

BALTIC GERMANS IN DAUGAVPILS: PLACES OF RESIDENCE AND WORK

ROUTE MAP

It is believed that before World War II there were very few Germans living in Daugavpils. By providing the information summarized in this booklet, we want to convince the inhabitants and guests of our city that, despite the fact that there were not many Germans (about 500 people) until the autumn of 1939, their presence in the city was quite noticeable. Although almost 100 years have passed since then, we have been able to find out where the Germans lived, what their lifestyle was like, and what their occupations were. For the time being, the information is rather fragmented and has been collected from a variety of sources. We hope that we will be able to continue the work started, gradually creating a more complete picture. This is an offer of a small, unusual tour of Daugavpils, where we will try to tell and show the unofficial life of Germans in Daugavpils shortly before their departure from Latvia.



18. novembra street 66

Before World War II, more than 500 Germans lived in Daugavpils, which was a little over one percent of the city's total population. This ethnic community had its own meeting places.



Imantas street 35

The historically most significant one was the local Lutheran church on Šosejas Street (18. Novembra Street) 66⁽¹⁾, as Germans were the founders and leaders of the congregation before World War I. After the war, many Latvians joined the church, but the Germans still retained their influence. There were both Latvian and German congregations in the church. According to historical evidence, the number of members of the German congregation reached 500, which was almost the total number of Germans in the city.

For the Germans of Daugavpils, it was important to work in the local department of the German Parents' Association. For some time, the address of the department was 35 Zaļā Street (Imantas Street)⁽²⁾. The house was renovated after the war. Later, the department was situated in another place – 7 Viestura Street, now the district of the city polyclinic. In charge of the department were the most active representatives of the local German community: physician Hugo Czernay, engineer Voldemar Shnakenburg, pastor Rihard Rozenberg, and engineer Eugene Zinkel.

The German Parents' Association maintained a German private school (Primary School No. 18) in Daugavpils. Its address was 35 K. Valdemāra Street⁽³⁾. The house was rebuilt and has been preserved. The school activities were supported by the entire local German community, therefore for school events the spacious premises of Daugavpils City



Kr. Valdemāra street 35

BALTIC GERMANS IN DAUGAVPILS: PLACES OF RESIDENCE AND WORK



Rīgas street 42

Club at 31 Imantas Street were used. The building of the City Club, rich in tradition, has been rebuilt and preserved.

The small German community was active during the Daugavpils City Council elections. The Germans compiled their own list of candidates, led by E. Zinkel (1880 – 1947). For many years he had been working in leading positions in the city council (address – 1 K. Valdemāra Street); he was also the head of Daugavpils Voluntary Firefighting Brigade, the deputy chairman of the council of Daugavpils City Club and the chairman of the audit commission of Latgale German Credit Union.

The city's central street – Rīgas Street – has always been a shopping place; here, opposite the church, there was a wallpaper shop-warehouse run by the Paul brothers at 42 Rīgas Street⁽⁴⁾. The brothers lived in another place, which was unusual at the time; therefore, it can be considered that the store was rather big and probably occupied two floors.

Almost opposite the Paul brothers' store, on the site of the present-day shopping centre "Solo", there was a leather workshop that also belonged to a German. On the same street, patients were attended by doctor Held, who was coming from Rēzekne for that purpose. The doctor was one of the first to leave Latvia after selling his property in both cities.

Eduard Mannheim, a teacher of German and French, lived a few steps from this place, at 20 Cietokšņa Street⁽⁵⁾.

Opposite E. Mannheim's house, there lived a family of four people in the house No. 19, which no longer exists. A young man from that family took part in hostilities on the German side and died in Russia.



Cietokšņa street 20

Two German families, at least seven people, lived in the 6th house on the same street⁽⁶⁾. One of them was a representative of a beer warehouse and, as was customary at the time, he welcomed guests right at his home. A young man from that German family died near Lviv. The house has been renovated preserving its old foundation.



Cietokšņa street 6

Another central street in Daugavpils in the 1920s-1930s was Lāčplēša Street, where many shops, workshops, warehouses, etc. were located, for example, the building No. 35⁽⁷⁾ housed Mr. E. Schulz's dry cleaning. The whole Schulz family, including their elderly relatives, lived in that house. The house is built in the so-called Latgale baroque style and has historical significance. Now it houses several offices, shops, and apartments.

Famous people have always lived in the city centre, on Lāčplēša Street; among them were, for instance, the widow and the daughter of Arvid von Pfeiffer (1847 – 1915), the former head of the town and chief of the police. The widow and the daughter of prosecutor Paul Brunovsky lived in the same house. Unfortunately, the house has not survived. Currently, it is the location of Daugavpils University.

Many Germans lived on Lāčplēša Street, for example, in the house No 21⁽⁸⁾, which no longer exists – now there is a park.

The house, which was located on the site of the today's polyclinic, was the home to the family of a well-known doctor Chernay; the family consisted of at least three people. Ophthalmologist Hugo Chernay regularly reported in the local newspapers about his departures and the resumption of patient visits. It is known that his daughter, Miss Chernay,



Lāčplēša street 35

BALTIC GERMANS IN DAUGAVPILS: PLACES OF RESIDENCE AND WORK

worked as a masseur in the sanatorium “Mežciems”. In addition, Dr. H. Chernay was an active member of the German national group, advocating for the national interests of the Baltic Germans in Latvia.

Another street, where the Baltic Germans lived as neighbours, was Raiņa Street; it suffered greatly during World War II. It is known that the house No. 42 ⁽⁹⁾ was home to a large Gideon family, which consisted of eight people. The last meeting of Latgale German Savings Mortgage Association took place in the apartment of Emilia Teichman in the same house. The association was actively involved in the city’s public life, for example, it donated significant sums of money to charity and participated in the construction of several monuments. There were other two German families living in the house No. 103. Nowadays, there is a school, a stadium and a park; the houses have not survived and the appearance of the street has changed but we can still imagine how city residents, especially the residents of Raiņa Street, went to Kārlis Blūzmanis’ garden cafe-restaurant, which was located in the place of today’s small green area.



18. novembra street 29



18. novembra street 73

The house No. 73 on 18. Novembra Street still retains the charm of an early 20th century stone building. It is located next to the present Polish Gymnasium.

120 18. Novembra Street, a wooden house, is currently in a partially abandoned condition.

In the house No 31 on 18. Novembra Street, which has not survived to this day, there lived two sisters, who were among the first in our city to take the decision to leave Latvia for Germany. That was evidenced by an advertisement for the sale of furniture published in the newspaper in October, 1939.

The city’s central transport artery, 18. Novembra Street (formerly Šosejas Street), was really densely populated by the Baltic Germans. It is known that the Germans lived in the houses No. 12⁽¹⁰⁾, 19⁽¹¹⁾, 25⁽¹²⁾, 29⁽¹³⁾, 31⁽¹⁴⁾, 56/59⁽¹⁶⁾, 73⁽¹⁶⁾, 120⁽¹⁷⁾ that can be explained by the proximity of the Lutheran church of which they were members. The family of Baron Rudolf Stromberg, who was born in Laši Manor and died in Poland near Poznań in 1945, lived in the house No 19 (the house has not survived).

House No 29 on 18. Novembra Street, a three-storey stone building in which the Schnakenburg family lived in one of the apartments.



Varšavas street 15

The part of the city called Jaunbūve was very popular with the German population. Not only was the Church Hill nearby, but there were also railway workshops staffed by many Germans living in the area. Those were engineers, car maintenance specialists, guards, technicians, etc. Varšavas Street and the adjoining streets on the side of the Orthodox Church were called the German settlement. The information found testifies that the Germans lived in the houses No. 15, 21, 22, 43. Only two of those houses have survived to the present day.



18. novembra street 120

The stone house of the early 20th century at 15 Varšavas Street ⁽¹⁸⁾ witnessed the oldest German woman, who had decided to leave Daugavpils for Germany, moving out in 1939. She was 87 years old when she left Daugavpils.

BALTIC GERMANS IN DAUGAVPILS: PLACES OF RESIDENCE AND WORK

The stone house of the early 20th century at 22 Varšavas Street⁽¹⁹⁾, where the Germans lived, has survived to the present day.

Several German families lived on the nearby Ventspils Street; their addresses have been ascertained and the houses can still be seen.

A family of eight people left the house No 67/69⁽²⁰⁾ Ventspils Street. 82 Ventspils Street⁽²¹⁾, abandoned wooden building.

Germans also lived in other parts of our city, for example, on Lielā Dārza St., Vienības St., A. Pumpura St., etc., which confirms their presence in Daugavpils and allows to understand the role and significance of the Germans in the city's life until the autumn of 1939. The Germans were actively involved in trade, sole proprietorships and family businesses. Most often those were families with many children. It was typical of the Germans to live together with older family members. The departure of 300-400 Germans from the city did not pass unnoticed.



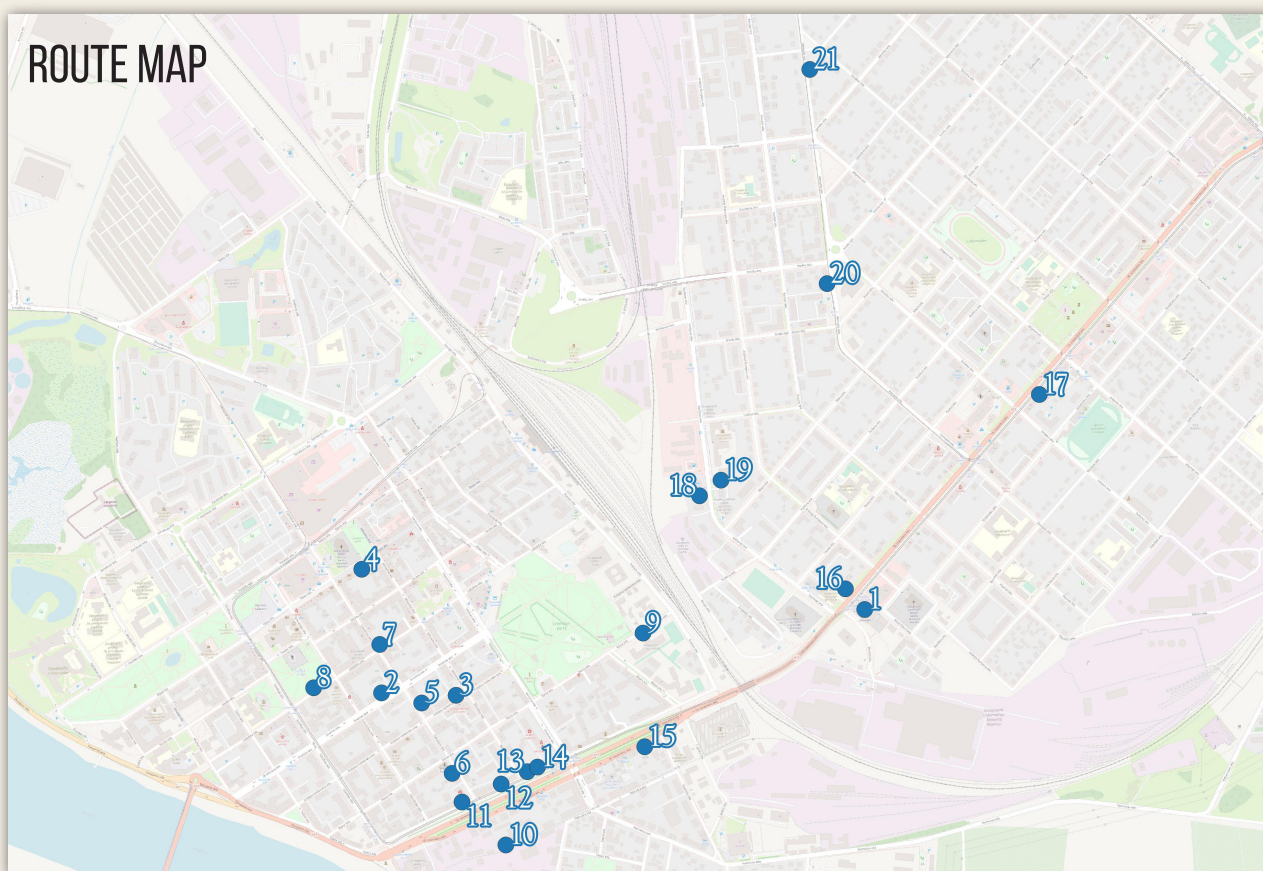
Varšavas street 22



Ventspils street 67/69



Ventspils street 82



The booklet has been developed within the framework of the Latvian Science Council project “The Baltic Germans of Latgale in the context of socio-ethnic relations from the 17th till the beginning of the 20th century”, project No. lzp- 2020 / 2-0136.

