



red

yellow

## *kalvarija*

[\*other names\*](#)

[\*background\*](#)

[\*resources\*](#)

[\*mapquest\*](#)

[\*Map of Area around Kalvarija in 1883\*](#)

[\*bibliography\*](#)

[\*cemetery inscriptions\*](#)

[\*surname list\*](#)

[\*my price roots\*](#)

[\*holocaust research\*](#)

[\*family finder\*](#)

[\*biographies\*](#)

[\*autobiographical passage\*](#)

[\*homepages\*](#)

[\*postcards\*](#)

[\*google group news\*](#) 

[\*1908 households\*](#) 



Click on thumbs for full image

[\*general background\*](#)

Kalvarija, presently a small city in the District of Marionpole, Lithuania , was built in the 17th century on the site of the small village Trabi on both sides of the river Sheshupe. By 1678 King August II recognized it as a city and gave it city

rights. From the years 1795-1807 the city was part of Prussia. In 1815 it was conquered by the Russians and was included in the Gubernia of Suwalk.

Kalvarija's fast development was mainly due to the fact that it was along side of the road to St. Petersburg and Warsaw. By 1827 there were 501 buildings, in 1867 it became central city of the district which included a courthouse, post office, telegraph agent, a hospital of 25 beds and 3 doctors. There were also army doctors in the 2 army units in the barracks there. Kalvarija had a large jail, several factories for the production of medicinal alcohol, and a large market.

Russian control continued to 1915. During WW2 the Germans overthrew the city and surrounding areas. Half of the city was burnt around 900 buildings. In 1919, with the evacuation of the Germans, Kalvarija became part of the District of Marionpole in independent Lithuania. In 1921 Kalvarija was connected to the Lithuanian railroad. In 1926 a hospital, 500 beds, for the mentally ill was moved into what were once the army barracks. It was one of largest of Lithuanian medical institutions. During WW2 many buildings were destroyed.

## ***Jewish Settlement up WWI***

There is a good possibility that there was a Jewish presence in the village of Trabi that was in the weaving trade. As early as 1713 the Jews received permission from King August II to build a synagogue under the condition that it would not be higher than the church. Jewish craftsmen also received permission to work without becoming members of the guilds.

Jews were mainly engaged in trade, crafts, and agriculture and in a small part industry. Jews owned more than 80% of the stores (60 of 72). Grain trade was also in the hands of Jewish merchants exporting mainly to Germany. There was also a pig's bristles processing factory for brushes where many Jews were employed. The workers of this factory organized, under the influence of the "Bund" during the years 1893-1897. They organized strikes in order to improve their working conditions to just 10 hours a day, and to improve their salary which was at a starvation level.

The achievements of the German Jewish community in the areas of Science and culture made a big impression on the Jewish community of Kalvarija and several of the sons of the rich began to study, along with their religious studies, Russian and German. They "Germanized" their Yiddish, which was known as "Kalvaricha Death", which was well known in Lithuania. The German example (culture) on one hand, and the poverty on the other hand where led to the emigration of many. Hundreds of the young and young families left the city in the 80's of the 19th century, mainly to the U S, South Africa and Eretz Israel. In Kalvarija there were several "specialists " who made their living by smuggling migrants through Germany, as this was cheaper and less complicated.

Most of the Jewish children studied in the "Heder", in a few of these Hebrew and grammar were taught as well. There

was also an institution for 150 poor children for the study of Talmud-Torah. 1858-59 with the permission of the local authorities a general school was created where 80 - 100 young boys and girls studied. Many continued their studies in the Russian Gymnasium in Suwalk or Marionpole. In 1871 15 Kalvariya youth studied in these institutions. In 1899 a school for the poor was formed by some of the richer families to enable them to continue studies after the "Heder".

In 1803 a new synagogue was built with heavy walls of large stones. The Bima and Tora case was decorated by an artisan and the walls were also decorated by paintings of animals. In the courtyard a Beit Midrash was built.



Social work in Kalvariya. Active charity organizations (Gimilot Hasidim) gave loans with small weekly return payments. A sick charity ( Bikor Cholim) gave health services and medicines and a group of women and young girls gave aid to the sick.



By the end of the 19th century many were learned in Hebrew and subscribed to the Hebrew press Hamalitz, Hamagid and Hasharchar.

There is early evidence to aliya to Eretz Israel as there are 9 tombstones of former Kalvariyan residents on Mt Olive cemetery in Jerusalem. In the early 80's youth joined the "Yesod Hamala" organization with the purpose of Aliya to Eretz Israel. In 1890 the Zionist movement Hovavei Zion gathered signatures to send protest to Baron Hirsh in order to convince him to help resettling Eretz Israel instead of Argentina. In 1894 the organization " Shcarei Toushia " was formed in order to educate toward Aliya. In a donor list for Eretz Israel , in 1909, 120 names from Kalvariya residents.

Autumn 1914 with the beginning of W.W.I Jews were ordered to hard labor on roads as punishment for their German support. In the battles in the area in and around Kalvariya there were 220 casualties to the Jewish community. Half the city was burnt including the old wooden synagogue. Most of the Jewish residents were forced to leave their homes and scattered to other towns in Russia.

At the end of the German occupation many returned and were in the need of aid.

### ***Kalvariya during Lithuanian Independence***

With the formation of Independent Lithuania on the 16th February 1918 and the evacuation of the German army at the beginning of 1919, many of the former resident began to return. With the announcement of Jewish Autonomy an 11 man committee was formed. This committee was active in most of the Jewish life during the years 1921-25. Since most knew Hebrew as well as Yiddish the protocols were written in both languages page opposite page.

In the local council there was also representation from the Jewish community. In the election of 1924 a Jew was elected

as Vice Mayor. In 1934 there were three Jews in the council of nine.

The Jewish community began to rebuild their houses that were destroyed and many returned to their former occupations. The economic situation was bad and the store owners suffered most. Grain trade also suffered because of the new laws limiting trade. The situation was so bad that in 1923 a committee sent a letter to the main national Jewish committee with requests for aid for 97 men women and children (listed by name) that need clothing.

From a survey conducted by the Lithuanian government in 1931 there were 72 stores in Kalvarija 60 of which were owned by Jews. On that same survey there were 16 factories and small crafts shops in the hands of Jews. In 1937 there were only 32 in the hands of Jews. The psychiatric hospital, the largest in Lithuania, offered livelihood to Jewish contractors and suppliers.

The scenery and pure air that surrounded the city, the river Sheshupe and the forests beside it drew many Jewish vacationers, which also added to the resident's livelihood.

The Lithuanian Organization of Merchants was against buying from Jews and as a result there was a boycott against Jewish stores and craftsmen. The Lithuanian co-operative took in their hands the agriculture industry exports and the imports of agricultural tools, seeds, fertilizers etc. and in this many lost their livelihood. In 1939 the National Lithuanian Party in Kalvarija proclaimed that the market day be on the "Shabbat" (Saturday). These were the main causes of emigration.

In the Jewish school Yavne there were 135 students, in the Yiddish school 130 students. There was a high school of eight classes. This institution was in operation till 1935 and was closed because of lack of students. A Hebrew kindergarten was active, a library of 2000 books in Hebrew and Yiddish.

From time to time theatre groups would come to Kalvarija to perform and the local residents also had amateur performances with the income for Keren Ha Kayemeth, Keren Ha Yesod, Wizo and Keren Tel Chai.

Zionist groups were active in Kalvarija. There was a Kibbutz run by "Ha Halutz" for preparing youth for their aliya. The youth received Zionist education in the Hebrew schools and the youth movements and many did reach Eretz Israel. Sport activity was centered mainly in the local branch of "Maccabi".

There were also volunteers in the local fire brigade. One member received an award in 1937.

### ***Kalvarija during WWII and after***

In 1939 the Germans deported 2,400 Jews from the Suwalk province of Poland to the border of Lithuania and 800 of

these were absorbed and taken care of by the residents of Kalvarija.

When Lithuania became part of the Soviet republic in June 1940 factories in the hands of Jews were taken over and put in the hands of Komisars. Supplies were limited and prices rose. The middle class which was mostly Jewish was the hardest hit. Jewish youth movements were abolished and the Communist youth movement made great efforts in enlisting youth. Hebrew educational institutes were closed.

On 22 June 1941, the first day of the war between Germany and Soviet Russia, the Germans entered Kalvarija. On the 1st of July the Lithuanian police proclaimed that all Jews were obligated to wear the Yellow Star patch, and that they were forbidden to walk on the sidewalks. Jews were taken to work at hard labor and on the way to work and back they were humiliated while the Lithuanian population watched. At the beginning of July 90 people, Lithuanian communists, Jewish intellectuals, and others were brought in to the hotel "Zdarouvitv". There they were beaten, tortured for several days. On the 5th of July they were brought to the banks of lake Orios, about 2 km from the city, where they were shot and buried.



On Shabbat 30th of August all the remaining Jews were evacuated to the barracks in Marionpole, under the pretense of being sent to the ghetto there. All their belongings were left at the Synagogue and in their empty carts the Jews were transported. All in all there were 8600 Jews in the Barracks.

On 1st of Sept. 1941 they were all brought to the banks of river Sheshupe and there near pre dug pits they were shot and buried. The Lithuanian police and shot later caught some that managed to escape. After they had rid themselves of the Jews the locals, at the head the Priest proceeded in destroying all the Jewish shops that were in the vicinity of the church and with their bricks built a wall around it.



During WW2 1/2 the city was destroyed. Nothing was left of the old Jewish cemetery. Beit Ha Midrash remained whole is used as a granary.

After the war only one Jewish family returned and lived in their home for about 1/2 yr. In the years 1989-70 there was but one Jew living in Kalvarija.

In the 1990's the old cemetery was partially restored.

*Bibliography: Encyclopedia Judaica*

*Pinkas Hakehilot: Lita (Hebrew)*

*Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities*

*Edited by Dov Levin*

[return to menu](#)

## *resources*

### **The Suwalk-Lomza Interest group**

In the 19th century Kalvarija was part of The Kingdom of Poland in Suwalk Gebernia.

#### **Landsman** *articles*

Vol I # 3-4 Cemetery transcripts

[Vol IV Translation of article on town by Berl Kagan](#)

Vol I # 3-4 Taxpayers list from 1821-31

Vol II # 2 Contributors to Eretz Israel

Vol IV # 2-3 Donor lists from 1872,1876,1886

Vol IV # 4 + Vol VI Visits to the town with photos

Vol VII # 1 Pinkassim in Chicago

Brought to my attention by Mark Gordon

#### **Jri-Poland**

[AJGS Cemetery Project report on Kalvarija cemetery.](#)

Use alphabetical table to get to K

[Genealogical Research and Travel in Lithuania](#)

[Other Suwalk source](#) at Feefhs

[\*Bruce Kahn's Photograph Index\*](#)

The photos on this page are from the beautiful collection of photographs of Kalvariija with his kind permission

[JGSR Jewish Genealogy Web Pages](#)

[menu](#)

*surname list*

In the process of researching for this page I made contact with many other Kalvariija researchers and have made a list of their surnames.

BANOWITZ	BLACHARIS	KAVADLO	KAVOLSKY	RIEBE	ROTSTEIN	SIMKOVSKY	SMOLIZANSKI
RODBERG	DENEMARK	FREID	GERBER	GOLDSTEIN	GRUNSTEIN	GUTERMAN	HARRIS
KRONSON	LIPOFSKY	MARGOLIS	MITNICK	MOTNICK	OPPENHEIM	PURWIN	RACIKOVSKI
RODBERG	ROSENBLATT	RUDBERG	RYTENBERG	SCHAMPANSKY	SEJNENSKY	SENENSKY	SHAMPANSKY
SPEKTORSKY	SYLVETSKY	TIKTIN	BLAUSTEIN	BRANSON	BANOWITZ	CALECKY	DAVIDSON
DAVIS	DENEMARK	GOLDSTEIN	GREENSTEIN	KOZUSCHNIK	KRAMARSKY	PALNITSKY	PHILLIPS
EDELSTIEN	ESTERSON	FELBROWSKI	FELDMAN	FINK	BLACHARSH	GERBER	GINSBERG

GREENSTONE	GUTERMAN	JURGELIS	KALWERSKY	KASHANSKI	KATSERINSKY	KOHANSKI	KOSSIN
LAZENIK	LEVINE	LOBELSTEIN	MARGOLIES	MITNIK	MOTNICK	OPENSTEIN	OPPENHEIMER
POLLACK	POPELIANSKI	PRIESGERBER	PSHAMISLOVSKI	PURWIN	RATKOWSKY	RIEBE	RITTENBER
RITTENBERG	RODBERG	ROTSTEIN	SHAPIRO	SMIGELSKY	SPEKTORSKY	SULOWAY	TAVEL
TYCKOCINSKY	UKRAINSKI	WIZANSKY	WOLF	ZERETSKY	ZERETSKYAND	ZILBERSTEIN	ZILINSKAS
ZIRILSTEIN	GOTTLIEB	TICKTIN	TRILLING	STAM	STONE	ARONSON	PREIS
SKIERSOBOLSKI	SKIRSABOLSKY	GOLDSTON	JACOBS	LEVY	DEMBNER	ROSENHOLZ	REINHERTZ
RESNIKOFF	LAVNER	EIGER/AGAR	FRANK	STERN	WOLFKOWICZ		

Please note that these names are not in alphabetical order. **Check your name using ---find-- ctrl F** . Note that many names ending with Y can also end with I and vice versa. I have recently set up a mailing list on Google Groups. If you would like to be put on the mailing list or can contribute any information for this page please write

[\*Carol Monosson Edan\*](#)

[menu](#)

### *my price roots*

The name Preis may have come from the time that Kalvarija was part of Prussia between the years 1795-1804.

My maternal grandmother was born Fannie PRICE was from Kalvarija. Her fathers' headstone can be found in the Kalvarija Jewish Cemetery. She married Hyman ARONSON from the Augustow which was also part of Suwalk, Kingdom of Poland. They emigrated to the US at the beginning of the 20th century and settled in Boston. Any connection? Write

[Carol Monosson Edan](#)

[menu](#)

## ***bibliography and suggested reading***

"Where Once We Walked: A Guide to the Jewish Communities Destroyed in the Holocaust," by Gary Mokotoff and Sallyann Sack

"Jewish Roots in Poland" by Miriam Weiner

"Marijampole on the river Sheshupe" Edited by Avraham Tory-Golub

Pinkas Hakehilot: ( Hebrew )

Edited by Dov Levin

The Jews of Lithuania: A History of a Remarkable Community 1316-1945

by Masha Greenbaum

Yahadut Lita ( Hebrew )

Vol 1 edited by N. Goren, L. Garfunkel

Vol 2 edited by R. Hasman, D Lipec

Vol 3 + 4 edited by L. Garfunkel

[menu](#)

## *holocaust research*



### *Memorial in Mariampole*

Here the blood of about 8000 Jews was spilled  
- men, women, and children;  
and about 1000  
people of other nationalities  
that  
the Nazi murderers  
and  
their local collaborators killed in a gruesome fashion.

Since the fate of the Jews remaining in Kalvariija in 1939, a little more than 1000 souls, was the same as the Jews of Marionpole I suggest a visit to [Marionpole](#) shtetle page on Shtetlinks.

[Mariampole, Lithuania](#): the translation of the necrology from "Mariampole al gedot ha-nahar Sheshupe" has been contributed by James M. Friedlander.

### [Yad Vashem](#)

The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority

### [The Simon Wiesenthal Center](#)

Go to Multimedia Center - Index to Topics - Click K - Scroll to Kalvariija

### [U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)

### [The American Friends of The Ghetto Fighters' House](#)

[menu](#)

## *homepage links*

Do you have a homepage that is relevant to Kalvarija ? I will place a link here

## *jewishGen Family Finder*



Rabbi's House

*A widely-used searchable database which connects people who are searching the same ancestral towns and surnames.*

Search the JGFF

[menu](#)

[ShtetLink directory](#)

[JewishGen Home Page](#)

*"This page is hosted by JewishGen, Inc., the Official Home of Jewish Genealogy, at no cost to the public. If you have found this page useful, your [Jewish Gen-erosity](#) is greatly appreciated." Donations to JewishGen are tax-deductible.*

Compiled by [Carol Monosson Edan](#)

Last update 28 October 2010 CME

All Photos from [Bruce Kahn's Photograph Index](#)

Copyright ©1999 & 2001 & 2003:CME \_

