

## Pogost - the Old Town (1925)

[http://shtetle.co.il/shtetls\\_minsk/pogost\\_ber/pogost.html](http://shtetle.co.il/shtetls_minsk/pogost_ber/pogost.html)

Original text by Anatoly Sinilo for My Shtetl. English translation by C. Murray-Seegert / Google Translate. Thanks to Elisabeth Schilling for her corrections.

Pogost , also known as Igumen Pogost or Pagost Cherven, is a long-standing town of Cherven (Igumen) district of Minsk province. (Translator's note: 'Pagost' means church-yard in Russian). After 1924 it was the district town of the Berezinskii Barysau district, on July 6, 1925 it was officially declared a village.

Pogost is in a remote area between Berezyna and Mogilev. It is situated on the road from Byerazino, near the Berezina river, and is mentioned in the book "Russia" Vol. IX, published under the editorship of Semenov-Tienshansky Pagashchankay, and there and on the map it is also called Kljava or Kleukaj.

From a distance, you see a striking church bell tower and a high steep shingled wall of the old synagogue. The main road from Byerazino enters the main street of Pogost. On both sides of the road are little village houses, mostly covered with straw, a few roofed with shingles. One of these houses contains the postal and telegraph office with a bank.

The main street enters the square lined with small gray shops. There are only three private stores, but there is also a cooperative store which is connected to the agricultural society.

In the middle of the square are stalls. There is also a free-depot fire brigade in a little simple shed. To the right of the square are the lanes of the village leading to the buildings of the former parish school and the new Peter and Paul's church, built in timber.

To the left of the area are the densely crowded houses in the Jewish part of Pagost with three synagogues. In the first, the most beautiful one, local Jews are still praying, in the second one there is a local club. The third one is not used for praying it remains unused as an outstanding monument of Nowy Pogost's past.

In this synagogue there is extremely nice wooden scrimshaw, carefully carved, that decorates the "Omed" (this is the place where the Cantor stays during the worship) and "Oran-koydesh" ("Holy Safe", with Torah scrolls). This carving is very old, beautiful and unique. The ornamentation is rich and diverse. Upstairs - a two-headed eagle and a stork; also long chains made from a

single piece of wood. It is said that the synagogue is 190 years old, but the old documents that recorded the entire history of the synagogues and Pogost were shipped in 1915 to Leningrad, where they are under the protection of the Jewish religious community. Earlier, outside the synagogue, there lay a stone with a strange inscription, like the magical Old Slavonic letters. In 1924 that stone was brought to Minsk and placed in the Belarusian State Museum.

Old Pogost - a poor and little known settlement. Lying in a remote, poor area, Pogost had only administrative importance as parish center in the Zaberezinskih forests. Termination of the parish in 1924 completely undermined the role of the village.

The total population in Pogost in 1858 was 775, in 1897 - 1525, 1909 - 1605, in 1916 - 1303 in 1917 - 1291, in 1924 - 200. Most inhabitants are peasants. In 1916, only 593 people did not consider agriculture to be their main means of life. Shops in Pogost in the first half of 1923/24 fiscal year had a turnover of 8 - 17,400 rubles, and for the second half of the year - 10 - 26, 798 rubles. There were four craft workshops in the first half of that year, with production of 5,965 rubles. Among the many craftsmen are tanners.

*M. Azbukin.*

*Pogost. "Our Land". Number 2 - 3, 1925. S. 15 - 16.*

### **On the stone slab in Pogost**

In the village of Pogost in Igumen County, outside the entrance to the Jewish Synagogue, there is an oval, two-foot long, squared stone slab, covered with incomprehensible large inscriptions in a few lines, clearly and deeply carved. The farmers explained to us that this stone was in the woods, but the Jews transported it and laid at the door of the synagogue. The only pity is that soon the feet of Jewish worshipers will blot out this particularly important monument.

*GH Tatur.*

*Essay of archaeological sites in the area of Minsk Province and its archaeological significance. Mn. 1892. pp 35 - 36.*

***Quoted from the book "Memory, Berezino district",  
Minsk, Belarus, 2004***

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