

INVESTIGATION & ARREST OF ABRAM MOSZEK BURSTYN

During research conducted by Polish Express, special attention was paid to looking for ancestral names such as Gershberg, Hershberg, Burstyn, Nejman, Suralsky, etc.. While searching the Bialystok Archives this researcher came across a file with documents from a court case involving Abram Moszek Burstyn, a resident of the City of Kolno which is near Wąsosz, the area in which The Nedar Foundation concentrates. No linkage to the Burstyn tree maintained by The Nedar Foundation can be established although a cousin, Abraham Morris Berinstein who emigrated to Rochester, NY, before 1892, was born in 1870, the date which can be extrapolated for the birth of Abram Moszek Burstyn. Given the custom of naming children after deceased relatives, it is possible that there was a relationship to the Leyzor Burstyn family tree.

Even if there is no direct relationship to the families being studied, this presents an interesting case study of a Jewish shopkeeper and his arrest and incarceration for the crime of overpricing kerosene in 1914-1915. Establishing the details about life in the Wąsosz area is one of the primary goals of The Nedar Foundation. The units of measures make it difficult to follow, but based upon my understanding, Abram bought this barrel of kerosene from Osip for an amount which already exceeded the government set price. He then resold the kerosene by the quart to others at what he considered a fair markup but the government considered to be price gouging.

Below I have listed the documents discovered. In each case, I have included the original document followed by a translation. Please bear in mind that the translator, Simon Gisin, has somewhat limited English skills (although I find them quite good, probably due to the effort of his English as a second language instructor – cousin Barbara Chapman Dworkin). I have no knowledge of Russian but attempted to edit Simon's documents so that any error is mine.

List of documents

- Summary of Police Report (2 handwritten original documents) –
Apparent date of this report was November 23, 1914
- Police Report Transmittal Letter dated January 23, 1915
- Cover Sheet for Decree No. 157 (March 3, 1915 appeared before
Decree below)
- Decision of the Governor (Decree No. 157) – This document sets a
fine of 15 rubles or 7 days in prison – February 27, 1915
- Data Sheet for Remanding of Abram Burstyn – Since remanding
implies that Abram Burstyn was sent to prison, perhaps he
couldn't afford or didn't want to pay the 15 ruble fine and was
remanded to prison.

Original Document:

Протоколъ

1914 года, ноября 23 дня города Киева.
 Старший урядный агрономъ т^{го} района Киев-
 ской урядной комиссии Земской агрономъ Ме-
 шеевъ, составивъ постановленіи протокола о
 покупке дровъ, составилъ докладъ, что о
 действительной покупке дровъ в гор. Киевѣ -
 Абрамъ Буринскій продавалъ керасинъ по
 цѣнѣ сверхъ установленной тѣмъ же по-
 ставленіемъ для города Киева на
 ноябрь мѣсяца кварта керасина 18 коп., а
 Буринскій продавалъ по 40 коп. кварту.

Истинно гор. Киева действительный ин-
 жинеръ дровъ Абрамъ Мещковъ Буринскій
 45 коп., но распроесъ обидѣлся, что онъ
 не могъ купить дровъ керасина въ цѣнѣ 10 пудовъ
 у истинно гор. Киева Осипа Курдюмовскаго
 по установленной цѣнѣ 4 пуд. 80 коп. за пудъ, а про-
 давалъ по 6 пуд. 60 коп. пудъ что есть 30 коп. квар-
 той, ввиду чего онъ не могъ продавать по уста-
 новленной цѣнѣ, такъ какъ очень дорого
 платилъ, но если покупщикъ свое окладилъ.

Истинно гор. Киева Осипъ Матвеевъ
 Курдюмовскій 58 коп. но распроесъ обидѣ-
 ный, что онъ 20^{го} сего ноября отвозилъ керасинъ
 изъ гор. Киева в гор. Владимиръ возвратъ
 продавъ обратно в Киевѣ, в Владимиръ купилъ

Original Document:

одну дошку керосина ввесьма десяти руб. за,
и утищили за таковой по 2 руб. 80 коп за
руб., а предан утищю дошку неутищю сер.
Кована Абраму Бурмистину по 4 руб. 80 коп на
свои похороны свое скончили.

Истеменица гор. Кована Розалия
Москвична Лиса 50 лет, на распроем
обидешила, 2^{го} его надбрю она утищили
города Кована Абрама Бурмистина ку
тища 1/2 кварты керосина и за таковой
по требованию Бурмистина ему утищили
на 20 коп. введше Бурмистин. Бран по 40 коп.
от похоронителей за квартиру керосина, на свои
похороны свое скончили.

Истеменица гор. Кована Мекли
Францевна Бурмистова 40 лет от роду
на распроем обидешила, 2^{го} его надбрю она
утищили сер. Кована Абрама
Бурмистина кутища квартиру керосина и за
таковой по требованию Бурмистина утищили
на 40 коп. введше все по купателю по требо
ванию Бурмистина купили по 40 коп за
квартиру, на свои похороны свое скончили,
а потому синою сеставили ей протокава
для привилегий Абрама Бурмистина и Олена
Курмановского отивтательности согласено для
затеманого местоположения Вуришского Генерала
Губернатора от 20 июля 1914 года А. пункт 1.
Смарин Струженский *Ваше*

This is a Summary of a Police Report which was handwritten in Russian. Translation from Russian to English by Simon Gisin as edited by Daniel Hershberg follows:

Protocol

In the year 1914, on the 23rd day of November in the city of KOLNO

Senior Guard of Kolno District of the first battalion subdivision of Zemskiy ^[1] Security Command Lemesh during an official investigation prepared this protocol and recorded the fact that on the current day the owner of a small convenience store in the city Kolno, Abram Burstyn, sold kerosene at price higher than was established for City of Kolno on the November monthly limit -17 kopecks per quart - 40 kopecks per quart.

A resident of the City of Kolno, Abram Moshkov Burstyn, 45 years old, owner of a convenience store, during inquiry, gave the following testimony where he explained that he himself had bought one barrel of kerosene weighing 10 poodes ^[2] from a resident of the City of Kolno Osip Kuliongovskiy at the price of 4 rubles and 80 kopecks ^[3] per pood and sold it at the price 6 rubles and 60 kopecks per pood, i.e., the price of one quart of kerosene was 30 kopecks. He was compelled to pay more and cannot sell it for less. With this, his testimony was complete.

Resident of the City of Kolno, Osip Mateushev Kuliongovskiy, 58 years old, during inquiry, explained that in 20th of November of current year he had the luck to pick up and deliver one passenger from the City of Kolno to the City of Bialystok and on his trip back had bought one barrel of kerosene weighting ten poodes and paid for it 3 rubles and 80 kopeck per pood, but sold this whole barrel to a resident of the City of Kolno, Abram Burstyn, at price 4 rubles 80 kopeck. About this his testimony was taken.

Resident of the City of Kolno Rosaliya Mazkevna Liss, 50 years old, explained during her questioning that on November 23, of the current year, she bought a half of a quart of kerosene from a resident of the City of Kolno, Abram Burstyn and paid him 20 kopecks according to his request. Burstyn requested all other buyers also to pay 40 kopecks for one quart of kerosene. About this her testimony was taken.

Resident of the City of Kolno Teklya Francevna Gutovska, 40 years old, explained during her questioning that on November 23, of the current year she bought from merchant Abram Burstyn, resident of the City of Kolno, one quart of kerosene at price 40 kopecks per quart since he insisted on this price. About this her testimony was taken.

For these reasons mentioned above this protocol was prepared by me for the purpose of accounting for the actions of Abram Burstyn and Osip Kuliongovskiy in compliance with Decree of Governor General of Warsaw issued July 20, 1914, A, article 1.

Senior Guard/signed/Lemesh)

Notes of translator

- ^[1] Zemskiy—A branch of locally elected and independent authorities which deal with local problems of the territory including roads, bridges, fire protection, prevention of petty crimes, hospitals, schools, etc.
- ^[2] Pood is a equal to approximately 36.11 pounds or 16.38 kilograms it was used in Russia. Pood was first mentioned in a number of documents of the 13th century.
- ^[3] A ruble is Russian monetary unit and it equal 100 kopecks.

Original Document:

М. В. Д.
НАЧАЛЬНИКЪ
КОЛЬНЕНСКАГО УѢЗДА Господину Ломжинскому Губернатору.
ЛОМЖИНСКОЙ ГУБЕРНИИ.

Отдѣленіе /В.Полиц.
Дѣлопроизв.

Января 23 дня 1915 г.
№ 641

Р а п о р т ъ.

Гор. Кольно. Представляя дознаніе по обвиненію жителей гор.Кольно Осипа Матешева /Куліонговскаго и Абрама Мошкова Бурштына въ продажѣ керосина по цѣнамъ сверхъ установленной таксы, прошу Ваше Превосходительство о наложеніи на виновныхъ административнаго взысканія.-

И.д.Начальника уѣзда

Дѣлопроизводитель

Кураторъ представителю
по Црзх. тѣмъ, по вѣдомости
судн. деп. а также по 30 экз.
Душманъ и др. по 30 экз.
Мѣст. инст. Кан. деп. №

м. Бурштына 23/1

