

Remembering the Jewish Community of

Radymno, Poland

Remembered by Naftali Taubenfeld

Father of Jane Cohen

An old song goes as follows:

Radymno, Radymno, Radymno ist gewesen ain shtetl a sheine a feine.

Radymno is a beautiful and fine town.

Sitting on the main road between Warsaw and Lvov, Radymno was, in the 1930's, the home of 3500 Jews among a total population of 6400. It was a place where Jewish life flourished, despite occasional bursts of anti-Semitism from its non-Jewish inhabitants. Jews had lived in Radymno for over 350 years.

Every morning during Elul, the sound of the shofar would arouse us to come to daven. Every Friday afternoon, all the children of the town would get their nails cut so that they would look good on Shabbos.

Economically, Radymno was a thriving town, and all its inhabitants benefited. It was no secret that the non-Jews did well as a result of the industriousness of the Jews. However, when the Germans came, our non-Jewish neighbors had their opportunity to vent their in-grown hatred on us. They always tried to outdo the Germans with their mistreatment of the Jews.

I remember seeing them cut the beards of the old Jews in public; I remember seeing them humiliate all Jews by forcing them to wash the sidewalks and the streets. Most of the Jews of Radymno either were murdered by the Germans or, as in our case, escaped from the town. Even after the war was over, when my aunt returned to Radymno from the camps, she was murdered by the local townspeople. Eventually, all the remaining residents of Radymno left the town; last year, when my brother visited Poland, he found Radymno to be totally desolate. He described it as a dead town -- dead with no life.

Also last year, my family and I went to Israel. As we stood in the Community of Villages in Yad Vashem, we took pictures, pointing to the town of Radymno. We were all there: My wife and I, our five children, their spouses, and our nine grandchildren. The town is gone. The Jews survived.