Remembering the Jewish Community of

**Antopol, Belorussia**

Remembered by Eldad Ganin

Antopol is a town in the marshlands between Pinsk and Brest-Litovsk. Over the years this area was ruled by Poles, Germans, and Russians. Now it is in the country of Belorussia. It is an area that was often the battleground between opposing armies moving west towards Poland or east towards Russia. No matter who came through, the Jews always suffered.

Jews settled in the town around 1605. By 1897, Jews comprised 80% of the town's population of 3900 people. Antopol Jews supplied pickles and geese to markets in Lithuania and Germany. Jews also owned many small businesses, mills, and factories.

The center of Jewish life in town was the synagogue courtyard. Around the courtyard were found the Old Synagogue (a beautiful wooden shul), the Old Bet Midrash, the New Bet Midrash, and the chief Rabbi's house.

Soon after the start of the war in October, 1939, the Russians annexed the Antopol region into Belorussia. In June, 1941, the Russians fled from the oncoming German army. By October, 1941, the Germans established two ghettos -- one for the "skilled" Jews, and one for the "useless" Jews.

By October 1942, disease and German torture had reduced the Jewish population to about 2000 Jews. From October 15-19,1942, the Germans liquidated the ghetto. Only eight Jews managed to escape. Some of these joined the partisans, others were hidden by non-Jews until the Red army drove out the Germans in July 1944. Thus ended over 300 years of Jewish life in Antopol.
Our member, Eldad Ganin, lost his great-grandfather, Nahum Meir Wolowelsky, plus about 20 other family members who lived in this town.

Here is a site by Steve Morse with information about Antopol and a Yizkor book has been translated into English. A Holocaust memorial stands in Montefiere Cemetery in Queens, NY.