

[Pages 621-629]

The History of the Jews in Tábor

(Tábor, Czech Republic – 49°24' 14°40')

Compiled by Dr. František Kroupa, Tábor

Translated from the original Czech by **Jan O. Hellmann/DK**

Edited in English by **Rob Pearman/UK** Assisted by **Dan Pearman/UK**

Jews appear relatively late in the history of the town of Hradiště Hora Tábor (*Hradiště on Tábor Mountain*) – known as ‘Tábor’. Almost all the surrounding towns have records showing the presence of Jewish families in the 15th century and some even as early as the 14th century. Jews are first documented as being in Tábor at the end of the 16th century. The reason for this is surely the quaint religious and social character of old Tábor, which – despite the destruction in 1437 and 1451 beyond its boundaries – demonstrated the internal relations within the town^[1].

I am not saying that Jews had not visited this town before. Tábor was certainly a magnet for Jewish merchants living in the surrounding area. But such visits were only on market days and suchlike, and permanent settlement was excluded because of the views of the governing commons^[2]. It is therefore even more interesting that the first Jewish name is noted in the town's oldest records (in 1525) in connection with a gentile family. This name was Jan Kloboučník. He is shown as living in houses nos. 69 and 70, and his brewery is called “Židovský pivovar” (*The Jewish Brewery*). It is a pity that the reason for this name is unknown^[3].

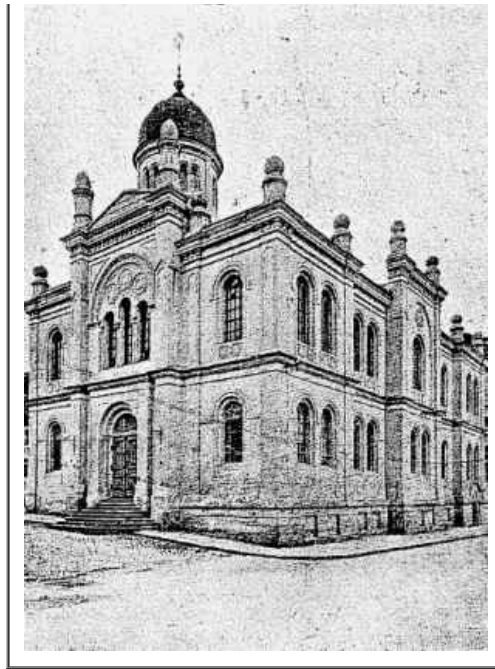
The first document in the town books which refers to Jews in Tábor is from 1572 and concerns house 137. It states that its owner, Václav Kašovec, has been imprisoned by manorial order because he fed Jews in his inn. However, this document simply confirms an occasional Jewish presence in Tábor.

Of much greater importance is a record from 1594 stating that Paul Lidl Junior from Lidlov bought house no. 51 in Tábor and leased it to a Jewish family. This was unpleasant for the citizens of Tábor who did not like the fact that the leasing of such a noble house, which was not within their jurisdiction, broke the prohibition on Jews living in the town. The name of this Jewish family is not known.

In the period before 1618, the first we know is from the evidence of Petr Vok Zmyslovsky from Radvanov which states that the Jew Beneš lived in the Lidl house together with his wife Rachel, their son Adam and another Jew called Jáchym. At the same time, the Jew Hiršl lived in Tábor with his wife Rejna and foster son Marek. This Beneš is probably the same Beneš Mendl who is mentioned in 1617, together with his wife, during a business dispute. The name Mendl is therefore linked to the beginning of Jewish life in Tábor.

Things first began to change for the better in 1621. At that time Ferdinand II improved the poor social standing of Jews in gratitude for their financial support during the Czech uprising^[4]. The beginning of Jewish settlement in Tábor is documented at the end of that year or the beginning of 1622. What happened was this: upon the surrender of Tábor on 18 November 1621, the town was ordered to make a large payment totaling 60,000 Rhenish guilders^[5]. This payment was collected in the period from 22 November 1621 to 22 December 1622. The conditions were very strict for this impoverished town. Each house owner had to pay one third of the estimated value of his house. Since many of the poor citizens did not have this much money, as many valuable objects as possible were seized. In order to make an exact estimate of the value of these objects, the governor of Tábor at that time, Maximilian Bechler from Meningen, called on the Jews from Týn nad Labem and Soběslav.





Synagogue (exterior)

Interesting information about the early days of the presence of Jews in Tábor is to be found in the testimonies given to the court at Soběslav on 9 April 1669 by the Tábor citizens Jan Duchka and Jan Krumlovský. At that time the Tábor magistrate tried to expel the Jews from the town and older citizens were therefore asked to testify that there had been no Jews permanently living in Tábor before 1618. I quote from the testimonies:

The testimony of Jan Duchka, aged 74: “I can confirm that Jews arrived in our town of Tábor after its occupation, at a time when a large remuneration had to be paid. As the citizens did not have the money, they delivered golden, silver, brass, copper and tin objects to the city hall. In order to evaluate these objects, the commandant Maximilian Pechlar called in Izák Brašovský from Týn nad Labem and Mojžíš Bechynský from Soběslav. They stayed in Tábor until their death. I cannot state anything other than that they came on the order of the commandant, as the magistrate had no power at that time.”

The testimony of Jan Krumlovský, aged 65: “I remember that when the citizens of Tábor paid the remuneration and did not have the money, various personal belongings were delivered to the city hall, for example, cloth makers' cloth or shoemakers' shoes. The commandant did not call upon the magistrate, as he had no powers at that time, but called on two Jews, namely Izák from Týn and Mojžíš Bechyňský from Soběslav, to take care of these items. They made a good profit from this.”

Izák Brašovský arrived in Tábor with his sons Zachariáš and Wolf. Mojžíš Bechynský arrived with his sons Izák and Jakub. This is the beginning of the Jewish community in Tábor which, as early as the years 1630-1640, established a cemetery and a prayer house.

In connection with the purchase of a plot of land for the cemetery, a decree of 3 August 1634 is preserved which also notes the names of all Tábor Jews in that year. It states:

“We, the village mayor, the town mayor, the magistrate by the Mercy of His Royal Highness of Hradiště Hora Tábor (*Hradiště on Tábor Mountain*) rule on the supplication by Mojžíš Brašovský, Josef Brašovský, Jakub Bechynský and Marek Hyšl – all of them Jews residing in Tábor – supported by the recommendation of the noble and brave knight Voldřich Skuhrovský from Skuhrov, Louňovice nad Blanicí, Libouň, Zvěstov, Osmonín, Counsellor of His Majesty the King, Steward of the region of Kouřim and Treasurer of the Bohemian Kingdom^[6]. The above-named Jews approached us to humbly request that they be allowed to buy for their burial and for the burial of their children, both from this town and from across the surrounding countryside, a plot close to the town and for permission to enclose it with a fence.

In view of the importance of the recommendation that we have received, we have decided to grant their request and to allow them to purchase the Paskovská garden behind the Hradská gate and to use it for eternity without any hindrance from anybody. For this mercy, they shall pay the sum of four Rhenish guilders each year on the day of the Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ^[7], for the first time in this year of 1634 and for each year thereafter. Should the Jews omit to pay this fee, then it will be doubled to eight Rhenish guilders and, in the event of non-

payment, they will be imprisoned until they do pay. In addition, in the event that they should bury a dead person brought in from the surrounding countryside, they may do so without asking the authorities, except in the event of a plague when such burials are not allowed and therefore will face a penalty of 30 Rhenish guilders. Should the Jews from the surrounding countryside pay the local Jews for such burials, then such payment shall remain in the pocket of the Jewish community.

As confirmation, we seal this with our own seal.

Executed in the town of Hradiště Hora Tábor, 3 August anno domini 1634.”

I note the interesting fact that obtaining the right to the cemetery was based on the recommendation of the nobility, as was the case with the first Jews to settle in this town.



Cemetery

At approximately the same time, the Jews obtained a house for their prayers. It was a house called Velibradovský; today this is no. 282. They were not allowed to buy it. It was granted to them on a lease. The magistrate gave, as a reason for granting the lease, the fact that the house was not used for any craft because of its position close to the city wall and the gentiles would not be disturbed by the noise of Jewish services.

In 1644, during the reconstruction of the fortifications, a new bulwark called “Židovský”^[8] was built at the northern end of the wall. This indicates that the location of the prayer house influenced the development of this part of the town. In the beginning, as was also the case with the cemetery, the prayer house was also allowed to be open to Jews from the surrounding area. Later this was forbidden and access was limited to local Jews. In the prayer house, there was also at a later time an apartment for the Jewish teacher – the rabbi – who carried out this role for Tábor and for the surrounding area. The first known rabbi was Lebl Brodt. He is mentioned in the Jewish census in Tábor of 1690. He came to Tábor from a nearby village around the year 1686, when the magistrate allowed a rabbi to be called to Tábor from outside the town. In 1699, the magistrate also allowed the teacher of religion to carry out ritual slaughtering. In 1716, the teacher of religion is Jáchym Kantor, but the Jews were forced by the magistrate to fire him. In 1725, the teacher is Jakub Abraham, about whom we have an interesting report, namely that the Jew Sander Letzka threatened him with the knife used for ritual slaughtering. After the unsuccessful murder attempt, the attacker harmed himself. In 1758, the magistrate permitted one further assistant teacher. In 1734, the Jews were ordered to keep records, but even so the Jewish records were also kept by the Roman Catholic Church. The prayer house was rebuilt in 1776 and served its purposes until 1885, when “Na Parkánech”^[9] was built as a new and dignified synagogue. In the house numbering that was carried out during the reign of Josef II, the house had the number XV.

Let us follow the development of the Jewish community in Tábor further. From the relatively few records, we already know that the aforementioned son of Mojžiš Bechyňský lived in house no. 228 that was leased from the owner. The new Jewish census of 1653 tells us that the following lived in Tábor:

- Felix Brašovský
- Löbl Brašovský
- Wolf Brašovský
- Zachariáš Brašovský
- Adam Bechyňský
- Izák Bechyňský
- Izák Bechyňský Junior
- Jakub Bechyňský

The taxation list of the same year records six town houses where Jews live and from which they carry out their business, and for which they pay rent. I managed to discover that four of these six houses are the ones we have already mentioned, namely: “Velibradovský” (no. 282), “Cibulkovský” (no. 246/ Jewish no. VIII), “Korsovský” (no. 225) and “Jindovský” (no. 101). The other houses were “Hubatý” and “Klindatovský”, but they could not be located. The kind of business undertaken can be recognized from records and mainly from a letter to the Emperor in 1668^[10] which requests the removal of the Jews because of their loan-sharking. A record dated 1658 is also interesting as it states: “the selling of tobacco shall be forbidden both to the gentiles and to Jews”.

At the same time, a new danger to Jewish settlement in Tábor appeared. In 1650, the Czech Assembly^[11] decided that Jews shall not be tolerated in places where they did not live before the year 1618. Because of this decision, the Tábor magistrate applied for the expulsion of Jews and repeated this application in 1669. The magistrate used in his argument the aforementioned evidence of the old citizens Jan Duchka, Jan Krumlovský, Václav Sosna, Tobiáš Vokoun and Jan Volšovský. Following the failure of these applications, the following agreement was concluded in 1675 between the magistrate and the Tábor Jews:

1. “According to^[12] this agreement, each Jew shall pay annually 50 Rhenish guilders, each guilder being equal to 60 crowns, plus one penny for each week. This payment is due in two annual installments: one on the day of St. George and one on the day of St. Havel^[13]. This Schutzgeld^[14] is to be paid from the year 1676 and for the future. In the event that the money is not paid within eight days, the Jews shall be punished by the court.
2. In the event that any Jewish son living here wishes to marry and remain with his wife in this town, a payment of 50 Rhenish guilders and an additional five Rhenish guilders annually shall be added to the above-agreement in each case.
3. A foreign Jew who marries a daughter or widow from this town shall not be allowed to remain here and the wife must leave the town together with her husband immediately after the wedding and the above-mentioned sum of 50 Rhenish guilders may be reduced by 5 guilders.
4. On Sundays and on other holidays, especially at the time of Christian religious services, the Jews shall avoid the main square between 8 am and 11.30 am, and they shall not delay gentiles from attending the service whether by their words or behavior. They must not sell or buy on holy days or during the time of Vespers, and their shops shall remain closed during such times.
5. The Jews are not allowed to buy or sell illicitly any goods outside the town or in the side streets during the hours of a market. They are allowed to bring goods in their original state^[15] to the main square and to sell or buy there, but at the moment of purchase the gentiles shall have the right of first refusal. They must not take goods that have been reserved by gentiles, and they shall not accept receipt of any goods that have already been bought by another Jew.
6. Any Jew from the surrounding countryside or from a foreign country must not be allowed to enter the town without the permission of the mayor appointed by the authority of His Imperial Mercy, and must not remain overnight in the house of another Jew without this having been permitted. The penalty for non-compliance is three florins.
7. For the time being, the Jews may live anywhere except on the main square or on the main street, Novobranská.
8. They shall help to convert wool, butter, cheese and skins into a cash equivalent for local benefit rather than for the benefit of foreigners.
9. They shall buy beer, distillate, salt, meat and bread locally and thereby contribute to the benefit of the town.
10. They must not employ gentiles in their homes. They shall not live in a house together with gentiles. They shall keep their houses clean in order to avoid the outbreak of plague.
11. They shall not weigh goods anywhere other than in the town and, if there are days when wool or fat is not weighed, then they are to pay on days when they are weighed.
12. They shall be prepared to assist the town's citizens with buckets and tools in case of fire or (God save us) if the town is surrounded by the enemy.
13. Finally, they shall honor and respect the magistrate and their neighbors.

This agreement shall be valid for 10 years without breach from any side according to the above^[16]. After 10 years, both parties must agree whether the agreement shall continue unchanged or whether a new agreement shall be negotiated.

This agreement that is valid pro interim for 10 years is signed by the Jews that are present here in their own hand and sealed with the seal of the town of Tábor.”

This first agreement concerning protection money was worked out on the basis of similar agreements in other towns and of local experience. We can see in the agreement the influence of Jews on gentile business and how the gentiles are seeking protection.

With regard to the duty to assist in the defense of the town from fire or attack, we have an interesting example from the previous year. In 1674, the Jews Ore Bechyňský, Izák Bechyňský, Valach (actually Jáchym Brašovský)^[17] and Felix Brašýnský were imprisoned because they neglected this duty until they paid a penalty of one threescore each^[18].

The protection agreement was very positive for the Jews because, in spite of the many limitations, it guaranteed them safety and a peaceful development. In the following 10 years it brought them economic strength and welfare which they even demonstrated publicly.

Suitable events for such demonstration were mainly weddings. We have two interesting reports about weddings. The first is from the diary of the Tábor deacon Bartoloměj Zelenka, who noted on 4 February 1681 that: "The Jews shamelessly grappled at the wedding. One of them, Valach by name, even hit his father shamelessly". As has been mentioned above, this Valach is Jáchym Brašovský. I consider this note to be truthful because Deacon Zelenka was a very righteous and moral man, as is witnessed by a note in his diary from 25 September 1681 where he writes: "I have physically punished boys who threw stones at the Jewish school".

The other report is in the town hall records for 1683, where it is noted: "On Saturday Maušl the Jew led his daughter into the synagogue with music without a license or permit and was therefore rebuked".

When the 10-year agreement expired in 1685 the town applied again for permission to expel the Jews. According to the town records, the citizens were encouraged not to lease houses and shops to the Jews and to serve notice on existing lease agreements. The Jewish aldermen Maušl and Perl Guttman were imprisoned because they refused to hand in lists of the Jews living in Tábor. This "action against the Jews" which dragged on for three years was again in vain. It ended with a new agreement where the protection money was set at 45 guilders. However, even after the conclusion of this agreement, the town still looked for ways to get rid of the Jews. There is a very interesting note about this in the town records, where it states that: "Mr. Mates Angermeyer, who takes mail from Jindřichův Hradec to Vienna, is asked to visit Secretary Košínský and to offer him 12 ducats on account^[19] to take the 'Jewish action'. In the event that the outcome is in favor of the town, he shall receive a further payment". So, even an all-powerful gratuity was used.

In the 1690s, we have limited reports about Jewish houses in which only nos. 66, 105 and 108 are shown as being inhabited by Jews. The nobleman Kryštof Karel Voračický from Paběnice leased his house – which is today no. 39 – to Jews.

According to the Jewish census of 1690, the following Jews live in Tábor:

- Maušl, who has a small wool trade and shop
- Perla Ore, widow of Ore Izák Bechyňský, has a small shop
- Perl and Guttman Lazarus have a small trading business and a shop
- Löbl Brašovský, pauper
- Marek Jakubů trades in raw skins
- Felix Brašovský has a small trade
- Lebl Brodt is the rabbi and is paid 40 guilders.

The Jewish community of Tábor counted eight men, nine women and 12 children. The town respected the protection agreement, but saw to it that no Jews bought houses in the town. In 1699, the municipality decreed that the houses of citizens must not be leased to Jews and, when the magistrate bought house no. 275 (Jewish no. VIII), he gave notice immediately to the Jewish family living there.

Of course, this hostile attitude of the town towards them brought a reaction from the Jews, and we can see in the town records some documents recording both silent and noisy Jewish demonstrations. The son of the Jew Maušl was imprisoned for three days because he loudly agreed to insults addressed at the mayor. The Jew Perl was almost imprisoned because he "participated in drafting a disrespectful letter to the municipality". Sometimes there were even louder arguments where a barber-surgeon is summonsed and the righteous magistrate imprisons even the gentile citizens. In the matter of religious tolerance and respect for religious customs, we must compliment the magistrate who, in 1692, granted that a Jew in prison may receive food brought in from outside.

The strong competition between Jewish merchants and gentile craftsmen was a cause of many disputes at the end of the 17th century. The dispute with the butchers was solved in 1699 by giving the Jews the right to the ritual slaughtering of their own animals. Producers of socks sought to defend their monopoly on the production of woolen socks. The rope makers called for a ban on "the buying and onward sale of yarn". The cloth makers complained that the Jews were exporting the best wool. This long term fight was very obvious in 1769 during the work of the "Commission for Industrial Development". There were many disputes between the shoe makers and the Jews because the Jews had an almost total monopoly on the leather they sold to them. Many gentiles owed money to the Jews for the purchase of raw material, and the magistrate did not like to judge those involved in such disputes.

Therefore, a directive was issued in 1714 concerning gentile debts to Jews. Jakub Maušl is often mentioned in these debtor disputes, and therefore he was not popular with the magistrate. A record from 1710 notes that Jan Želizek is threatened with prison if he does not stop leasing house no. 141 to Jakub Maušl. Five years later a similar threat is made to Tobiáš Remiš about house no. 342. In a similar way the magistrate stepped in when Samuel Felix, who lived in house no. 277, wanted to rent house no. 230 from Terezie Kršňáková. Because of the action of the magistrate, the old debts included in the rent were not realized.

In 1705, a new dispute arises because, it seems, protection money was not being paid regularly by the Jews. The magistrate threatens the Jewish aldermen with imprisonment and the closure of the prayer house if the protection money is not paid immediately.

At the start of the 18th century, we find an interesting record concerning the first attempt by a member of the Jewish community to convert to the Roman Catholic Church. It is recorded that, in 1711, the daughter of the Jew Marek – probably Marek Jakub – wished to become a Christian. We do not know how this situation ended. Also the previously mentioned attacker of Rabbi Jakub Abraham wanted to become a Christian, probably in order to avoid punishment.

(Images: people – see final page for translation of titles)

For the Jewish community in Tábor the so-called “normal” year of 1725 was an important one. The number of Jewish families in each town in that year was to be the established norm for the future. There were eight such families in Tábor, and each of them received their family (*familiant*) number, and the number of families was not allowed to increase. These eight families are the foundation of Jewishness in Tábor and many Jewish citizens can trace their roots back to these families. On page 643 of his quoted^[20] book, Professor K. Thir gives the results of his investigations and comes to the following probable result: “some of today's Jewish families are descendants of these families”. Taking into consideration the germanisation of Jewish names during the reign of Josef II, we assume that:

- The Freund family is descended from the family of Izák Bechyňský
- The Goldstein family is descended from the family of Löbl Brašovský
- The now-extinct Šrámek family, as well as the Stern family which now lives here, is descended from the family of Mojžíš Bechyňský
- The Eichberg family is descended from the family of Felix Brašovský.

The largest family in Tábor today – the Guttmann family – is probably descended from Guttmann Lazar, whose father Perl Lazarus (“son of Löbl”) is mentioned around the year 1690. He may have been the son of Löbl Brašovský. The Mendls are difficult to define, because Mendl (Mändl) means simply ‘Emanuel’ and is noted as a family name in several tribes^[21]. The first time is as Mendl Guttmann in 1721, so it is possible that the Mendls are also from the Guttmann tribe.”

However, the development of the Jews of Tábor is quite vague. The complete absence of records does not allow us to follow a single tribe's development. In connection with the Mendl tribe, I refer to what was already said about Beneš Mendl at the beginning of this article. Beneš Medl had already settled in Tábor before 1618. However, because of the lack of records, no firm conclusions are possible.

The strict regulations of the “normal” year, which sought to limit the growth of the Jewish population, remained only on paper. The decrees of Marie Teresie from 1744 and 1745, which in principle ended with the capitulation of the government to the Jews, were also without any result. The number of Jews in Tábor continues to grow slowly and they lease further houses. A record from 1747 shows that Felix Mendl is renting house no. 200; a record from 1759 shows that three years later the family of Friedman Guttmann is living in house no. 281; a record from 1763 states that the soap maker families of Herman and Wolf Mendl are living in house 209; and a record from 1767 that Bernard Guttmann is renting house no. 275.

In 1769, 18 Jewish families are already living in Tábor, and the number of records is increasing. In that year, there was a meeting in Tábor of the Commission for the Industrialization of Town and Land, which also dealt with the Jewish question. In the conference protocols from the meeting on 29 November concerning the administration of the town, we can read that Jews were to be kept apart from the gentiles in a separate street which ran from house no. 235 on Kryštof Street alongside the town fortifications towards the cattle market. It is assumed that a separate entrance gate was created for this Jewish town. As well as the relocation of Jewish homes, all Jewish shops were to be removed from Novobranská Street – today this is known as Pražská – and there is a new ban on the sale or lease of houses to Jews. These new measures are the result of attempts to suffocate the growing trading activity of the Jews. This resulted in some Jews turning their attention to agriculture and to trade. Typically, Jews became butchers, producers of socks (except those made from wool), producers of gingerbread, soap makers, saddlers, glaziers and – in large measure – couriers^[22].

A list of all the Jewish families in Tábor from the year 1797 is preserved and is complemented by the census of 1806. The list is based on the family numbers issued in the list from the previously-mentioned book by Thir – pages 643 and 644 – and adds the latest information and explanations.

- Family no. 1
This is the family number of Kateřina Guttmann. This ancient Tábor family assumes its origin from a member of the Brašovský family. Mentioned in the census of 1690, the previously-mentioned Lazarus Guttmann is shown to be living in house no. 53 in 1705^[23]. The economic situation of the family improved greatly in the time of Bernard Guttmann, who is shown as leasing house no. 275 in 1767 with a permit to distill fire water. Previously this had only been permitted to the citizens. In 1774, he received – directly from the magistrate – the lease of this house for a yearly rent of 10 guilders as a reward for economic

services to the town during the Seven Years War. He died in 1791 and the previously-mentioned Kateřina Guttmann is his widow. There were five sons and three daughters: Michael, Jonathan, Anselm, Leopold, Abraham, Magdalena, Judita, and Marie. The first born Michael bought family number no. 18 after/from Adam Marek, about whom we report below. The younger sons Jonathan (a sock maker) and Anselm took advantage of the imperial decree of 18 September 1789 which stated that Jewish owners of large industrial establishments may settle wherever they wish and marry without having an independent family number. They were successful in this matter, but later, when Jonathan Guttmann wanted to buy house no. 248, where he lived, he was turned down by the magistrate, in spite of his argument that he had seven looms and employed one foreman, three journeymen and one apprentice. This old Jewish family suffered a strange fate: in August 1801, all members of the family were baptized except Michael, and they took the name Gutmansthal. Immediately after the baptism, the youngest one – now known as Vojtěch František Gutmansthal – applied to buy his father's house at no. 275, which the magistrate could not refuse because he was now a Christian. In 1805, Karel (previously Anselm) bought the large fortified tower – which is today the regional court – with a large area of land around it. He strengthened the terraces and planted many trees. Vojtěch Gutmansthal was of great benefit to the town during the sudden attack by Bavaria on 26 November 1805, when he immediately and warmly welcomed the enemy officers and mediated wisely between the army commander and the magistrate.

- Family no. 2
The owner of this family number was Šalomoun Guttmann, who traded in skins and feathers. He was the brother of Bernard Guttmann and received his own family number. He had four sons: Samuel, who later inherited the family number and the permit to marry, Leopold, who did not live in Tábor, Jakub and Izák. Izák Guttmann is probably connected with the 1802 record concerning the lease of house no. 199. He was a weaver. After the death of Šalomoun Guttmann and Samuel's departure to Svratov, the owner of the family number was Jakub Šalomoun Guttmann, who received a permit to marry in November 1802. In 1830, the number was inherited by Markus Guttmann and after him by his son David Guttmann.
- Family no. 3
The owner of family number 3 was Veronika Guttmann. She was the widow of David Guttmann, the brother of Bernard Guttmann, and she had a shop selling textiles. There were several sons: Friedman, Abraham (a sock maker), Markus, Gabriel, Matěj and Jakub. This family is linked to house no. 155, which is called "By the Friedmonds". The family leased the house for many years, and the records show that it was in their ownership until 1853. In 1830, the owner of the family number was Jakub Guttmann who passed on the number to Anselm Fuhrmann from the family of Markus Fuhrmann (family no. 14).
- Family no. 4
The owner of family number 4 was Tobiáš Guttmann. He traded in skins, wool and textiles. The family is said to originate from the "normal" year, but this cannot be proved. Tobiáš Guttmann has the first permit to live in Tábor from 1786. He indirectly purchased house no. 55. His sons Mojžiš, Leopold and Mendl all live at home and work in his business. In 1830, the owner of the family number is the oldest son, Mojžiš, who has two sons – Emanuel and Abraham.
- Family no. 5
Family number 5 was owned by the peddler Michal Stern, a member of an old Jewish family whose origins are to be found in the now-extinct Šrámek family descended from Mojžiš Bechyňský. Michal Stern is protected by the Tábor agreement, but the origin of his family is not clear. He has three sons: Jakub, Izák and Šimon, and his brother Aron Stern is living under the same roof. In 1819, Aron Stern leases house no. 131. In 1830, the family number is still owned by Michal Stern.
- Family no. 6
The owner of family number 6 is Jakub Mendl, who trades in textiles. As was mentioned earlier, the Mendls are connected with the beginning of Jewish history in Tábor. In 1809, Jakub Mendl leased house no. 290. He had four sons. The oldest – Samuel – left Tábor; the second died very early; and in 1830 the owner of the family number is Mojžiš, and after him Leopold.
- Family no. 7
Family number 7 was owned by Felix Mendl, a member of the old Jewish family that originated in the "normal" year. He was the younger brother of the previously-mentioned Mendl, and traded in textiles. He had two sons: Wolf, who inherited the number from his father, and Heřman who was a soap maker. The soap factory of Heřman Mendl was built on the site of former stables beside house no. 207, officially acquired by the baker Jan Procházka. In 1830, Wolf Mendl is the head of the tribe, with sons Wolf, Emanuel, Seligman and Mojžiš.
- Family no. 8
At the time of this census, the owner of family number 8 was not living in Tábor. He had three sons: Zachariáš, who received a wedding permit in 1803 and was living in house no. 159 in 1810; Šimon, who later received family number 14; and Heřman. In 1830 the family number is owned by the oldest son Zachariáš, who had six sons: Abraham, Emanuel, Jáchym, Ludvík, David and Bernard. House no. 156 is connected to this family, as it was where Bernard Mendl was already renting a shop in 1816 and later rented the whole house. He first owned the house in 1852.
- Family no. 9
Family number 9 was owned by Samuel Mendl, the brother of Jakub – there were five sons in all. He trades in textiles and leases house no. 138. This family is one of the old families from the "normal" year. Samuel Mendl has three sons: Mendl, Šimon and Henoch. At the time of the census of 1830, he still owns this family number.

- Family no. 10
This number was received by the old Eichberg family that originates from the family of Felix Brašovský. At the time of the census, this family number was owned by Markus Eichberg, a courier and dealer in textiles. He also owns the number in 1830. In the family there are four sons: Felix, Abraham, David and Josef.
- Family no. 11
The owner of family number 9 is Magdalena Fuhrmann, the widow of Markus Fuhrmann. She has a transport company, hence the name^[24]. The sons are: Filip, Aron, Gabriel and Anselm, the latter is shown in the census of 1830 as having inherited the number.
- Family no. 12
Family number 12 is owned by Löbl Goldstein, a peddler. This family descends from Lebl Brašovský and is also an old family from the “normal” year. There is one son with the same name. At the census in 1830, the owner of this number is the same.
- Family no. 13
The owner of family number 13 is the peddler Leopold Goldstein, whose family also originates in the “normal” year. He died in 1804 and, as he had no sons, the family number was transferred to Leopold Guttman, the second son of his relative Tobiáš Guttman. In the census of 1830, Leopold Guttman still owns the family number. He has three sons: Samuel, Markus and Michal.
- Family no. 14
We know little about the owner of this family number as he was not in Tábor during the census. The family died out early on. Israel died in 1804, and his son with the same name died in 1805. The family number was transferred to Šimon Mendl, the son of Bernard Mendl (see family number 8). He also owns the number in 1830 and has two sons: Jakub and Emanuel.
- Family no. 15
This family number is owned by the Jewish family Hauser. At the time of the census, it is owned by David Hauser, a courier. He has two sons Izák and Jonáš. In 1830, the owner of the family number is Jonáš.
- Family no. 16
This family number was given to Samuel Winternitz, the teacher at the Jewish school, who was not living in Tábor at the time of the census and died in 1806. In 1830, nobody is shown as owning this number.
- Family no. 17
Family number 17 was originally owned by the Šrámek family, which descended from Mojžíš Bechynský. However, the family died out in 1791 with Benjamin Šrámek, and the number is given to Mojžíš Schwälbel, who was the servant in the Jewish prayer house and caretaker in the Jewish hospital. However, he was not present at the time of the census. The magistrate decided that the number shall later be given to Markus Guttman, son of the late David Guttman. This was, however, not completed for reasons unknown, and in 1830 the owner of the number is Heřman Bernard Mendl.
- Family no. 18
The owner of family number 18 is Michael Guttman, a gingerbread maker and a merchant in textiles. He is the first born son of Bernard Guttman and the only one who was not baptized (see family number 1). He has several sons: Seligman, Mendl, Bernard, Jakub and Mojžíš. He bought this family number after Markus Adam. The magistrate decided that his first born son Bernard should receive his family number and that same son Bernard later receives family number 1 after his grandfather Bernard. And this is what happened. In the census of 1830, Bernard Guttman already has this old family number. Seligman Guttman has family number 18 and three sons: Seligman, Emanuel and Bernard. The Guttman family lived in house no. 22 which Michal Guttman rented from his baptized sister in 1822.

This has been a review of the Jews of Tábor according to the Jewish census of 1769 as preserved in the list of 1797. The next list is dated 1806, and the results have already been noted in the 18 family numbers described above. In 1830, a new Jewish census was carried out. This census shows a significant expansion of the Jewish population of Tábor. The total number of families at that time was 32. For the first 18 families, the results have already been noted. The remaining family numbers are as follows:

- Family number 19
is owned by Mojžíš Holzbaues and after him by Emanuel Guttman, son of Mojžíš Guttman and grandson of Tobiáš Guttman. He has two sons: Markus and Samuel.
- Family number 20
is owned by Josef Goldfinger and after him by David Šalomoun Guttman.
- Family number 21
is owned by the ‘out of town’ Jew Eliáš Müller.
- Family number 22
is owned by the ‘out of town’ Jew David Katz and after him by Markus Guttman.
- Family number 23
is owned by the ‘out of town’ Jew Mojžíš Herzig and after him by Izák Šalomoun Guttman.
- Family number 24
is owned by Michal Kohn.
- Family number 25
is owned by Isaac Guttman and after him by Gabriel Marek Fuhrmann.
- Family number 26
is owned by Gottlieb Goldstein and after him by Emanuel David Guttman.

- Family number 27
is owned by the 'out of town' Jew Peter Beneš and after him by Abraham Guttman.
- Family number 28
is owned by the 'out of town' Jew Izák Stein.
- Family number 29
is owned by Antonín Guttman.
- Family number 30
is owned by Abraham Wolfgang Stern.
- Family number 31
is owned by Michal Mojžíš Guttman.
- Family number 32
is owned by Emanuel Goldstein.

In this period, we also have to register a note concerning the Jewish hospital in Tábor. Richard Hrdlička writes in the 23rd issue (1931) of "Staré i nové letopisy táborské" (*The Old and New History of Tábor*) that on 22 July 1828 the Tábor magistrate applied to the regional authority for a permit allowing the Jewish community of Tábor to buy house no. 84 below the town park on the road to the Závšov mill and to establish their hospital there. The project was realized and even today the older Jewish generations have many memories about this hospital in that house. The hospital also had its own caretaker as is indicated in connection with Mojžíš Schwälbl (see family number 17).

The last Jewish census in Tábor was in 1840. According to this census, the community counts 212 persons (108 males, 104 females) living in a total of 36 houses – in some houses there are two families. These are the following:

7	Abraham Guttman	208	Mojžíš Guttman
22	Terezie and David Guttman	209	Ludvík Mendl
55	Emanuel Tobiáš Guttman	224	Bernard Guttman
113	Felix Eichberg	235	Simon Mendl, Ludmila Schwarz
136	Jakub Stern	236	Marie Goldstein, Barbora Eichberg
138	Eliáš Müller	243	Markus Eichberg, Anselm Fuhrmann
140	Orphans of Františka Guttman	244	Jonáš Hauser
142	Marie Kohn	247	Wolf Mendel
153	Teresie Kraus	259	Izák and Gabriel Schwälbl
156	Heřman Mendl	265	Gabriel and Veronika Fuhrmann
157	Alois and Heřman Mendl	268	Leopold Guttman
159	Markus and David Guttman	273	Orphans of Ludmila Goldstein
168	Emanuel Samuel Guttman	275	Rozálie Stern, Mojžíš Guttman
169	Antonín and Šalomoun Guttman	280	Emanuel Guttman
174	Michal Theiner	282	Markus Beneš
203	Zachariáš Mendl	344	David Eichberg
204	Šalomoun Guttman, orphans of Guttman	378	Jakub Schwälbl

The numbers refer to house numbers.

As can be seen from the list, the Jewish community of Tábor was growing. This was also helped by the law of 1841 that allowed Jews to own plots within the manor and the town. The magistrate and the public were worried by this growth, which was very pronounced in the town's business life. In 1844, there were 13 Jewish shops in the town by comparison with four gentile shops. The magistrate therefore hoped for the opening of a mine at Horka, which would make Tábor a mining town and therefore would be closed to Jews as according to the old law of 1648 by Ferdinand III^[25].

The important year of 1848 brought new attacks on the Jews mainly because of a misunderstanding about the freedoms they received. There were very sharp attacks on Jews employing gentiles in their household, which was prohibited by the old laws dating from 1650, 1724 and 1818. Therefore in the constitution year^[26], the magistrate

renewed this ban. However, the Jews fought against it and they succeeded. There were personal attacks on the tobacconist Heřman Feigl, who came originally from Myslkovice and was living in house no. 130. This attack was also without result. From this Feigl family comes an important Czech compatriot Ludvík Feigl, who was/has been living for a long time in Lvov^[27].

At this point, it is possible to close the historic part of the story of the Jews in Tábor. When the ban on the ownership by Jews of unmovable property^[28] disappeared (1852), there disappeared at the same time the last obstacle to a connection between the lives of the Jewish inhabitants and the remaining citizens of Tábor.

The only exception was the Jewish school, which deserves a short description. It was founded in 1844 but ceased to exist in the same year, with the Jews returning to the old way of private tutoring. In 1864, the school was reinstated with two classes and with German as the language of teaching. The headmaster was David Bergler. The school was first at no. 156 Pražská Street, then later at no. 242 Střelnická Street, then later again at no. 142 Kotnovská Street. In the 1880s, because of a lack of pupils, it was changed to a single class school. In 1890, the school had 45 pupils (24 boys and 21 girls); in 1892, it had 44 pupils (25 boys and 19 girls); in 1895, it had 46 pupils (22 boys and 24 girls); and in 1897, it had 51 pupils (21 boys and 30 girls). In that same year, it was changed again to a two-class school, but soon after it closed down (on 3 December). The small anti-Jewish demonstration caused by the Polná trial was not the reason for closing down the school^[29]. The reasons were within the Jewish community and mainly a result of the activities of consciously Czech Jews. It was mainly driven by the redactor^[30] M. Schönbaum, redactor Pleschner, V. Guttmann, Bohumil Stein, Dr. Bedřich Stern, M. Eisenstein and others.

As an important addendum, I add the names of the Tábor rabbis. The first rabbi in Tábor was appointed in 1843, and this was Guttmann Klemperer who was active for 40 years until 1884. He was followed by Dr. Neremáš Kronberg (1884-1889) and by Dr. Natan Weisslovič (1890-1923). After him, the position was not occupied until 1931 when Desider Fischer became rabbi. Aron Reichard has already been Cantor of the community for 45 years.

In the past 50 years, the Jews have strongly influenced the public life of Tábor, both in terms of industry and in business and financing. They have also participated in the town's self-governance and in the various associations. They have always acted peacefully, with deliberation and have worked responsibly. This – combined with the moderateness of the older generation and the fervent Czech sentiments of the younger generation – has been the foundation of a stable and heartfelt coexistence with the citizens of Tábor, despite a few sporadic demonstrations against the Jews at the end of the 19th century. Many important industrialists and scientists came from the Jewish community of Tábor.

But in a way, the future is in doubt. In 1884, there were 455 Jews in Tábor and in 1933 just 265. How can this be explained? I can see two reasons: the gradual relocation to the economic and industrial centers and a reduced birth rate. The first reason is not harmful, because what is reduced in one place gets increased in the other. However, the second cause is dangerous. We can simply remember how many children there were in the historical censuses and compare it to the fact that today there is probably only one family in Tábor with four children and many families with no children at all, despite the good economic situation.

Prof. Dr. Viktor Guttmann is from one of the oldest Jewish families in Tábor. After college in Tábor, he studied at the Czech University in Prague. Prof. Dr. Frankenberger soon recognized his qualities and made him his assistant at his laryngological clinic.

After the death of Prof. Frankenberger, Prof. Guttmann became the head of this clinic. Prof. Guttmann left behind him many scientific works that established his fame. Shortly before his death, he became the first Jewish Professor at the Faculty of Medicine. He died too young at the age of 42 years on 7 November 1921.

Chevre Kadisha was reinstated by David Fuhrmann. After his death it was led by Karel Mendl. Today's chairman is Mořic Penížek in cooperation with Hugo Penížek and M. Eisenstein. They all serve the fine idea of the dignified burial of the deceased.

The ladies association “Channuka”, led by the manufacturer Mrs Malvína Vodičková, supports the poor and takes care of fellowship in the community.

In 1933, the Chairman of the Tábor Jewish community is Dr. Bedřich Stern, a physician; Vice-Chairman is Isidor Vodička, a manufacturer; Secretary is Alois Mendl, a wholesale merchant; and Treasurer is Mořic Eisenstein, freeholder.

Footnotes

1. Tábor was founded in 1420 by two members of the radical wing of the Hussites, the religious movement that followed the teachings of the Bohemian religious dissenter Jan Hus and became a forerunner of the Protestant Reformation. The town flourished as an egalitarian peasant commune. The Hussite Wars between the followers of Jan Hus and various monarchs who fought to defend and enforce the authority of the Roman Catholic church lasted from 1419 to about 1434. The destruction to which the author refers was widespread. [Return](#)
2. The governing commons: the leadership of the town was elected from among all citizens without respect to rank – therefore it is called ‘the commons’. [Return](#)

3. Jewish brewery: the explanation would seem fairly obvious from the name, so the author's exact meaning is unclear. [Return](#)
4. The Czech uprising of 1618 against the Hapsburg rulers heralded the Thirty Years' War (1618–48). See: <http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Czech+Uprising+of+1618>. [Return](#)
5. In the 14th century, the cities of Cologne, Trier and Mainz were granted the valuable right to mint gold coins. Rhenish guilders became the base currency of the Rhine region in the 14th and 15th centuries and, in both gold and silver forms, they became the most common coin for long-distance trading across central and northern Europe, and were important to the German monetary system until modern times. [Return](#)
6. The Kingdom of Bohemia existed as a formal entity throughout the period of the Holy Roman Empire, the rule of the House of Habsburg, the Austrian and Austro-Hungarian Empires. It was only dissolved at the end of WW1 with the creation of a new country called 'Czechoslovakia'. [Return](#)
7. The Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ is an annual Christian celebration on 6 August. [Return](#)
8. Zidovský = Jewish. [Return](#)
9. Na Parkánech = at the town's fortifications. [Return](#)
10. This is the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold 1 (reigned from 1657 – 1705). [Return](#)
11. Czech assembly ie the Assembly of the Lords (the highest legislative body in Bohemia). [Return](#)
12. 'According to' is a translation of the Latin 'ad actum'. [Return](#)
13. St Havel (*Latin: Gallus*): the festival of this Christian saint is October 16. [Return](#)
14. Schutzzgeld = protection money (a tax that guaranteed protection to the Jews). [Return](#)
15. 'In their original state' is a translation of the Latin 'In naturam'. [Return](#)
16. 'According to the above' is a translation of the Latin 'ad actum ut supra'. [Return](#)
17. Gelding: the Czech name 'Valach' means gelding and is probably a nickname. [Return](#)
18. Threescore = 60 (the currency is not quoted). [Return](#)
19. On account is a translation of the Latin 'ad referendum'. [Return](#)
20. The author quotes this source (Prof Karel Thir: "Staré domy a rodiny táborské" - 1920) in his own footnotes. [Return](#)
21. Tribe, kinship group or family network. In other words broader than a simple 'direct line' family. [Return](#)
22. Courier: this term is used to describe someone whose profession is to transport goods for others (carrier, transporter). [Return](#)
23. This means that he appears in the census of 1690 and that in 1705 he is living at house No. 53. [Return](#)
24. Wagoner: the name 'Fuhrmann' is German for 'wagoner' or 'carrier'. Here it is a name; otherwise in Czech wagoner and carrier are synonyms [Return](#)
25. Ferdinand III was the Holy Roman Emperor from 1637-57. His law prohibited the settlement of Jews in royal mining towns. [Return](#)
26. Constitution year: this is 1848 which saw the law change one further step towards the emancipation of the Jews. [Return](#)
27. Feigl: see www.nm.cz/publikace/ne-publikace-detail-en.php?id=50 [Return](#)
28. Unmovable property – ie real estate. [Return](#)
29. Polná trial : was a series of anti-semitic trials in 1899 and 1900 following an accusation of blood libel against Leopold Hilsner, a Jewish inhabitant of the village of Polná in Bohemia. The affair achieved widespread media publicity at the time. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hilsner_Affair [Return](#)
30. Redactor = editor. [Return](#)

Credit

Thanks to Wolfgang Kunz (Austria) for his assistance with the Latin terms in the original text.

Links

History of Tábor in English

http://www.taborcz.eu/en/vismo/dokumenty2.asp?id_org=101216&id=1011&p1=1008

New Jewish cemetery in Tábor photographed before 1939 (source: <http://sechtl-vosecek.ucw.cz/cml/desky/deska7475.html>)

Description of the new Jewish cemetery in Tábor in Czech

<http://pamatky.kehilaprag.cz/hledani/Tabor-novy-hrbity>



Alois Mendl
Former Mayor



Bernard Guttman
Former Mayor



Krb. Guttman Klemperer



Salomon Guttman
Former Mayor

--	--	--	--



Dr. Bedřich Guttman
Former Mayor



Jindr Guttman
Former Mayor



Alois Freund
Former Mayor



Karel Mendl
Former Chairman
of Chevra Kadisha



Moric Penížek
Chairman of Chevra
Kadisha



Eva Mendlova
the most senior member



Malvína Vodičková
Chairman of the
Ladies' Association



Hugo Penížek
Deputy Chairman
of Chevra Kadisha



Rb. Dr. Natan Weisslovič



Dr. Bedřich Stern
Chairman of the
Community



Dr Vilém Glücklich
Community Representative



Rb. Desidor Fischer

[« Previous Page](#)

[Table of Contents](#)

[Next Page »](#)

This material is made available by JewishGen, Inc. and the Yizkor Book Project for the purpose of fulfilling our mission of disseminating information about the Holocaust and destroyed Jewish communities. This material may not be copied, sold or bartered without JewishGen, Inc.'s permission. Rights may be reserved by the copyright holder.

JewishGen, Inc. makes no representations regarding the accuracy of the translation. The reader may wish to refer to the original material for verification.

JewishGen is not responsible for inaccuracies or omissions in the original work and cannot rewrite or edit the text to correct inaccuracies and/or omissions.

Our mission is to produce a translation of the original work and we cannot verify the accuracy of statements or alter facts cited.



[Jews and Jewish Communities of Bohemia in the past & present](#)



[Yizkor Book Project](#)



[JewishGen Home Page](#)

*Yizkor Book Project Manager, [Lance Ackerfeld](#)
This web page created by Jason Hallgarten*

*Copyright © 1999-2019 by JewishGen, Inc.
Updated 04 Nov 2013 by JH*