

REMEMBERING LIBIVNE

The Jewish Community of Luboml

Exhibition Plan



To me, Luboml was, and will forever remain -- Libivne!
Chane Kraut Achtman



Dina Gershenzorn



David Prussman, son of Gittel Prussman of 86 Brush Street, as a Russian prisoner-of-war held in a German camp at Ostitz, 1918





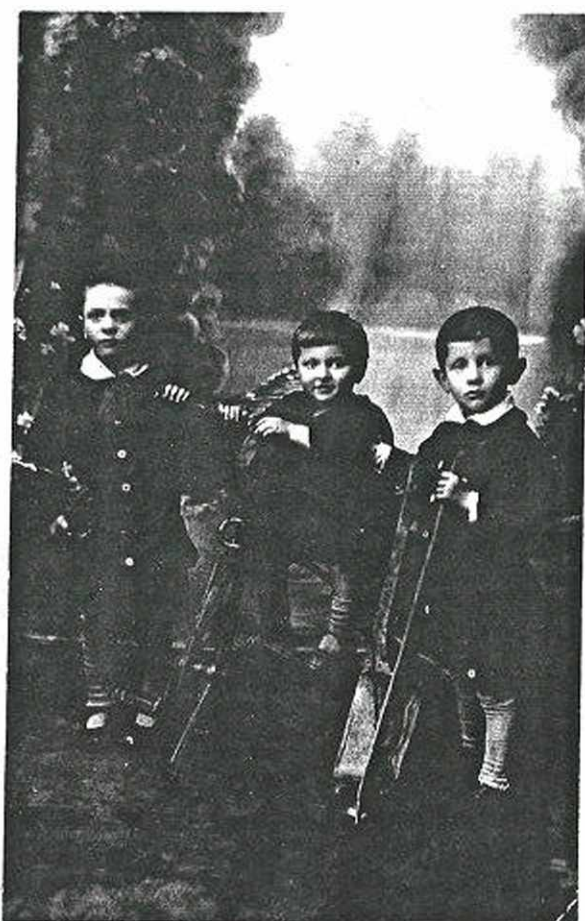
Chaim Uberman with friends and family



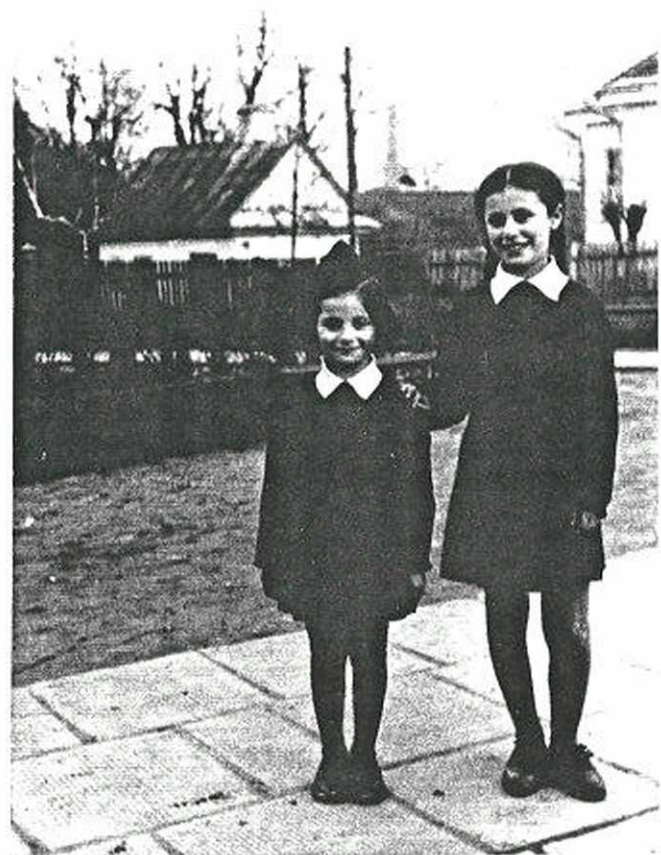
*Feiga Ziegelbaum Buber with
her seven-month-old son Efraim
1938*



Taken on the occasion of David Sestchuk's aliyah, 1930



*The Sobel children - Arele,
Sorek and Nathan, 1930*



Bluma and Toby Zygielman, 1939



Ahuva Royter Applebaum's
mother and friend, ca. 1919



School Melamed and his
wife Chanah Kandelshain,
and their children Hershel
and Zivia, 1920s



Group of friends including
Motel Kosover, Hersh Lejb Szipman,
Yoshe Raif, Fradel Erlich, and
Chava Segal, 1930s



Three young girls. Roza Szwarc
at right, 1930s



Feiga Teitelbaum



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An exhibition curated by

Fred Wasserman
Project Director
Luboml Exhibition Project

Underwritten by the Aaron Ziegelman Foundation

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Cover: The Great Synagogue looking from the northwest. Stepenyer Shtibl, Thilim Shtibl, and Schnayder (Tailors) Shtibl at right, ca. 1920s-30s. Photo by Szymon Zajczyk. (Polska Akademia Nauk, Instytut Sztuki P55.2)



From: Lucjan Dobroszycki and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Image Before My Eyes* (New York: Schocken, 1977)

INTRODUCTION

The Luboml Exhibition Project is developing *Remembering Libivne*, an exhibition about Jewish life in Luboml, Poland in the period between the two world wars and during the Holocaust. Through hundreds of photographs, artifacts, video oral histories, and music, the show will explore the collective memory of *Libivne* (as it was called in Yiddish). The exhibition will be curated by Fred Wasserman, Project Director of the Luboml Exhibition Project, who was formerly Senior Researcher/Curator for the permanent exhibits at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum and co-author of *Ellis Island: An Illustrated History of the Immigrant Experience*. The show will be available for display in 1996. Venues are being sought in New York and Israel, and possibly other locales.

BACKGROUND

Luboml had one of the oldest Jewish communities in Poland, dating back to the 14th century. By the 1920s and 1930s the town had a vibrant community of at least 3,500 Jews (some accounts place the number as high as 6,000) with perhaps another 6,000 Jews in the surrounding area. The interwar years were a period of astonishing cultural ferment and change in this *shtetl* [Jewish market town] located in northwestern Volhynia¹. While traditional institutions like the Great Synagogue, the *stiblekh*, and the *Talmud Torah* continued to play a central role, they were joined, and sometimes challenged, by modern intellectual attitudes, styles of dress, and other secular influences (particularly Zionism) which increasingly made their way to this corner of eastern Europe.

As the 1930s progressed, the status quo in Luboml was also threatened by the rise of Nazi Germany. When war broke out in 1939 the town was occupied by the Soviets, until 1941 when the Germans arrived and established a ghetto. The Germans, assisted by Ukrainians and Poles, massacred the Libivner Jews in a series of actions which culminated in the final executions on Hoshanna Rabbah 5703 (October 1, 1942). Only 51 Luboml Jews (excluding those who emigrated before the war) are believed to have survived the war.

The survivors built new lives in Palestine/Israel, the United States, the Soviet Union, Argentina, and Canada. In 1975, many of the survivors and other Libivners published the *Yizkor Book of Luboml*. An English translation, to be published shortly, will be one of the very few memorial books translated into English in its entirety.

¹Luboml was in Russia before World War I; in Poland between the world wars; in the Soviet Union following World War II; and is now part of Ukraine.

THE LUBOML EXHIBITION PROJECT

In 1994, Aaron Ziegelman, a Libivner who emigrated to the United States in 1938, initiated the Luboml Exhibition Project to preserve the history and memory of the *shtetl*. At that time he selected Fred Wasserman to head up the effort in the role of Project Director. Mr. Wasserman has been assisted by Project Associate Roberta Newman, formerly Photography and Film Curator at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and a specialist in Jewish culture and history. The Project is underwritten by the Aaron Ziegelman Foundation with additional contributions from private individuals.

The Project has undertaken an unusual outreach and research effort to locate and collect materials related to Luboml. It has been publicizing the exhibition in the Jewish press, and working closely with members of the Libovner Voliner Benevolent Society in New York as well as with a group of Libivners in Israel. This collaboration has been most successful as the Project has located almost 900 photographs, fourteen minutes of rare film footage, and over 100 artifacts from over sixty sources (primarily private families) in the United States, Israel, Canada, Argentina, and France. In addition, extensive research has been conducted at museums and libraries in the United States, Israel, and Poland and overtures have been made to archives in Russia and the Ukraine. Working relationships have also been developed with people currently living in Luboml who have been locating materials for the exhibition.

Museum-quality 4 x 5 copy negatives and 8 x 10 reference prints have been made of all the photographs and a numbering system has been developed for the collection. Ultimately, this rare material will be donated to an archive, preserving Luboml (and by extension, a certain type of eastern European Jewish life) for generations to come.

The Project will also be undertaking a video oral history documentation project. Interviews with living Libivners will preserve the experiences of both survivors as well as those who emigrated before the war. Selections from the oral histories will be used in video programs for the exhibition.

EXHIBITION CONCEPT

The main focus of the exhibition is a portrayal of the Jewish community of Luboml during the period between the two world wars. This exploration will be bracketed at the beginning by a brief section on the town's pre-twentieth century history, and at the end by a significant presentation of the Holocaust period and its aftermath. The exhibition will challenge the stereotype of the poor traditional *shtetl*, showing that in fact this town also had a solid middle class and was significantly affected by modern influences.

As a guiding interpretive approach, *Remembering Libivne* will place a strong emphasis on arriving at the history and the memory of Luboml through the personal stories and mementos of the Libivners themselves. Indeed, the tone of the exhibition will approximate the feel of a memorial book: part history, part memoir, part memorial. Extensively incorporating video oral histories and quotations from the *Yizkor Book of Luboml*, the exhibition will, in effect, be about the collective memory of the *shtetl*.

Inevitably the memories of Libivne are filtered through the experience and reality of the Holocaust. The story of the liquidation of the town will of course be a part of the exhibition (and often its unspoken subtext). But by giving a full portrayal of the rich and vibrant Jewish community in Luboml in the 1920s and 1930s, and thus placing the liquidation in a larger historical context, the exhibition hopes to deepen visitors' understanding of the full import of the Holocaust.

Ultimately, remembering--the transmission of collective memory--is central to the Jewish people. In contemporary life, museums now play a significant role in sustaining this process. While *Remembering Libivne* will be intensely specific, it will also, in some sense, serve as "every-shtetl," for the town reflects the life of many Eastern European Jews in the decades before the Holocaust. In the specificity of Luboml, visitors to the exhibition will find something of the universal, and hopefully share in a collective memory that remains central to modern Jewish life.

EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION

The exhibition is organized into six major sections. "Our *Shtetl*" gives an overview of Luboml, presenting a brief sketch of the town's history from the 14th century through World War I, the physical layout and architectural features of the town, the local economy, and the political and charitable activities of the Jewish community. "Religious and Family Life" examines the central role of both Jewish religious institutions and the home in Libivne, with a look at celebrations of the Sabbath, holidays, and major life events. "Youth" explores the "golden era" of secular life in the *shtetl* following the First World War when there was an explosion of Zionist activity, cultural life, and changes in education. "Leaving Luboml" addresses the phenomenon of emigration, as Libivners left for America or made *aliyah* to Palestine, while sustaining ties with their families and *landsleit*. "War, Destruction, and Survival" focuses on Luboml's occupation first by the Soviets and then the Germans, the liquidation of the *shtetl*, and stories of the Libivners who managed to survive. "The Return to Life" follows the survivors as they built new lives following the war and constructed memorials to honor their murdered families.

These six sections will be framed at either end by large photomurals featuring pictures of the people of Libivne: at the entrance to the exhibition there will be vintage family and group portraits; at the end, a display of recent photographs of Libivners who still maintain strong ties with each other and with the memory of the *shtetl*. An outline of the organization of the exhibition appears on page six.

EXHIBITION DESIGN

The size (number of objects and photographs) and scale of the exhibition will depend on the physical requirements of the selected venues. The exhibition could be designed for a space ranging from as small as 850 square feet to as large as 2,500 square feet.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

Phase I: Preliminary Research

Fall 1994

COMPLETED

Fred Wasserman was named to be the Project Director. He and project sponsor Aaron Ziegelman had important consultations with the director and staff of A Living Memorial to the Holocaust/Museum of Jewish Heritage about launching the Project. The primary tasks during this preliminary research phase were initiating outreach to identify people who might have relevant materials for the exhibition, assessing the types of documents and three-dimensional artifacts which would be appropriate and available for exhibition, and surveying archival sources. Hundreds of photographs from private families were copied and Project Associate Roberta Newman organized a photography archive. Mr. Wasserman and Mr. Ziegelman also visited Israel to work with Libivners in developing Israeli outreach and collecting as well as to comprehensively explore Israeli archives.

Archival research was conducted at the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee; Museum of Jewish Heritage; YIVO Institute for Jewish Research; Beth Hatefutsoth; Yad Vashem; Jabotinsky Institute; Center for Jewish Art, Hebrew University, Mt. Scopus; Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People; Israel Film Archive; Israel Museum; Jewish National and University Library; Spielberg Film Archive; and Beit Lohamei Haghetat (Ghetto Fighter's Museum).

A report summarizing the findings of Phase I was produced by Mr. Wasserman.

Phase II: Preparation of Exhibition Plan

Winter-Spring 1995

COMPLETED

Research for photographs and artifacts continued during this phase, with a particular emphasis on making contacts in eastern Europe. Mr. Wasserman established working relationships with interested parties in Luboml who have apparently located photographs and documents not found in other sources. Additionally, he located an extraordinary collection of photographs documenting Luboml's synagogue (taken by Szymon Zajczyk) at the Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute of Art in Warsaw. In the United States, Mr. Wasserman made a visit to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum for important archival and curatorial consultations. Outreach in the press and by word of mouth continued, yielding significant Luboml-related artifacts.

Drawing on the wealth of potential exhibition materials uncovered in the first two phases of research, Mr. Wasserman prepared this exhibition plan.

Phase III: Exhibition Design

Spring 1995-Fall 1995

A New York venue for the exhibition will be selected as well as a companion venue in Israel. An exhibit designer will be selected. This person will assess both sites and,

working closely with Mr. Wasserman, develop a design for the exhibition which will meet the requirements of both venues.

Outreach and research efforts will continue, including a visit by Mr. Wasserman and Mr. Ziegelman to Luboml where they are hoping to potentially locate original artifacts or architectural elements for the exhibition. A video oral history project will be implemented; twenty interviews will be conducted in the United States and Israel.

Exhibition materials will be developed, including text panels, label copy, and graphics.

Phase IV: Exhibition Production

Fall 1995-Winter 1996

Video programs will be produced for the exhibit. Artifacts will be borrowed and conserved as necessary. Text panels, label copy, and graphics will be translated into Hebrew for the bilingual version of the exhibition which will appear in Israel.

Exhibition components will be fabricated including freestanding walls, cases, photographs and photomurals, graphics, text panels and labels, video monitors, and music.

Programming will be developed including lectures and film screenings (i.e., the Yiddish film classic, *A Brivle der Mamen*, is fictionally set in Luboml).

PROJECT PERSONNEL

Fred Wasserman

Project Director

Mr. Wasserman is an award-winning independent curator who specializes in large-scale historical exhibitions. He spent seven years researching and developing the permanent exhibits at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum and co-authored *Ellis Island: An Illustrated History of the Immigrant Experience* (New York: Macmillan, 1991). Most recently, he was a Guest Curator for the New York Public Library's groundbreaking exhibition, *Becoming Visible: The Legacy of Stonewall* which was the first major exhibition in the United States on lesbian and gay history. He is co-authoring a book based on the exhibition (forthcoming 1996).

Roberta Newman

Project Associate

Ms. Newman, formerly the Photography and Film Curator at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, is a writer, researcher, and media producer specializing in Jewish culture and history. She is the Associate Producer and Co-writer of *The Stations That Spoke Your Language*, a National Public Radio documentary about Jewish broadcasting, and is the Head Researcher for *A Life Apart*, a forthcoming documentary about Hasidim. Her articles on Jews and media have appeared in *YIVO Annual*, *Jewish Folklore and Ethnology Review*, and *Judaica Librarianship*.

EXHIBITION OUTLINE

PROLOGUE: LIBIVNE FAMILY ALBUM PHOTOMURAL (Vintage)

- I. "OUR *SHTETL*"
 - Early Days
 - Views of Town
 - Economic Life
 - Serving the Community
- II. FAMILY AND RELIGIOUS LIFE
 - Great Synagogue and *Shtiblekh*
 - Sabbath and Holidays
 - Cycle of Life
 - Making a Home
- III. YOUTH
 - Zionism
 - Culture
 - Education
 - Recreation
- IV. LEAVING LUBOML
 - Emigration and *Aliyah*
 - The Ties that Bind
- V. WAR, DESTRUCTION, AND SURVIVAL
 - Under the Soviets
 - The Ghetto
 - Liquidation
 - "The Struggle for Life"
- VI. "THE RETURN TO LIFE"
 - Survivors Return
 - DP Camps
 - New Lives
 - Memorials
 - Memorial Wall of Names

EPILOGUE: LIBIVNE FAMILY ALBUM PHOTOMURAL (Contemporary)

EXHIBITION DESCRIPTION

PROLOGUE: LIBIVNE FAMILY ALBUM PHOTOMURAL (Vintage)

At the entrance to the exhibition, visitors will meet the Jewish people of Luboml. They will see a large wall-size photomural (actual size dependent on venue) of dozens of family photographs. A combination of formal posed studio portraits and more candid snapshots, this mural will set the essential human tone of the exhibition.

I. "OUR *SHTETL*"

The first section of the exhibition will provide a brief synopsis of the early history of Luboml, an overview of the physical appearance of the town, and a portrayal of the economic and political life of the local Jewish community. The town's role as one of the earliest Jewish communities in Poland will be addressed as well as Luboml's long and distinguished rabbinic tradition. Relations with the local population and the history of pogroms and massacres will also be detailed. Finally, Luboml's experience during the Austrian occupation in World War I (during which time there was even a Jewish mayor) and the violence of the Polish/Russian war will be outlined.

Following the brief sketch of early history, this section will shift to a focus on the years between the world wars. A general sense of the appearance and layout of the town will be presented, including outstanding features such as the Great Synagogue, the three churches, civic structures, the marketplace, the bath house, and town wells, as well as typical streetscapes and houses. The exhibit will detail the modernization of the town as Libivners recount modern improvements like the first paving of the streets (ca. 1919) and the installation of streetlights (ca. 1925).

Luboml's role as a traditional eastern European market town will also be explored in this section. The relationship of the town to the surrounding villages, its position in the local economy, and the importance of the marketplace in the life of the *shtetl* will be addressed. The exhibition will also look at the small amount of industry and manufacturing in Luboml (i.e., mills which produced lumber, flour, and oil; a distillery; and brickworks) as well as the myriad craftsman and small business owners who comprised the majority of Jews in the town.

This section will present the *kahal* [Jewish community council] in Luboml, elected in the 1920s after the new Polish government authorized the organization of Jewish councils to administer the social and religious matters of the community. In particular, the display will explore the charitable and social welfare efforts of the community as it worked with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee to offer relief to pogrom victims, feed and clothe the needy, deal with orphans, and open an infirmary.

EARLY DAYS

Pertinent Quotations

During the time of the German-Austrian occupation in the First World War, the town suffered greatly from lack of food. The forced labor tormented everyone. Every second day, people received two kilograms of bread mixed with sawdust. The pieces of wood were removed from the bread, and the bread was eaten as if it were the best cake.

Meir Natanson, YBL 92²

After World War I, new winds began to blow in the small towns of the new Poland and former Russia....As everywhere else, so it was in Libivne.

Yechezkel Kahn, YBL 63

Exhibit Highlights

Artifacts

- Pages from the Luboml Workers Ledger (*Pinkas*), 1720-1927 (reproduction)
- R. Yisrael Yoneh Landau. *Maon Ha Brachot* (Dierenfurte, 1806). [Landau was the Luboml rabbinic authority from the 1790s until 1820.] (title page reproduced on YBL 58)
- Series of stamps depicting local landmarks: the Great Synagogue, the marketplace, the Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church. Stamps say "City Post Luboml" in four languages, Yiddish, Polish, Ukrainian, and German. Issued 1918.

Photographs

- Jews in Luboml, Volhynia Province, Poland. Gerson (artist), engraving, 1880. (reproduction) (Jewish Historic Institute courtesy Beth Hatefutsoth P19.3)

Graphics

Map of Jewish communities in the "Four Lands," 1667-1764. (reproduction) (YBL 32)

VIEWS OF THE TOWN

Pertinent Quotations

Just as our shtetl had an official name--Luboml--and a Jewish name--Libivne, so did each street have an official name given it by the authorities and a name which the Jews gave it. The street where we lived....[was called]the Golden Street. Why golden? Many years ago, before the street was paved, it was full of holes and mud, especially in the

²YBL = *Yizkor Book of Luboml* (Tel Aviv, 1975). The numbers are references to pages in the draft English translation.

autumn. And a joke was born about the street: When a stranger complained, asking why such a muddy street was called the Golden Street?, the people would answer, "If you go into the other streets, you would see that our street is indeed a Golden Street in comparison with the others."

Rochl Leichter Weissman, YBL 124

There was a certain spot...where Jewish life stopped and from that point on lived the gentile citizens of Luboml. It just happened to be that the Jews lived in the center of town and the gentiles' homes and fields surrounded the Jewish part of town like a belt.
Menachem Erlich, YBL 130

I remember when the first car came to Luboml, and all Luboml ran after the car. All the Jews ran after the car. It was a bus, from Shatsk to Wlodowa. There were also horses and wagons, but that was a problem. They were not acquainted with the cars, so when a car came all the horses began to run.

Moshe Shalev, 1995

Exhibit Highlights

Artifacts

- Wooden relief map of Luboml, done from memory and not to scale by Avraham Roz [Royznman], ca. 1970s (Heichal Wolyn)
- Two paintings of Luboml area (Zim)

Photographs

- Views of typical streetscapes, houses, the Great Synagogue, churches, and the marketplace of Luboml (various sources)

Graphics

- Hand-drawn map of Luboml by Avraham Royznman, ca. 1975 (inside cover of YBL)

Video

- 14 minutes of film footage shot by an American tourist visiting Luboml in 1933 (Zim)

ECONOMIC LIFE

Pertinent Quotations

I remember the residents of our town being divided into different standings. There were scholars and those who were thirsty for knowledge, merchants and craftsmen, rich and poor, widows and orphans, lucky men and those who had run out of luck, fishermen and owners of carriages, water carriers and beggars.

Menachem Erlich, YBL 130

The area of the marketplace was divided up into various, definite sections: the southeastern corner for the horse auction, and the section nearby for cows; on its northern section, pigs and stands for selling pork and other products; and the northwestern section, for shoes, clothing, furs, hats, and other furnishings. The noise was deafening; voices of vendors and buyers, mooing of cows, whinnying of horses, snorting of pigs--all these filled the area of the marketplace, which bustled and hummed without let-up until the late afternoon.

Y. Garmi, YBL 56

A Jew has it worse than the worst criminal because anyone can spit in his face and get away with it....You should celebrate the day you left Poland as the greatest holiday....in America you indeed work hard. But at least you are assured of making a living and feel like an equal among equals. But by us? Even if you work hard day and night, do you get anything for your labor? And for everybody you are a "bull's eye" whose face can be spit into by the worst smarkatsh. And you have to keep silent.

Letter from Joseph Zygielman in Luboml to Note [Nathan] and Devoyre [Deborah] Eiger in New York, November 23, 1937

Chayimke the water-carrier....provided water for the town, carrying it from the pump in his karamisles [a wooden yoke carried on the shoulders, with two pails hanging from either end]. He did not know how to write, and let his customers total up the cost of his labor, for not everyone paid him the same price.

Batya Cohen (Zilberman), YB 179

Exhibit Highlights

Artifacts

- Liquor labels from Rajzman and Kopelzon distillery, ca. 1920s (Sobel)

Photographs

- The marketplace, 1917, 1920s, 1925 (various sources)
- The machine shop of the Sobel brothers, 1936 (Sobel P44.15)
- Students and teachers in a sewing course sponsored by the Singer Sewing Machine Company, early 1930s (Wolkun P50.6)
- Portraits of Hersch Blumen, the "Kirsher" Shoyket [ritual slaughterer]; Rokhl Leah, the midwife, known as "Di Bobe" [The Grandma]; and Shlomo Jucht, "The Water Carrier" (various sources)

SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Pertinent Quotations

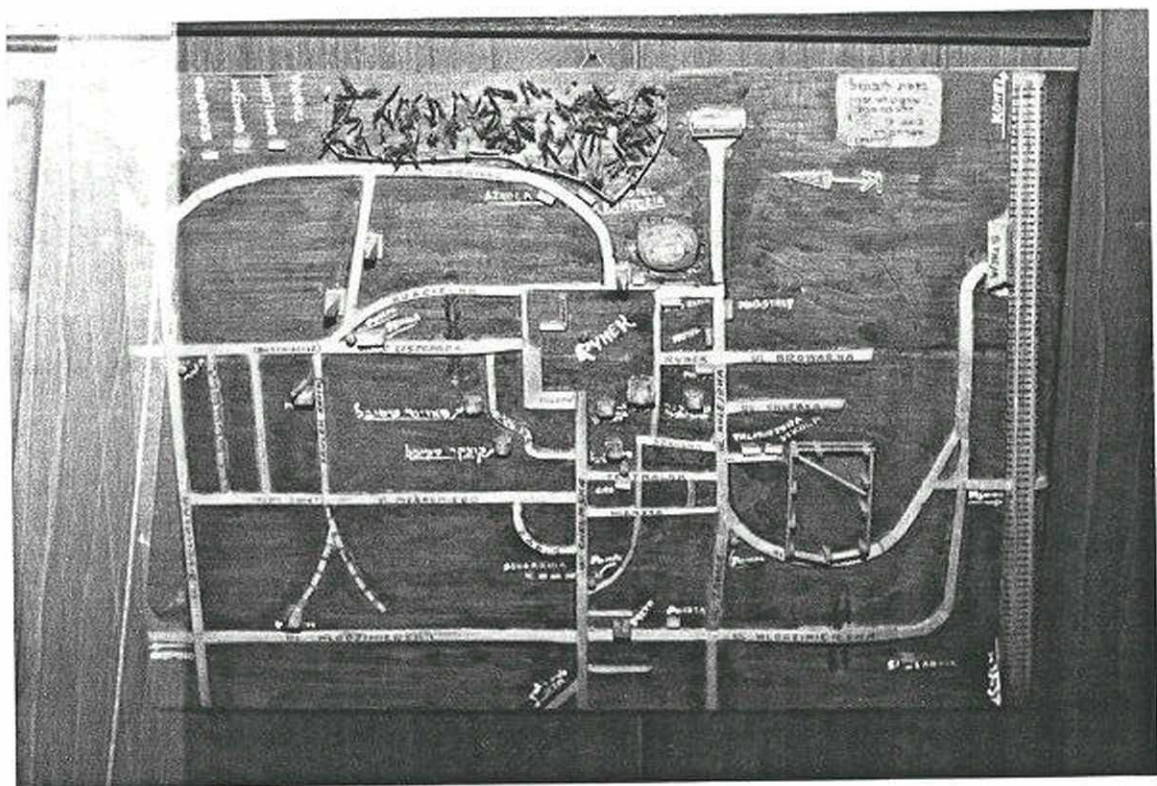
Dearest Note, the blood freezes when every day you pick up the newspaper and you see that in this and this shtetl...they drive the Jewish stores from the marketplace, and every day the newspaper brings fresh [news of] pogroms and edicts...upon Polish Jewry. By us in eastern Poland the situation is a little lighter because our peasantry is Russian and the stick has two ends. The regime is afraid for itself. But we are also starting to feel it. With one word, Note, the situation is very bad.

Letter from Joseph Zygielman in Luboml to Note [Nathan] and Devoyre [Deborah] Eiger in New York, November 23, 1937

Exhibit Highlights

Photographs

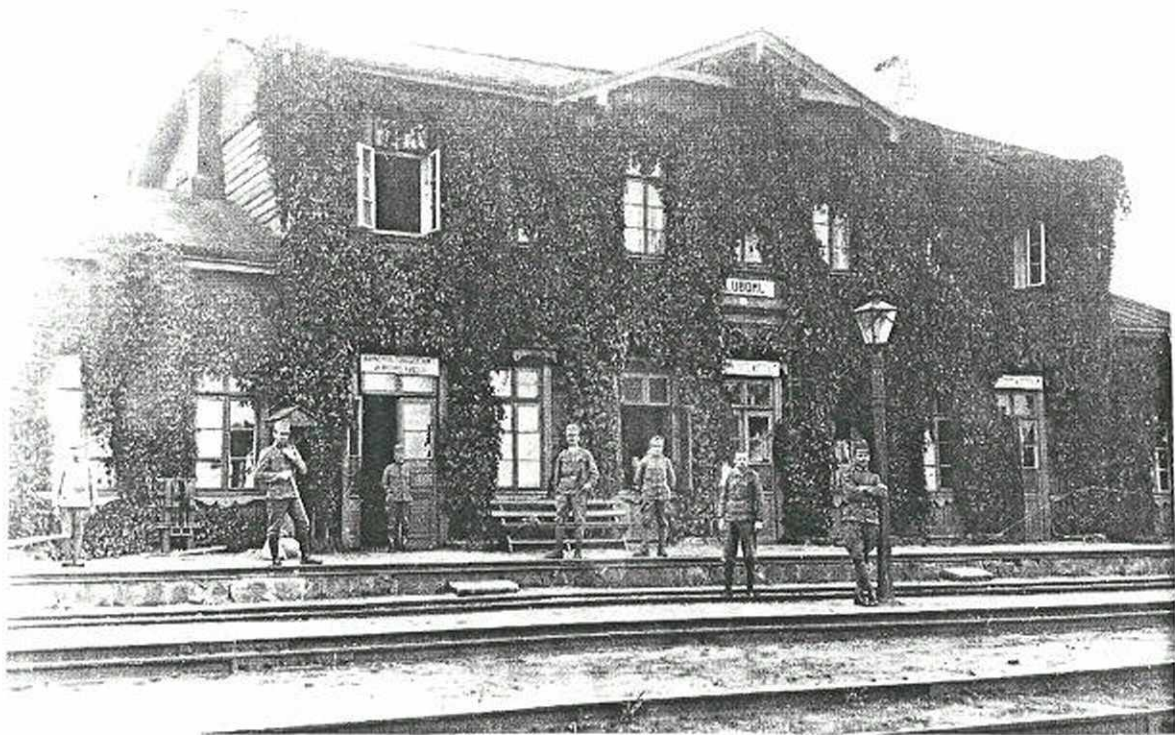
- Portrait of officials at a municipal council ceremony honoring the governor of the Luboml region, 1934 (Sobel 44.9)
- A traditional reception with bread and salt extended to the Catholic Archbishop by leaders of the Jewish community (YBL 180)
- Needy townspeople gathered for a warm lunch at the soup kitchen, 1917 (Sobel P44.2)
- Volunteers baking matzoh for the poor, ca. 1919-20 (Blau-Weiner P7.9)
- Group portrait of the Orphans Committee during "Orphans Week," 1926. (Heichal Wolyn P17.22)



Wooden relief map of Luboml, Avraham Royzman, 1970s (Heichal Wolyn)



General view of the marketplace from the northeast, 1917 (Sobel P44.3)



Soldiers outside the Luboml train station, World War I (Sobel P44.1)



Typical thatch-roofed house, 1939 (M. Ingber P5.14)



Students and teachers in a sewing course sponsored by the Singer Sewing Machine Company, early 1930s (Wolkun P50.6)



Market day in the marketplace, 1920s (Heichal Wolyn P17.21)



Liquor labels from the distillery of M. Rajzman and K. Kopelzon, 1920s-30s (Sobel)





Needy townspeople gathered for a warm lunch at the soup kitchen, 1917 (Sobel P44.2)



Studio portrait of Shlomo Jucht, "The Water Carrier" (Heichal Wolyn P17.20)

II. RELIGIOUS AND FAMILY LIFE

This section will look at the central role of religion and family in the lives of Luboml's Jews. A major focus will be the Great Synagogue, one of the distinctive fortress-type synagogues built in western Volhynia in the seventeenth century, which persisted as the symbol of the Jewish community though it was no longer actually the center of religious life (most people went to smaller *shtiblekh*). Its distinctive architecture will be fully detailed, particularly interior views of the richly decorated holy ark and *bime*. This section will also portray the celebration of the Sabbath and holidays, as well as important life-cycle events: births, bar mitzvahs, weddings, and funerals. Local customs and traditions will be emphasized.

This section will also have a small display suggesting the typical Jewish home in Libivne. Drawing on remnants of household articles which have been saved for over fifty years, a small collection of artifacts will give a taste of domestic life. More broadly, this exhibit will touch on typical housing arrangements, living conditions, and the kinds of food eaten in Luboml.

GREAT SYNAGOGUE AND SHTIBLEKH

Pertinent Quotations

We were amazed by the force of the resonance in the synagogue and when we had a chance to remain there alone, we would shout and wait excitedly for the echo that came to us from all directions. On the other hand, we were afraid to pass close to the synagogue alone at night--the "time when the souls of the departed came to the synagogue for prayer and the reading of the Torah."

Y. Garmi, YBL 46

In the Bet-Midrash and the shtibel men revealed the details of their worries and added them to all the worries of the community....In the shtibel and Bet-Midrash men tried to determine the future course of events in world politics, such as the time in which the next war would break out, etc....There was always one question that kept repeating itself. "Is this or that for the good of the Jewish people?"

Menachem Erlich, YBL 130

Exhibit Highlights

Artifacts

- Model of the synagogue by Avraham Roz [Royzman], 1977 (Heichal Wolyn)
- *Chumash* (Vilna, 1858) (Lichtmacher)
- Traveling *Chumash* (Warsaw, 1903) (K. Bokser)
- *Duty of the Pure-Hearted* (Warsaw, 1875) (A. Eiger)
- Phylacteries and velvet pouch (Getman)
- Tallis pouch (Getman)
- Tallis with blue thread (associated with the Radzyner Hasidim) which belonged to Aron Eiger (A. Eiger)

Photographs

- The Great Synagogue: exterior views taken from several directions, late 19th century-1930s; interior views showing the entrance from the *poylish*, the holy ark and eastern wall, the *bime*, and the women's gallery, 1920s-30s. (Polska Akademia Nauk, Instytut Sztuki, Warsaw and other sources)
- Townspeople posing with a Torah Ark donated to the Lines-Hatsedek Synagogue by the Gershengorn family in memory of their mother. (Heichal Wolyn P17.24)

SABBATH AND HOLIDAYS

Pertinent Quotations

To me, Luboml was, and will forever remain -- Libivne! Libivne with her zaftike [plump] Jews and her kosher Jewishness; Jews in their kapotes [long kaftans], kasketn [caps], furazhkes [fur hats]; as well as short-coated Jews of all kinds of political affiliations, all the way from the "right" to the "left"; Jews who were proud in their poverty--exhausted, oppressed, weary at their weekday workbenches and in the stores where they worked. On Sabbath and on holidays you could not recognize them. All of them viras-shomayim'dik [filled with the fear of Heaven], shining, rejuvenated; the evyonim [poor people] and beggars, all looked then like the richest of men. Libivne also had its women....busy all Sabbath long with their Korban-Minches [women's prayer books, in Yiddish], with their Tsene-U'renes [Old Testament for women, in Yiddish], the pages were soaked with bitter tears, even though at times she did not know what was written there, but she read nonetheless everything with a real Jewish heart, with emotional feeling for Jewish troubles and worries.

Chane Kraut Achtman, YBL 111.

I remember the atmosphere [in Luboml] before Yom Kippur. It was in the end of September, in the beginning of October, always. It is autumn there. The leaves are falling from the trees. The sky is gray and it is windy. It is like a ghost, a holy ghost is over the town. And everything is quiet. Everything is closed. It is something that I never experienced in another town. It was like God is there. Even such a secular person like me was afraid from the atmosphere, that something is there, that God is there.

Moshe Shalev, 1995

Of all the holidays celebrated in our shtetl, the most celebrated holiday was Simchas Torah. All the other holidays were celebrated in the homes or in the synagogues, but Simchas Torah was celebrated in the streets, before the eyes of the gentile neighbors.... The Luboml Jews would bring out the Torah scrolls from the synagogue into the street, and later return them with song.

Yaakov Helfand, LYB 118

Exhibit Highlights

Artifacts

- Pocket *Luach* [traditional Jewish calendar], 1912 (K. Bokser)
- Sabbath candlesticks (K. Bokser and Vlahakis)
- Spice box (Hoch)
- Kiddush cups (Hoch and Vlahakis)
- Passover wine cups and tray (Levensohn)
- Passover *Haggadah* (Lublin, 1903) (A. Eiger)
- Black embroidered shawl (Linder)

Photographs

- Two men returning from synagogue on the Sabbath, 1930s (Uberman P39.51)
- Group of women going to/returning from synagogue, 1936 (Golod P42.15)
- Photographic New Year cards from various families
- Passover greeting card depicting young men posing with wine bottle and glasses, 1919 (Roz P6.1)

CYCLE OF LIFE

Pertinent Quotations

When the woman was ready to give birth, a curtain was drawn about her bed that would divide her from the rest of the house for reasons of modesty and against the "evil eye." They would paste up on the door lintels printed copies of the "Shir Hama'alot" psalms. Some also put under the woman's head a copy of the holy book "The Angel Raziel," as a talisman protecting mother and child against evil spirits, devils and all sorts of evil forces.

Y. Garmi, YBL 51

When a child reached the age of three, there was great joy in the parents' home. This was celebrated as a birthday, as the first day of this new, little Jew, the day when he would assume the responsibility of doing mitzvot and studying Torah. From that point on, he was no longer a child like other children, but a young candidate for a great and glorious task. It often seems to me that this third birthday was more important than the thirteenth birthday [the bar mitzvah] for on this day the fate of many young, tender children was decided for a number of years to come.

Nathan Tchelet (Blumen), YBL 174

There were women in Libivne who were called beterkas [those who pray]. They kept track of everybody's anniversaries of death, and they made a living out of the few groshen [cents] that they begged from the bereaved to go to the beys oylom [cemetery] to pray instead of them. I remember once hearing such a strange beterke talking to a dead person, after knocking three times on the tombstone; "Tsadeykes Tsadeykes Zlate Bas Chave! Do you know who is standing before you? I, Rashke Bas Memke, am praying for your daughter..."

Velvl Royzman, YBL 110

Exhibit Highlights

Artifacts

- Engagement certificates for Haya Kandelshain and Isaac Freedman, 1929 (Hebrew & Polish) (Tessler)
- Ketubah for Raisa Gitel Katz and Eliahu Moshe Bokser, ca. 1903 (K. Bokser)
- Wedding invitation for Sore Dobrish Lichtmacher and Leyzer Kershenboym, 1931 (sent to relatives in the U.S.) (Lichtmacher)

Photographs

- Abraham Getman on the occasion of his bar mitzvah, 1941 (Getman P54.4)
- Engagement party of Sol Milshteyn and his American bride Rose, 1937 (Chanales P46.33)
- Wedding of Nathan Eiger and Devoyre Schiff (his American bride), outside under the *khupe*, 1935 (Kessler P47.34 & 35)
- Wedding portraits from several couples (various sources)
- The Gershengorn family at the unveiling of Devoyre's grave (Gershengorn P49.6)
- Portraits of widows in mourning (Chanales P46.14, Bravet P57.20)

MAKING A HOME

Pertinent Quotations

Libivne also had its women: Jewesses, with kupkes [night hat] and babushkes on their heads: wigs were worn only by the richer ones, those who had money, Jewesses, saddled with children. They lived and suffered in hunger and in poverty; lived in crowded houses, in alkers [cubicles], in airless rooms, or in cellars, without hygienic accommodations.

Chane Kraut Achtman, YBL, 111

We ate soup and bread to fill up, and potatoes, potatoes, potatoes.
Abraham Getman, 1995

Exhibit Highlights

Artifacts

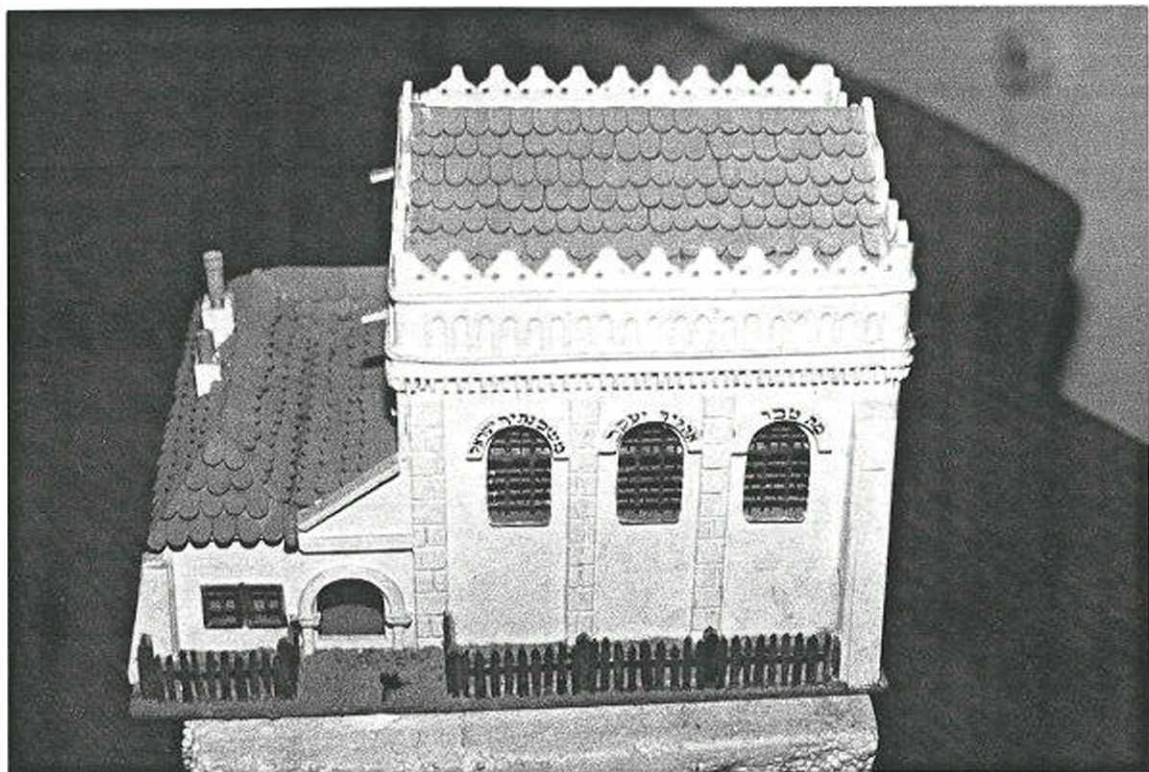
- Cutlery (K. Bokser, Prager, Vlahakis)
- Brass mortar and pestle (Reifman)
- Samovar (Freese)
- Copper pot (Freese)
- Wooden nutcracker (Prager)
- Towel (K. Bokser)
- Pillowcases (Prager)
- Fur blanket (Prager)
- Photo of child in pressed tin frame (K. Bokser)

Photographs

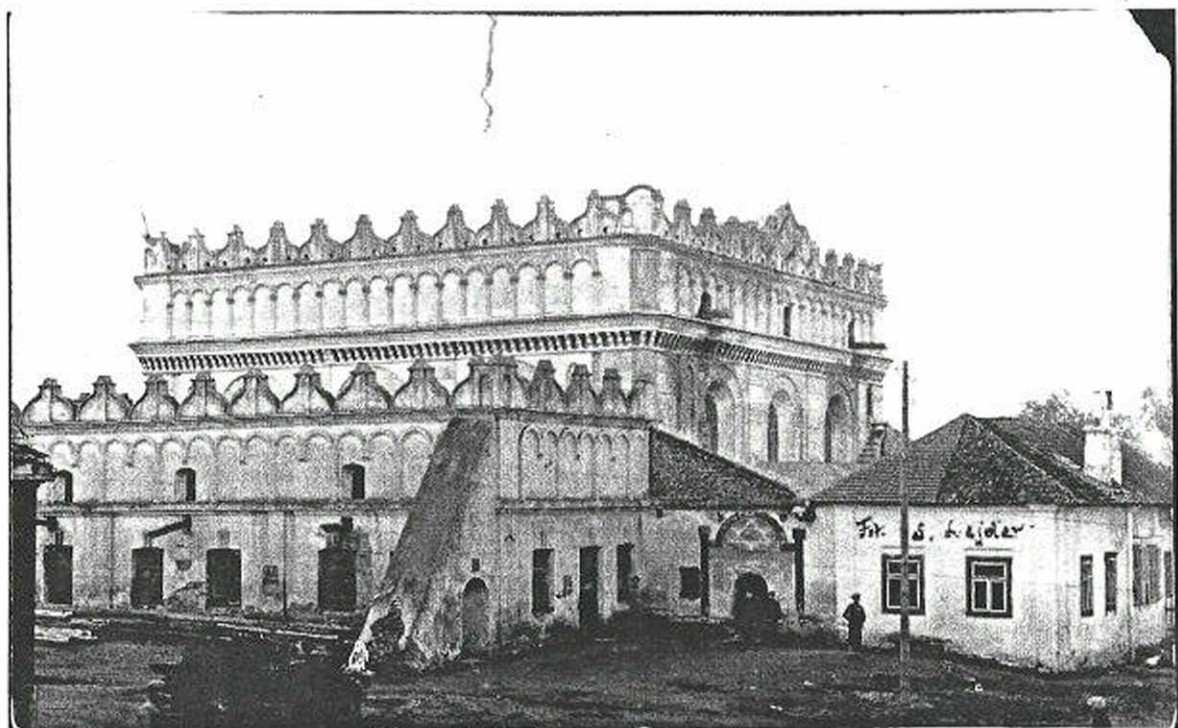
- Mekler and Natanson families at a festive meal at the home of Mary (Miriam) Natanson, ca. 1930s (Shinal P9.8)
- Zygielman family gathering around a festive table, late 1930s (Chanales P46.34)
- Typical houses in Luboml (various sources)

Video

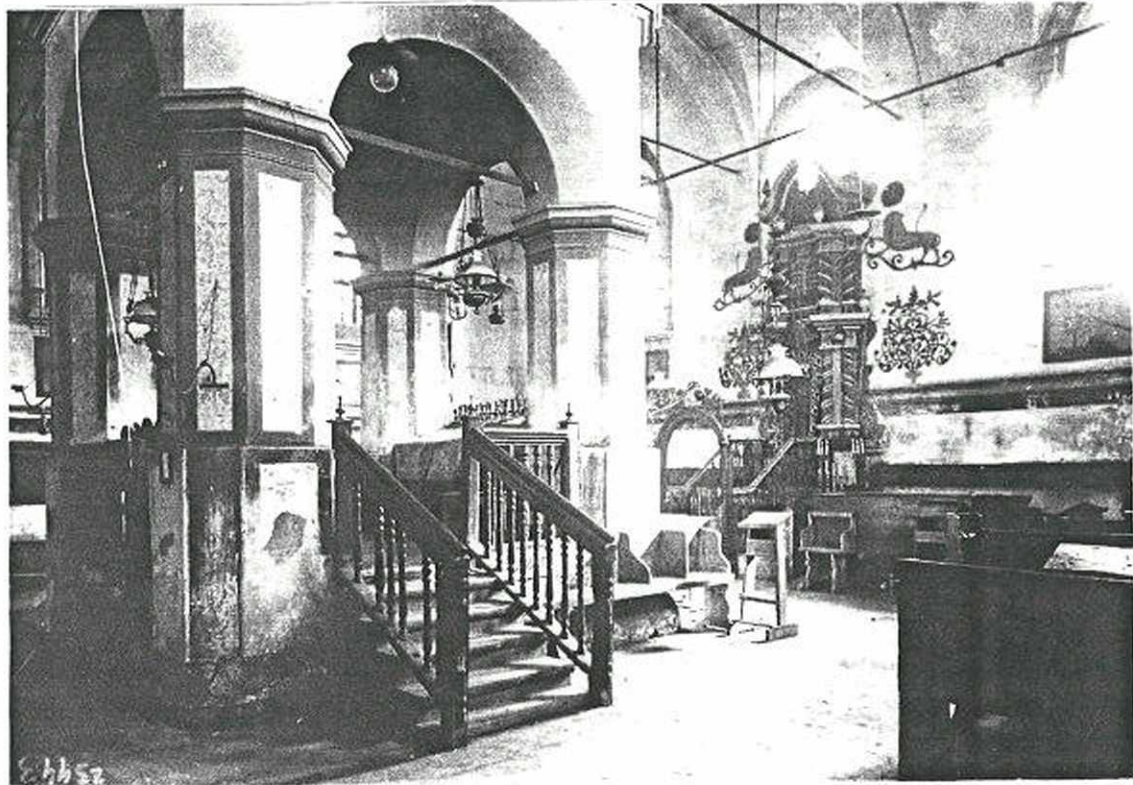
- Libivners discuss their experiences growing up in Luboml: what their houses were like, the kinds of food they ate, the kinds of clothes they wore, etc.



Model of the Great Synagogue, made by Avraham Royznman, 1977 (Heichal Wolyn)



Great Synagogue, view from the northwest, ca. 1930s. Photo by S. Lejder (Chanales P46.46)



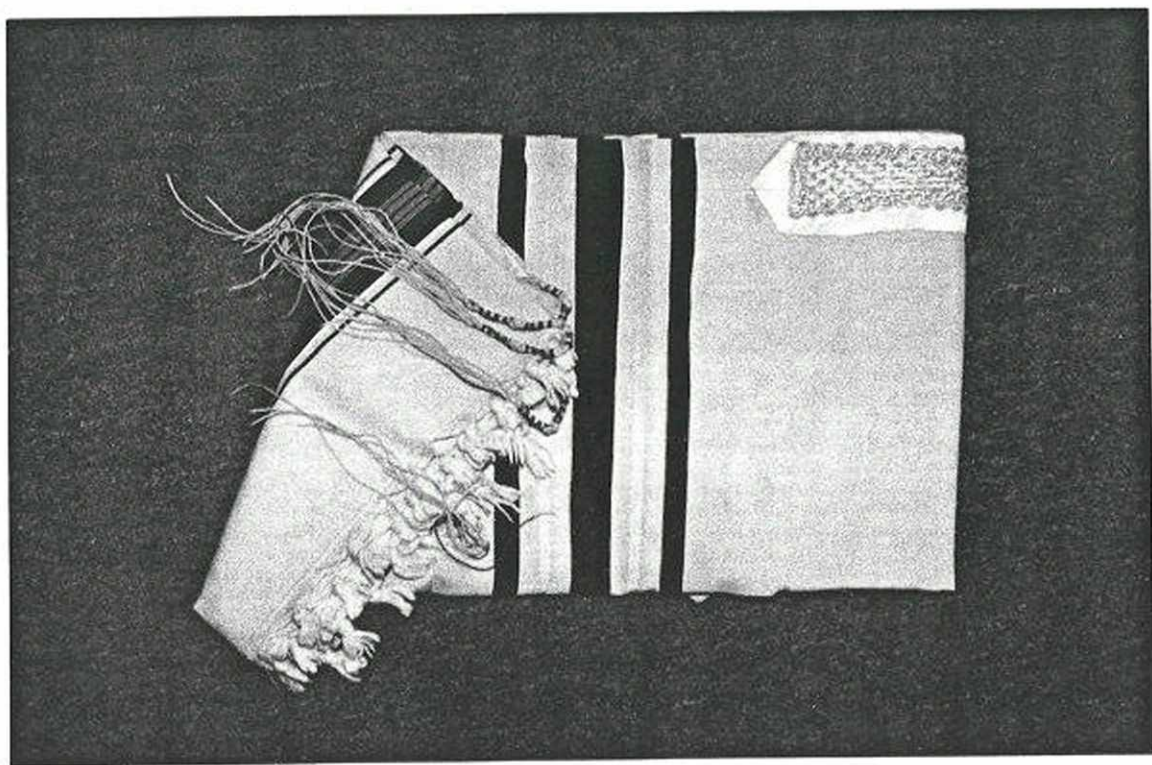
Interior of the Great Synagogue showing the Holy Ark and the *bimah*, ca. 1920s-30s. Photo by Szymon Zajczyk. (Polska Akademia Nauk, Instytut Sztuki P55.13)



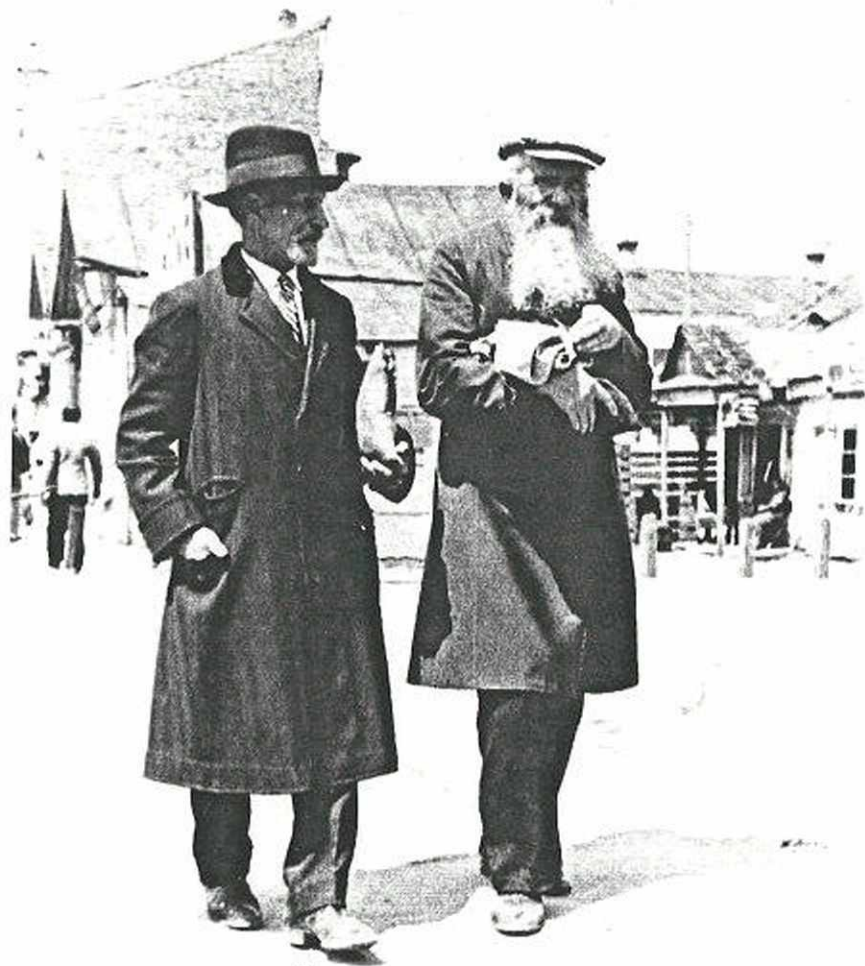
Entrance to the Great Synagogue from the Polish, ca. 1920s-30s. Photo by Szymon Zajczyk. (Polska Akademia Nauk, Instytut Sztuki P55.11)



Tallis pouch (Getman)



Tallis with blue thread (associated with the Radzyner Hasidim) which belonged to Aron Eiger (A. Eiger)



Two men returning from
synagogue on the Sabbath,
1930s (Uberman P39.51)



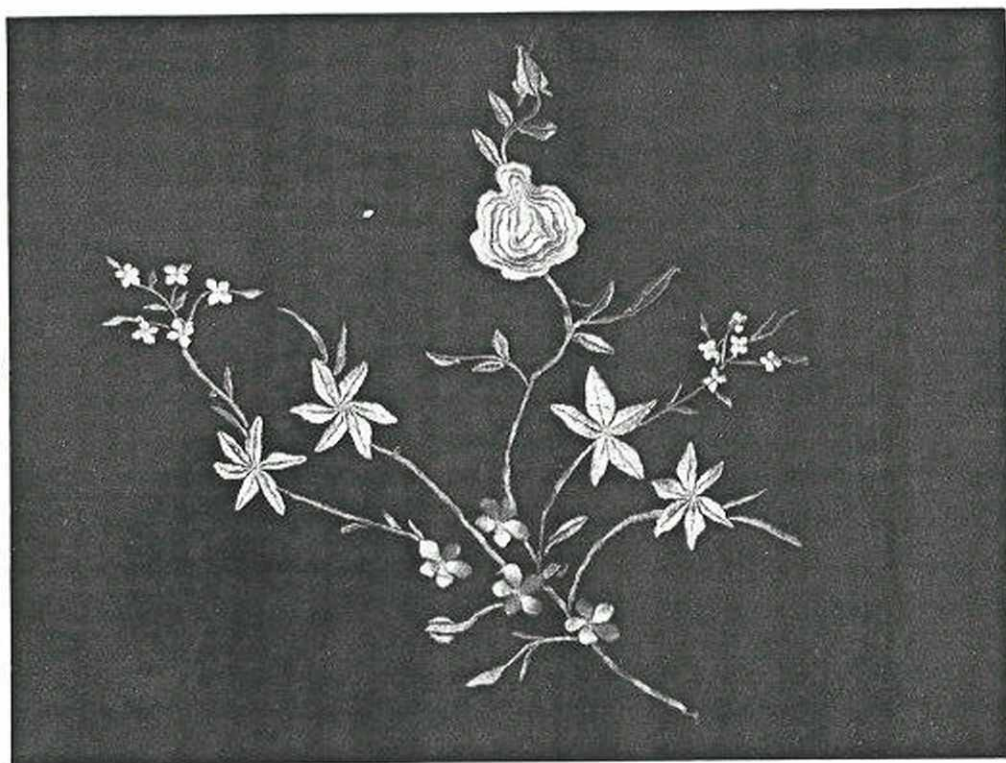
Townpeople posing with a Torah Ark donated to the Lines-Hatsedek Synagogue by the
Gershengorn family in memory of their mother (Heichal Wolyn P17.24)



Sabbath candlesticks used by the Bokser family in Luboml (Bokser)



Spice box used by the Eiger Family in Luboml (Hoch)



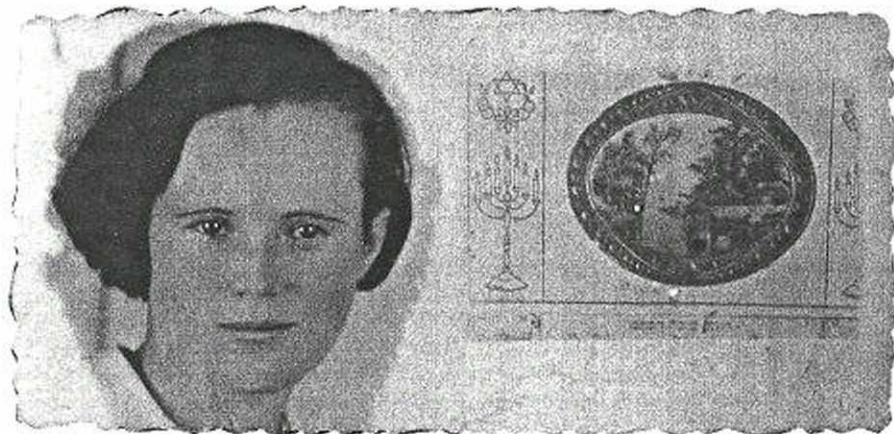
Embroidered shawl which belonged to Gittle Machla Lipshitz (Linder)



New Year's card, portrait of Nuchim Dubecki, 1938. The card reads, "Like God's pure radiant angel/With a banner in hand/Loaded full of blessings/The New Year now arrives!" (Linder P59.13)



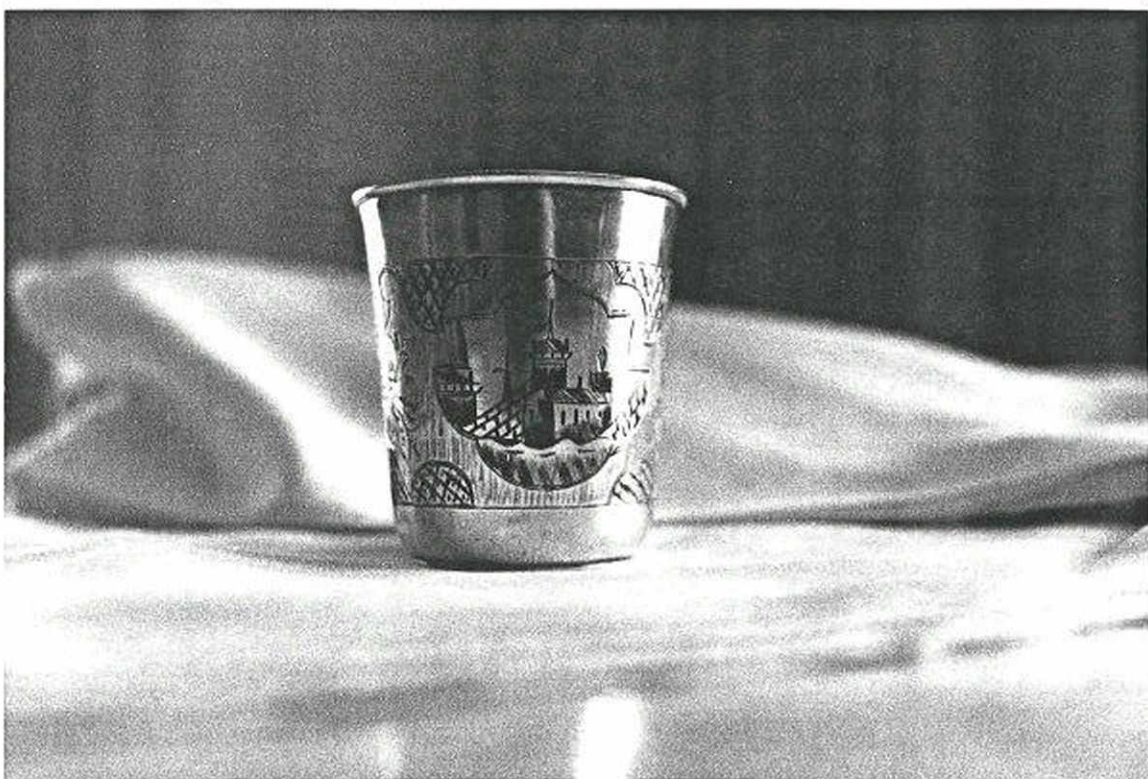
New Year's card, portrait of Mendel and Rochl Frechter. Photo by A. Blusztajn (Roz P6.3)

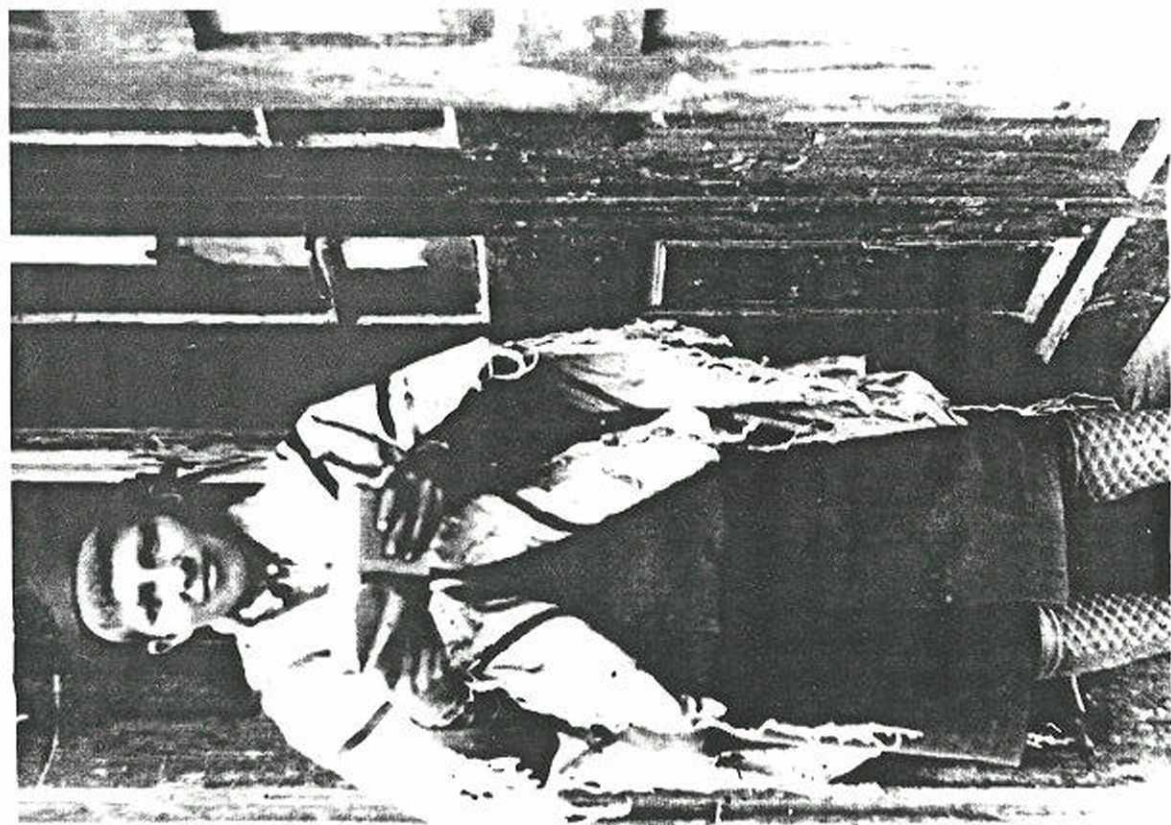


New Year's card, portrait of Chaya Friedland (E. Kandelshain P8.11)



Silver tray and kiddush cup used by the Axelrod Family in Luboml (Levensohn)

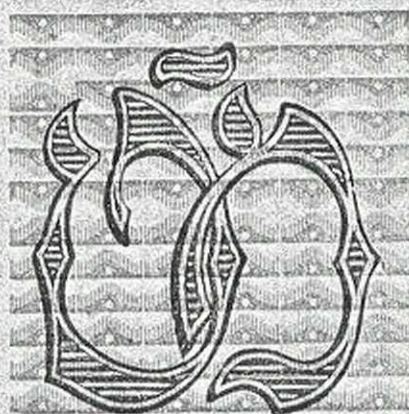




Abraham Getman on the occasion of his bar mitzvah, 1941
(Getman P54.4)



Passover greeting card, 1919 (Roz P6.1)



א. צווייטער יא. טע
נאעווי 32

Wedding invitation for Sore Dobrish Lichtmacher and Leyzer Kershenboym, 1931 (sent to relatives in the United States) (Lichtmacher)



Engagement party of Sol Milshteyn and his American bride Rose, 1937 (Chanaleles P46.33)



Wedding of Nathan Eiger and Devoyre Schiff (his American bride), outside under the *khupe*, 1935 (Kessler P47.35)



The Gershengorn family at the unveiling of Devoyre's grave (Gershengorn P49.6)

III. YOUTH

This section will explore the burgeoning secular culture which flourished in Luboml in the aftermath of the First World War as the effects of modernism and enlightenment took hold. Particular attention will be paid to the emergence of Zionist organizations. Beginning with the founding of the Poale Zion party in Luboml in 1918 and Hashomer Hatzair in 1919, and through the establishment of Betar in 1929 and several Labor Zionist collectives (kibbutzim), Zionism became a significant force among the *shtetl's* idealistic youth.

The movement was accompanied by a flowering of culture which will be presented in this section. For example, a theatre group was established to perform Yiddish plays; the proceeds from the performances were in turn used to open Hashomer Hatzair's first Yiddish and Hebrew library. The exhibit will also feature other activities including literary discussion groups, visiting theatre troupes and authors from Warsaw, and the opening of the first movie theatre in 1928.

Education, too will be addressed in this section as the exhibit looks at the Polish (secular) schools which Jews attended along with their Ukrainian and Polish neighbors as well as the traditional *khadorim* [Jewish elementary schools] and *Talmud Torah*. The drive for educational reform will also be documented as Libivners established a Tarbut school (Zionist-sponsored, Hebrew, secular) in the 1920s and a Yavne school (Zionist-sponsored, Hebrew, religious) in the 1930s.

Finally, this section will finally showcase the range of recreational activities for the youth in Luboml including sports teams, picnics, and outings in nature. Many of these events, like so much else among Luboml's youth in the 1920s and 1930s, were affiliated with or promoted by the Zionist organizations.

Pertinent Quotations

Libivne and her youth.... some of whom had faith in the Messiah the son of David, and some who had faith in Marx and Engels; others yet in Herzl and Shivath Zion [Return to Zion].

Chane Kraut Achtman, YBL 111

I remember that there was a confrontation between the pious Jews and the more modern ones, not because of differences in ideology, but on the question of how one was to dress: one young man was brave enough to put on a tie. To pious Jews this act was a symbol of doing away with old traditions of the shtetl, and they called him an apikoyres [a renegade].

Dr. Ben Zion Bokser, YBL 107

ZIONISM

Pertinent Quotations

Luboml was a Zionist town. Among the youth there was a general feeling and longing for Zion. The adults of the town also longed for Zion, though they did it silently. There were no anti-Zionist organizations in Luboml, and if there were signs of opposition to the movement, it was only because it was a secular movement.

Yaakov Hetman, YB 208

In April of 1920, when it was decided in San Remo to deliver the mandate over Palestine to Great Britain....the joy in the city was overwhelming. In the central synagogue there was a festive gathering to celebrate this great event....For the first time the youth of the town saw the national flag waving freely in the air. Prayers of celebration were said on the occasion of the establishment of a national homeland in Eretz Yisrael. There were also enthusiastic speeches given....Women gladly parted with their jewelry in order to contribute towards the building of Eretz Yisrael.

Nathan Tchelet-Bluman, YB 200

Exhibit Highlights

Photographs

- Group portraits of the many Zionist organizations in Luboml including Hashomer Hatzair, Hechalutz Hatzair, Betar, the Klosowa Collective (Kibbutz), Histadrut HaOved, Noar Hatsioni and Keren Hayesod (Jewish National Fund) (various sources)
- Betar members from Luboml with their flag, 1935. The flag reads, "Ken Luboml" [Luboml "den"]. (Uberman P39.54)

CULTURE

Pertinent Quotations

In the southeastern corner of the town square stood the only cinema of our town. Its lights shone from a square frame that hung from the front of the building, and penetrated arrogantly through the darkness of the marketplace at night. This light was the kind that blinds you and irritates the eye; it was exciting, not quieting. To that theater we were drawn like moths to light, in the hopes of sneaking in for the treat of seeing the latest detective movie.

Menachem Erlich, YBL 129

Exhibit Highlights

Artifact

- Zelig Faigen's article about Mendele Mocher Sforim in *Our Hope*, a biweekly literary journal [Yiddish], Warsaw, February 1, 1928 (Sobel)
- Zelig Faigen's notebook, "My Literary Archive," Luboml, Poland, 1925-27 (Sobel)

Photographs

- Members of the drama group costumed for the play "King Lear," 1919 (YBL 95)
- Postcard with photographs of famous Yiddish writers (owned by a Libivner) (Bravet P57.32)
- Employees of the Express Printing Press posing in their workplace, 1930s [political, theatre, and cinema posters on wall] (Heichal Wolyn P17.25)

Music

- Soundtrack of period music from Volhynia in the 1920s and 1930s.

EDUCATION

Pertinent Quotations

I was born into a Zionist home, in which the spoken language was Hebrew. My father was a Hebrew teacher, the founder of the first Hebrew school....We studied Hebrew and when we were growing up we learned how to speak Yiddish. In the Polish school we learned how to speak Polish and on the street we learned Ukrainian.

Moshe Blumen, Yad Vashem Testimony 03/6147

I went to a school where...it would be a mixed background--Ukrainian, Polish and Jews. The principal of the school came in, not once but many a time, to our classroom and he said, "You dirty Jews. Go to Palestine." This was an occurrence that happened many times and we just said nothing. They also made fun, the children....That was just before the war. We were forced to go on Shabbat to school so we, of course, did not want to do it and we did not want to write on Shabbat, so we were just listening to lectures.

Sonia Orbuch, Yad Vashem Testimony 03/5268

Exhibit Highlights

Artifacts

- School identification card for Chaja-Luba Zygielman, 1938 (Chanales)
- School report card for Mejer Lipszyc, 1934/35 (Linder)

Photographs

- Students and teachers in a science class, 1930s (Golod P42.48)
- Portraits of students and teachers from Polish public schools, 1930s (various sources)
- Portrait of students and teachers from the Luboml Yeshivah, 1934 (Erlich P10.7)
- Group portrait of students and teachers on the occasion of clothing distribution to poor children by visitors from the U.S. and the trustees of the Talmud Torah, 1929 (Heichal Wolyn P17.12)

RECREATION

Pertinent Quotations

The young people of Libivne were also active in sports. There was a Jewish sports club Zhidovsky Klub Sportovy. The Libivne football [soccer] team was well organized. There were football matches between Jews and Poles or Ukrainians which attracted people from the whole town. There were also fights among the players, especially if the Jewish team won, and the Poles or the Ukrainian teams could not stand having lost. This was a common occurrence in almost every small town in Poland.
Velvl Royzman YB 109

Exhibit Highlights

- Group portrait of the football [soccer] team of the Luboml Zhidovsky Klub Sportovy (Jewish Sports Club), ca. 1933 (Shalev P2.1)
- Betar members and others with a mandolin and bicycles (Golod P42.58)
- Group of friends ice skating, 1930s (Roz P6.9)
- Luboml girl scouts on a trip to Krzemieniec, 1930 (Erlich P10.5)



Group portrait of students and teachers on the occasion of clothing distribution to poor children by visitors from the U.S. and the trustees of the *Talmud Torah*, 1929 (Heichal Wolyn P17.12)



Employees of the Express Printing Press, 1930s [political, theatre, and cinema posters on wall] (Heichal Wolyn P17.25)



Betar members from Luboml with their flag, 1935. The flag reads, "Ken Luboml" [Luboml "den"]. (Uberman P39.54)



Group portrait of Hashomer Hatzair members on Lag B'Omer, 1929 (Eiger P48.11)



School identification card for Chaja Luba Zygielman, 1938 (Chanales)



Girl students at a Polish public school, 1930s (M. Ingber P5.21)



Group portrait of the soccer team of the Luboml Zhidovsky Klub Sportovy [Z.K.S.], the Jewish Sports Club, ca. 1933



Betar members and others with a mandolin and bicycles (Golod P42.58)

IV. LEAVING LUBOML

This section of the exhibition explores the phenomenon of emigration and *aliyah* among the Jewish community of Luboml. In the early years of the century, some Libivners, like other eastern European Jews seeking economic opportunity, left for America (mostly the United States, but also Canada, and beginning in the 1920s Argentina). With the inroads of Zionism in the *shtetl*, the first two Libivners made *aliyah* in 1921 and were followed by others, particularly as emigration to Palestine increased in the 1930s.

The exhibit will also portray the ongoing ties between Libivners and their relatives overseas as they stayed in touch and continued the process of chain migration (i.e., a father goes to New York, saves money and brings over his wife and children, his brothers, parents, etc.). The persistence of ties to the *shtetl* will be explored by showing materials from the benevolent societies which were established in New York, Buenos Aires, and Palestine/Israel.

EMIGRATION AND ALIYAH

Pertinent Quotations

My dear beloved Arele and Lyubele! I can in no way make peace with the idea that you, my dear ones, are going away. Because until now it seemed like only a fantasy to me. But I see that reality is stronger and that a higher authority wished it so....so travel in good health, arrive in peace, be successful throughout life. I expect to hear good tidings from you. Be proud, religious, nationalist Jews. Your uncle, Joseph Zygielman
Entry in homemade autograph book given to Esther Zygielman and her children Aron and Lyuba, upon their departure from Luboml for New York, 1938

I thank you very much for writing, Chaim!...Do you already have a lot of money? And what are you thinking of doing? I heard from your family at home that you wrote to Chaya in Maciejow that you already decided not to return to Luboml. You want to become a native American. Your 'mama' told me this and she...wept bitterly. Write to me and let me know if this is true. Write to me and let me know what's new.
Letter from Gedalia Grimetlicht in Luboml to Chaim Feygeles in Newark, New Jersey, 1913

Exhibit Highlights

Artifacts

- Passports (E. Ingber, Kessler, Levine, Tessler)
- Fork and spoon given to Bracha Oselka Fuks by her mother as an *aliyah* present, ca. 1935 (Fuks)
- Embroidered towel given to Yaakov Hetman by his mother as an *aliyah* present, 1936 (Getman)
- U. S. non-quota immigration visa for Icek Moszek Axelrod, 1927 (Axelrod)

- Documents related to Zelig Faigen's emigration to Buenos Aires in 1928 including his passport; medical certificate; certificate for "Morality and Good Behavior;" his brother Isaac's U.S. "Application for Visa" for Zelig (he was turned down because of quotas); two poems given to him when he left Luboml; and a photograph of him with relatives taken on the eve of his departure.
- Palestine identity card for Moshe Shlivo, 1936 (Shalev)
- U.S. immigrant identification card for Aron Zygielman, 1938 (Ziegelman)
- U.S. citizenship certificates (Vlahakis, Linder, Levine)

Photographs

- Farewell portrait of friends and family at the railroad station, taken on the occasion of the Zygielman family's departure for America, 1938 (Chanales P46.31)
- Series depicting Miriam Ziegelbaum Ingber shaking hands good-bye with various friends (outdoors in the snow) on the eve of her departure for Palestine (M. Ingber P5.7, 10-13)
- Portraits of various Lubomlers taken on the eve of their departure for the United States, Argentina, and Palestine (various sources)
- Portrait of Hyme Rosenbluth reunited with his father, taken the day he arrived in New York (Rosenbluth)

THE TIES THAT BIND

Pertinent Quotations

Our sister Malka has, keyn eynhore [knock on wood], a son, about to turn two. It's amazing. He says the alefbeyts [alphabet] and is as gorgeous as the whole world. In America he would be considered outstanding. And our Sore and Rokhele and Hodesl are very fine children. They write very well and they say they want to see you for themselves.

Letter to Chaim Feygeles in Newark, from his sister Beyla in Luboml, ca. 1910s

Exhibit Highlights

Artifacts

- Letters and postcards sent from Luboml to relatives in the United States and Argentina (Axelrod, Kessler, Lichtmacher, Sobel)
- Embroidered Polish girl's outfit, sent by her grandparents in Luboml to Edith Axelrod in Massachusetts, 1930s (Reder)
- Phylacteries and velvet pouch sent from Luboml to a bar mitzvah boy in New York [embroidered "Luboml, Poland" (in Hebrew) on the back] (Lichtmacher)
- Money order sent to Luboml from Massachusetts to pay for funeral expenses, 1926 (Levensohn)
- Libovner Voliner Benevolent Society constitution, New York, 1906 (Gershengorn)
- Panoramic group portrait at the 32nd Anniversary Banquet and Dance sponsored by the Libovner Voliner Benevolent Society, New York, 1939 (Sobel)

- Handwritten note inviting Zelig Faigen to a meeting to discuss the founding of a Libivne Landsleit Organization in Buenos Aires, 1945 (Sobel)

Photographs

- Composite portrait: Zeid family in Luboml with superimposed photograph of the father who is already living in the United States, 1930 (Levine)
- Family photographs sent to relatives overseas with personal inscriptions (various sources)

IMMIGRANT IDENTIFICATION CARD
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

ZYGIELMAN
SURNAME
Aron
GIVEN NAME

Poland **Jan 10, 1928**
COUNTRY OF BIRTH DATE OF BIRTH

Polish **brown**
NATIONALITY COLOR OF EYES

NOV 24 1938 **15**
DATE OF ARRIVAL STEAMSHIP

Legelman Aron
IMMIGRANT SIGNATURE

ORIGINAL **IMMIGRANT INSPECTOR**



U.S. immigrant identification card for Aron Zygielman, 1938 (Ziegelman)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ORIGINAL
TO BE GIVEN TO
THE PERSON NATURALIZED

No. 6081666

Section No. 8391

Personal description of holder as of date of naturalization: Age 49 years, sex female, color white, complexion medium, color of eyes hazel, color of hair auburn, height 5 feet, inches, weight 146 pounds, visible distinctive marks none, marital status married, former nationality Polish.

I certify that the description above given is true, and that the photograph affixed hereto is a likeness of me.

Gittle Machla Lipshitz
(Complete and true signature of holder)

Commonwealth of Massachusetts,
Berkshire County

Be it known, that at a term of the Superior Court of
Berkshire County
held pursuant to law at Pittsfield
on April 18, 1944, the Court having found that
Gittle Mochla Lipshitz
then residing at 96 Robbins Avenue, Pittsfield, Mass.,
intends to reside permanently in the United States (when so required by the
Naturalization laws of the United States), had in all other respects complied with
the applicable provisions of such naturalization laws, and was entitled to be
admitted to citizenship, thereupon ordered that such person be and (she was
admitted as a citizen of the United States of America.

In testimony whereof the seal of the court is hereunto affixed this 18th
day of April in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and
forty-four and of our Independence the one hundred
and sixty-eighth.

Spence A. Mason
Clerk of the above-named Court.

By _____ Deputy Clerk.

Gittle Lipshitz
Seal

It is a violation of the U.S. Code (and
punishable as such) to copy, print, photograph,
or otherwise illegally use this certificate.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

U.S. citizenship certificate for Gittle Machla Lipshitz, 1944. She emigrated from Luboml in 1937 (Linder)



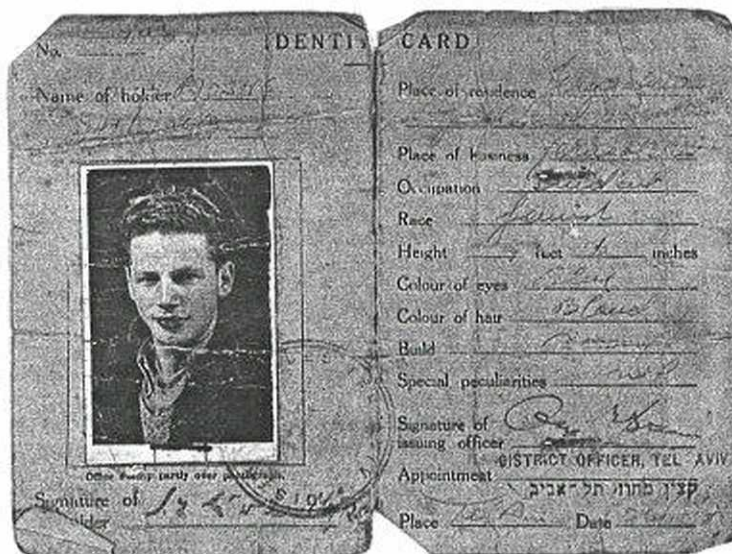
Phylacteries and velvet pouch sent by the Lichtmacher family from Luboml to a bar mitzvah boy in New York [embroidered Luboml, Poland on the back], 1930s (Lichtmacher)



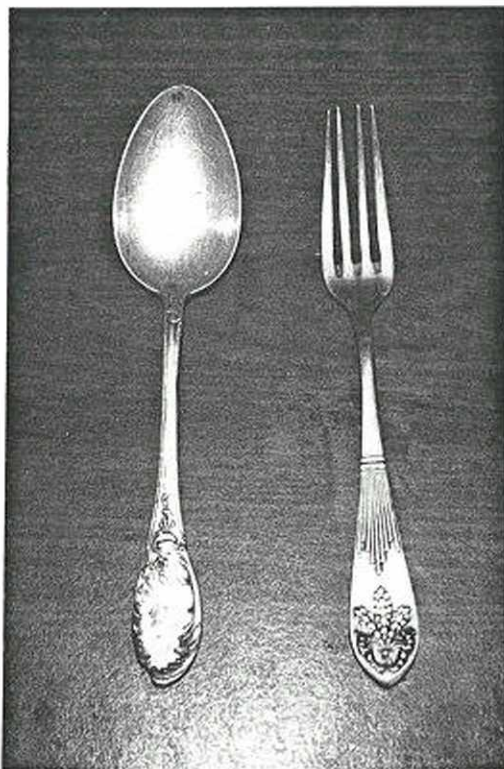
Polish girl's outfit sent from Luboml to Edith Axelrod in Massachusetts, 1930s (Reder)



Miriam Ziegelbaum Ingber saying good-bye to Leah Wolwushes on the eve of Miriam's departure for Palestine, 1937 (Ingber P5.12)



Palestine identity card for Moshe Shalev, 1936 (Shalev)



Spoon and fork given to Bracha Oselka Fuks by her mother as an *aliyah* present, ca. 1935 (Fuks)



Embroidered towel given to Yaakov Hetman by his mother as an *aliyah* present, 1936 (Getman)

V. WAR, DESTRUCTION, AND SURVIVAL

This section will explore the experience of Luboml and its people during the Second World War and the Holocaust. As almost no relevant photographs or artifacts are extant, video testimonies and wall quotes will be used to convey the story of the Soviet occupation of the town from 1939 to 1941, and the subsequent German occupation and establishment of the ghetto. The series of "actions" in which hundreds of Jews were murdered, the campaign of terror and forced donations of property, the horrendous living conditions in the ghetto, and the final liquidation on Hoshanna Rabbah 5703 (October 1, 1942) will all be presented. The final portion of this section will tell the stories of the survivors who hid in the woods, adopted false identities, joined the partisans, fought in the Soviet Army, or otherwise managed to survive until 1944 when the area was liberated from the Germans by the Soviet Union.

Though the entire emphasis of this section is on words, a single rare artifact--a pair of *tefillin*--will be an emotional focus of this display. On the occasion of his bar mitzvah, Libivner Chaim Posner (originally Povrosnik) was given these phylacteries by the Chief Rabbi of the Kotzker Hasidic court who told him to take them with him wherever he went. When war broke out in 1939, Posner joined the Polish army, soon became a POW, and was sent to Sobibor. He hid the *tefillin* in his underwear during these travails and buried them in a tin box at the concentration camp. A few days before the uprising at Sobibor, Posner dug up the *tefillin* and carried them with him as he escaped into the woods and then hid in basements in Chelm until the town was liberated by the Soviets in 1944. Looking back on his experiences, Posner reflected "Because I had the *tefillin* I survived."

UNDER THE SOVIETS

Pertinent Quotations

The price of essential goods rose suddenly....Fear overwhelmed the inhabitants....A difficult winter passed, and by spring of 1940 all people of the town were without hope.
Yehuda Krein, YBL 221

For most people in the city it was hard to get used to the Soviet authority. Business was completely forbidden. Once the militia caught Hilda Dubetski selling a kerchief to a village woman and she was sentenced to 12 years in Siberia--thanks to which she is alive today [1975] and is living in Israel.
Menachem Rubinshtein, YBL 225

The town is overflowing with refugees. In one word: the happy human faces of the former townspeople have vanished. The number of homeless is growing by the day. The station is packed as are the synagogues and the houses of study.
Bela Raz, YBL 232

THE GHETTO

Pertinent Quotations

The night of June 21 was a beautiful night. It became apparent that the night was bestowed with a special beauty. Still and peacefully the moon illuminated our poor little city....The streets were overflowing with our dear youth, full with a lust for life....A dance was going to take place....I decided to participate. I thought to myself, "Perhaps I will be enjoying myself for the last time with my friends." ...1:00 a.m. we returned home, content from the evening....[Next morning] from everyone, one heard only one word: "War."

Chaim Rozenblit, Yad Vashem Testimony 03/3396

The first decree required all Jews to wear a Magen David sewn on a white arm band. The Jews were ordered to report, every day, for forced labor, or face the death penalty.
Joseph Karpus-Weitzfrucht, LYB 323

After all Jews were assembled in the market place, they were told to tell the Germans whether they were merchants or workers. Some Jews were afraid to say they were workers, lest they be classified as Communists. My brother Moyshe was standing among the workers, but when he saw our father among the merchants, he went over to his side. The Germans took all the merchants and shot them.

Abraham Getman, YBL 281

The order went out to burn all Torah scrolls, along with the Megillah. Fifty young women were made to bring the Torah scrolls out into the street and to burn them under the faithful eyes of the Germans and the Ukrainian police.

Rochl Leichter Weissman YBL 268

The last months in the ghetto were horrid, for we were waiting for a violent death. As summer passed, we learned that the Germans had liquidated the ghettos of Kovel, Ludmir, and Lutsk; and later on Rovne, Trisk, and Tomashovke; Libivne remained like an island.

Rochl Gutman (Sandlboym), YBL 278)

Exhibit Highlights

- Map of Luboml during the German occupation (reproduction)

LIQUIDATION

Pertinent Quotations

I will never forget October 1, 1942! That is when the shooting began in earnest. Big ditches (pits) had been dug out in preparation. They ordered the people to take off their clothes and lie face down on the ground, and then shot them through their necks. I managed to run into the woods.

Boruch Trachtenberg, YB 260

At three in the morning of Hoshanna Rabbah, 5703, police entered the ghetto, chased the Jews out of their houses, searched and found them--in bunkers and hideouts and brought them to the marketplace. From there they were taken on their last journey, to the pits that had been dug by them. They were shot immediately and their bodies dumped into the pits. There were 4,000 victims that day. It was like that for seven days....A total of 10,000 Jews from Luboml and the vicinity were murdered....Of all the residents of Luboml, only 51 survived, most of whom found their way to Israel, or to relatives in America.

Rochl Leichter, Weissman YB 269

The earth heaved for three days because there were still people alive in the pits, some of them were only wounded, not dead. They covered the earth with a thin layer of sand, or earth, and upon the earth [a layer] of plaster, and then another layer of earth; thus, for three days, the earth heaved.

Masha Rabinowitz, Yad Vashem Testimony 03/4132

More than 2000 Jews were assembled....People knew about the mass shooting and some did not want to go. They were killed right on the road or dogs were set on them. Using these methods the crowd was driven to the place of their death. When some people did not want to approach the hole the German beasts in white gowns hit them on the head with a special club, which had nails at its top. When somebody did not want to undress, these beasts forced already naked Jews to strip the resistant. They shot adults, and children, from one to seven, who were carried by mothers in their hands. [They] fell into the hole alive and were buried alive.

Summary of the People's Investigator of the Procurator's office of the Lubomil District, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, 1945

"THE STRUGGLE FOR LIFE"

Pertinent Quotations

Father used to say, "My children, if we get through this night, then we will survive."
Zippora Kotner, Yad Vashem Testimony 03/5974

One night these armed Polish AKA (Armia Krajowa--Polish Freedom Fighters) found our hiding place and ordered us to come out....When they were not looking, I quickly climbed up into the attic. When my mother tried to do the same, the murderers caught her. They ordered our Jews to give up their valuables, and another Pole told them to lie down on the floor. A great wail arose as the Jews, my family, huddled in one corner--a little pile of Jews from whom unnatural cries and screams were heard. Each one buried his head into the pile of human beings. A burst of shots from an automatic machine gun were heard, a few sighs, and then all was still...quiet....

Nathan Sobel, LYB 241

We were there [hiding in a stable] for two Passovers. My father figured out when Passover fell and he asked the gentile to bring us only potatoes with their skins and a little water--nothing more--during the eight days. He alone prayed and recited psalms. Such was both the first and second Passovers.

Pesya Helfand Ebers, Yad Vashem Testimony 03/3263

Suddenly four Ukrainian policemen arrived on the scene, and demanded to see documents. The senior policeman....ordered us to come with him and the remaining policeman. We walked about two kilometers from the village, and when we came to a cluster of bushes, Nikolai ordered us to enter it. My wife understood that we were about to be shot, and she began to scream "Sh'ma Israel." My heart became like a rock. I could not utter a word.

Joseph Karpus-Weitzfrucht, LYB 329

I felt liberated the minute I joined the partisan group, I felt liberated even if I got killed tomorrow, I didn't care....Because I felt I was being killed as a person, not as a Jew in a ghetto where you had no chance, no choice but to be killed. Here I died because I'm a person, I'm with the partisans. I'm doing my job. I'm fighting face to face with the Germans or I'm doing to help the partisans survive.

Sonia Orbuch, Yad Vashem Testimony 03/5268

"Mighty God

We are the children of outsiders and strangers here, we will not find our place.

Wherever we turn they will meet us with mockery and expel us with a curse.

We are the children of a mother and a father, we were not created from an inert stone,

We have only one hope--to find our home sometime."

Homeward, homeward,

Israel is our home, Israel is our hope,

And within Israel is our happiness

From a poem written by Chana Melamed Gitalis while she was in hiding during the Holocaust

Exhibit Highlights

Artifacts

- Phylacteries that Chaim Posner received for his bar mitzvah which he buried at Sobibor (Museum of Jewish Heritage)
- Poems written for Sonia Orbuch while she was in the Partisans, 1943 (Orbuch)

Video

- Survivors discussing their experiences during the Holocaust.

VI. "THE RETURN TO LIFE"

This section will follow the 51 survivors as they returned to Luboml after the war and left Europe to build new lives in Israel, the United States, Canada, and Argentina. Topics covered will be the condition of the town when the survivors returned, their emotional responses, their lives in DP camps and refugee centers, their resettlement in new countries, and the efforts of their fellow Libivners to assist them.

Prominently featured will be a survey of the several monuments which the Libivners erected over the years in Luboml, New York, and Israel. Finally, a wall of names will honor the memory of the thousands of murdered Libivners.

SURVIVORS RETURN

Pertinent Quotations

I had returned to visit one large cemetery; my town was one big grave. I came to gather the ashes of my beloved family. I came looking for my adolescent years. I wanted to imbed into my memory all that happened in the past; to remember all those that had been tortured and consequently murdered and whose lips were whispering the names of their loved ones. I had come to see the ruins of my hometown, to bury my soul in the pain and heartache; to mourn those friends and relatives who perished needlessly.

Menachem Erlich, YBL 132

I returned to Libivne on June 22, 1944....Not a stone was left of the Besmedresh. A place that had served its holy task for hundreds of years; where for hundreds of years Yiddish was heard; where many generations of Jews would gather to pray to God--it now lay in ruins. Thorns and wild grass had covered it.

Chaim Rozenblit, YB 250

In 1944 the Russians liberated Libivne. When we came there, we could not recognize our shtetl. A big part of it was in ruins, burned to the ground. The old synagogue was broken. A Pole lived in my grandfathers' house, and I told him to leave the house at once. Later a few more Jews from Libivne came back, but none of us stayed there, loath to live in a place which was soaked with the blood of our nearest and dearest ones!

Chaike Koltun-Pozner, YBL 294

When I returned and my brother returned from Russia, we exhumed their graves, made coffins and reburied them in a cemetery. We made two graves....When we dug them up, my sister's body was completely whole. We even found a little piece of bread and a cup of milk in a pocket in her coat. My brother-in-law's body was scattered in pieces, and we laid him in the coffin with sand. He had once been a giant, tall and strong.

Pesya Helfand Ebers, Yad Vashem Testimony 03/3263

You always think perhaps if we get back to that hometown, things will be the same as they used to be before the war. We were hoping, I'll come home, I'll find somebody alive, something of that past.... We came back to our hometown and it was a ghost town.... Nobody wanted to live in Poland.... Our aim was to get out of Poland at any cost.
Sonia Orbuch, Yad Vashem Testimony 03/5268

Exhibit Highlights

Artifacts

- Passover silver wine cup buried in Luboml and retrieved by Rivka Shlivo Karpus following the war (Shalev)
- Postcard which Sonia Orbuch sent to Bernard Meller (who survived the war in Russia) telling him that no one from his family had survived, ca. 1944-45 (Orbuch)

Photographs

- Survivors at a monument to the Luboml Holocaust victims, Luboml, ca. 1945 (Sobel P44.39)
- Survivors near the "killing pits," the mass graves near the brickworks (Sobel P44.38)

DP CAMPS

Pertinent Quotations

DP camp was a life. It was satisfactory for us in the sense that we were together among Jews. We had our organizations. We had our aim. We learned Hebrew. We had our Shabbat services. We had performances. We had a total Jewish life.
Sonia Orbuch, Yad Vashem Testimony 03/5268

Exhibit Highlights

Artifacts

- Chaja Horen's identity card issued at Wetzlar DP Camp, 1947 (Museum of Jewish Heritage)
- Documents related to Abraham Getman's time in a DP camp in Austria, 1947-48, including his worker ID card; identity card and travel document for foreigners and stateless persons; identity card certifying that he was "in a Nazi Concentration Camp due to his Jewish descent"; and a letter of reference for his employment as a driver in a DP camp (Getman)
- Framed portrait of Nathan Sobel, a young survivor, taken in Paris (en route to Palestine) (Sobel P44.35)

Photographs

- Libivners in DP camps and refugee centers (Getman, Orbuch, Kessler, M. Kandelshain)

NEW LIVES

Exhibit Highlights

Artifacts

- Chaja Horen's "Declaration of Intention" to become a U.S. citizen, 1949 (Museum of Jewish Heritage)
- Documents related to Abraham Getman's new life in Israel including his Irgun membership card; record of army service, 1948-50; certificate stating that he passed second-level Hebrew; and Israel Army reserves service card, 1958-59

Photographs

- Rivka Shlivo Karpus, a survivor, in Pinsk, 1948 (Shalev, P2.6)
- Survivors Moshe Blumen, Nathan Sobel, and Abraham Getman in Israel, 1949 (Getman P54.19)
- Lubomlers at a festive gathering of the Luboml-Opalin Society, Buenos Aires, 1950s (Sobel P44.43)
- Lubomlers at a Succoth celebration in Israel, 1960s (Erlich P10.19)

MEMORIALS

Pertinent Quotations

The few Jews who were left alive had decided to build a barbed-wire fence around the newest and largest cemetery of our town for the mass-graves of the murdered kdoyshim [holy martyrs]. This was done with the help of an engineer. After fencing in the mass-graves, I and two of my friends...decided not to leave the place but to build a 'nasip' [a raised mound of earth] as a memorial. All three of us worked till nighttime, without a stop, and erected a mound 6 meters long, 4 meters wide, and 3 meters high. And we seeded it with grass.

Nathan Sobel, YBL 244

O Libivne! My hometown that lies in ruins! You shall live in my heart forever!
Chane Kraut Achtman, YBL 112

Exhibit Highlights

Artifact

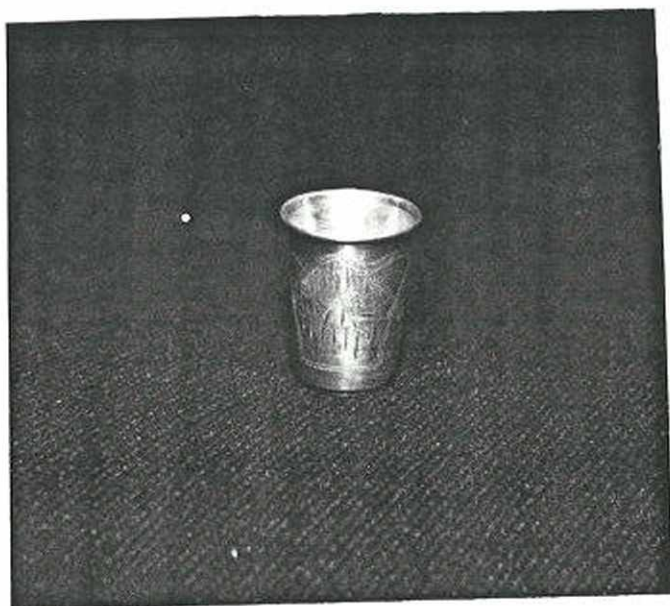
- *Yizkor Book of Luboml* (Tel Aviv, 1975)

Photographs

- Various memorials to the Luboml Jews erected in Luboml, New York, and Israel, 1945-1990s (various sources)
- Lubomlers holding a *Yahrzeit* gathering in a DP Camp, Zeilsheim, West Germany, ca. 1946 (Orbuch)
- Lubomlers in Israel gathered for a memorial ceremony, 1960s (Kostin P34.14)
- The Luboml Room at Heichal Wolyn
- Libovner Voliner Benevolent Society memorial ceremony, New York

MEMORIAL WALL OF NAMES

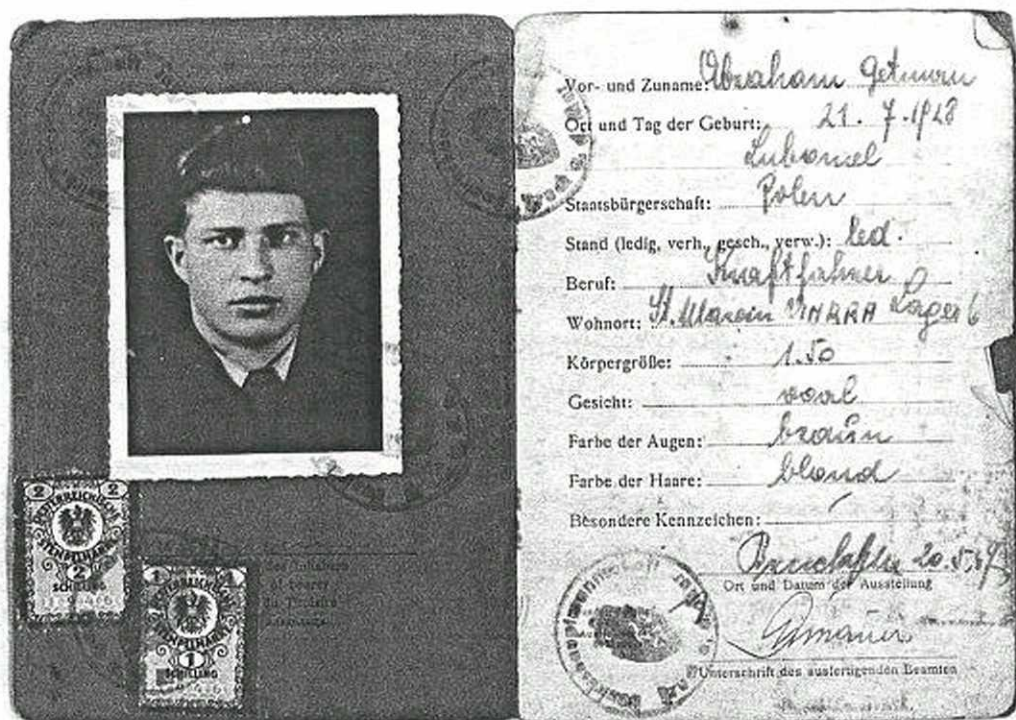
A graphic treatment will be developed to create a wall listing the names of all of the Jews in Luboml who perished in the Holocaust.



Passover silver wine cup buried in Luboml and retrieved by Rivke Shlivo Karpus following the war (Shalev)



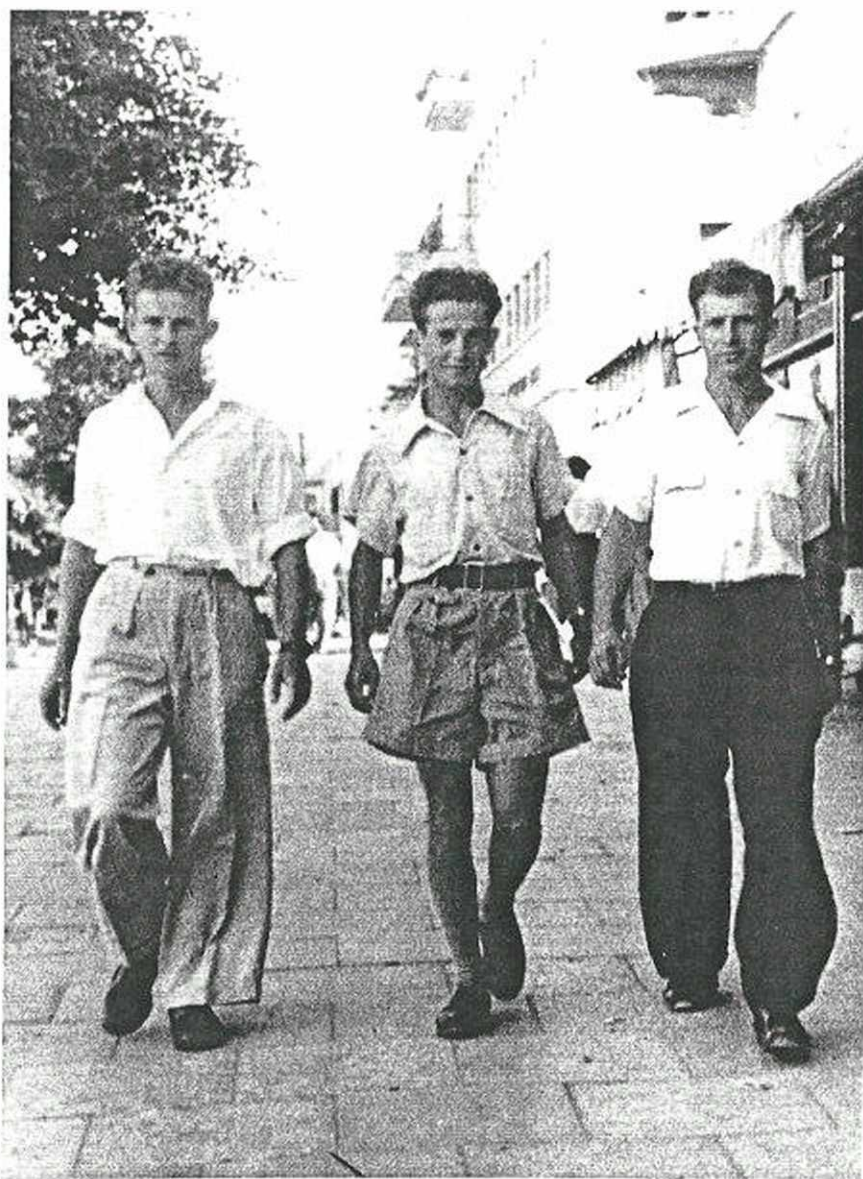
Survivors at a monument to the Luboml Holocaust victims, Luboml, ca. 1945 (Sobel P44.39)



Abraham Getman's "Identity Card for Foreigners and Stateless Persons," 1947
(Getman)



Mirel Steifman and her daughter huddled on a bed in a DP camp, 1947 (Kessler P47.41)



Luboml survivors Moshe Blumen, Nathan Sobel, and Abraham Getman, Israel, 1949 (Getman P54.19)

EPILOGUE: LUBOML FAMILY ALBUM PHOTOMURAL (Contemporary)

At the end of the exhibition visitors will once again meet the Jews of Luboml. Here, recent photographs of groups of Libivners will show that their ties with each other remain strong and persistent over fifty years after their dispersion. Some of these photographs will be obtained from the families; others will be specially photographed for the exhibition. Possibilities include:

- The reunion of the Ziegelman, Eiger, and Zimmerberg families, New York, 1989
- Return visit to Luboml by Aaron Ziegelman, Victor and Anne Gershengorn, Bernard Meller, Abraham Getman, and others, 1991
- A group of retired Libivners who have all settled in the "Golden Lakes" community in West Palm Beach, Florida
- Libivners in Israel, including Yossef and Rivka Karpus, Moshe Shalev, and others

MORE LIBIVNE FAMILY ALBUM (Vintage)

To date the Luboml Exhibition Project has made copies of almost 900 photographs of Luboml and its people and it expects to find hundreds more. Only a portion of this collection can be included on the walls of the exhibition, but the Project wants to make this extraordinary material available to visitors. In the course of the exhibition design phase, the organizers will consider a number of options ranging from the low-tech to the high-tech including:

- A sitting area, either in the middle of the exhibition or at the end, where visitors can look at laminated photographs in binders.
- A continuous slide show running in a separate room at the beginning or the end of the exhibition.
- Interactive stations, in the middle of the exhibition or at the end, where visitors can look at the photographs on videodisk or CD-ROM.