

Remembering the Jewish Community of

Nowy Korczyn, Poland

Remembered by Gila Kriegel

Nowy Korczyn (Novi Korchin), known in Yiddish as Naishtadt (Na-shtute), is a small town located in the Kielce region of Poland. The earliest Jewish community in Nowy Korczyn dates to 1564. In the 1921 census, the Jewish population was 2478, which was 67% of the total community. Jews in Nowy Korczyn were mostly business owners. They owned grocery stores, shoe stores, a soda factory, building supply stores, hardware stores, textile stores, a bakery. The Polish people were mostly farmers. The Jews were observant. There were only orthodox shuls and shtiebels, one large beautiful shul and 3 or 4 smaller ones.

Most Jewish children in Nowy Korczyn went to public school, which was compulsory. They went to Hebrew school in the afternoon. There was a Yeshiva for the very orthodox. The Mizrachi movement was very active, teaching Zionist ideals.

Christians and Jews lived in relative harmony. Many of the Jews lived comfortably, some with household help.

In 1939, the Nazis invaded Poland. In 1942, most of the 4000 Jews of Nowy Korczyn were moved into one area, the Jewish ghetto. Jews were not allowed to leave the ghetto. On October 1, 1942, loud speakers awakened the ghetto. "All Jews must leave their homes and may take only an overnight bag. Jews must go immediately to the center of town." To quote an eyewitness to the deportation of the Jews of Nowy Korczyn, "The whippings, the barking of the dogs, the savageness and cruelty that these poor Jews from Nowy Korczyn had to endure, I am unable to put into words. The pleadings and the screams for water were continuous." The Jews were loaded into

trains and sent to work camps and eventually to concentration camps like Kielce and Treblinka.

Of the 4000 Jews of Nowy Korczyn, one of the only families that survived intact as a family was the family of Gila Kriegel's mother, Sarah Raze Wiener. Sarah, two of her sisters, her parents and a cousin were hidden in an underground bunker for two and a half years by a righteous gentile couple Steffa and Yusef Macugowski. (Mah-tzu-govskee) The Macugowskis risked their lives to hide eight Jews in a crawl space under their home. The hidden group lived on bread and water in a two-foot high bunker. They couldn't stand up straight, couldn't speak above a whisper and didn't see the light of day for two and a half years. For the last six months of the war, the Nazis made their headquarters in the Macugowski's home. The Macugowskis stayed on, ostensibly to act as servants to the Nazis, but really to continue to feed the Raze family. It was a horrible existence, but they were the lucky ones. They survived as did a fourth sister and her husband who had been sent to Kielce and Bergen Belsen.

There may be another 30 or 40 people who survived from Nowy Korczyn. Today there are no Jews living in Nowy Korczyn. Only the two Jewish cemeteries and the destroyed synagogue remain.

Here is a [website](#) about Nowy Korczyn.