** First free elections in Czechoslovakia since 1946
- 1991** Czechoslovakian President Václav Havel visits the Jewish Suburbia and declares it a national monument and memorial to the slain Jews of Bardejov
- Circa 1992** Neo-classical portico entrance of the Old Synagogue collapses
- 1993, January** The country of Czechoslovakia is divided and The Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic (Slovakia) are simultaneously and peacefully founded
- 1993** Under the new Slovak government, Jewish communal property in Slovakia is put under the ownership and control of UZZNO, the Central Union of Jewish Religious Communities in the Slovak Republic
- 1993 – 2003** Ten year period when Jewish private owners of properties confiscated under the anti-Semitic laws of 1939-45 can petition the government
- 2000** Bardejov is named a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site with the Town Square sector and the Jewish Suburbia both officially designated as world cultural treasures needing preservation and access for world visitors
- 2001** Slovak government and US government sign mutual agreement to protect and preserve certain cultural properties many of which relate to the prewar era of Jewish settlement in Slovakia
- 2005** The last Jew to live in Bardejov, Meir Spira, dies
- First phase of Bardejov Jewish cemetery renovation begins under the sponsorship of the Bardejov Jewish Preservation Committee

## Jewish Timeline of Bardejov – continued

- 2006** Bardejov Jewish Preservation Committee established as non-profit organization
- 2007** Preservation and indexing of headstones in Bardejov Jewish Cemetery is completed and put on Bardejov Jewish Preservation Committee website
- 2008** Bardejov Jewish Preservation Committee sponsors reunion trip to Bardejov with meetings with the Mayor and tours of the Jewish Suburbia, cemetery, and Bikur Cholim Synagogue in order to raise awareness and move forward the restoration of the Jewish Suburbia
- 2009** Mikvah building in Jewish Suburbia is re-roofed, painted and given new windows and doors for the purpose of housing a hardware store and offices *against the objections of the Bardejov Jewish Preservation Committee which has been working to get the hardware store vacated from the Jewish Suburbia*

**March** Peter and Pavol Hudak arrange a commemoration in front of the former Lowy house on the Bardejov Town Square to note the 130th anniversary of Rudolf Lowy's birth. Lowy was a prewar leader of the Jewish community and responsible along with some of the town's medical doctors for coming up with the scheme to inject a small dose of typhus into two of the girls slated for the first transport of Jews from Bardejov. Their scheme delayed the deportations by about one month. Presentations on Lowy are also given to local elementary and high school students

**April** Bardejov father and son historians Pavol and Peter Hudak mark the 67<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first deportations of Jewish girls from Bardejov with a candlelight ceremony in front of the mikvah building in the Jewish Suburbia

**September** For the first time Bardejov joins the European Day of Jewish Culture. The Bikur Cholim Synagogue, a constituent of the Slovak Jewish Heritage Route, is opened to the broad public for the first time ever. The entire event is organized by Pavol and Peter Hudák, local activists and researchers of Bardejov Jewish history

- 2010** Hardware store tenant vacates the Old Synagogue building and restoration work begins on Old Synagogue. Hardware store operations moved to Mikvah and Beit Hamidrash buildings

## Jewish Timeline of Bardejov – continued

**2010 September** The European Day of Jewish Culture is celebrated in the Bikur Cholim Synagogue with presentations on Jewish artists of Bardejov and Jewish cemetery symbols by Peter and Pavol Hudak

**November**, Emil Fish, representing the US Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, leads a delegation from the Bardejov Jewish Preservation Committee to a meeting with the mayor of Bardejov, representatives from UZZNO – the Central Union of Jewish Religious Communities in the Slovak Republic, and representatives of the Monument Board of Slovakia, to discuss the future of the Jewish Suburbia and plans for a Holocaust memorial in Bardejov

**November**, The city of Bardejov commits to allotting city land next to the Jewish Suburbia for a proposed Holocaust memorial to Bardejov area victims

**November**, Bardejov celebrates the tenth anniversary of its addition to UNESCO's list of World Cultural Heritage which identifies the historic town reserve and the Jewish Suburbia as world cultural treasures

**2012 May 15**, 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the WWII deportation of Bardejov's Jews

**2016** 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Jewish settlement in Bardejov