

Leeleva Online Map

Huron River

Ukrainian: Gorin or Horin (Горинь)

Russian: Gorin or Horyn (Горынь)

Polish: Horyń

The largest river that flowed through the Leeleva area in the 19th Century was the Huron River. Jake Unruh depicted the river on the Leeleva map as passing to the northeast of the village.¹ In fact, the Huron River passes about 10 miles to the northeast of Leeleva.



The Huron River between Krevin and Slavuta²

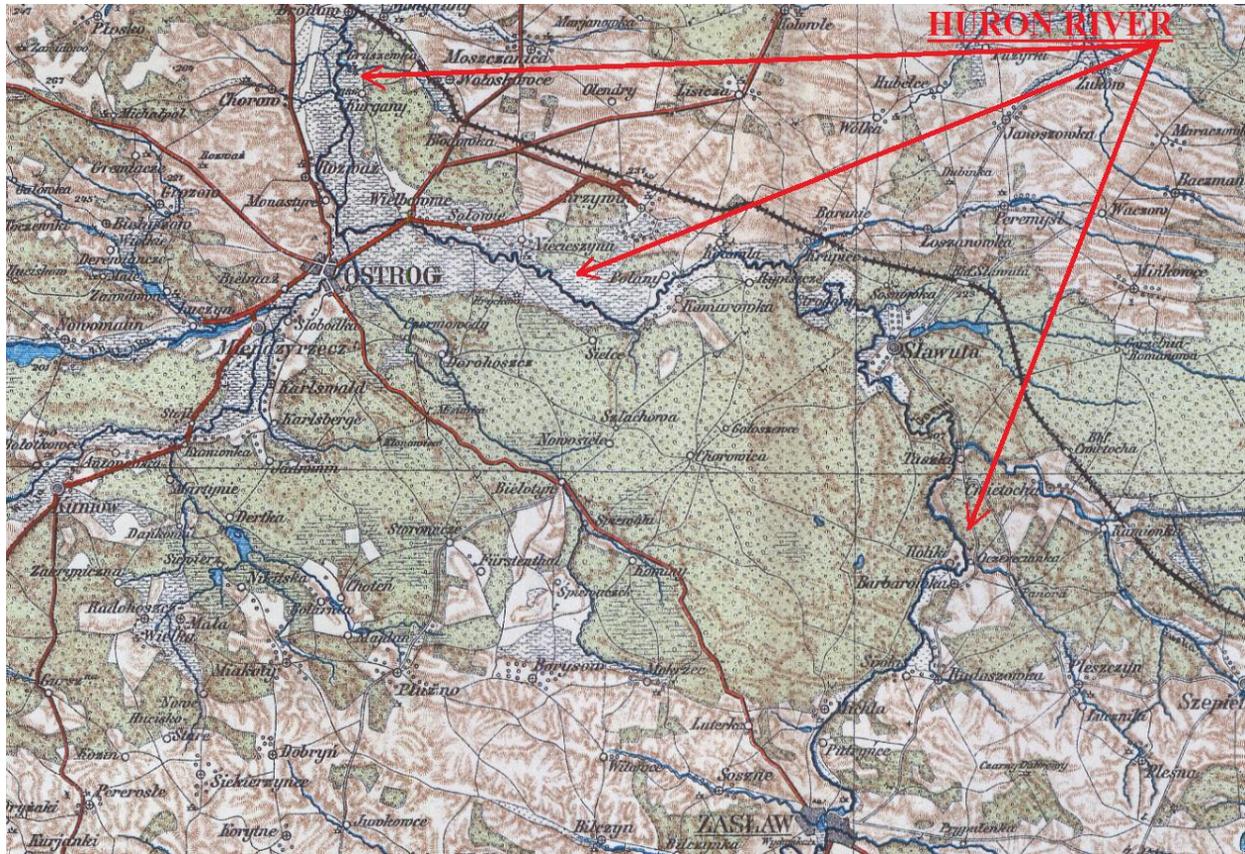
In 19th Century Volhynia, the Huron (Gorin) River was one of the major waterways bisecting the gubernia. This map from 1883 shows the Huron as it flowed in a general northerly direction through Volhynia Gubernia. The Huron emptied into the Pripyat (Pripet) River in Minsk Gubernia. The Pripyat flowed east to empty into the Dnieper River, which can be seen at the extreme right of this map. On the extreme left can be seen the Bug River, which flowed in a northwestern direction, eventually emptying into the Vistula River. On this map, Ostrog County is outlined with a red dotted line.³



Huron River in Volhynia Gubernia, 1883⁴

The river has its origins in an area between Ternopil and Kremenets', in the Kremenets' Mountains, after which it flows in a generally northeastern direction towards Zaslav (Iziaslaw). After Zaslav, the river flows north to Slavuta where it again changes direction back towards the west. After flowing south of Krevin and Welburne, the river hooks sharply towards the north at Ostrog. After Ostrog, the river flows northerly, hooks towards Rivne, and then flows north again until it discharges into the Pripyat River (in the 19th Century, the Huron joined the Pripyat in Minsk Gubernia). The Pripyat itself is one of the largest rivers in Western Ukraine/Belorus' and joins the Dnieper River north of Kiev.

This map shows the Huron flowing through Ostrog County as it looked in the late 1900s. The Vilna River joins the Huron on the east side of Ostrog. Note on this map the wide floodplain of the Huron River north and east of the Town of Ostrog.⁵



Ostrog Area in the Late 1800s

From ancient times, the Huron served as a transportation and communication link between Podolia (the area south of Volhynia) and Polissya and Poland in the north and west; and central Ukraine, the Dnieper and the Black Sea in the east and south.⁶ The river was navigable for barge traffic south into Ostrog County in the 19th Century and Netishyn was an important port for water-borne freight and many rubles of goods were delivered or dispatched.

North of Ostrog, the river became deeper, reaching a depth of several meters, as well as a very broad width. Annual spring flooding of the Huron occurred for 3-5 weeks and the river would be at least half frozen beginning in the month of December.⁷



Huron River north of Ostrog⁸

The river served many additional purposes to the people living in its watershed in addition to being a source for water and transportation. It served to power mills all along its course. Natural as well as man-made ponds along the river gave rise to industrialized fish farms.⁹ In the floodplains of the river during dry seasons were large grassy meadows which gave farmers good places to graze their cattle and horses.¹⁰

The Huron also provided important natural resources for the area. Deposits of rich clay were left behind after centuries of flooding. These clay deposits gave rise to a rich pottery industry which employed many in the villages of Krevin, Krupets, Solovi, Kolome and Slavuta.¹¹

The river also provided an environment for flora and fauna in the region. Forests grew up around the banks of the river providing fuel and building materials. The wildlife living in the forests near the river such as beaver and otters, cranes and birds of all kinds, as well as fish and shellfish, provided food and other resources.¹²

Thus the Huron, as well as its tributary waterways, played many vital roles in the area throughout history, including the 19th Century.

This painting shows a large bird, perhaps a Eurasian Crane, flying low over a springtime stream in the southern Polish Polissya.

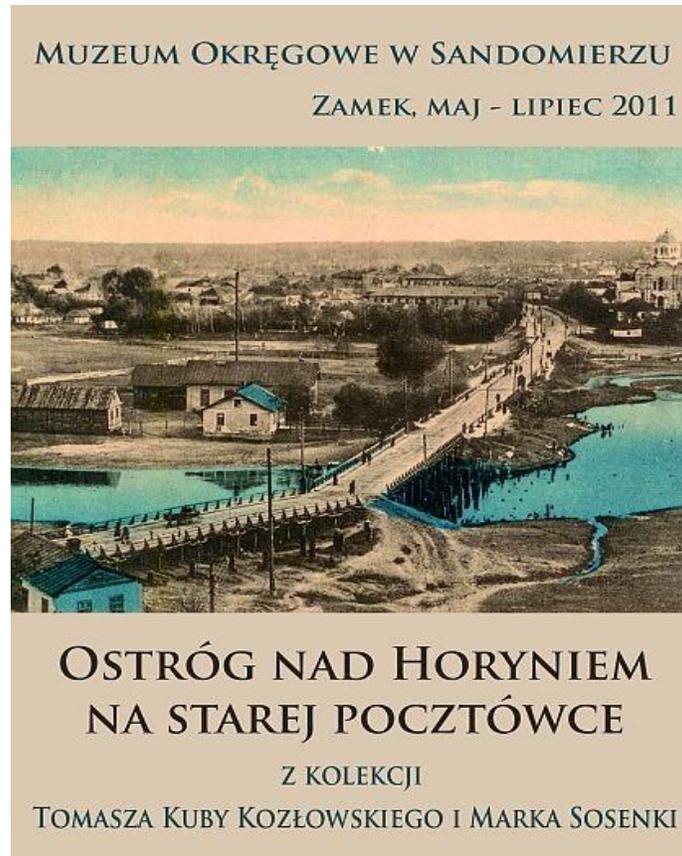


Wiosna (Spring) – 1911, by Henryk Weysenhoff¹³

In some European cultures, towns or cities have been referenced throughout history by their name along with the name of a major waterway upon which they are located. For instance, the German City of Frankfurt am Rhine means literally in English “Frankfurt on the Rhine (River)”. Likewise in Polish, locations along a river may historically be identified along with the river.

In the case of Ostrog, Polish sources will sometimes list the town as “Ostrog nad Horyniem” meaning “Ostrog on the Horyn (River)”. The seat of the adjacent county in the 19th Century, Zaslav, can likewise be found sometimes under the name “Zaslav nad Horyniem” (Leeleva was situated in Zaslav County after the Polish-Soviet War of 1921) (also see “Slawuta nad Horyniem”). Remember that during certain times throughout history Volhynia was under Polish rule.

This poster, advertising an exhibition in Sandomierz, Poland, of historic postcards depicting Ostrog, clearly references the town as Ostrog on the Horyń (Ostrog nad Horyniem). This exhibition was held May through July, 2011.



Ostróg on the Horyń; Postcard Collection¹⁴

An explanation of the geography of Western Ukraine would be helpful in understanding the role of the Huron River in 19th Century Volhynia. The Huron River flowed through the heart of traditional Volhynia (Ukrainian: Волинь, Volyn'; Russian: Волинь, Volyn'; Polish: Wołyń; Lithuanian: Voluinė or Volynė; Czech: Volyň; German: Wolhynien or Wolynien; Yiddish: Volin, וואָלין).

Historically, Volhynia was bounded by these traditional regions:

- Mała-Polska (lesser Poland), Mazovia and Polissya on the northwest
- Belorus' on the northeast;
- Galicia on the southwest
- Podolia on the southeast
- Kiev or Kievan Rus' to the east¹⁵

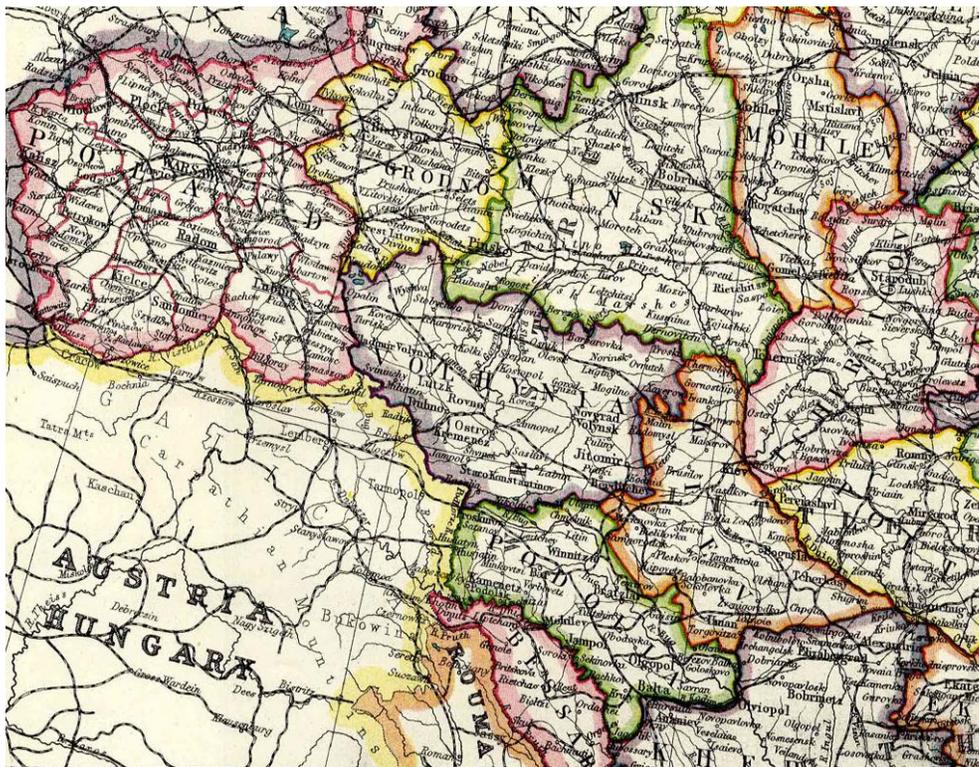
The traditional western border of Volhynia was the Bug River.

Politically, by the very early 20th Century (as part of the Russian Empire) Volhynia Gubernia was bounded by the provinces (gubernii) of:

- Poland (Lublin) to the west
- Grodno and Minsk to the north
- Kiev to the east,
- Podolia to the southeast

Austria-Hungary (more properly known as the Austro-Hungarian Empire or the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy) bordered Volhynia to the southwest; more specifically, the Austro-Hungarian province of Galicia (properly known as the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria). Galicia, ethnographically a Ukrainian region, was at this time controlled by the Austro-Hungarian Empire and therefore separated politically from Ukraine proper.

This map shows western Ukraine under the Russian Empire in 1908. Note the proximity of Volhynia to Poland, Grodno, Minsk, Kiev, Podolia, and Austria-Hungary.



Western Ukraine, Russian Empire, 1908¹⁶

Several rivers flow northward through traditional Volhynia, feeding the Pripyat River in traditional Belarus'. Among these rivers, west to east, are the Styr, the Huron(Gorin) and the Sluch. These rivers flow from the Podolian-Volhynian highlands or uplands in what was Podolia Gubernia and southern Volhynia Gubernia. These highlands are the northeasternmost extension of the Carpathian Mountains. To the south of these highlands rivers flow to the south, directly towards the Black Sea.

The Pripyat Valley, which forms a great natural depression in northern Ukraine/southern Belarus', is an area of vast marshes which extend along the river's length from Poland all the way to the Dnieper River. The Town of Ostrog effectively lies right at the border of these highlands and lowlands; the Podolian Uplands rising south of Ostrog and the Polessian Lowlands along with the Pripyat and Pinsk marshes falling away to the north.



Pripyat Marshes, 1890¹⁷

The Podolian-Volhynian highlands are characterized in Volhynia by the Kremenets' Mountains; a range of low mountains rising from Kremenets' and stretching for 40 miles toward the northeast. At the foot of these highlands, running east and west through Volhynia and engulfing the town of Ostrog, is a swath of forest-land which once ran the length of Volhynia. It is on the north edge of these highlands, several miles north of a line running from L'viv to Ternopil to Khmel'nitski, where the Volhynian rivers Styr, Gorin and Sluch originate. This photo shows a view in the Kremenets' Mountains.



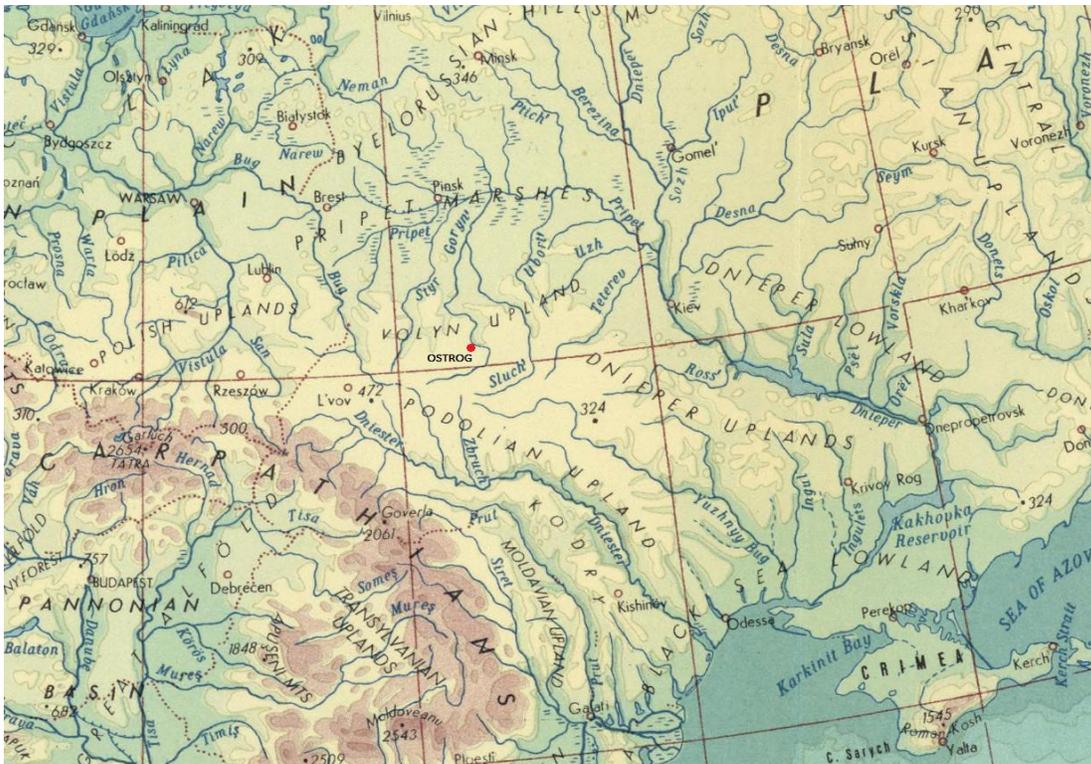
Kremenets' Mountains¹⁸

Geographical location on the southern edges of these lowlands was an historic disadvantage to the economy of the Ostrog area, as well as for all of Volhynia. One of the resources which the Ostrog area had in abundance was its forests. Logging and timber-related industry could have been much more profitable had Ostrog's river systems provided a more direct route to important trading centers.¹⁹

Before the advent of the railways, export of logs and timber was most easily done by utilizing waterways. Water-borne traffic to or from Ostrog had to travel in a very roundabout way to reach Black Sea ports; far to the north (to the Pripyat) and then far to the east (to the Dnieper), then finally south. Although the distance to the Black Sea via the Dniester River was far shorter, Ostrog's river systems simply didn't flow that way.

Furthermore, Ostrog did not have access to rivers flowing to the north, to the Bug River which led to Baltic Sea ports. For this reason, export of timber from the Ostrog area was simply not profitable and one of the area's chief natural resources went largely unexploited.

The fact that Ostrog could not be directly tied to ports like Odessa or Kharkhiv on the Black Sea, and Danzig (Gdansk), Konigsberg (Kaliningrad) or Riga on the Baltic Sea, severely handicapped the economic and cultural development of the Ostrog area. It was not until the days of the railways and road travel when Ostrog could easily trade with the outside world. Even then, though, the haphazard way the Russian Empire laid out the roads and railways meant this purpose was served in a very inefficient manner.



Central-eastern European River Systems²⁰

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Photo via Panoramio.com; Hoshchans'kyi district, Rivnens'ka oblast, Ukraine
50° 30' 16.70" N 26° 32' 21.09" E, June 8, 2009, © All Rights Reserved by Alex_II.

Photo via Panoramio.com; Slavuts'kyi district, Khmel'nyts'ka oblast, Ukraine
50° 19' 23.38" N 26° 43' 51.84" E, May 3, 2009, © All Rights Reserved by Alex_II.

Photo via Summitpost.org; SE face of Kremenets (on the left) as seen from Ukraine's Uzhanskyi National Nature Park; Sep 23, 2010; © All Rights Reserved by LukZem.

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Unruh, Jacob, “From Village Life to Kansas Plains”, 1978.

Wiosna – 1911, by Henryk Weysenhoff

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- ¹ Unruh, Jacob, "From Village Life to Kansas Plains", 1978.
- ² Photo via Panoramio.com; Slavuts'kyi district, Khmel'nyts'ka oblast, Ukraine.
- ³ The Dnieper River, the largest of river in Ukraine, flows south, emptying into the Black Sea at Kherson. On its way through southern Ukraine, the Dnieper in the 19th Century flowed through the great City of Kiev, then near the Mennonite Colonies of Chortiza and Molotschna. The Vistula River, after being fed by the Bug and others, flowed in a northerly direction through Poland. After passing Warsaw, the Vistula passed through the areas inhabited by Mennonites in northern Poland, from Schwetz and throughout the Vistula Delta, to Elbing and Danzig. The Vistula empties into the Baltic Sea at the Bay of Danzig.
- ⁴ "Letts Russia". No. 5. Letts's Popular Atlas. Letts, Son & Co. Limited, London. (1883).
- ⁵ U51 Ostrog., Übersichtskarte von Mitteleuropa.
- ⁶ Cynkalowsky, Prof. Alexander, Ancient Volyn and Volhynian Polissia.
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- ⁸ Photo via Panoramio.com; Hoshchans'kyi district, Rivnens'ka oblast, Ukraine.
- ⁹ Cynkalowsky, Prof. Alexander, Ancient Volyn and Volhynian Polissia.
- ¹⁰ Romanchuk, A [Романчук О.], "Gorin River; Past and Present" [Річка Горинь: минуле і сьогодення], 2004.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Wiosna – 1911, by Henryk Weysenhoff.
- ¹⁴ "Ostróg nad Horyniem, na Starej pocztoyce", zamek, maj - lipiec 2011., Regional Museum of Sandomierz, Poland, 2011.
- ¹⁵ These regions all were included in or were occupied by at least a minority of ethnic Ukrainians. In certain times of history, Ukraine and Belarus' have collectively been known as Ruthenia. Red Ruthenia was a term for western Ukraine; White Ruthenia (or White Russia) referred to eastern Belarus; Black Ruthenia (or Black Russia) referred to Western Belarus; Grand Duchy of Ruthenia referred to the Kievan Rus'. There have also been smaller regions referred to as Green Ruthenia, Carpathian Ruthenia, etc., etc.
- ¹⁶ "Central and South Russia", George Philip & Son.
- ¹⁷ Marsh, Polissia [Жанр:пейзаж], Iwan Iwanowitsch Schischkin [Иван Иванович Шишкин].
- ¹⁸ Photo via Summitpost.org; SE face of Kremenets (on the left) as seen from Ukraine's Uzhanskyi National Nature Park; Sep 23, 2010; © All Rights Reserved by LukZem.
- ¹⁹ Forests and Forestry in Poland, Lithuania, The Ukraine, and the Baltic Provinces of Russia.
- ²⁰ Pergamon World Atlas, Pergamon Press, LTD, Poland, 1967.