

THE ŁÓDŹ ATLAS

Sheet IV: Łódź and its environs in the first half of the 19th c.

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Rurar settlement in the present-day area of Łódź in the pre-industrial period

In the Middle Ages expansion of settlements was strictly correlated with river systems. River valleys, particularly larger ones, were natural human migration channels and primary locations for permanent settlements. For that reason, the environs of Łódź being situated in proximity to a major watershed and away from larger river valleys, were later and less populated than other areas of the Łęczyca and Sieradz district. Nevertheless, during the Middle Ages, within the present-day city limits nearly 30 villages and several proto-industrial settlements were established, including water mills, ore mills, and forges. The oldest villages – Mileszki, Kały, and Radogoszcz were probably founded already in the 12th c. and the first mentions of them come from the 13th c.

One typical form of rural settlement was a compact village. The oldest settlements were oval-shaped. This form of settlement, arranged around a pond in the middle, has survived in Mileszki. The villages established in the 14th through the 16th c. under the German law were usually arranged along a single village street (Strassendorf) and built-up either on both sides or on one side only. In line with the three-field system, fields were organised into three sections. Not all villages from those times had survived until the beginning of the 19th c. In the period of devastation and depopulation in the 17th and 18th c. there vanished such villages as Lipinki, Doly, Czerniec and Wola Stokowska – all formerly located in the eastern part of the current city area. The number of such villages may have been 2–3 times greater.

The prevalent proto-industrial settlements were water mills that were either located on the edge of villages, or formed separate settlements. Other settlements also included ore mills or forges – as was the case with Rudna and Kulama – but they were very short-lived.

Between 1783–1793, in the contemporary area of Łódź there sprang up new forms of rural settlement – so-called Dutch colonies. Following the Dutch model, they were established on wetlands and in forests, along local, often winding roads. They were arranged into loosely concentrated colonies that stretched along the entire length of the village area, because each colonist set up his farm on his own vast piece of land (the three-field system had been replaced by crop rotation). Holendry Chojeńskie (presently Dąbrowa), Holendry Mileskie (Janów and Henryków), Holendry Stokowskie (Augustów), Holendry Radogoskie (Zabieniec) and Holendry Kałowskie (Grabieniec) were established at the time, with several glass works next to them.

Concurrently, established was a number of tiny settlements set to exploit the forests. They were known as the ‘Budy’ – Budy Stokowskie, Sikawskie, Jagodnickie and other. Their inhabitants – the ‘Budnicy’ – produced tar, pine tar, and potash.

After these areas were incorporated into Prussia and church properties were secularized in 1796, the new administration turned the former properties of the bishops of Włocławek in Łódź and the properties of the bishops of Kraków in Pabianie into regular Prussian colonies. They were usually geometric and linear developments (Olechów, Augustów, and Wiączyń), and only Nowosolna was given a unique eight-vector radial form.

At the beginning of the 19th c., prior to Łódź’s industrialisation, several further, usually small, new villages were established within the city’s present-day area, such as Łagiewniki Małe, Moskule Małe, and Różki, as well as hunters’ settlements of Podłódź and Koziny.

The settlements discussed in this chapter have been gradually incorporated into Łódź and to a greater or lesser degree affected the city’s spatial organisation, while their relics are still discernible on the city map.

The rise of industrial Łódź

The first thought of locating an industrial settlement in Łódź must have been conceived soon after the formation of Congress Poland. This follows from a letter written in 1815 by the then mayor of Łódź, Szymon Szczawiński, to the superior authorities, in which he wrote, e.g. “... whilst no such various handicraft factories are to be found within the limits of this town, therefore the undersigned kindly requests that they be established here (...). Suitable and convenient locations for such factories may be delimited in this town...”

A favourable decision in this matter was only taken in 1820, preceded by an inspection of the area by Rajmund Rembieliński, president of the commission for the Województwo Mazowieckie (the region Łódź was part of at the time). The inspection turned out to be successful, in effect of which under his decree of 18 September, 1820, the governor of Congress Poland granted the ‘factory town’ status to the towns listed by the regional commissions, including Łęczyca, Łódź and Zgierz.

Rembieliński’s report indicates that Łódź owed the industrial status so gained to the following factors: 1) available vast state-owned lands, 2) water-rich rivers and streams, along with water mills, which could be tapped for industrial purposes, 3) easy access to supplies of cheap timber from extensive local forests, 4) convenient location for transport close to the newly built road between Łęczyca and Piotrków, 5) presence of newly settled German colonists and manufacturers, 6) deliberate pursuit to revive this “sombre” district, “at first sight imparting an impression of savage wilderness” and “towns producing virtually no profits whatsoever”.

Clothmakers’ settlement in Nowe Miasto

The true maker of the industrial Łódź was Rajmund Rembieliński. Already on his first inspection in July of 1820, he issued several ad hoc regulations to coordinate the town’s further development, chose the location for the future clothmakers’ settlement, and personally defined its regulatory principles.

When establishing this settlement, named Nowe Miasto (New Town), efforts were made not to diminish the properties of the existing townsfolk. Therefore, the new settlement was created on the state-owned manor farms in Stara Wieś and Wójtostwo Łódzkie. Land was swapped with the provost of Łódź, who in return received the distinctive triangular plot between the current Kamińskiego, Żródlowa and Uniwersytecka Streets.

Nowe Miasto consisted of two functionally different parts. The first was a settlement area earmarked for development. It was located along the axis of the Piotrków route, just below the place where it crossed the dike over the Łódka river valley. The settlement was given a compact, geometrical shape and was enclosed within the rectangle marked by Północna, Wschodnia, Południowa and Zachodnia Streets. Its focal point was the market located – for compositional reasons – on the local terrain elevation. It had an original octagonal shape, unique in Poland. In the middle of the market the Piotrków route intersected with Średnia Street, which was a section of the road that connected Konstantynów and Lutomiersk on the

one side, with Stoki, Nowosolna and Brzeziny on the other. The market was, therefore, a local transport junction.

The market of Nowe Miasto was to be the showcase of the entire town, which was why the new town hall was located there. In line with the neo-classical urban planning rule of designing markets as open spaces, Nowe Miasto’s town hall was erected in the market frontage at the exit of the Piotrków route. It was given a beautiful classicist-Empire architectural form by B. Witkowski. The town hall’s architectural counterpart was the Evangelical Church of the Holy Trinity, located at the opposite corner of the market across Piotrkowska Street.

In contrast to the representative edifices, the housing buildings of Nowe Miasto were rather modest. Within the market they were simple one storey brick houses, and brick or wooden single storey houses with mansard roofs in the off-market streets. They combined residential and production functions, with the production room being a large workshop with a loom. All buildings were architecturally uniform, as they were built to the standard designs provided by the authorities. Some of the buildings had been erected still before the influx of German clothmakers, recruited from various countries, others were built by them to the same designs, utilising loans and materials granted by the state. In total 184 small building plots were delimited in Nowe Miasto. The only industrial structure was a fulling mill located by the River Łódka at the corner of Północna and Kilińskiego Streets.

The area of the clothmakers’ settlement development was complemented with ‘clothmakers’ gardens’ located on its eastern side and stretching in four broad strips along Północna, Średnia, Południowa and Podcegielniana (currently Jaracza) Streets, and also divided into 184 large plots. This original urban planning form appears to draw on the then popular ideas of Robert Owen, who suggested that for harmonious human development it was necessary to combine factory work and farming. One ensuing practical aspect was that craftsmen could grow their own fruit and vegetables, and even grain crops.

The construction of Nowe Miasto commenced in 1821 to be completed in 1823. It was then that the first clothmakers arrived in town. As a result of Łódź incorporating the areas occupied by the newly-established settlement, and following the city’s boundaries adjustment, its area increased by 300 ha to approximately 1540 ha.

Linen-cotton settlement – Łódka

The clothmakers’ settlement in Łódź was just one of many of its kind in Congress Poland, and was not the decisive factor for the city’s staggering industrial development and spatial vastness. The mainstay of Łódź’s unprecedented growth was the decision to establish in its vicinity a large and unique linen-cotton settlement named Łódka. Its construction commenced in 1924. Compared to Nowe Miasto, Łódka was arranged based on a totally different spatial and functional plan. This resulted from the different specific characteristics of these branches of the textile industry. The wool industry was less mechanized and all production took place in the weavers’ houses, which was reflected in the compact structure of the clothmakers’ settlement. The linen and cotton industries, however, utilised a whole range of mechanical fulling, bleaching, pressing, dyeing, or rinsing devices, all powered by water energy. These technical purposes were best suited by the River Jasień for having more balanced and higher water levels than the nearby Łódka River. Moreover, a system of water reservoirs and mills had existed on the River Jasień for centuries and could be easily adapted for industrial purposes.

The large distance of the potential industrial axis on the River Jasień from the twinned complex of Stare Miasto and Nowe Miasto, with which the new settlement was to be linked, caused Łódka’s vast meridian stretch. Therefore, to develop Łódka, it was necessary to incorporate into the city the entire village of Wólka and the mill settlements of Kulom-Piła, Lamus, Księży Młyn, Wójtowski Młyn and Araszt were incorporated, too.

It was Rembieliński’s idea for the Łódka settlement to run a full production cycle of linen, starting from raw materials preparation, to production of yarn and woven fabrics, through complex finishing processes. Accordingly, the settlement was divided into three specialised production zones – spinning colonies, weaving colony, and so-called waterfront factory estates.

Spinning colonies were initially delimited along Wólczańska Street and Widzewska Street (today Kilińskiego Street); the first one was called Spinnlinie, and the second Buschlinie. Later on, another colony was established in Zarzewska Street (today Przybyszewskiego Street) and named Nowa Łódka or Böhmsische Linie after its Czech settlers. Spinners were obliged to grow flax themselves, for which purpose they obtained large, approximately four-acre plots (1.68 ha). After processing the flax straw, they span linen yarn in their own homes on manual spinning wheels. Then they shipped the yarn to the weavers’ colony, located on both sides of Piotrkowska Street. Weavers, who did not grow their own flax, were granted smaller, approximately 1.5 acre (0.5 ha) plots providing sufficient space for a house and garden (in this case no separate “clothmakers’ gardens” were envisaged).

In their houses – also built to a uniform design – they wove linen on manual looms. “Ordinary” unbleached linen was then sent to waterfront factory estates where, at each manufactory, it underwent the various finishing processes. In cutting, rinsing and fulling machines linen was further refined and given a consistent texture, bleached at the bleaching plant by being soaked in water vats and exposed to sunlight, dyed at the dyeing plant, and then manually printed at the printing plant. The final product was put out for sale at the Rynek Bielnikowy, located at the corner of Emilia Street (now Tymienieckiego Street) and Piotrkowska Street, where it was purchased by domestic and Russian, Persian and even Chinese merchants.

In the Łódka settlement cotton products were manufactured, too. However the production cycle was different, since cotton, imported from America, was spun in mechanical spinning-mills (of which Geyer’s factory – Biała Fabryka became the most famous example a decade later). Next, cotton textiles were manually woven, in the same weaving colony, and then they underwent similar finishing processes as linen fabrics.

The Łódka settlement was built between 1824–1827. In 1828, it expanded at the expense of Wójtostwo Zarzewskie into a clothmakers’ colony called Ślązaki or Szlezying to mark the Silesian origins of its inhabitants. Following the Łódka settlement’s incorporation into Łódź, the city’s area increased to 2205 ha.

In the period of organised industrial settlement development, i.e. in the years 1821–1831, as many as 1029 families of foreign artisans and factory owners settled in Łódź. At the time, the overall population increased from 799 to 4343.

Nowa Dzielnica

Despite the crisis that followed the collapse of the November Uprising and affected the wool and partially the linen industry, Łódź continued its dynamic expansion over the next decade, primarily due to the growing cotton industry. At the time, new cotton manufactories were established on the River Jasień, the most famous of which, Ludwik Geyer’s plant, in 1840 employed 600 people and was the largest cotton plant in Congress Poland. It was there that in 1838 the first steam engine in Łódź was launched..

As the city’s industrial development was on the increase, so was its population which tripled to reach the figure of 15 500 in 1840. Therefore, to ensure the city’s appropriate development in the future, the authorities significantly expanded its area by incorporating the state forests within the Łódź quadrant. Nowa Dzielnica (New District) was established on the land so incorporated and, as suggested by its name, was the first real urban quarter of Łódź. It was not intended for any particular occupational category, but for any new inhabitants. It was arranged into a dense grid of streets within which 300 building plots were delimited with sizes appropriate for urban needs. Nowa Dzielnica’s axis ran along Główna Street, where the central place of the district, Wodny Rynek, was situated together with the first public city park – Żródliska Park (so-called Kwela).

Following the establishment of Nowa Dzielnica, the city’s overall area increased by 534 ha to 2739 ha. The establishment of this quarter was the last organised and rational urban planning effort in the 19th c. history of Łódź. The population of Nowa Dzielnica grew slowly, anyway, so that in the mid-19th century many plots were still undeveloped, while its eastern part was covered by a forest, the relic of which is today’s Park im. 3 Maja.

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Mapa Klucza Łódź Składającego się z Wsi Wólka, Widzew, Zarzew, Młynów Lamus, Xięży i Woytowski. Posiadł Kólom i Piła, niemniej Dezeryi Młynowej Araszt (...) oraz *Grontów z Territorium Miasta Rządowego Łódź na Osadę Rękodzielniczą Łódka zajętych...*, ok. 1:5000, 1827, W. Miniewicz

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Mappa Lasu Obrębem Łódź zwanego (ze schematem regulacji Nowej Dzielnicy), ok. 1:8400, po 1840 r., bez autora


 Nowosolna – aerial picture, scale: 1 : 25 000

 Mileszki – aerial picture, scale: 1 : 1 500

IV