



The Seven Communities

The first Jewish traces on the territory of what is now Burgenland date from 13. century. However, the beginning of a continuous Jewish settlement is only from the second third of the 17th. century to record.

The most famous among the Jewish communities of Burgenland, which belonged to Hungary until 1921, are the so-called › **Seven Communities** ‹ : Eisenstadt, Mattersdorf (since 1924 Mattersburg), Kittsee, Frauenkirchen, Kobersdorf, Lackenbach and Deutschkreutz. These seven communities in today's northern and central Burgenland were under the protection of the powerful Esterházy family and are called Hebrew › *Sheva Kehillot* ‹ ('Seven Communities').

Around the middle of the 18. Century were born on the territory of present-day **South Burgenland** s under the protection of princes or princes. Count Batthyány the three Jewish communities of Rechnitz, Stadtschlaining (successor municipality Oberwart) and Güssing, as well as the two municipalities Körmend and Nagykanizsa, which are located on today's Hungarian soil.

If it is said that the Jews were under the protection of the two princely/ country houses, it must be mentioned that this was only done on the

condition of protection fees which the Jews had to pay. On the basis of the contract, the rights and obligations of the Jewish subjects were recorded in so-called **protection letters**, which had to be renewed again and again after the end.

After the revolution of 1848, which aimed at the legal equality of all citizens, and the end of the protected Jewish community opened up the possibility of complete political autonomy for some Jewish communities. The Jewish community of Unterberg-Eisenstadt was the only municipality that was the only municipality to maintain its **political autonomy** until 1938.

Around the middle of 19. Century lived on the territory of today's Burgenland about 8,500 Jews. In 1921 it was approx. 3,000 Jews, and thus 1.2% of the total population of the entire Burgenland.



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