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**JEWISH MEMORIAL  
SITES IN PALANGA**

You will not find a city or town in Lithuania that does not have traces of the Jewish culture, which are often old cemeteries and synagogues. In 1487, there was a Jewish funeral brotherhood *Hevra Kadiša* in Palanga, which suggests that Jews have been living in Palanga as early as in the XV century. XVII century Jews have already comprised a significant part of the village's community and put a lot of work to turn the little village into a prosperous town.

In 1693, when Jews received the right of townspeople and could acquire land plots, build houses and trade, there were 10 of them here. Palanga only had 43 residents at the time. After a century, in 1794, there were 17 Jews among a total of 69 townspeople.

According to the data from 1817, there were 80 homesteads in Palanga, 30 out of which belonged to Jews. There were 688 residents at the time (in Old and New Palanga), 439 (219 men and 220 women) out of which were Jews who did not belong to the jurisdiction of Palanga Manor and who paid taxes to the manor for their land plots. The Jewish Kahal owned a school, sauna and a cemetery.

In 1869, there were 979 Jews living in Palanga (476 men and 503 women). Jews carried out traditional businesses: trading, crafting and owning inns. In the second half of the XIX century, the Jewish population has increased (in 1881, there were 1618 residents, out of which 1121 were Jews) due to the fact that amber processing companies (belonging to Jews) were established in Palanga and mostly had Jewish workers. A red-brick synagogue was built in 1902. Another, smaller synagogue was built around 50 meters from the large synagogue (these synagogues did not remain to this day). In 1936, Eta Gutmanienė built the first power station in J. Basanavičiaus Street. In 1938, there was a big fire in Palanga that destroyed the entire Jewish residential quarter.

In 1941, a massive massacre of Jews began in Palanga when Germany attacked the Soviet Union. More than 400 members of the Jewish community became victims of the Holocaust carried out on 27th of June and 12th of October. This is how the history of the integral part of Palanga town community, which lasted longer than 500 years, has ended.

## 1. Old Jewish Cemetery of Palanga (I)



The Old Jewish Cemetery of Palanga was at the edge of the park of Tiškevičiai family, near the entrance. This place is now called the Youth Hill. People were no longer buried in the cemetery since 1892 (before the establishment of Tiškevičiai Park). Layers found under

the cemetery are more than 200 years old. According to analogues, it is believed that tombstone monuments were decorated with images of the city of Jerusalem and temples, Decalogue plates, Zodiac signs and hands outstretched for a blessing.

## 2. Old Jewish Cemetery of Palanga (II)



After Palanga was ravaged by a fire in 1830, the old burial registration books were destroyed (the oldest burial brotherhood books date back to 1487). Since 1831, funeral registration began in the new Jewish cemetery in the town's outskirts (around 300 meters to the east from Naglis Hill). 10 various-sized granite and concrete tombstone monuments with engraved Hebrew inscriptions remained in the cemetery. On 4 September 2008, the cemetery was registered in the Cultural Property Register of the Republic of Lithuania (unique object code – 32235).

## 3. Monument for the commemoration of Jews



On 27 June 1941, 111 Jews and people of other nationalities accused of supporting the Soviet regime were shot in the dunes across Birutė Hill, in the southern part of Birutė Park in Palanga. Based on the historical research of the Lithuanian Genocide and Resistance Research Centre, there were 95 members (93 men

and 2 women) of the Jewish community in Palanga municipality among the killed, as well as 16 non-Jewish people who were mostly Lithuanians. In 1989, a monument – large granite stone was built in a symbolic location in memory of the massacre victims. According to the old residents of Palanga, the actual location of the massacre is a few hundred meters away – within the territory of Auska villa.

## 4. The burial area of Jews in the civil cemetery of Palanga town



In 1958, the remains of 111 Jews and people of other nationalities shot on 27 June 1941 in the south part of Birutė Park in Palanga were reburied in the civilian cemetery of Palanga town. This decision was adopted by the then executive committee of the working people deputies of the Lithuanian SSR Palanga town, according to Resolution No. 610 of Lithuanian SSR Council of Ministers. The burial area is in the western part of the cemetery, near the main entrance to the cemetery from Vytautas str. side.

## 5. Jew massacre location and grave in Palanga



On 12 October 1941, around 200-300 women and children from Palanga Jew community were imprisoned on 26 June 1941 in a small ghetto of Valteriškė village and then killed in Kunigiškiai forest. The massacre location and grave is 1.1 km to the east from Liepaja highway (A13 – motorway). On 18 June 2015, the massacre location and grave were registered in the Cultural Property Register of the Republic of Lithuania (unique object code – 10992).