



# DEMBITZ

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JEWISH PLACES OF INTEREST IN DĘBICA, POLAND



# Dębica

Yiddish: דעמביץ Dembitz

Location: Poland, Podkarpackie Voivodship

Town rights: 1358

Population: 47,000

Area: 13 square miles

Coordinates: 50°3'N 21°25'E

# BASIC FACTS

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- 1471 – the first mention of Jews in Dębica.
- Late 16th century – the first permanent Jewish settlement.
- 1660-1690 – the second wave of the Jewish permanent settlement.
- From the 19th century on, Jews dominated in crafts, business and industry.
- At the turn of 19th and 20th century, Jews outnumbered the Christian population.
- July 21, 1942 – the first liquidation action in the local ghetto: the end of the kehillah.

# POPULATION

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Year	Total population	Christians	Jews	Jewish Percentage
1880	3,256	841	2,385	73
1890	3,578	1,395	2,153	60
1900	3,991	1786	2,205	55
1910	4,871	2,752	2,119	43
1921	3,922	2,428	1,564	40
1939	14,556	11,656	2,900	20



# PLACES OF INTEREST

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- New Town Synagogue
- Ghetto Area
- Cemetery
- Memorial monument in the Wolica forest
- Mikołajków Family Square
- Regional Museum, incl. Judaica section
- German Nazi Labor Camp Museum in Pustków (option)

# NEW TOWN SYNAGOGUE

- Originally built after 1660
- Demolished around 1712
- Rebuilt around 1772
- Demolished 1914
- Renovated around 1920
- Demolished 1939
- Refurbished and turned to department store 1955
- Present shape 1995
- Registered as a law-protected monument 2021
- Purchased by the municipality 2023
- Renovated to become a civic culture center 2024-2025



New Town Synagogue circa 1920 (Yad Vashem)



# NEW TOWN SYNAGOGUE

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New Town Synagogue in January 2018. Photo by Arkadiusz Franczyk



# GHETTO AREA: DATES

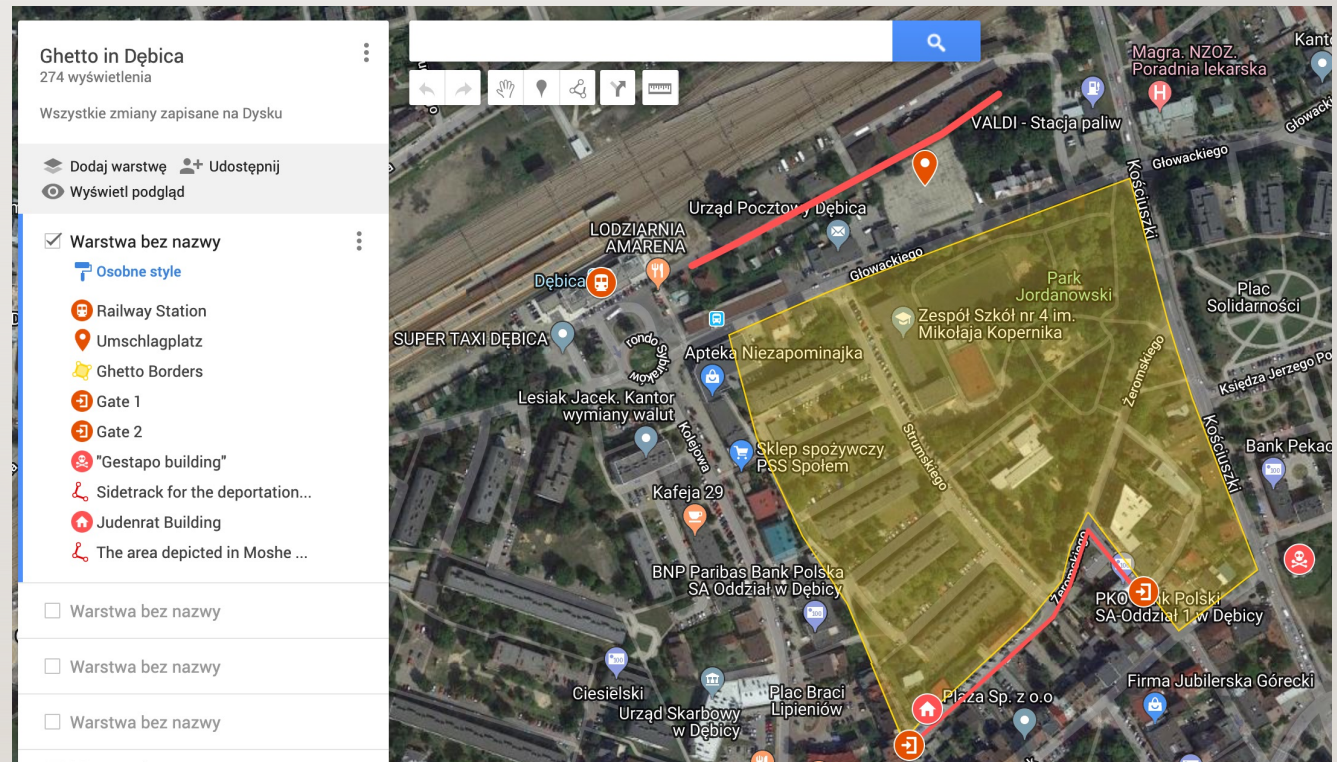
- September 8, 1939 – Germans enter town
- January 1941 – Open ghetto established
- June 29, 1942 – Ghetto closed
- July 21-25, 1942 – First liquidation action
- August 1942 – Ghetto turned to labor camp
- December 15-16, 1942 – Second liquidation action
- April 13-15, 1943 – Final liquidation





# GHETTO AREA: BORDERS

- Głowackiego Street – north
- Kościuszki Street – east
- Żuławskiego Street – south
- Kolejowa Street – west





# GHETTO AREA: COMMEMORATION

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Holy Victims of the Ghetto are remembered each year around July 21 during a special commemoration ceremony co-organized by Ireneusz Socha and the Mayor of Dębica.



# CEMETERY



- It was probably founded between 17th and 18th century and was fenced with a brick wall. It had a decorative gate and a Taharah building next to it.
- During World War II, Germans executed Jews in the cemetery and finally devastated it by using most of the matzevot as building material in and around the city.



# CEMETERY

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Jewish cemetery in Dębica in 1986. Photo by Andrzej Kramarz

- After the war, a group of Jewish survivors had transported most of the matzevot they were able to found back to the cemetery.
- In the late 1940's, the cemetery wall was pulled down and the bricks and the gate were all stolen by the city residents.
- In the following decades, many matzevot were destroyed or were stolen to be reused as tombstones in the local Catholic cemetery. The cemetery was neglected, and the city residents treated it as a playground and a recreational area.



# CEMETERY



Rededication on August 20, 1996. Photo by Artur Barwacz

- In 1983, a temporary fence was built around the cemetery following a petition by Ireneusz Socha.
- In 1996, the Nissenbaum Foundation cleaned the area, set the remaining matzevot in order and built a new metal fence around it. They also organized a rededication ceremony on August 20, 1996.
- Today, the cemetery is owned and taken care of by the Dębica county.

# MEMORIAL IN THE WOLICA FOREST



Yad Vashem Photo Archive

- In July 1942, during a liquidation action in the local ghetto, the Germans killed almost 600 Jews in the Wolica forest.
- In 1949, on the site of the mass murder a memorial monument with a commemorative plaque was built by a surviving son of Natan Grünspan. Later another commemorative plaque was added on the monument by Meir Goldman.
- In 1996, the Nissenbaum Foundation built a fence around the monument.



# MEMORIAL IN THE WOLICA FOREST

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Photo by Przemysław Sroka



# MIKOŁAJKÓW FAMILY SQUARE

In 2006, the City Council of Dębica resolved to give the name of Aleksander and Leokadia Mikołajkóws to a square located near their house in which the couple had saved the lives of 13 Jews. Mikołajkóws kept them in hiding from July 1942 until August 23, 1944. All were saved.

Aleksander and Leokadia Mikołajkóws were named Righteous Among the Nations by the Yad Vashem institution in Jerusalem.





# MIKOŁAJKÓW FAMILY

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Dr Aleksander Mikołajków and his wife Leokadia  
with their sons Leszek and Andrzej

# THOSE SAVED

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- Chaskiel Reich – ritual slaughterer, 51
- Rajzla Reich – housewife, 45
- Rachela Reich – no profession, 20
- Samuel Reich – schoolboy, 18
- Efraim Reich – schoolboy, 16
- Jakub Wolf – merchant, 65
- Rubin Wolf – merchant, 36
- Rachela Wolf – embroidress, 28
- Chawa Wolf – no profession, 23
- Alta Kohn – no profession, 34
- Lejb Kohn – child, 6
- Chaim Faust – hat maker, 65
- Perla Faust – no profession, 61

# AUTHOR & GUIDE

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