

History of Jewish settlement in the Bukowina and Czernowitz from 1776 till 1914

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Till 1774–75, Bukowina was part of Ottoman Moldavia. A small population of mostly Sephardi Jews lived in the area. They were largely engaged in commerce and some had come to Bukowina by the invitation of the Ottoman government.

Shortly after annexation by Austria and incorporation into the province of Galicia, the 1776 census recorded the Jewish population of the Bukowina as 2906 people. Immediately following annexation This Population started to grow due to an influx of Jews from Galicia proper.

In 1780 there were 1069 Jewish families living in the Bukowina. Estimating the number of people per family to be 4, we can assume the total number number of Jewish people to have been about 4000. This is an Increase of over 30% in 4 years.

During the rule of Maria Theresia, who's attitude towards Jews was far from friendly, Jews were generally not allowed to settle in the Bukowina.

With the ascent of Josef II (1780 – 1790) to the throne, the Situation of the Jews improved. In 1782, he abolished the law by which Jews had to wear a yellow badge and pay the pol tax. In that year,(1782) he issued the "Toleranzpatent" through which he gave Jews the right to engage in handicrafts and attend schools and universities.

At that time a large number of Jews in the eastern provinces of the Austrian Empire earned their livelihood from the manufacture and trade in wine and alcoholic beverages. When a ban on their owning taverns Was enacted, these people lost the means of earning a living and became paupers.

Josef II decided to settle a significant number of these people as Farmers on land which would have to be donated for this purpose by each village or rural district. Each village or rural district, according to it's size, had to provide a proportionate number of Jewish families with land and seed for the first sowing. With the land and the grain, occasionally Jews settling in the rural areas also received houses. This brought Jews from the small towns to the rural areas and in to the Bukowina. During the years 1780 – 1790, small Jewish farmsteads first Appear in the Bukowina.

But with the ascendancy of Francis I to the throne, harsher laws Pertaining to the Jewish population were enacted.

Francis I ruled from 1792 till 1835. During his rule and despite the Harsh anti Jewish laws, many Jews in the Austrian empire attained prominence in commerce, industry, banking and transportation. From 1816 Jews could settle in the Bukowina only if given individual residence

permits. Still during this period many Galician Jews settled in Czernowitz.

Emancipation of sorts was finally enacted in 1848 after the unsuccessful revolution of that year, in which Jews had taken a prominent part.

The federal constitution of March 4, 1849 separated Bukowina from Galicia and made it an autonomous duchy whose internal affairs as defined by the constitution would be regulated by a Diet or Regional Parliament.

These internal affairs were defined as those concerning public buildings paid for by government funds, charitable institutions, churches and schools, maintenance and housing of the army and any other functions assigned to the Bukowina parliament by the federal government.

At the head of the Autonomous Duchy of Bukowina, was a President named By the central government.

This independence lasted only 32 months, because with the emperor's patent of December, 31, 1851 reforms were introduced which negated the political rights granted by the March 4, 1849 constitution, to the various crown Lands including Bukowina. Bukowina remained however, as before, an independent crown land separate from Galicia.

After 1848, many Jews left farming since they saw no possibilities of success in that endeavor because of the unfavorable rules for leasing and parceling out the land. They were lured to the cities where they thought It would be possible to find work.

In 1860 Graf Agenor Goluchowski, who had been named as interior minister On August 1859 attempted to reunite Bukowina and Galicia into a single administrative entity.

On December 24, 1860 representatives of the people of all classes and Religious entities of Bukowina presented a petition to the minister of state, Anton Ritter v. Schmerling (1805-1893), in which they demanded the autonomy of Bukowina.

Kaiser Franz Joseph I fulfilled the wish of Bukowina and with the patent Of February 26, 1861 Bukowina again became an independent duchy with its own coat of arms, the earlier regional constitution was reestablished and a regional law was enacted according to which a Regional Parliament consisting of 31 members, the Bukowina Bishop and 29 elected representatives (10 of them from the class of the large land owners, 7 from the cities and chambers of trade and commerce, and 12 from the rural districts) was established.

On April 6, 1861 the first session of the Regional Parliament took place.

The Jewish population, above all the intelligentsia took an active part in the fight for the independence of Bukowina. They not only helped draft the petitions, their representatives were active in all the deputations.

Largely as a result of these political changes, Bukowina experienced a tremendous population growth and the Jewish population of the Bukowina increased even faster than of the population in general.

In 1850 the total population of Bukovina was 380,826 inhabitants, including 14,581 Jews (3.83% of the total population). In 1857, the total population was 456,920 inhabitants, an increase of 20%, the Jewish population numbered 29,187 (6.38% of the total population), an increase of 100%.

In the years 1857 – 1869 the Jewish population continued to grow:

In 1869 the total population was 511,964 an increase of 12% since 1857. The Jewish population was 47,754 an increase of 63% since 1857.

In the years 1869 – 1880, the general population continued to grow and the Jewish population growth, continued to outpace the general population growth;
By 1880 the total population numbered 571,671, an increase of less than 12% over 1869.
The Jewish population numbered 67,418, an increase of 41% since 1869.

In the period 1850 – 1880, the total population grew by 50% while The Jewish population more than quadrupled.
By 1880, on the average, one of every 11 inhabitants of the Bukowina was Jewish.

This increase in the Jewish population of the Bukovina can be attributed to immigration of Jews from Galicia, Russia, and Romania where Jews had far fewer civil rights and economic opportunities and where they were often subject to harassment and expulsion.

In Galicia, Jews were given the rights to vote in 1860 and complete political rights in 1867, but they were distrusted and discriminated against by the Polish majority who wanted to break away from Austro – Hungary and be joined to Poland.

In Russia , during the rule of Nicholas I (1825 – 1855), Jews had to provide a larger proportion of army recruits than the rest of the population and the term of service was at least 25 years. The Pale of Settlement, too small to contain the large Jewish population was further restricted in 1835. In 1871 there was a pogrom in Odessa, in 1881 there began an era of pogroms and expulsions. In 1891 Jews were expelled both from St. Petersburg and from Moscow.

In Romania Jews were harassed and discriminated against by one Government after the other. At the Berlin Congress of 1878, when Romania was granted complete independence it promised equal rights to the Jewish population, but never lived up to it's promise.

By 1880 Jewish inhabitants were to be found in all parts of the Bukowina and only 11 villages in the province did not include Jewish inhabitants.

In most cities and villages, the Jewish population constituted 10% of the total population.
In 26 villages the Jews constituted from 10.2 to 49.1% of the total population.

In 1857 of a total population of 456,92, the Jewish population was 29,187 (6.53%).

In 1869 of a total population of 513,404 the Jewish population was 47,772 (9.31%).
 In 1880 of a total population of 571,671 the Jewish population was 67,418 (11.79%)
 This was 6.71% of the total Jewish population of Austria.

According to the census of 1880, the Jewish population lived in the following cities in Bukovina:

City	Total Residents	Jewish Residents	% Jewish
Chernivtsi	45,600	14,449	31.7
Suceava	10,104	3,750	37.1
Wiznitz	4,165	3,795	91.9
Siret	7,240	3,122	37.1
Kimpolung	5,534	799	14.4
Waschkoutz	4,277	781	18.3
Sadagura	4,836	3,888	80.3
Storozhinets	4,852	1,601	32.8
Gura Humorului	2,957	963	32.5
Boyany	5,227	781	14.9
Vatra Dornei	3,980	494	12.4
Unter Stanestie	2,727	690	25.3
Putila	691	80	11.5

In the following years the Jewish population of the Bukowina continued to grow as is evident from their number:

In 1880, 67,418
 In 1900, 96,135
 in 1910, 102,900
 in 1914, 120,000.

In the Bukowina as a whole the Jewish population grew at a faster rate than the Christian population. The growth of the Jewish population in the years 1869 1880 was 41.33% as compared to 11.35% for the total population.
 In the years 1880 1890, the Jewish population grew 22.69% as opposed to 13.11% for the total population and
 in the years 1890 1900, 16.24% versus 12.93%.

In Czernowitz, the Jewish population continued to grow too, but their percentage as part of the population did not change.

In 1890 out of 54,171 residents, 17,359 were Jewish (32.04%).
 In 1900 out of 67,622 residents, 21,587 were Jewish (31.92%).
 In 1910 out of 87,235 residents, 28,613 were Jewish (32.10%).