

Leeleva Online Map

Sawmill

Ukrainian: тартак (tartak) or лісопилка (lisopylka)

Russian: лесопилка (lesopilka)

Polish: tartak

On Jake Unruh's Leeleva map, depicted to the far west, beyond the RS Highway, is a saw mill¹. There were saw mills here and there throughout Ukraine and Volhynia in the 19th Century. With its vast forests, Volhynia obviously had potential to develop a thriving lumber industry. However, the lumber industry was overall under-developed at this time².

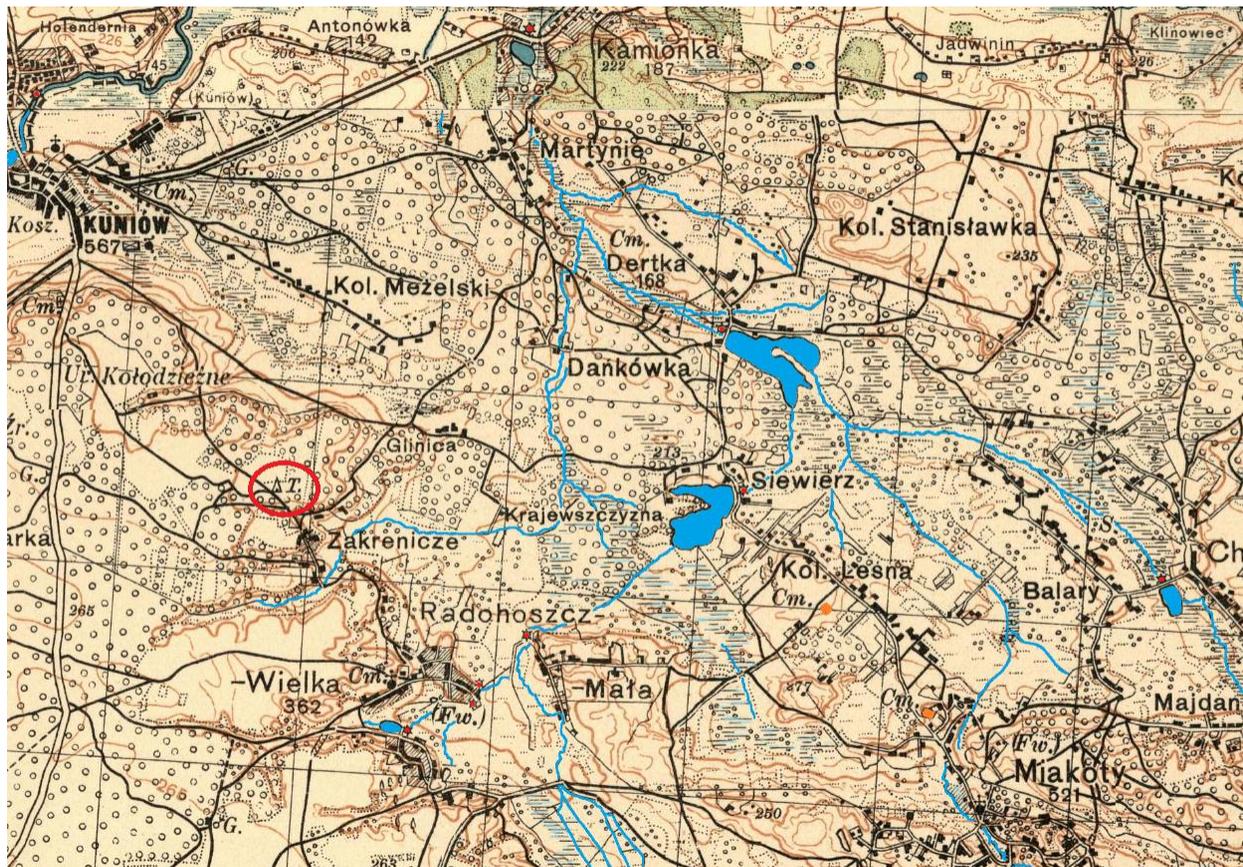
Unruh placed the saw mill toward the edge of the map, west of Komminka and Antonovka. However, due to the stylistic nature of the map, this doesn't necessarily indicate the exact or even approximate location of the mill. In his book The Helpless Poles, Abe J Unruh indicates the difficulty determining locations and distances when dealing with the "old-timers" from the old country. Unruh indicates that when indicating the location of a particular village or landmark, the "old-timers" would simply point in this or that direction and give an approximate distance. Too much emphasis was never placed on exact location or distance³ (distance in Volhynia at the time was measured in Versts [1 verst = .6629 mile]⁴). I feel this is probably the case with many elements on the Leeleva map, and certainly the case with the saw mill.

According to Polish military maps charted in the early 20th Century, there was indeed a saw mill in the vicinity of Leeleva (Lesna)⁵. The Polish map indicates a Tartak (T; Polish for saw mill) just to the northwest of the village of Zakrenicze (today known as Zakrynychne), about 3.5 miles west of Lesna. According to the Polish map, this was the only saw mill in the direct vicinity of Leeleva. Therefore, this may very well have been the mill depicted on the Leeleva map.

Many saw mills and flour mills throughout Russia (and the rest of the world for that matter) in the 19th Century were located along rivers; the force of the flowing water providing power for the saws. However, according to the Polish map, no powerful waterway flowed near the Zakrenicze saw mill. It's entirely possible, then, that the Zakrenicze saw mill was powered by steam.

Steam-powered mills were beginning to be utilized throughout Volynia by the late 19th Century. Indeed, documentation does show that steam-powered saw mills were in use in nearby Slavuta by the year 1886⁶.

Abe J Unruh indicates that no saw mills existed in the area (before the year 1874)⁷. Still, Jake Unruh places the mill on the Leeleva Map; therefore this mill at Zakrenicze must have been built between 1874 and 1900 or so.



Saw Mill at Zakrenicze, 1922

It's impossible to tell what the saw mill at Zakrenicze could have looked like. As with any large, industrializing nation such as Russia was in the late 19th Century, various manufactories or workshops would have taken any number of shapes and sizes, based upon the needs and traditions of the community.

This is a photo taken in 1912 of a saw mill located along the Oka River in Russia (the Oka River, a tributary of the Volga River, flows south of Moscow).



Sawmill on the Oka River, 1912⁸

Continues . . .

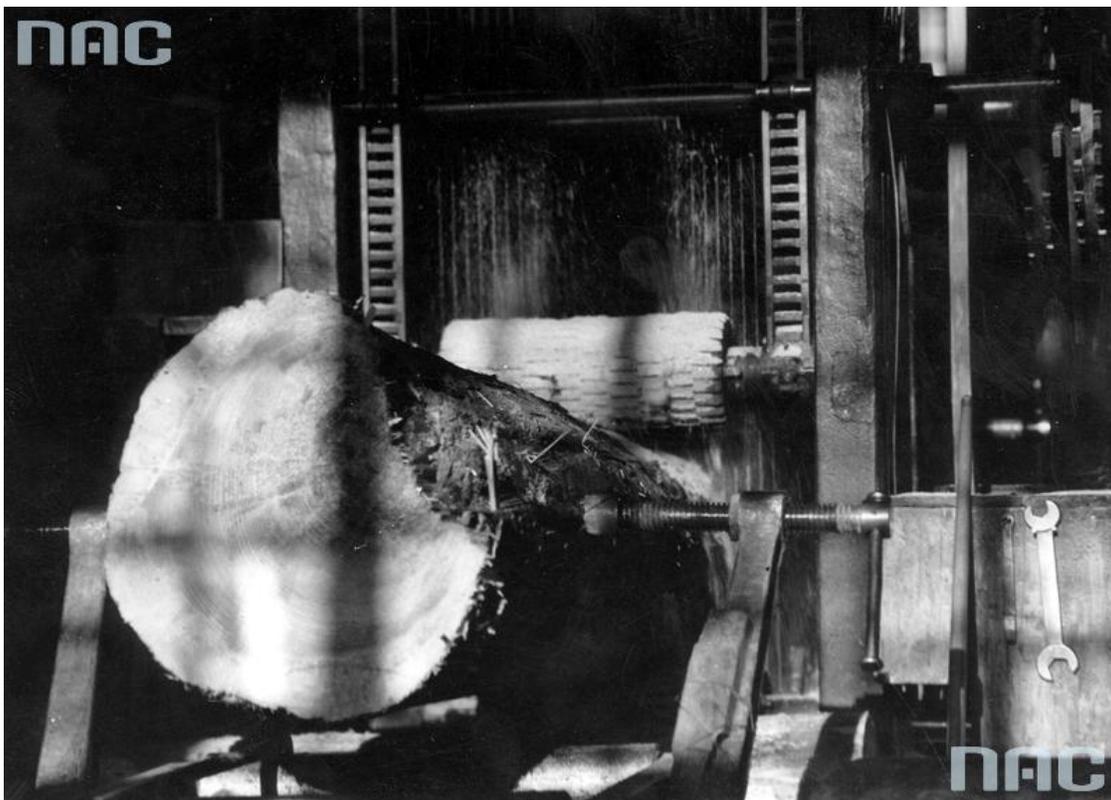
These photos were taken at a saw mill in Skole in 1922⁹. Skole is a Ukrainian village located about 160 miles southwest from Ostrog. Skole today is located in Ukraine but in 1922 when these photos were taken, Skole was in Poland (Second Polish Republic). Skole, located in the northern foothills of the Carpathian Mountains, is ethnographically Ukrainian, as is Volhynia.



Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe, sygn. 1-G-1922-6



Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe, sygn. 1-G-1922-10



Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe, sygn. 1-G-1922-9



Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe, sygn. 1-G-1922-16

Lumber needs of Volhynians would have been varied, but our German ancestors probably would have produced most of their own lumber, therefore limiting their reliance upon a saw mill such as the one at Zakrenicze.

Abe J Unruh relates how Germans cut boards from a tree using a process called “brat schneeda”. A tree would be cut but a stump equivalent to the desired length of board would be left standing. With the aid of a raised platform, boards could then be cut from the vertical stump using a two man cross-cut saw. Many Germans used the resources in the forest to make a living. A father and son team might go into the forest early in the week and not return for several days, busying themselves by felling trees and sawing logs. Logs such as these may have been sold to a saw mill such as the one at Zakrenicze¹⁰.

Many Germans apparently became quite skilled felling timber and cutting wood. Velma Penner Unruh relates that her father-in-law, born in Karolswalde in 1885, was able to hew an entire wagon from a single tree¹¹, save for the wheels which presumably would have needed to be purchased from a stelmakhi (wheelwright) in Komminka or Stölle.

Sources:

Cherkas'ka N. [Черкаська Н.], “Letters of Prince Roman Damian Sangushko, the Last Owner of the Estate of Slavuta ...” [Листи князя Романа Даміана Сангушко, останнього власника славутського маєтку ...], 2003.

Forests and Forestry in Poland, Lithuania, The Ukraine, and the Baltic Provinces of Russia; with notices of the export of timber from Memel, Dantzig, and Riga. Compiled by John Croumbie Brown, LLD, Edinburgh, 1885.

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

“Sawmill, Oka River, 1912”, Sergei Mikhailovich Prokudin-Gorskii Collection.

“Sawmill in Skola, 1922”, Polskie Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe.

Unruh, Abe J., The Helpless Poles, Pine Hill Press, Inc, 1973.

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

Unruh, Velma Penner, “Leeleva Village”.

¹ Unruh, Jacob, "From Village Life to Kansas Plains", 1978.

² Forests and Forestry in Poland, Lithuania, The Ukraine...

³ Unruh, Abe J., The Helpless Poles, Pine Hill Press, Inc, 1973.

⁴ Rural roads in the western United States run every mile, creating a grid system which enables a traveler to easily calculate distance. Such a system was not present in 19th Century Volhynia. Therefore, without the aid of modern odometer or similar instrument, distance would have been very difficult to calculate accurately.

⁵ P48 S43 (alt. A48 B43) Zasław (1:100 000 WIG - Mapa Taktyczna Polski), Wojskowy Instytut Geograficzny, Warszawa, 1931.

⁶ Cherkas'ka N., "Letters of Prince Roman Damian Sangushko, the Last Owner of the Estate of Slavuta ...". Slavuta is located about 18 miles northeast of Leeleva.

⁷ Unruh, Abe J., The Helpless Poles, Pine Hill Press, Inc, 1973.

⁸ "Sawmill, Oka River, 1912", Sergei Mikhailovich Prokudin-Gorskii Collection.

⁹ "Sawmill in Skola, 1922", Polskie Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe.

¹⁰ Unruh, Abe J., The Helpless Poles, Pine Hill Press, Inc, 1973.

¹¹ Unruh, Velma Penner, "Leeleva Village".