

Nowa Sól, Nowa Sól County, Lubuskie Province, Poland

Compiled by and translated from Polish by Edward F. Rozyłowicz



Location of Nowa Sól
Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org>

Nowa Sól (Eng: New Salt, Ger: Neusalz) appears in historical documents shortly after the takeover by the Habsburg dynasty of Silesia in the 16th century. In 1553, Anthony Schmidt of Gdańsk, called Danczko, received authorization to create salt works from Emperor Ferdinand I. In exchange, within two years of salt production, Danczko was obliged to commence the transportation of this raw material to Silesia and to regulate its river commerce. The first salt works, which were located in the **Milska** village (18km east of Nowa Sól), was closed due to a dispute with the owner of the land. The new salt works were built in 1563, on land near the village of Modrzyca (4km north of Nowa Sól). The plant was called "**Nowa Sól w Modrzycy**" (New Salts in Modrzyca), eventually transforming itself into a shorter form of "**Nowa Sól**" (New Salt).

Two years later, a flood destroyed the first wooden buildings. The new rebuilt brick buildings, including the main office (today's town hall), water mill, a brewery, tavern, and residential buildings built after 1572. These facilities have given rise to the present city of Nowa Sól. Products of the salt works were destined for the market of Lower Silesia. From about 1570 regional salt works began to experience a crisis, caused by increases in price, import duties, and difficulties in obtaining salt from France (derived from sea).

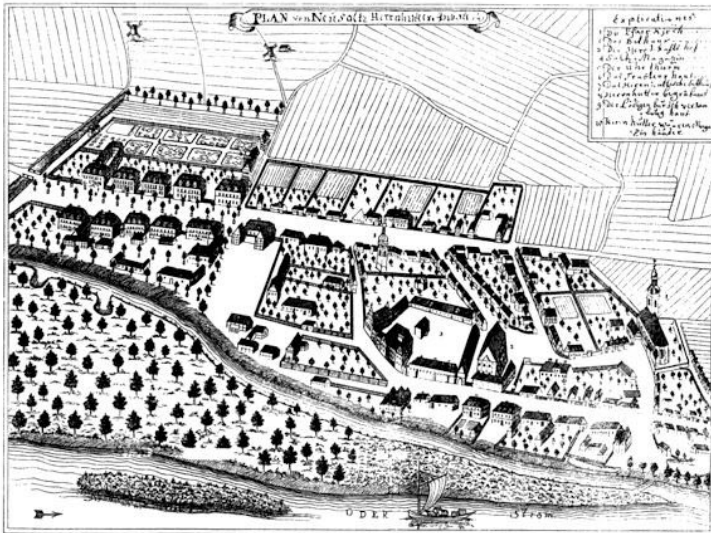
In 1586, Daniel Preuss of the Office of the Governor, who contributed significantly to the development of the salt works, increased salt production, albeit only temporarily. During the initial period of its existence, the village of Nowa Sól was haunted by numerous natural disasters. Political events also inhibited its development. The outbreak of armed conflict in 1618, which started the 30-year war, led directly to the collapse of the Nowa Sól salt works. Military campaigns, billeting, material requisitions, and rape resulted in the ruin and depopulation of the surrounding areas. Nowa Sól, due to its favorable location, bore the brunt of the gradual decline. Even during the war, Emperor Ferdinand II, in an attempt to revive the activities of the Nowa Sól salt works, issued in 1630, a decree prohibiting the eating of salt other than from imperial salt works. However, this decree did a change the position of the salt works, whose income dropped significantly. This was mainly due to the influx of salt from Polish Silesia. Smuggling of Polish salt was much cheaper than salt produced in the Nowa Sól salt works. More privileges granted to the salt works did not improve the profitability of the production and gradually the facility fell into decline.

Finally, in 1713, the works were converted into a trading company and as such, in this form, the salt works existed until the mid-19th century. Despite the collapse of the salt works, a settlement developed because of its convenient location, where many craftsmen and merchants located their plants and warehouses here. The decisive moment in the development of Nowa Sól was the war between Prussia - Austrian (The



Prussian Coat of Arms
Nowa Sól
Source: <http://www.nowasol.pl/>

Silesian War). In December 1740, the Prussian army, led by Frederick II, took possession of the city. The king, soon after the cessation of hostilities, noticed the importance of the position of this town, decided to give the city of Nowa Sól a charter.



Nowa Sól (Neusalz) in the 18th century
Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org>

The relevant documents were issued on 18 May 1743; in October, the king granted the town all privileges and identified a framework for development. Nowa Sól was elevated to the rank of a city; the king ordered the development of its expansion, expecting a wider influx of settlers and craftsmen. This intention was partially fulfilled and thanks to the arrival in the city of a group called "the Moravian brothers", who founded their colony here. This colony, in a short time has become a role model.

Regular and thoughtful construction, clean and green grew the town and notable resident "brothers" moved in from other parts of the city. Additionally, economic activity has been exemplary. In a short time a tannery, a mill, and a pharmacy was established. Thanks to the efforts of the king, trading of millstones was started, verdigris production

initiated (verdigris is the common name for a green pigment obtained through the application of acetic acid to copper plates or the natural patina formed when copper, brass or bronze is weathered and exposed to air or seawater over a period of time), as well as two brick factories.

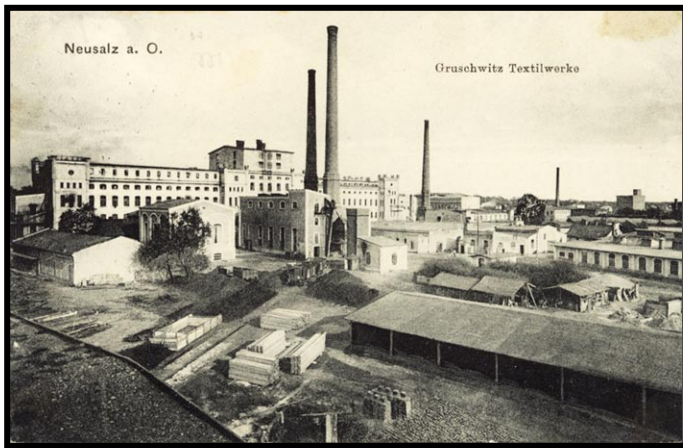
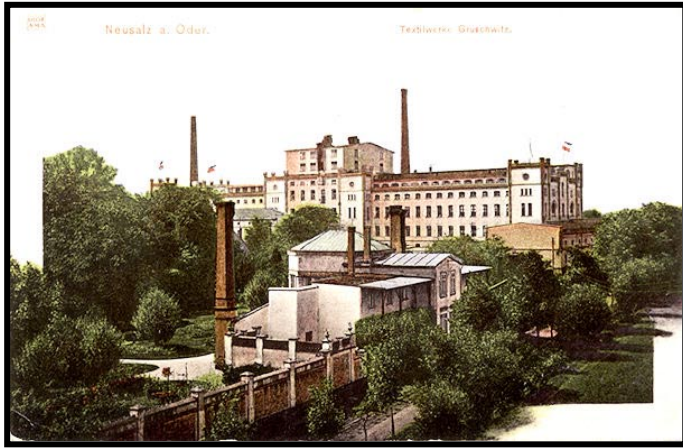
This was a promising and dynamic development of the city, but was halted in 1756 by the outbreak of the Seven Years' War. In 1759, the town was looted and burned by the Russian army. Reconstruction commenced after the war. Nowa Sól began to attract the new settlers. A textile weaving mill, a tannery, tin factory, glass factory, a bakery and smaller factories opened. In 1787 in Nowa Sól there were 183 houses, and the population was over 1,500 inhabitants.

Further losses were suffered during the Napoleonic wars. French, Saxon, Prussian, and Russian troops roamed the city. In 1814, Duchy of Warsaw troops were allowed to return home with the consent of Tsar Alexander I.

After 1815, Silesia remained a province of Prussia. As a result of administrative changes, Nowa Sól found itself in a created district of Legnica and the county Koźuchów. The 19th century was characterized by continued industrial development in the city. Nowa Sól quickly became a major industrial center specializing in metallurgy-metal and the processing of flax. Heavy industry was represented by two plants: "**Stara Huta**" (Old Steel Mill) - founded in 1827 by KH Gläser (later the plant was handed over to family Krause), and in 1852, "**Nowa Huta**" (New Steel Mill) ("**Paulinnenhütte**").



Current Coat of Arms of Nowa Sól
Source: <http://www.nowasol.pl/>



(top) Gruschwitz fabryka nici - pocz.XX w.
Gruschwitz thread factory – early XX c.
 (bottom) Gruschwitz fabryka nici - lata 20.XX w.
Gruschwitz thread factory, late 1920s

years 1900-1907 a railway line was built in the direction of Poznan. These developments increased services to the local population - restaurants, inns, and hotels. Business owners built grand houses, villas and funded hospitals and libraries, and built housing for workers and laborers. Erected were several primary schools, a vocational school, and secondary school of education (*gimnazjum*). In particular, care was taken to establish a number of green city parks. In 1916, a regional museum (*Heimatmuseum*) was opened to the public. Numerous sports organizations were formed; among them, a shooting club (*Schützengilde*) and a yacht club ("*Möwe*"). Population growth stimulated the growth of the city. At the end of the 19th century, the tradition of salt remained only in the name of the city.

The real mogul of the linen industry was the tycoon JD Gruschwitz who established a plant in 1816. The origins of that plant dates back to the 18th century based on the Moravian brothers' linen manufacturing. Modernizing the factory resulted in increased production and number of employees. This plant's production was principally high quality yarns. Another large industrial plant was established in 1872 by the brothers Garve, a glue factory. As such, In Nowa Sól there arose, or continued to increase, many smaller industrial plants. That still included the production of millstones, the tannery of the three Moravian brothers, plus several starch producing facilities. Opened in the 1880s was a furniture factory, a paper factory, a steam sawmill, two breweries, and a factory of agricultural machinery. Shipyards that previously build wooden boats became specialized in repairs of engines. The Oder River navigation played a significant role in the transport of food processing goods.

At the turn of the century Nowa Sól has become in a full sense an industrial center. Suitable trade connections have contributed to the lush growth of prosperity. Numerous roads were built connecting the city with other towns in the region. In 1871, a permanent link (bridge) was constructed to the opposite bank of the Oder River. The wooden bridge replaced an established ferry. In the same year, Nowa Sól established railway connection with the cities of Wroclaw (Breslau) and Zielona Góra. In the



Club żeglarski "Mewa" - lata 30.XX w..
Nautical Club "Seagull", 1930s



Szpital powiatowy - ok.1931 r
District Hospital, around 1931

During the time of World War I, the city's population and its industry worked largely for the war effort. This time of the Weimar Republic in Nowa Sól, as well as across Germany in general, were characterized by extremely violent social and political transformations. The post-war economic crisis and raging hyperinflation caused a decrease in virtually all production levels and a reduction in the quality of life. 1923 was a particularly turbulent year in Nowa Sól when riots and political demonstrations were frequent, resulting in the destruction of shops. The 1920s and the early 1930s saw a period of economic recovery. Despite the mounting difficulties, the city authorities carried out a series of bold investments. The network of

water-sewage system was rebuilt; new streets were laid, as well as new housing for workers was constructed. In 1930, the county hospital (*Kreiskrankenhaus*) was opened, and in 1931, a new steel bridge was built across the Oder River. In 1936, the city's population exceeded 17,000 people.

With Hitler's rise to power in Germany, began a new chapter in the history of the city. Political parties were abolished, trade unions revoked, and people of Jewish origin began to be harassed. Government contracts resulted in the revival of the metal industry, an increase in the construction industry, and hence a fall in unemployment. Starting in 1934, a full swing in construction commenced for an anticipated future war. In Nowa Sól city and many industrial plants, more than a dozen air-raid shelters were constructed. Additionally, there was resumption in the construction of fortifications on the Oder River (*Odrstellung*). In this way, the city entered into the next chapter of its history. Nowa Sól Residents were rapidly drawn into the vortex of war. At the beginning of September 1939, in the invasion of Poland by Germany, soldiers of the Wehrmacht, with machine guns, were stationed within the city. Gradually the industry of Nowa Sól moved to the production of war material. Because most men were conscripted into the military, in virtually all plants, women gradually replaced the departed men and forced labor from POW camps was brought in. Throughout the duration of the war, Nowa Sól did not suffer any direct effects of the hostilities. The city was not affected by Allied aircraft bombing nor any raids or direct acts of war. Only by the approach of the German/Soviet front in 1944 was the city forced to take the necessary steps to prepare its defense. At the end of January and February of 1945, after the evacuation of its population, did Nowa Sól find itself in a war zone. In the fight for Nowa Sól, the resulting destruction only slightly affected the city. On February 14, 1945, Nowa Sól was overrun by Soviet troops. By early spring, the city began to receive Poles. Some people came in search of the spoils of war, which was minimal in the city, but quite a few came for the purposes of settlement. In May 1945, a Polish administration was organized and thus began the eviction of the ethnic German population. In the early postwar years, Nowa Sól was within the district Koźuchów. In 1953, Nowa Sól became the county seat, which operated until the administrative reform in 1975. The new district, Nowa Sól, was created in 1999.



Panoramic view of Nowa Sól from the Oder
Source: <http://www.nowasol.pl/>

References and Further Reading:

Nowa Sól ... http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nowa_S%C3%B3l

Nowa Sól, Official City Web Site ... <http://www.nowasol.pl/>

Nowa Sól County ... http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nowa_S%C3%B3l_County

T. Andrzejewski, *Miejscowości Powiatu Nowosolskiego* – Localities of the County of Nowa Sól, *Muzeum Miejskie w Nowej Soli* – City Museum of Nowa Sól

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Places Worth Seeing in Nowa Sól:

- ✓ Town Hall in Moniuszki Street erected between 1574-1575 as a building of the imperial salt office
- ✓ St Michael's Parish Church in Koscielna Street, erected between 1591 and 1596.
- ✓ St Anthony's Parish Church in Pilsudskiego Street, erected between 1835 and 1839.
- ✓ St Barbara's Church, from 1900.
- ✓ Protestant Church of Moravian Brothers, Wróblewskiego Street, built in 1747.
- ✓ Chapel of the Evangelic Parish at the cemetery in Wandy Street built in 1886.
- ✓ ● **Salt warehouses, the only such buildings in Poland:**
 - in Solny Square, built in the late 17th century;
 - in 3 Wróblewskiego Street, from 1774;
 - the old mill in Garbarska Street.
- ✓ Houses from 18th century in 3, 6, 8 Arciszewskiego St.; 19 Witosza St.; 15 Szeroka St.; 2 Koscielna St.; 12 Moniuszki St.; 3, 6, 15 Odrzanska St.; in Kusnierska St.
- ✓ Water Tower, from 1863.
- ✓ Unique Drawbridge on the port channel of the Odra river.