Remembering the Jewish Community of

Baranovice, Belarus

Remembered by Rosaline Roback Granoff
Daughter of Gladys Karelitz Roback

Before the Second World War, the city of Baranovice (Ba-RAHN-a-vitch) was located in Poland 50 kilometers west of the Soviet s group.

In 1939, the Germans started to bomb the city. Baranovice remained under Soviet control until 1941, when it nationalized businesses and made families move into small living quarters. My mother's family, the Karelitz family, were affluent storekeepers, and the Russians confiscated first the family business and then their home. They lived in two rooms in an apartment building. My mother's sister was a lawyer; her husband, a judge, was sent to Siberia never to return.

After the Germans came, my mother's family moved back to Baranovice into the ghetto. The Germans chained off two streets in the city and whole families lived in one room. There were two sections in the ghetto. From there the Jews were systematically killed on three separate occasions. First on Purim 1942, the Germans had a quota to fulfill, followed by the second killing rampage that lasted for an entire week beginning on Yom Kippur and the third massacre occurred in November 1942. The 350 Jews who survived were sent to a concentration camp near Baranovice.

During the killings, my mother escaped by working as an accountant in the Ghetto. Eventually, my mother escaped to the Partisans (where she met my father), but not before she witnessed the Germans taking members of family away. My mom is the only known survivor of her family. There are no Jews left today in Baranovice.
Here is a memoir about life in Barnovichi. There does appear to be a Jewish community.