

STORY OF A HOUSE IN JACMIERZ

This house at 7 Rynek Street is known to everyone in Jacmierz. It stands on the corner, with its gable facing the marketplace, parallel to Targowa Street. It is entered into the municipal register of monuments under the number A-143. It is popularly referred to as "the House of Wolanskis" or "the old library". Its history is very interesting and rich.

The history of the building is however intertwined with that of the people who built it, lived and worked in it. On the basis of the surviving and available documents, it is possible to determine quite precisely when it was built. The Austrian cadastral map of Jacmierz from 1849 shows an empty corner lot at the site of the building. The map indicates that there is a well in the middle of the plot. On the next cadastral map from 1851, a residential building and an outbuilding are already drawn. Therefore, it can be assumed that the house we are interested in was built in 1850. Who built it? In the archives in Lviv there is a

"The Town Book of Jacmierz for Inscribing Various Documents for Eternal Remembrance" from the years 1817-1860. It was maintained by the town authorities. Various matters of importance to the inhabitants were recorded there: purchase and sale contracts, prenuptial agreements (prenups), wills and similar matters. The inhabitants of Jacmierz made these records in Austrian offices, at a notary office or in court. Recording it again in the town records, in the presence of the mayor

and municipal councillors, was to add additional importance to the matter and be inscribed in "eternal memory". Entries were made on an ongoing basis, but transactions and events that had taken place several years earlier were also recorded, and the entry in the register was supposed to authenticate a transaction made earlier, a donation, etc. In the town register there is an entry from 1860 stating that a Jew named Josko Horowicz bought a plot of land on the marketplace in Jacmierz. I am quoting this entry in its entirety, preserving its original syntax and spelling, because it contains a lot of interesting data.

A contract between the two parties, namely Franciszek and Julianna Ochenduska on the one hand, and Josko Horowicz alias Pinkas on the other, was concluded between these two parties on the following points:

1. *Julianna née Zylka, married to Franciszek Ochenka, having the succession inheritance from her late father Jendrzey Zylka, resp. by virtue of a decree issued by the imperial-royal county government in Sanok on 10 October*

1857, the spouses Franciszek and Julianna Ochenduska, who have a hereditary right to this property, sell by perpetual right to an Orthodox Jew Josko Horowicz alias Pinkas, his wife and successors, for a sum agreed between them of 46 florins, which sum has been fully counted by the buyer into the seller's own hands, the plot that has been vacant since 1846, when a building burned down there, which was registered in the land register under the number 84, whereas the seller, upon receipt of the said amount, acknowledges and renounces hereby any claim thereto, both for himself and for his successors.



A house in 1915

2. *Viewed from the east, this plot is located along a public road from the hospital to the marketplace. From the west, on the side of Jakub Ochenduska, it starts from the town and reaches the garden of the heirs of the late Marianna Bober.*

The length of the plot is 17 fathoms, the width from the marketplace is 5 fathoms, and at the back from the garden of the heirs of the late Marianna Bober is 6 fathoms.

3. *On the same plot, the sellers leave no debt to the buyer*

but only the existing imperial-royal taxes and the municipal and ecclesiastical duties of the town of Jacmierz due from the date of this contract concluded by the same buyer, which his successors shall pay and dispose of. Such a contract of sale and purchase is to be valid and effective, and we allow such a contract to be entered into the transaction register and sign the same in front of credible witnesses. Jacmierz, 7.2.1860 Julianna Ochenduszczyzna née Zylka, husband of Franciszek Ochenduska. I accept, Josko Horowicz, wife Hana. Attending witnesses: Village Mayor Piotr Floryan, Assessor Feliks Garbieński, Jan Zbiegniewicz, Jakub Ochenduska, Jan Ostrowski, Jakub Ostrowski. Entered in town records on 14.2.1860 in the presence of Peter Floryan, the Village Mayor. Compiled by Jozef Zylka.

It is unknown where Horowitz came from. He could afford to buy land in the town and build a large house, so he must have been an enterprising and wealthy man. Horowitz built a house on the purchased land. It was large and rich in comparison with other houses that Jacmierz was built with. Half of the house is made of brick, another half of wood, while the front of



Stanisław Wolanski

water to the kitchen upstairs. It is not known whether it was Horowitz or later residents who did it, but in fact a so-called "weeble-wobble" pump supplied water to the kitchen. The house was intended for the Horowitz family, but there was also room for a shop, which they had been running for years. They traded in everything, and their store illustrated the adage "shoe wax, soap, and jam". For some time, one room in the house served as a synagogue, where the Jewish community from Jacmierz gathered for prayer. Josef Horowitz and his descendants looked for income wherever they could. In addition to running a shop, they took part in auctions at the marketplace during fairs and also lent money (sometimes even the Grotowskis, the owners of Jacmierz, borrowed from them).

The Horowitz family must have been a respected and valued family in Jacmierz, because Szulim Horowitz, probably Josko's son, was a member of the town's authorities in the years 1885-1892. The authorities must have had a mixed relationship with other members of the Jewish community, because in one of the minutes of the city council from 1888 it is mentioned that Jewish merchants use usury on the sale of salt, i.e. they inflate its price to 15 kreuzers per "topek" (at that time, the salt produced around Drohobych was sold in the form of a so-called "topek", a truncated cone with a calibrated weight). The councillors obliged Szulim Horowitz to have the exclusive right to sell the salt at the prescribed price of 11 cents per topek.

Not much is known about the members of the Horowitz family. They appeared in Jacmierz around the middle of the 19th century, and their children went to school in Jacmierz (as evidenced by the school records). The last of the Horowitz family, another Jozef, married Sara Chana Wilner in 1892. They had seven children. Jozef died in 1918, his wife a year earlier. The minor children were looked after by a relative of Shulim Horowitz.

the house, there is a spacious arcade based on four pillars, which was used for trade during fairs. A large attic with windows from the front and from the backyard, with a balcony in front, could be used to accommodate merchants coming to fairs. Under the brick part of the house there are cellars with barrel vaults. The well, which was located on the purchased plot, was not filled in, but was located within a spacious basement. In this way, it was possible to supply

The Horowitz family lived in Jacmierz until 1928, when Chaja Horowitz, who was last member of the family to leave Jacmierz, sold the house by a deed of sale dated 23.08.1929 drawn up in Brzozow. Her siblings had left Jacmierz earlier. They left in search of a better life and other opportunities for growth. Daniel, Marcin, Estera, Mendel, Abraham, Moses, and finally Chaja left. They were scattered all over the world, some went to the USA, others to Western Europe, others to Israel. Thus they were spared the fate that befell the majority of the Jews of Jacmierz during the German occupation. Only Abraham Horowitz remained in Poland. He lived in Turzansk near Komancza in the 1920s, and there is no information about him since then. He was probably murdered by the Germans like many other Jews.

At the beginning of the 20th century, another family with the surname Horowitz appeared in Jacmierz, but it was not related to the Horowitz family described above.

The Horowitz family left Jacmierz, but what remained of them was the house they had built. It was acquired by Bronisław Smolik, born in Jacmierz on 9.04.1876, son of Franciszek and Rozalia Sieradzka. The Smolik family house was almost opposite the Horowitz house, on the street leading to the market. It was much smaller and more modest than the Horowitz house. Bronisław Smolik is a very interesting person, although little is known about him. He studied at a gymnasium in Przemyśl, but then, in some unknown way, he became involved with a Dutch oil exploration company. As a representative of this company, he travelled all over the world, reportedly being in China, India and probably the USA. That's how he made his fortune. Around 1910 he married a Czech woman, Jozefa Silhankova, who accompanied him on many journeys. Around 1928, together with his wife, he returned to his hometown of Jacmierz and bought a house that Chaja Horowitz was selling. He must have paid a lot, but he was a wealthy man. Educated, fluent in languages, and having traveled around the world, he certainly made an impression in a small town. That is why he was elected mayor of the town of Jacmierz. Unfortunately, he was the town mayor for a short time, because it in this period that Jacmierz lost its municipal rights. The Self-Government Act, introduced in 1933, abolished the existing individual communes, where a rural commune, such as Posada Jacmierska, was headed by a village mayor, whereas a unitary, urban commune was governed by a town mayor. In their place, collective communes were created, comprising several localities each. Bronisław Smolik, together with his wife Jozefa, ran a shop located in the house they bought. It was the first Polish store in Jacmierz. Until then, all trade had been in the hands of Jews. Unfortunately, Bronisław died suddenly on 26.09.1934. The Smoliks had no children. After her husband's death, Jozefa continued to run the store with the help of his family. It is not known what her financial situation was after Bronisław's death. She decided to dedicate one room in the house to the post office. Previously, the post office was located in the building next to the church bell tower. It was run in a rented house by two sisters: Wanda and Bogumila Misiewicz, originally from outside Jacmierz. After Wanda's death in 1925, her sister resigned from running the post office. At that time, the mail was sent to the so-called "cat's castle" (granary) at the Wolańskis' house. It was then that the running of the post office in Jacmierz was taken over by Stefania



Jozefa and Bronislaw Smolik

of Stanislaw Wolanski, the father of, in particular Stefania Wolanska. This family had many children. In exchange for lifelong care, Jozefa bequeathed her house at the marketplace to Stanislaw, the youngest Wolanski. She died in 1961 at the age of 75. The Horowitz house changed hands again.

Stanislaw Wolanski, born in 1913, was an organist in Mrzyglod for some time and during the war. Together with the local parish priest, he helped refugees from the Polish territories occupied by the Soviet Union. Those who crossed the San River could count on the help of Stanislaw Wolanski and the parish priest of Mrzyglod, as well as accommodation and rest in the presbytery. After the war, he returned to Jacmierz, worked in a shop of his aunt Smolikowa for a while, and then at a fruit and vegetable procurement point in Jacmierz. He had moved in with Jozefa Smolik

Wolanska. After Bronislaw Smolik's death, the post office found a room in his house at the marketplace. On one side of the arcade was the entrance to the shop, on the other was the entrance to the post office. Soon, the arcades of the house and the post office became a meeting place for clients of both establishments. The local intelligentsia would also gather there to chat.

During the war, the post office became an important point of the resistance. Stefania Wolańska had access to all letters and parcels. On more than one occasion she intercepted letters from local collaborators, who sent them to their employers in the Gestapo. In cooperation with other postal offices in the area, she received encoded telegrams about the arrests planned by the Germans and notified those at risk. At the post office in Jacmierz, the resistance movement had its own locker for incoming orders, warnings and clandestine press to be distributed in the area. Jozefa Smolikowa, who ran a grocery store next door, was probably aware of Stefania's additional activities at the post office.

and cared for her until his death. A textile shop operated in Wolanski's house until the end of the 1960s. It later moved to the Posada Jacmierska to the former building of the Agricultural Club. Stanislaw Wolanski was a bachelor. The house he lived in was too big for a lonely man, so he rented some of the rooms to the Village Library. It was housed there in the years 1969-2008. The building was old and unrenovated. When the ceilings began to crack and the floor began to collapse under the weight of the shelves, the library moved to the building of the former Stefczyk's Credit Union, which was owned by the municipality. For some time, a repair shop for electronic equipment occupied one room of the house. Stanislaw Wolanski died in 1983. He neither disposed of his property, nor bequeathed it to anyone. The building has been "masterless" since his death.

This is the history of this house. It witnessed many events that took place at the marketplace in Jacmierz. It survived World War I and did not burn down during the hostilities in 1915, when a large part of the houses at the marketplace burned down. It survived World War II and during the war its basement gave shelter to many residents during shelling of Jacmierz.

But she never objected, never protested, and pretended she didn't know. She was a Pole not by birth but by choice, and her patriotism and attachment to her new homeland were commendable. Stefania Wolanska died in 1955. After her death, the post office continued to operate in the Smolik's house for some time, but soon moved to another building at the marketplace – to the Kubicki family. After the end of the war, Jozefa Smolik's grocery store continued to operate for some time, but the political changes that took place after the war did not support private trade. The store closed around 1948. In its place, a textile and footwear store was established under the patronage of the Commune Cooperative (GS).

Having no children or family of her own, Jozefa Smolikowa, became involved with her husband's family. Her husband's sister, Valeria, married



Photograph taken in 1977 by the Horowitz family during their stay in Jacmierz

From the moment it was built, it served the people of Jacmierz as a store, a post office, a synagogue, and a library. It has been abandoned by household members but it is still there. More and more neglected, falling into disrepair, it endures. How long will it last? It will be a pity if it disappears from the Jacmierz marketplace. Or maybe a miracle will happen and someone will give it a second life?

The Horowitz family left Jacmierz almost a hundred years ago. But did they really? In 1977, guests from America appeared at the marketplace in Jacmierz. Martin Horowitz, born in Jacmierz in 1906, brought his wife and son Dawid to show them the place where the Horowitz family came from. They inspected the house, and Martin met up with his old friends and neighbors. Then they left. In the summer of 2009, the granddaughter of another Horowitz, Marcus, who was born in Jaćmierz in 1905, appeared in Jacmierz. Miriam and her daughter Kimberli, who live in California, came to see the place and home from which their ancestor set out into the world. This is not the end of the Horowitzes' visits. A year later, in 2010, Dawid Horowitz, who visited Jacmierz in 1977 with his father

as a young boy, brought his two sons Jonathan and Daniel to show them the family nest. They entered a house that had already been abandoned. They were not bothered by dust and cobwebs, and explored all the rooms from the basement to the attic. They touched the remaining furnishings, and the walls that their ancestor had built. Dawid is a doctor of mathematical sciences, one of his sons is a journalist, the other a student. All three are intelligent and educated people. They packed a piece of plaster from the wall into a bag a souvenir, and took a horseshoe found in the attic. Leaving the building, they left a coin in the crack of the wall as a talisman that would allow them to return to this place one day. They visited the Memorial Hall in Jacmierz and saw the equipment and objects that may have been used by their ancestors. Then they left. After some time, they sent a book – an album with photos from their stay in Jacmierz, as well as a photo taken at their home, where, in a decorative cabinet, they keep the items valuable to them – Torah scrolls wrapped in a cloth decorated with an emblem with the coat of arms of Jacmierz. It is a beautiful example of respect for tradition.

Halina Radwańska, Jacmierz

MAN HAS TO KEEP THINKING

I'm sure that you treat these meetings with me as further educational lessons. May it be so for you anyway. You know that the mathematics we have been learning forces us to think and act in a certain way, but also to evaluate the behavior of the people we observe. I think that this joint meeting of ours is one of the last ones, because I don't sign up for the next one. And you know exactly why. You also need to see that our subject is not at all lofty. It is a bit difficult to understand in terms of the depth of interpretation of the world shown to us. It doesn't really want to be separated from ethics. Everyone thinks that philosophy is the queen of sciences. Mathematics is a practical science that solves its problems in a continuous and exhaustive way. Philosophers, on the other hand, have been arguing about who is in the right for centuries. We didn't argue. We talked. I am obliged to tell you, now-grown people, to set an example of how conversation brings people together, promotes understanding, and satisfies the desire to remember. I remember apple trees, the 3 of them that grew in our garden, huge ones with spreading crowns. Laden with flowers every other year. Every other year there were bees from neighbors and a lot of work with them, and something had to be done with the apples. And on clear Sundays, the neighbors came to meet under these apple trees straight from the church, and political discussions would continue until your head swelled. A disturbing event was the departure of a military unit of subdivisions not far from me to the front in Zaolzie. Those who saw this departure described it precisely, because it was not a march to the training ground. Railway workers brought disturbing news too. Nothing good awaited us. Then I found out that in the twentieth year – and it was not so long ago – even those who were over 17 years old were conscripted into the army. And from that moment on,

I began to fear for my boyfriend. And that's how it was with that boy. I knew he was my boyfriend, but he certainly did not know that I wanted to be his girlfriend. He was different from the others. He was wise and goodhearted. When they talked about the war, a new one, I was afraid that they would take him away from me. How is he going to cope there... On the day when he was supposed to leave for the unit, he came to us. In fear, I fled to the other side of the stream among my birches. He came to me and I remember that he took my hands and asked me, in a voice that was not quite his own, if I would wait for him. There are times in life when you don't know if you'll give an answer right away, even though it buzzes in your head: yes, I will. And it was the same with me. When he was leaving, with some regret in my heart, I said to myself: yes, I will. I swear. But he didn't look back. I wanted to run after him. I couldn't, because I was frozen like those birches. Then the carriages drove away. Then the young ones became "fugitives". And the village became quite empty. It was so quiet, it was as if the children had grown up in that silence. And because it was more fun that way, we gathered in the shacks in the evenings. Same chat went on and on: not many of them will return from the war, because that has always been the case. And mourning and poverty await us. One evening, my boyfriend's sister heard hurried footsteps behind the wall of the room. We all heard the knock on the door. She ran to open the door saying, my brother... She didn't finish; there was no one behind the open door. We understood that he had come to say goodbye. About a month later, a handful of grass and some soil were brought to me, wrapped in my handkerchief that I had given him. It was taken from the place where he died. It's lyrical, but I'm going through life with this lyricism and I'm fine with it. Life has given me a great crumb of happiness. It gave me a boyfriend who went there in my defense too. He only asked that...