

Dukla

Ukr. Дукля, Yid. דוקלע

All supply of wines for inns and taverns shall take no routes other than those bound for Jaśliska, Dukla, and Rymanów.
The 1589 tax proclamation

On the Hungarian Route ¶ Established in the 14th century, the town of Dukla gained importance in mid-16th century, when a customs house on the route to Hungary was set up here. In 1588, King Sigismund III Vasa granted the town the right of wine storage, and from 1595 it was in Dukla that the duty on all the goods carried across the border were to be collected. The merchandise brought from the lands on the Danube was mainly wine, but also beer, horses, dried fruit, cheeses, and iron. The goods carried in the opposite direction included cloth, yarn, hide, herrings, and honey. The Hungarian wine trade was the main occupation of the first Jews who settled in Dukla at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries. In 1676,

23 Jewish families already lived here. Dukla's Jewish community was organizationally subordinated to the kahal of the nearby town of Nowy Żmigród. Information about an independent Jewish religious community dates to 1742. ¶ A reference to Haim, a rabbinic official from Dukla, can be found in the memoirs of the wine merchant and Jewish community leader Dov Ber of Bolechów (now Bolekhiv). In the mid-18th century, Haim was arrested in the Hungarian city of Miskolc after he had bought a large amount of wine paying fake coins. After a one-year investigation, it turned out that the coins had come from the treasury of the Bernardine monastery in Dukla, where they had been contributed as alms from the nobility.

In the first half of the 17th century, Dukla became the residence of the noble family of Mniszech. The Mniszech palace in Dukla, dating back to the 16th century, was rebuilt in 1764–1765 in late Baroque style by Jerzy August Mniszech and his wife Maria. The aristocratic residence was decorated with a collection of works by famous painters, including Rubens and Bacciarelli. The palace was rebuilt after its destruction in World War II, and today it houses the Historical Museum, one of the town's main tourist attractions. The Historical Museum – Dukla Palace – is located at 5 Trakt Węgierski St., tel. +48 13 433 00 85.



Jews going out of the synagogue in Dukla, 1916–1917. Photo taken by a German soldier during World War I, collection of Beit Hatfutsot, The Museum of the Jewish People, Photo Archive, Tel Aviv

Traces of Jewish presence ¶ In 1758, the old wooden synagogue burnt down in a fire. An impressive new one of brick and stone was built in its place. The rectangular main hall measured 12 by 16 metres; on the western and northern sides it was adjoined by extensions housing a porch, a library, and a prayer room for women. The synagogue was devastated by the Germans during World War II. What survives today are the walls of the prayer room with a stone portal and the alcove for the aron ha-kodesh. In some places, it is still possible to discern traces of inscriptions with texts of Hebrew prayers. ¶ Near the synagogue, the bet midrash building has also survived (8 Cergowska St.); it was built in 1884, after another fire in the town, on Rabbi Tzvi Leitner's initiative. That fire, one of many that devastated

Dukla, destroyed not only the old bet midrash but also 104 houses of Jewish burghers and six houses of Christian burghers. A prayer house functioned in this building until 1940, when it was burnt down, and after the war it was converted and served as a storehouse for artificial fertilisers. At present, it houses a store. Across the street, in the former mikveh (12 Cergowska St.), there is an emergency ambulance service, a fire brigade, and the voluntary mountain rescue service (GOPR) station. Another interesting memento of Dukla's Jewish community is the municipal nursery school building (11 Kościuszki St.), founded by the financier and philanthropist Baron Maurice de Hirsch in 1895 as a four-grade Jewish primary school for boys. In Dukla's market square it is also worth visiting the former rabbi's house,

which is currently a tourist hostel run by PTTK (Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society, 25 Rynek St.). It is possible to have dinner there or to find affordable accommodation.

Under Habsburg rule ¶ In 1772, as part of the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria, Dukla was incorporated into the Habsburg Empire. Ten years later, the town became the administrative centre of the district (cyrkuł) that was established as a result of Josephine reforms. This stimulated local development, but as early as 1790, the district centre was moved to Jasło and Dukla lost its importance. Wine trade continued, however, and the size and significance of the town Jewish community kept growing. In 1795, 574 Jews lived in Dukla. A century later – in 1900 – some 2,539 Jews lived here, constituting about 80 percent of the town's entire population, while the whole kahal of Dukla had 3,046 members and possessed



three religious schools, among other institutions.

Dukla was the birthplace of **Józef Samuel Bloch** (1850–1921), a famous rabbi, a member of the Austro-Hungarian parliament, and a journalist who fought against anti-Semitism and false accusations of ritual murder. Dukla was also the home town of Naftali and Gitel Rubinstein, the parents of Helena Rubinstein – the founder of Helena Rubinstein Inc., a global leader in the cosmetic industry.

Turning mud into gold ¶ In 1854, in the village of Bóbrka, located 11 km from Dukla, the Polish pharmacist Ignacy Łukasiewicz, who invented the kerosene lamp, together with his associates established the first oil well in the world. Further oil mines and refineries began to emerge. Jewish entrepreneurs from Dukla, such as Isaac Reich or M.H. Ehrenreich, also became active in the oil extraction and processing

business. Eventually, the deposits were depleted and the oil industry began to move elsewhere, but the first oil mine in Bóbrka continues to operate to this day. The Ignacy Łukasiewicz Museum of the Oil and Gas Industry functions at the mine. It also lies on a tourist route called the Oil Trail, which links sites associated with the emergence of oil industry in southeast Poland and southwest Ukraine (see Drohobych, Ukraine).

Former rabbi's house in Dukla, 2014. Photo by Monika Tarajko, digital collection of the "Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre" Centre (www.teatrnn.pl)



Town hall in Dukla, 1918–1936; collection of the National Digital Archives, Poland

The Battles of the Dukla Pass

¶ The Dukla Pass was a relatively easy passage for merchants travelling across the Carpathians, but it was also a trail through which the troops fought their way during the great wars of the 20th

Pinkhas Hirschprung (1912–1998) was born into the family of Rabbi Haim Hirschprung of Dukla. From his early years he exhibited outstanding abilities as a scholar and thinker; as a result, he was sent to study at the famous Yeshivah of the Sages of Lublin (Yeshivat Hakhmei Lublin). He was in Lublin when the Germans attacked Poland in September 1939. Together with a group of Yeshivah students he escaped to the USSR, where he was arrested. On his release, he left for Lithuania, then to Kobe, Japan, and then on to Shanghai. Finally, shortly before the attack on Pearl Harbor and the U.S. entry into the war, he travelled by ship to Canada. He remained in Canada until the end of his life and served as Chief Rabbi of Montreal.

World War II and the Holocaust

¶ From the beginning of the German

occupation in September 1939, Dukla inhabitants, especially the Jews, faced century. During World War I, the Austrian-Russian troops passed through Dukla several times. Soldiers of both armies killed during the fighting for the pass are buried in the military cemetery in Dukla. Further bloody fighting took place here in 1944, leaving the town with another cemetery.

The guild ¶ In 1920–1939, a Communal Craft Guild functioned in Dukla; it associated 58 handicraft workshops, including 15 shoemakers and 15 bootmakers, 8 butchers and 8 ham and sausage makers, 7 bakers, 6 tailors, 3 carpenters, 3 hairdressers, and 3 clockmakers, as well as blacksmiths and locksmiths, metalsmiths, coopers, a glazier, a varnisher, a turner, a painter, and a photographer. More than half of the artisans in the guild, 38 people, were Jews. The occupations of Jewish artisans and shopkeepers included shoemaking, baking, butchery, hairdressing, clock and watch repair, and sheet-metal work. The only photographer in Dukla, Natan Laner, was a Jew as well. His studio was located at 4 Rynek St.

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severe persecution. On Yom Kippur (September 22, 1939), German soldiers dragged praying Jews out of the synagogue and beat them. A week later, during Sukkoth, the Jews of Dukla were rounded up in the yard in front of the palace and forced to pay a ransom; then they were ordered to leave the town and move across the San, to the Soviet occupation zone. Some of the Jewish inhabitants of Dukla did move to the USSR at the time, but a majority did not want to leave their homes and stayed in the town. In 1940, the local synagogue was set on fire. In June 1942, there were about 1,600 Jews in Dukla, of whom 300 had been displaced from Polish territories incorporated into the Third Reich. In July 1942, the Germans ordered the Jews living in the nearby villages to move to Dukla; as a result, a further 600 people appeared in the town. In August 1942, Dukla Jews were again rounded up in

the yard in front of the palace; they were surrounded by barbed wire, and the liquidation of the ghetto began. A group of about 100 members of the Jewish intelligentsia were taken away in the direction of Tylawa and shot there, on the slope of the Błudna Hill. About 200 strong, healthy men were sent to the forced labour camp set up near Dukla synagogue. The remaining group of about 2,000 Jews, mainly women, children, and elderly people, were transported to the Belzec death camp. Labour camp inmates were shot during work, and those who survived were transported in December 1942 to the ghetto in Rzeszów, where most of them were killed. About 150 of Dukla Jews survived the war.

¶ In 1944, the Dukla Pass became the scene of fierce fighting again, this time between the armies of the USSR and Nazi Germany. The war damaged 85 percent of the town's buildings.

In the village of Zyndramowa, 16 km from Dukla, the *Lemko Culture Museum* has since 1994 included the house of the Oliners – a Jewish family from that village – in its exhibition. This was made possible when, after many years, Holocaust survivor **Samuel Oliner**, currently a professor at Berkeley, came in contact with Fedor Gocz, a Lemko, the founder of the museum. As a little boy, Samuel Oliner was a pupil at the cheder in Dukla, and in the spring of 1941 he witnessed the mass execution of Jews from the local ghetto. After the war, he left for the USA and made his name as a sociologist studying altruistic behaviours. What inspired Oliner's choice of this particular subject matter for research was his experiences of World War II, and above all the selfless help he received from Balbina Piecuch from the village of Bystra. She saved Oliner, taking him in and finding him a job as a stable-boy on a remote farm.

Cemeteries ¶ Dukla Jewish cemeteries are located in the southern part of town, on Trakt Węgierski St. on the way to Barwinek. In the new cemetery, established in about 1870 and situated closer to the road and surrounded by a wall, about 200

matzevot from the 19th and 20th century have survived. Near the entrance, there is a memorial to the victims of the mass execution that took place at the cemetery in 1942. Slightly higher there is the old cemetery, probably founded in the 18th



The new Jewish cemetery in Dukla, 2014. Photo by Monika Tarajko, digital collection of the "Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre" Centre (www.teatrn.pl)

century, with a few dozen matzevot surviving. The owner of both cemeteries

is the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland.

“ A postcard with Hebrew writing led me to the Jewish community, which constituted over 70 percent of Dukla pre-war population. ¶ Jacek Koszczan, <http://straznicypamieci.com/?dukla>

Memory ¶ Present-day Dukla is a charming small town inhabited by about 2,000 people, situated on a busy road to Slovakia. It is an excellent base from which to explore the Low Beskids. Tourist Information Office is located on the 1st floor of the bus station at 26a Trakt Węgierski St., tel. +48 13 43 35 616, tit@dukla.pl ¶ The “Shtetl of Dukla” Society for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in the Dukla Region (+48 691 050 902,

sztetldukla@o2.pl), founded by a retired Border Guard officer Jacek Koszczan, looks after the town Jewish cemeteries, and each summer since 2012 it has organised the “To Save the Memory” Days of Jewish Culture in Dukla. Among other activities, this non-governmental organisation has also initiated the production of two amateur feature films about Dukla’s Jews – *Why?* (Pol.: *Dlaczego?*, 2012) and *Conscience* (Pol.: *Sumienie*, 2013).

Surrounding area

Trzciana (1.5 km): the hermitage of St. John of Dukla (18th c.). ¶ **Tylawa** (11 km): former Greek Catholic and subsequently Orthodox Lemko church of the western type (1784), currently the Church of the Assumption of the Mother of God; obelisk at the mass grave of people murdered by the Nazis in the forest at the foot of Bludna Hill behind the manor house. ¶ **Bóbrka** (11 km): the Ignacy Łukasiewicz Museum of the Oil and Gas Industry;



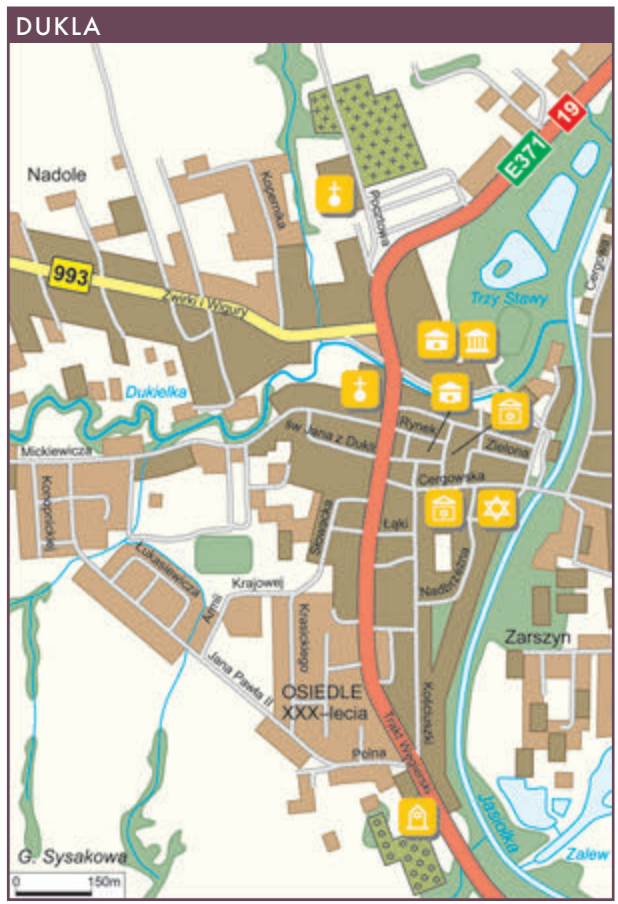
Judaica from Jacek Koszczan's collection in Dukla, 2015. Photo by Emil Majuk, digital collection of the "Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre" Centre (www.teatrn.pl)

two functioning boreholes, "Franek" and "Janina," a few caved-in oil wells and 8 wooden buildings (19th c.), a machine shop, a forge, boiler houses, pump treadmills, storehouses, administration and residential spaces. ¶ **Nowy Żmigród** (14 km): the Jewish cemetery on Jasielska St. (17th c.); a World War I cemetery. ¶ **Barwinek** (15 km): about 2 km north of the village there is an obelisk commemorating about 500 murdered Jews from Dukla, Jaśliska, and Rymanów. ¶ **Zydranowa** (16 km): the Lemko Culture Museum. ¶ **Jaśliska** (18 km): Umgebinde wooden houses (mid-19th c.) in the market square; Church of St. Catherine (1724–1756). ¶ **Żarnowiec** (18 km): the Maria Konopnicka Museum; a folk school with a restored former classroom (1886). ¶ **Trzcinnica** (36 km): open-air archaeological museum "Karpacka Troja" (Carpathian Troy); the wooden Church of St. Dorothy (late 15th c.); a manor complex with an orangery (20th c.). ¶ **Jasło** (39 km): the neo-Gothic Sroczyński Palace (1858); the Collegiate Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (15th, 18th, 19th c.); the Church of St. Stanislaus the Bishop (19th c.); the municipal park with a summer house with a figure of Aeolus; the Jewish cemetery in Floriańska St. (19th c.) with a section for World War I soldiers, a memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, and unmarked mass graves of about 200 victims killed in 1942. ¶ **Niebylec** (49 km): a synagogue, currently a library (19th c.), with unique polychromes; a Jewish cemetery (17th/19th c.); the Machowski manor complex (16th c.); the Church of the Invention of the Holy Cross and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (early 20th c.). ¶ **Brzostek** (56 km): a Jewish cemetery (mid-19th c.); the former synagogue (late 19th c.), currently used by the School Complex; a memorial plaque to the town's Jewish inhabitants on the town hall building; burghers' houses at the market square (18th–19th c.). ¶ **Wooden Architecture Trail**: Route IV (Sanok – Dukla), comprising 13 buildings.

Ruins of the synagogue in Dukla, 2015. Photo by Emil Majuk, digital collection of the "Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre" Centre (www.teatrnn.pl)



Worth seeing



The ruins of the **synagogue** (18th c.), Cergowska St. **Jewish cemeteries**, Trakt Węgierski St. ♪ **The Mniszech Palace** (16th–18th c.) with a park, currently the Historical Museum, 5 Trakt Węgierski St., tel. +48 13 433 00 85. ♪ **Bernardine monastery and church** (1761–1764), 5 Pocztowa St. ♪ **Church of St. Mary Magdalene** (1765), 18 Trakt Węgierski St. ♪ **Town hall** (17th c.), Rynek St. **Town houses** (18th/19th c.). ♪ **Military cemetery and memorial to the fallen in the Battle of the Dukla Pass** (1915).