

Nowy Targ County

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Kreis Neumarkt (Nowy Targ county under the occupation) was located in the region known as Podhale, which is most often associated with mountains, tourism and highlanders proud of their rich – and distinct – culture and traditions. It is impossible, however, to find among those idyllic images any accounts of the tragic fate of local Jews. In the case of Kreis Neumarkt, we have an extraordinary source which helped me to focus on and to explore the individual dimension of the studied events. In the winter of 1941/1942, the local authorities conducted a census of some 4,500 Jews, residents of the county. It was thanks to this census that I was able to learn their names, marital status, place of birth, addresses and professions exercised during the war. Furthermore, I could learn about their family relationships, neighbors, dates of death, or their escapes – because all of the above was reported in a special rubric entitled “Notes”. These “notes” were being entered right up to mid-August 1942, when the final destruction of Jewish communities in county Nowy Targ has begun. The destruction of the Jewish communities in Podhale region happened over the period of two weeks in August in full sight of the Polish neighbors. Their attitude had a key importance to the survival of the Jews who tried to hide in the area. The earlier mentioned census has become a key source, which enabled me to retrace the individual trajectories of the local Jews during the so-called third phase of the Holocaust. There were some 600 Jews who tried to survive in hiding, in the Nowy Targ area, but only nine of them survived here until the liberation. In my paper, I will address the local characteristics, which contributed to this tragic outcome.