

Leeleva Online Map

Riska River, Lake and Flour Mill

Among the most confusing elements of the Leeleva Map are the Riska River, the adjoining Lake, and the Flour Mill. According to the map, the Riska River flows from the lake. At the confluence of the lake and the river there stands the Flour Mill. The river then runs generally parallel to the road through Leeleva, then passes near Manziliska, and joins the Vilna (Viliya) River near Antonovka¹.

We'll probably never know for sure which river-lake-mill system was intended by Jake Unruh on the Leeleva Map. Unruh's map stylistically characterizes the area and is not intended as an accurate geographical representation. There are several river-lake-mill systems which might be the ones we're searching for, but none that match Unruh's map exactly. Furthermore, during the Soviet period some marshes and ponds were drained, and drainage canals were added to the area. This means that we cannot just compare Unruh's map to a current satellite view and expect to be able to find what we're looking for. One would need to examine old, pre-Soviet maps in order to locate this system.

The streams and ponds will give us clues as to which system Unruh portrayed in the Leeleva Map, but the Flour Mill which stands on the Lake may also be a big clue. Flour mills were common in the Ostrog area in the late 19th Century, but not every village had a mill. Both water mills and windmills were common in the area, but it's probably a water mill that Unruh referenced as it is located at the convergence of the stream and the pond on the map. While searching for this particular system, we'll be looking for a mill located at the convergence of a stream with a lake or a pond.

In looking at old maps that cover the last decades of the 1800s into the first couple decades of the 1900s, we will see that four mills, those at the villages of Kam'yanka, Dertka, Syvir and Choten Druhyi appear on all the maps and all four of these mills stand on small ponds (mills typically stood on ponds, called mill-ponds. A man-made pond could help control the water flow needed to turn the waterwheel for the mill). Any of the four of these could potentially be the river-lake-mill system for which we're seeking. It's important to note that on none of the maps do lakes or mills appear at the village of Leeleva.

A special note should also be given regarding another factor which complicates the search for the river-lake-mill system while studying the old maps; the language factor. This area was mapped by the Poles, Germans and Austrians in the 19th and early 20th Centuries and these maps depict the villages in the Ostrog area by their Polish or German names/spellings.

Maps drawn during the 1940s and after, as well as contemporary satellite views, will show villages by their Russian or Ukrainian names (keep in mind that Ukrainian and Russian are 2 separate and distinct languages). Furthermore, sometimes the name of a village was changed altogether at some point in time, for instance during the Soviet period. Some Polish/German names are similar to the Ukrainian/Russian name, but not always. This further complicates studying the old maps. Here's a table showing the various names of the villages we'll look at while searching for this river-lake-mill system. It's important to not get hung up on spellings of these villages because variation does exist. Transliteration from Russian or Ukrainian to English will never be perfect. For instance, the Russian/Ukrainian letter "Т" could transliterate to an English "H" or "G", depending upon the translator. Transliteration conventions exist, but will never be perfect. Hereafter, each village will be referred to as its current Ukrainian name, transliterated thus:

Ukrainian name	Polish map name	German map name	Leeleva Map name
Kam'yanka	Kamionka	Kamenka	Komminka
Antonivka	Antonowka	Antonowka	Antonovka
Dertka	Dertka	Dertka	
Syvir	Siewierz	Siwier	
Lisna	Lesna	Nikitska[ya]	Leeleva
Choten Druhyi	Balary	Bolarnia	
M'yakoty	Miakoty	Miakoty	
Hutys'ka	Hucisko	Hutisko	
Radohoshch	Radohoszcz	Radohoszcz	
	Martynie	Martyni	
Viliya River			Vilna River
Horyn River			Huron River

So to be able to reach some conclusions about this river-lake-mill system, the first thing to do would be to search for a river in the Ostrog area by the name of Riska or something similar. It's interesting to note that a hand-drawn map of nearby Karolswalde shows a river with a very similar name; the Ritschke². Ritschke and Riska are indeed very similar, but the village of Karolswalde certainly does not sit on the same waterway as does Leeleva.

So why the same name? A plausible explanation here involves the fact that the Ukrainian for "stream" or "river" is richka (річка). The Ukrainian word "richka" was probably mistaken by the Germans for the name of the waterway. (A similar "lost-in-translation" story is probably at the root of the village Leeleva being labeled as Nikitska[ya] on two of the following maps. "Lisna" can be translated to the Ukrainian or Russian word for "forest". When the German mapmakers asked the name of the village, the local Ukrainians must have replied "Lisna". Simultaneously, the local Ukrainians sometimes named an adjacent forest the Nikitska Forest³ ["Nikitskaya Lisna" in Ukrainian]. This may have sounded somewhat like a "Who's on First" Abbott and Costello bit to the mapmaking Germans.

And in the confusion, the name Nikitska[ya] was probably mistakenly applied to Leeleva). Due to the language barrier, confusion must have arisen regarding the name of the Riska River on the Leeleva Map. As a result, the German Mennonites may have referred to this stream erroneously.

It's probably safe to say that the Riska River on the Leeleva Map represents one of the system of streams and brooks which flow into the Viliya River near Kam'yanka (The Leeleva Map also shows the Riska River to merge with the Viliya near Kam'yanka). There are two rivers which merge at the Viliya near this point; the Ustyia (Устя) towards the east and the Hutys'ka (Гутиська) towards the west.

The main branch of the Ustyia flows from its source near Pluzne, then through the villages of Choten and Choten Druhy⁴. It flows into the mill-pond at Dertka, and then continues on and joins the Viliya at Kam'yanka.



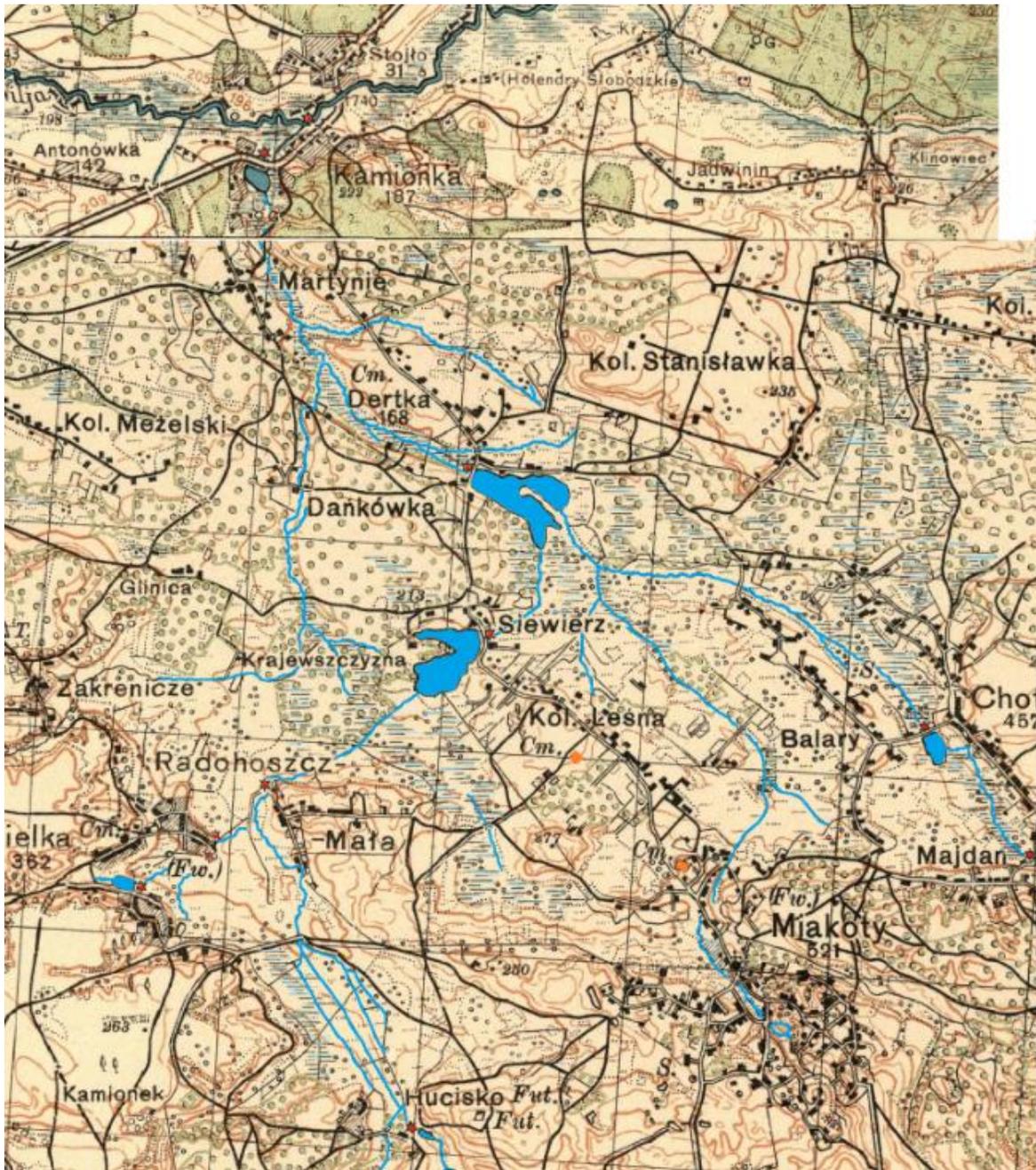
The Ustyia River⁵

The Hutys'ka flows from its source several miles to the south, through Hutys'ka and Radohoshch. The stream then turns eastwards until it flows into the mill-pond at Syvir. Exiting the mill-pond, the Hutys'ka flows into the mill-pond at Dertka, after which point it joins the Ustyia on its way north to the Viliya.



The Hutys'ka River⁶

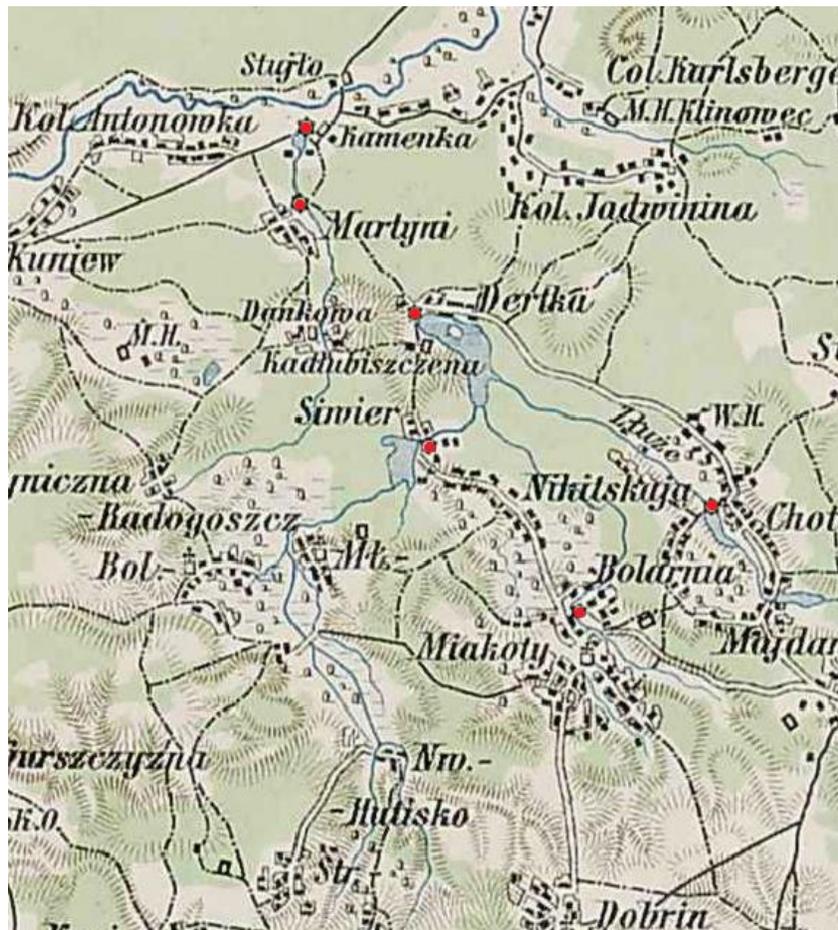
The two maps above were mapped by the Polish Army in the early 1920s. They not only show the Ustyia and Hutys'ka Rivers, but they also show the flour mills that were in the area at that time.



Flour Mills in the 1920s⁷

Flour mills, marked by red dots on the above map, are nearly all situated at downstream sides of mill-ponds. Note 2 flour mills at Kam'yanka, 1 at Dertka, 1 at Syvir, 4 at the Radohoshchs, 1 at Hutys'ka, 1 at Choten Druhyi and 1 at Majdan.

Another map, from 1889 and charted by the Austrians⁸, shows the Ustyia and Hutys'ka and the two mill-ponds at Syvir and Dertka. The mill-pond also can be seen by the village of Choten Druhyi (Bolarnia), as well as a very small one by Kam'yanka. 2 other mills appears on this map at the northern edge of M'yakoty and at Martyni.



Flour Mills in the 1880s

Continues . . .

Finally, this map drawn by the Germans in the late 19th Century⁹ again shows the two mill-ponds at Syvir and Dertka, as well as by Choten Druhyi. The mills at Kam'yanka and M'yakoty are also marked, but the mill at Martynie is omitted.



Flour Mills in the Late 19th Century

It appears that over the last decades of the 1800s into the first couple decades of the 1900s, mills disappeared from Martynie and M'yakoty, while new mills were erected near Radohoshch and Hutys'ka. Mills in Kam'yanka, Dertka, Syvir and Choten Druhyi appear on all the maps and all of these mills stand on mill-ponds. It's important to note that on none of the maps do lakes or mills appear at the village of Leeleva. We'll probably never know for sure which of these lakes and mills was intended by Jake Unruh on the Leeleva Map but I feel the mill-pond at Syvir is probably the lake in question, simply because of its proximity to Leeleva.



Hutys'ka River, 2012¹⁰

This photo from 2012 shows the Hutys'ka River as it flows in from the southwest. This view is from the bridge in Syvir, looking southwest towards Radohoshch and Zakrenicze. The hills behind these villages can clearly be seen. Before the Soviet period, the flour mill at Syvir must have stood near this bridge and the area in the foreground of the photo was the mill-pond.

Turning our attention now to the question of the Mill: flour mills were of course common in Imperial Russian agrarian society. A mill used a power source to turn a wheel which mechanically drove two large stones. These millstones were separated by a very small space and the grain, forced into this space, was thereby ground into flour¹¹. Locally, Czechs had a reputation of building the highest quality mills¹².

Many times in societies like this, tenants were required by their landlord to take their grain to a specific flour mill where the landlord controlled the price for milling. Oftentimes landlords owned mills or else the miller was in some way beholden to the landlord. The miller would be instructed to overcharge the tenants and the landlord could then pocket that extra profit.

Both water mills and windmills were used to grind grain into flour in the 19th Century. By the late 1800s however, a third power source, steam, was also being harnessed to power mills. In 1895 there were 30 water mills and 5 steam mills in Ostrog County.

Although the steam mills were outnumbered 6 to 1 in the county, they were far more productive than were the water driven mills. In 1895 the 5 steam mills produced more than 331,000 rubles worth of product while the 30 water mills produced just less than 25,000 rubles worth of product¹³.

Milling grain into flour was very important in 19th Century Volhynian society. Flour was not only an important staple for food, but grain was also an important export at the time for Ukraine. Farmers in Ostrog County in 1895 harvested several kinds of grains that would have been processed in these mills¹⁴.

Ostrog County 1895

Crops Sown Annually	Acreage	Production
rye	32,400 acres	1,245,150 lbs
wheat	13,150	608,100
oats	22,900	775,000
barley	8,700	355,600
buckwheat	6,200	155,000
millet	2,000	123,000

1895 Ostrog County Grain Production

This is a water mill which stands in the village of Mezerich. Mezerich is a village which is situated southwest of Ostrog, just west of Karolswalde. Mezerich is not marked on the Leeleva Map, but it lies along the highway between Antonivka and Ostrog.



Mezerich Water Mill¹⁵

This is a mill near Ternopil, a city which is located 65 miles southwest of Ostrog. This mill is probably quite representative of a 19th Volhynian watermill.



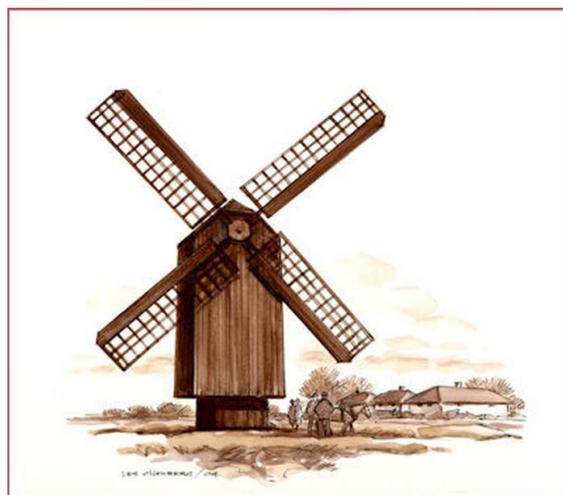
Water Mill near Ternopil¹⁶

Windmills were also commonly used in areas of Volhynia. We have no evidence at this time that windmills near Ostrog were built by Germans or German Mennonites, but if they were they would have been built similarly to windmills found in Olędry villages in Poland which were based on Dutch designs.

This is a windmill that stands near Huta, a village located about 28 miles northeast from Ostrog near the Mennonite village of Zabara. Windmills like this one also operated near Welburne and other villages north of the Huron (Horyn) River in the late 19th century such as the German Mennonite village of Gruental (Moszczanówka)¹⁷.

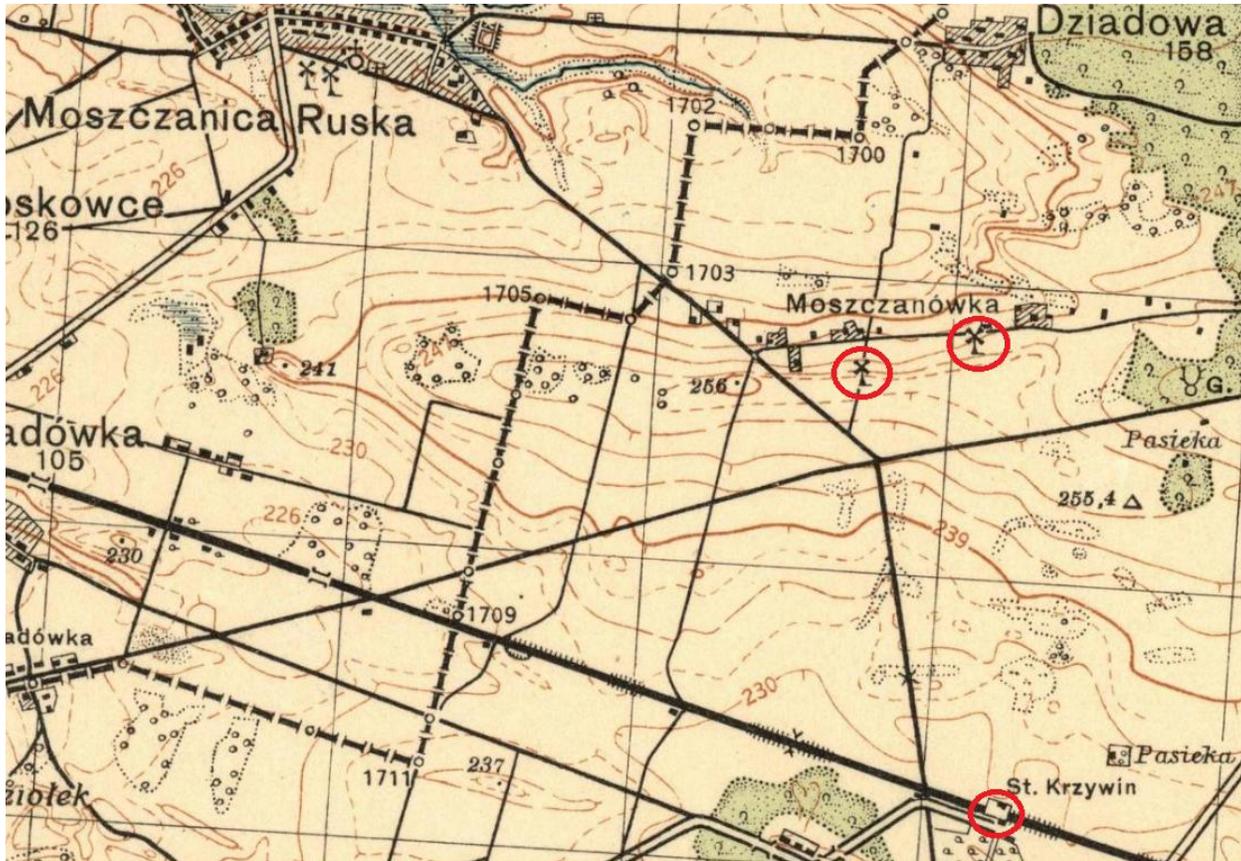


Windmill at Huta¹⁸



German Volhynian Flour Mill¹⁹

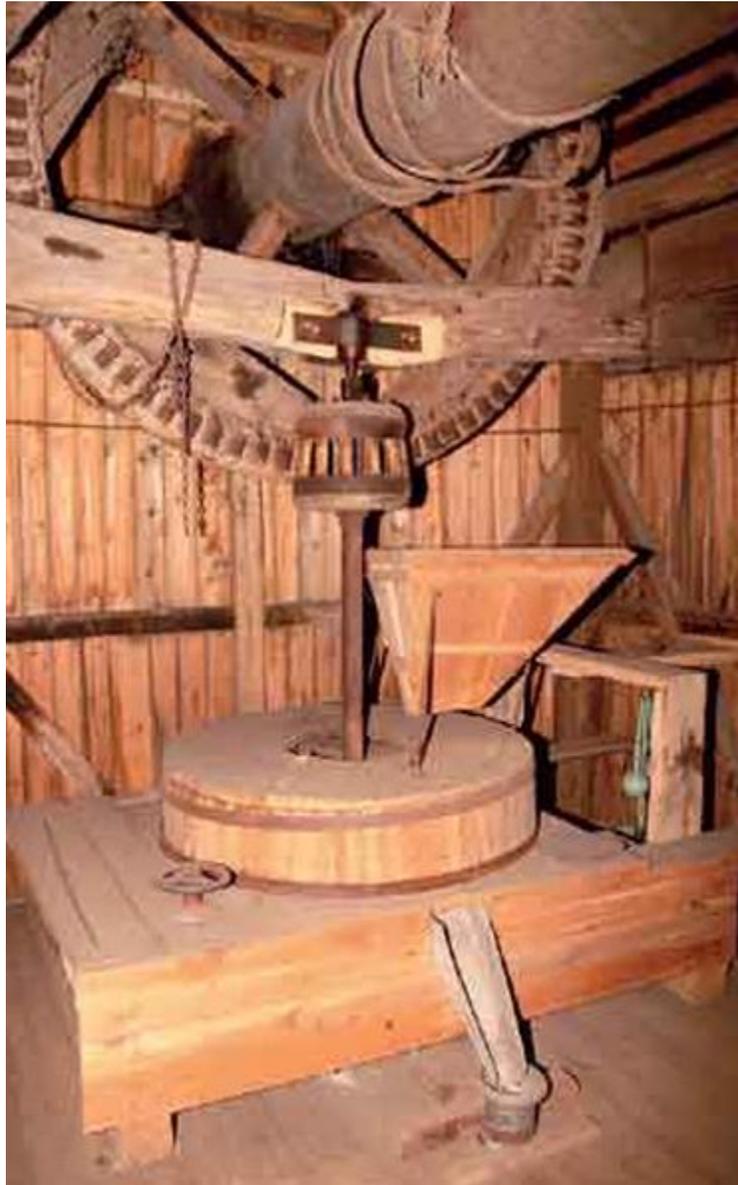
This map clearly shows 2 windmills at Gruental (Moszczanówka). Note the proximity of Gruental to the train station at Krevin (Krzywin)



Windmills at Moszczanówka²⁰

Continues . . .

This photo shows the mechanism from a wind mill near Kiev, Ukraine. The large shaft at the top would be directly attached to the sails, turning via pinion gear the vertical shaft in the center. The shaft drove the millstones, encased by the circular wooden fixture. Grain would be fed into the triangular shaped hopper on the upper right of the millstone. Meal, or ground grain, would issue from the metal spout under the millstone.



Mechanism from a Wind Mill Near Kiev²¹

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P48 S43 (alt. A48 B43) Zasław (1:100 000 WIG - Mapa Taktyczna Polski), Wojskowy Instytut Geograficzny, Warszawa, 1931.

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¹ Unruh, Jacob, From Village Life to Kansas Plains

² Krause, Claire Schachinger; "Karolswalde, Volhynia, Russia; 1900-1910",

³ Levin, V, "Ostrog", The Center For Jewish Art; Architecture

⁴ A very confusing characteristic of these old Russian maps to American eyes is the fact that 2 adjacent villages will sometimes share the same name. For instance, in the Lisna area, we have 3 cases of this; the Radohoshchs, the Hutys'kas and the Chotens. The Radohoshchs appears always to have had the same name, one was named Malo (Small), the other Velykyi (Great) – thus Small Radohoshch and Great Radohoshch. The 2 Hutys'kas were named Nova and Stara (New and Old). The Chotens are a bit different;

Choten itself was adjacent to Balary. At some point during the Soviet period, Balary was renamed to Choten Druhyi, meaning Choten the “Second”, and Choten itself became Choten Pershyi, the “First”. There are also 2 Krevins (Kryvyn), Nova and Stara (New and Old). New Kryvyn, however, looks to consist of only a house or 2, whereas the other 3 examples consist of more substantial villages.

⁵ P47 S43 (alt. A47 B43) Ostróg, P48 S43 (alt. A48 B43) Zasław

⁶ P47 S43 (alt. A47 B43) Ostróg, P48 S43 (alt. A48 B43) Zasław

⁷ P47 S43 (alt. A47 B43) Ostróg, P48 S43 (alt. A48 B43) Zasław

⁸ A Monarchia III. Katonai Felmérése “Osztröh”

⁹ U51 Ostrog., Übersichtskarte von Mitteleuropa

¹⁰ Ukrainian Wikipedia.org, Gutyska River Village in Syvir

¹¹ “New Life for Old Mills”, Welcome to Ukraine Magazine, October 2013

¹² Kovalchuk, Valery and, Korzun, Yuri, “The Situation of National Minorities in Zaslavshyni in Early 20th Century”

¹³ Brokgauza and Efrona Encyclopedic Dictionary, St. Petersburg/Leipzig; Anonymous, What is Ukraine?,

¹⁴ Brokgauza and Efrona Encyclopedic Dictionary, St. Petersburg/Leipzig,

¹⁵ “Mills Ukraine”, Mills.org.ua; Mezhrich

¹⁶ “Mills Ukraine”, Mills.org.ua; Shydlyvtsi

¹⁷ P47 S43 (alt. A47 B43) Ostróg

¹⁸ Wikimapia.org; 50°22'0"N 27°10'57"E; Млин (Гута); 2011

¹⁹ Ollenberg, Les, The Society for German Genealogy in Eastern Europe website “Volhynian Flour Mill”

²⁰ P47 S43 (alt. A47 B43) Ostróg

²¹ “New Life for Old Mills”, Welcome to Ukraine Magazine, October 2013