

Słownik Geograficzny
Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów słowiańskich
(Geographic Dictionary of the Former Kingdom of Poland and Other Slavic Lands)
c. 1893

Vishnevets (Wiśniowiec)
49 54 N / 25 45 E

Translated by Marianna D. Romaniuk
Edited by Richard M. Spector (*multicats@yahoo.com*)
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[Intro]

Translation Editor's Note

The following text is a translation from the Polish language *Słownik Geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów słowiańskich* (Geographic Dictionary of the Former Kingdom of Poland and Other Slavic Lands) – usually referred to as the *Słownik Geograficzny* – published between 1880 and 1904. The Vishnevets entry was published in 1893. To better understand the text it should be realized that Poland began as a sovereign nation in 1025 and from 1385 to 1569 participated in an informal union with Lithuania: the Polish-Lithuanian Union. From 1569 until most of Poland ceased to exist in 1793 at the time of the so-called Second Partition, Poland and Lithuania formed a formal joint nation: the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Vishnevets and most of the western part of Ukraine were always in the historically Polish part of the Union and later the Commonwealth. In 1793, under the terms of the Second Partition, Russia took control of the area around Vishnevets, which lasted until the end of World War I when it was restored to Poland. Poland held it until after World War II when Russia again gained control. Ukraine became an independent nation in 1991. The native inhabitants of the area around what is now western Ukraine included various ethnic minorities, among them Ukrainians, Cossacks, Tartars, and Jews. For many centuries before 1793 the area around Vishnevets, as well as much of the rest of present day Ukraine, was a constant battleground between the Russian, Polish and Lithuanian armies which sought to establish or maintain control of the area. The allegiance of the various ethnic minorities shifted between Poland, Russia and Ukrainian nationalists from time to time. At times there were others involved in the battles, including the Swedes, Saxons and Turks.

Confusing, incomprehensible or inconsistent material in this article is found in the original text and is not a result of the translation. In-text references in the original Polish text are presented at the end of this translation. They are keyed to reference numbers in the translated text. Names and Places Indexes also have been added at the end of this translation. The indexes refer to the page numbers of the original document (614 through 617). These page markers are in square brackets in the upper left of the translated text, as close as possible to the place in the original text where they appear.

Richard Spector, Translation Editor
Summer 2006

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Vishnevets (Wiśniowiec)

Wiśniowiec is a town in Krzemieniec District. It is located 20 verst from Krzemieniec (which has a post office station) and 41 verst from the Rudnia Poczajowska (Pochayev) railway station [**Translation Editor's Note: a verst is about 1.067 km**]. The town is located in a picturesque area, surrounded on almost all sides by orchards. The river Horyń, which has a dam and a river mill by it, separates the town into two sections. The northeastern section, called New Wiśniowiec, lies on the left higher bank of the River Horyń. The second section, which is to the southwest, occupies the lower right bank. Around the town, there used to be an old oak forest, now almost completely cut down.

In 1885, there were 97 homes, 665 residents, police and community headquarters, 3 churches, a Catholic chapel, Synagogue, 6 Jewish houses of prayer, the community school, 72 stores, weekly markets on Sunday, a fairground, and a brewer. According to Teodorowicz [**Reference 1**], New Wiśniowiec, along with the suburb Zagorodzie and Myszkowce village, has 112 homes and 876 residents, whereas Old Wiśniowiec along with the Fedkowce village [**Reference 2**] has 184 homes, 1501 Christians, and 460 Jews.

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The Christian Orthodox Church of Michal the Archangel, located in New Wiśniowiec, was originally built in 1645 by Prince Jeremy Wiśniowiecki. At first, it was a church belonging to the Carmelite monastery. The church was destroyed in the early 1700's and restored by Prince Michal Serwacy in 1726. It was restored again in 1768, and in 1832. After the supremacy of the Carmelite monks, it was converted into a Christian Orthodox church and consecrated in 1835. The now Christian Orthodox church renovated again in 1840 and these improvements charged to the treasury. Finally, on April 17th, 1863 a massive fire destroyed the church. After that incident, masses were moved to the subsidiary Church of the Assumption.

The Church of the Assumption is a small church that was built on the palace grounds at the foot of the castle hill, until now, it was simply called "the castle church." It is the oldest historic building in Wiśniowiec. Funded by Wiśniowiecki princes in 1530, it was restored from 1872-73. In the underground catacombs rest the remains of many of the Wiśniowiecki princes, among them, both of the parents of Prince Jeremy: Michal, the Owruć Forman, and his wife, Regina Mohylańska.

The church property is made up of a settlement [**Reference 3**] [**Translator's Note: The term used here is "huta" which is not a regular settlement but more of a communal village made up of anywhere from 10 to 25 families.**] of about 3 verst which includes 41-½ desyatina of land as well as 11 desyatina of meadows by the Kunnica village. Moreover, to the main parish in New Wiśniowiec belongs the subsidiary church in Dźwiniacz village, (which is about 5 verst) [**Reference 4**]. In Old Wiśniowiec is the Parish Orthodox Church of the Birth of the Holy Virgin Mary. This church was constructed from wood in 1845. The construction was paid for by

Count Mniszcho and was finished by its parishioners in 1869. The church property is made up of 72 ½ desyatina of land endowed to the church by Prince Michal Korybut Wiśniowiecki in 1738.

Old Wiśniowiec is also the site of the Catholic parish of St. Stanislaw. This is a brick structure that was built in 1757 by John Mniszcho. The Catholic parish of the Krzemieniecki deanery had 1790 parishioners. The chapel is in Wierzbowiec. This church houses the painting of St. Antony Padewski, famous for miracles. **[Translator's Note: The text is not clear about whether it is St. Antony Padewski who is famous for miracles or the painting itself.]** In the church graves rest the remains of its donors.

The pride of the town is the manor of the Wiśniowiecki princes, which was built around the year 1720 on a hill. The manor was built on top of the ruins of an old defensive castle, amongst the still visible defensive mounds and bulwarks, by the last descendent of the line, Prince Michal Serwacy. It is a great two story horseshoe shaped building made from cut stones. The roof is raised and built in the rococo style. In the palace's main vestibule is a great marble tablet that tells the later history of Wiśniowiec. The walls of the vestibule are inlaid with *faience* tiles in patterns of sapphire with white backgrounds. **[Translator's Note: The word *faience* comes from the French for Faenza, Italy. It is a type of earthenware decorated with colored glazes.]** In the vestibule are the grand steps that lead to the second floor. On both sides of the vestibule are rooms with high ceilings that are decorated with various paintings, some depicting the wedding and coronation of Maria Mniszchowa in Moscow (the engagement ceremony happened here in the castle church). Other paintings in this room depict the legendary triumphs of the ancestors of the house of Mniszchów during the times of Karol the Great and Otton III (in the recent years the paintings were sold by the owner of Wiśniowiec to the Rumiancowski Museum in Moscow). On the first floor, to the right of the vestibule, stretches a series of small residential rooms. To the left of the stairway, on the first floor, is a great hall with plaster busts of famous Poles. Past the hall is a series of guest rooms.

On the second floor, to the right of the staircase, is a great hallway decorated with inlaid *faience* tiles. On the walls hang the portraits of the last three kings of Poland. Past the hallway is the Korybut Room in which hang the portraits of the Wiśniowiecki princes. Farther are a few salons with beautiful old Gobelin tapestries both on the walls and furniture. At the very end is a spacious master bedroom with a grand canopy bed that was used by the Great Prince Paul during his stay here. In the same wing is a theater and behind it, similar to the downstairs area, are guest rooms. To the left of the staircase is the Lubomirski hallway hung with their portraits. Farther down are the library and the chapel, almost completely emptied out now. **[Translator's Note: The text is unclear as to whether it is the library or the chapel that was emptied.]** This wing also houses the grand and expensively decorated rooms that were once used by Stanislaw Poniatowski. In the bedroom used by Poniatowski, above the fireplace mantle, is a great mirror with the engraving "Le Conte du Nord," supposedly rendered by the Great Prince Paul. In these rooms hang beautiful paintings, portraits done

by Holbenia and sceneries by Canaletta. In the palace was a library with about 15,000 books, amongst them many rare bibliographies and valuable hand written texts.

The community is in the central area of the district bordered on the west side with the Oleksiniec, Poczajow, and Bereżce communities, from the northeast by the Borki community, from the east by the Borsuki community, and from the south by the Wierzbowiec and Zarudzie community. Wiśniowiec contains 18 settlements with a total of 1012 peasant homes (nearby are 315 that are in other condition), 13,851 peasants living on 7755 desyatina of land. **[Translation Editor's Note: A desyatina is a measurement that equals about 2.7 acres.]** The Wiśniowiec police district covers four communities: Wiśniowiec, Borsuki, Wierzbowiec, and Zarudzie.

The palace is surrounded by a large and beautiful garden that lies on the slope of the hill. This garden was created around the end of the last century (late 1700's) by the famous landscaper Miekler.

Wiśniowiec is a very old settlement. Though it is not possible to discern when it was established, according to Strykowski, after being thrown out of his district, Dymitr Korybut, Siewierski Prince, son of the Great Prince Olgierd, received from Witold a certain town in Wołyń and was supposed to, around 1395, build a castle there. **[Translation Editor's Note: Wołyń is essentially the area of the 19th and early 20th century Russian guberniya (province) of Volhynia.]** His son, Fiedor, nicknamed Fedko, became the founder of the nobility in Wiśniowiec. According to others, the builder of the castle and the head of the Wiśniowiecki house was Soltan, the grandson of Korybut. Neither of these statements have records backing them.

The first mention of the settlement appears in the privilege of Władysław Warneńczyk, in which he gives Zbaraż, Gródek, Wiśniowiec, Maniów, and other settlements to Wasil, Son of Fedko Nieświcki.

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Wasil had three sons: Wasil, Semon, and Soltan, who, on July 9, 1463 divided the property between themselves. Along with other towns and villages, Wiśniowiec became the property of Soltan who first took the last name of Wiśniowiecki after his town of residence **[Reference 5]**. After the childless deaths of Soltan and Semon, all their property went to Wasil's son, who took the last name of Zbaraski, after his town of residence. In the division of the lands, Wiśniowiec was given to Wasil's middle son, Michal, who became the rightful founder of the Wiśniowiecki house.

In 1494, during Michal's lifetime Wiśniowiec was destroyed by the Tatars. In 1512 at Łopuszna (two miles from Wiśniowiec) Hetmans Konstantyn Ostrogski and Mikołaj Koniecpolski won over the same group of Tatars in a memorable victory. **[Translator's Note: Koniecpolski translates literally to "End of Poland." Whether this is meant as the end of Poland as a country in the temporal sense or just as Poland's geographical end is unclear, but there is nothing**

ominous about the name; it is just that, a last name.] [Translation Editor's Note: A *hetman* was the highest military rank, besides the monarch, in the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth.]

Michał's sons, Aleksandr, the Rzeczyck Forman, and Ivan, the Szysk Forman, were the founders of two separate noble lines, the older of the two founded a royal line and the younger of the two founded a princely line. The royal line ended with King Michał in 1673, the second line of Wiśniowiecki princes, died out with Prince Michał Serwacy in 1744. The descendants of these two lines inseparably ruled Wiśniowiec.

In a review of Krzemieniec in 1545, the residents of Krzemieniec complained about the unlawful toll of two groszy per wagon load established in Wiśniowiec by the princes [Reference 6]. **[Translator's Note: Grosz, the singular of groszy, is a form of minor currency in Poland being one hundredth of a złoty. The złoty is the traditional principal Polish currency unit whose use dates back to the Middle Ages.]** According to a review in 1570, the lands and property of Wiśniowiec belong to: Michał, the Czerkask and Kaniowsk Forman, and Aleksandr, Aleksandr's sons, and Andrzej, the Castellan Wołyń, and Konstantyn, the sons of Iwan. **[Translator's Note: The text is unclear as to whom the sons of Iwan are, but they are probably Andrzej and Konstantyn.]**

Payments for their ownership are divided up according to the following scheme:

The first of them pays 4 groszy for each of 211 houses and 41 gardens, 2 groszy for each of 56 gardens, 20 groszy for each of 4 impoverished noblemen working for the masters, 6 groszy for each of the 9 mill stones, a tavern bar, and 2 inns.

The second pays 4 groszy for each of the 152 houses and 52 gardens, 2 groszy for each of the 92 gardens, 3 impoverished noblemen working for their master, 10 mill stones, 3 inns, 7 craftsmen, and 1 tavern bar.

Prince Andrzej pays 4 groszy each of the 251 houses and 102 gardens, 2 groszy for each of 62 gardens, 20 groszy for each of the 25 impoverished noblemen working for their master, 2 groszy for each of the 7 craftsmen, 19 mill stones, 9 distillery boiler houses, and 4 inns.

Finally, Prince Konstantyn pays 4 groszy for each of the 235 houses and 10 gardens, 2 groszy for each of the 113 gardens, 12 mill stones, 3 impoverished noblemen working for their master, and 3 inns.

In 1577 Prince Andrzej Wiśniowiecki and all the Wiśniowiecki princes did not take taxes from Wiśniowiec and surrounding towns as the Tatars had depopulated them. In 1583 Prince Michał Wiśniowiecki, the Kiev Castellan, collected from a portion of Wiśniowiec: 6 groszy for each of the 10 marketplace houses; 16 street houses, 10 farms, 17 paupers shacks, 15 town gardens, 1 saddle maker, 1 archer, 1 butcher, 2 shoemakers, 2 potters, 2 bakers, and 10 bailiffs. **[Translator's Note: The text is specific as to the amount of taxes collected only for the 10 marketplace houses.]**

Prince Aleksander Wiśniowiecki paid 6 groszy for each of 6 marketplace houses; 8 street houses, and 6 miserable huts.

Prince Andrzej Wiśniowiecki, Voyevoda of the province of Wolyn, paid 6 groszy each for 10 marketplace houses, 11 street houses, 1 saddle maker as well as 1 leather worker, 4 potters, 2 bakers, 1 butcher, 4 *póttanków*, 9 miserable huts, 5 fields, 8 gardeners, 3 gardens, 8 *kom*, and $\frac{1}{4}$ *koła waln*. Prince Andrzej also paid for part of the town of Wiśniowiec on behalf of the deceased Prince Konstantyn. His taxes were 6 groszy for each of the 7 marketplace houses; 16 street houses, 16 *póttanków*, 10 miserable huts, 10 gardens, 3 craftsmen, and $\frac{1}{4}$ double *koł waln* [Reference 7]. [Coordinator's Note: No translation is available for the Polish words in italics.]

In 1593, after the death of Andrzej, (1585) Wiśniowiec, along with other properties, passed to one of his four daughters. This daughter was given in marriage to Prince Jerzy Ivanowicz Czartoryski. In this way, Wiśniowiec left the hands of the Wiśniowiecki family, though not for long, since 20 years after leaving the Wiśniowiec family (1614), the town was purchased by Prince Michal, the Owrucki Forman. His son, Jeremy, the Russian Palatine and Hetman of the Crown, built a grand basilica for the Carmelite monks in Wiśniowiec. Unfortunately, the Cossacks later destroyed the basilica. In 1640, he also increased the size of the castle and fortified it. After the death of Jeremy's son, King Michal, Wiśniowiec passed to the younger princely lines of Prince Dymitri Jerzy, the Belzeki Forman and Hetman of the Crown.

In 1672 Turks took the castle as a result of Jewish betrayal. [Translator's Note: The text is unclear as to whether it was one or more Jews that committed the betrayal.] As a result of the betrayal, Borkowski, the leader of the army, and many nobles who took refuge in the castle were slaughtered and the town was burnt to the ground. In his desire to lift up the town, John III stated in 1677, "that in order for the town of Wiśniowiec to be able to breathe after the disaster, it is released from taxes for 12 years."

After the death of its last descendant, Prince Michal Serwacy, Governor of Wołyń and the Great Lithuanian Hetman, (died 1744 in Merecz) the great wealth of the Wiśniowiecki line passed to Michal's daughters: Anna Ogińska, of the Trocka province, and Elżbieta Zamoyska, of the Smoleńska province. At the time, the Wiśniowiecki estates were comprised of 9 towns and 150 villages, as well as vast property in Lithuania and Ukraine. Michal's third daughter, Katarzyna, was wed to Jan Karol Mniszcho, the Lithuanian Chamberlain, and had Wiśniowiec as part of her dowry. At the time, as part of the Old Wiśniowiec estate were the villages of Kwarczówka, Greater and Lesser Okniny, Horynka, Kuszlin, Podhajczyki, Jankowce, Kadzajówka, Wierzbica, Maniów, Kotiużyńce, Chwedkowce, Czajczyńce, Horynkowce, Krzywczyki, and Rakowiec. The New Wiśniowiec estate was made up of 23 villages: Łozy, Bodaki, Kochanówka, Hnidawa, Wierzbowiec, Szepelówka, Łopuszyna, Pachinia, Koniaczówka, Hołbissy, Martyszkowce, Biłka, Biłeczka, Rakowiec, Myszkowce, Polany, Kunakowce, Butyń, Młynowce, Bakoty, Dżwiniacz, and Zalesie [Reference 8].

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In 1783, the son of Jan Karol and Katarzyna, Michal Jerzy, the Marshal of the Crown, brought Wiśniowiec back to its former glory. In 1781, Stanislaw August Poniatowski visited the estate with the Great Prince Paul and his wife. At this time, Prince Paul and his wife traveled throughout various lands under the name of the Count of the North (du Nord). King Stanislaw visited the estate twice in 1787. His first visit was on his way to Kaniow for a meeting with Tsarina Catherine II and the Austrian Emperor Joseph. King Stanislaw's second visit was the same year on his return trip back home to Warsaw.

Through Mniszcho's intervention, on August 14, 1790, Fischer received the privilege of building a pharmacy in the town, with the stipulation that it remain under the jurisdiction of this place and not shield itself from taxes, that it not keep old or bad medications, that it brings in fresh medicines and hires the best pharmacists, keeping with the laws of the crown and the local Catholic church. **[Translator's Note: This is the first and only time Fischer is mentioned; he is probably the pharmacist requesting the establishment of the pharmacy. However, the text is unclear and there is no clear confirmation of this.]**

After the death of Count Michal Jerzy Mniszcho, the estate was passed down to his son, Karol (died in 1846) and after him the fortune was divided between two brothers. **[Translator's Note: The text is unclear about to whom these two brothers were related.]** Count Andrzej, who received Wiśniowiec, stayed in this area, though he soon (1852) sold the estate along with the palace and all the historical antiques to Princess Abamelek. In 1857, Wiśniowiec was purchased from her by Count Włodzimierz de Broel Plater, the owner of the town of Dąbrowicy (in the Rówieński district). Luck was not on the side of Count Plater. The estate was purchased at a high price and the times were unfriendly. Therefore, in 1876, Wiśniowiec was up for auction in order to pay off bank loans. The estate was then purchased at a low price by J. Tolli, President of Kiev. As a result of the sale there was a lawsuit and in 1884, the regional Łuck court ruled in favor of Count Plater.

A more detailed description of the town was written by Przeździecki in his work "Podole, Wołyń, and Ukraine" as well as Stecki in a two volume book titled "Wołyń." Descriptions and illustrations were given by the Illustrated Weekly from 1870 (No. 119).

J. Krz.

[Translation Editor's Note: This is an abbreviation of the author's name.]

References

Reference 1. Opis. Wołyń. Eparchii

Reference 2. o. 1. w.

Reference 3. o. 3. w.

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Reference 5. Arch. Ks. SanguszkóI, 54-5

Reference 6. Jabłonowski, Rewizye, 105

Reference 7. Jabłonowski, Wołyń, 28, 29, 78, 132, 133, 145

Reference 8. Stecki, Wołyń, 341-2

VISHNEVETS – Name and Place Indexes

Richard Spector, Translation Editor, and
Ronald D. Doctor, Co-Coordinator, Kremenets Shtetl CO-OP

The following indexes refer to page numbers in the original document (pages 614 through 617). These page markers are in square brackets in the upper left of the translated text, as close as possible to the place in the original text where they appear. Year indicators associated with some of the names in the original text are given in parentheses following the name.

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Town names in *Slownik* are spelled in Polish. In the following Places Index we have converted these names to the modern BGN spelling from JewishGen's ShtetlSeeker (<http://www.jewishgen.org/shtetlseeker/LocTown.asp>). However, we also present the *Slownik* spelling in parentheses. When the alternate spelling is significantly different from the BGN name, we have used "see" references to point you to the BGN name. In cases where the BGN name could not be determined with reasonable certainty, we provide only the Polish name.

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