

PIOTRKÓW TRYBUNALSKI

1. Trybunalski Market Square – We shall start our trip following the trail of the Polish Legions at the Market Square, the centre of our town. It were the Legions' commanders who had returned the square to its former glory of the crucial social and political place, which has been lost along with shutting down the Crown Tribunal at the end of the 18th century as well as demolishing the Town Hall in the sixties of the 19th century. The Market Square was used by Legionaries as the place of celebratory parades and military roll-calls involved with important anniversaries in Polish history.

2. Former Monastery Church of Dominicans – Church of St. Hyacinth and St. Dorota – The second parish established in Piotrków (after Saint Jacob's Parish Church Fara), created along with the birth of the Second Polish Republic, contains a particularly important souvenir within its walls. In the church porch we can find a peculiar memory plate with a painting of Polish soldiers lead by a famous chaplain Ignacy Skorupka in the Battle of Ossów. Below the painting, there are the names of the soldiers who died during World War I and freedom or border conflicts. Among them, there were many teenage Legionaries...

3. The Old Catholic Cemetery – One of the first decisions of the Military Department in the Supreme National Committee (which seat was in Piotrków) was to commemorate insurrectionists of the January Uprising involved with the town. The celebration happened in March 1915 at today's Old Cemetery and was accompanied by military company. The column of Legionaries marched Cmentarna Street. On the cemetery, they put a cross, and later (in the twenties) a monument in memory of the January Uprising. The monument stands there to this day.

4. Field Court Martial of the Polish Legions – tenement house at Wojska Polskiego 44 – The Wojska Polskiego Street was then known as Bykowska, and at the times of the Second Republic – Józefa Piłsudskiego Street. At number 44 there was the seat of the Field Court Martial of the Polish Legions. What was unfortunate, the institution proved to be very much needed in 1915. According to a diary from the Third Brigade, "the Legionaries are sitting in the town garden by the Monastic Church of Bernardines or loitering around the town aimlessly. It proves that the superiors are not taking care of their subordinates accordingly". All cases of the lack of discipline, desertion or potential criminal activities were judged by the Field Court Martial.

5. The State Printing Office – tenement house at Wojska Polskiego 71 – In March 1915, at the tenement house at contemporary Bykowska Street, the State Printing Office was reopened. It was originally working there under the Russian partition. Reopened Printing Office was used by the Press Office of the Military Department. It was the place where they printed "Wiadomości Polskie" (Polish News), where people like Ignacy Daszyński (a politician, journalist, the first Polish Prime Minister), Juliusz Kaden-Bondrowski (a journalist and novelist), Wacław Tokarz (a historian and military officer), Wincenty Witos (politician, three times Prime Minister) and Marian Kukiel (a major general, historian, social and political activist) published their texts. Another important journal was "Dziennik Narodowy" (National Journal). Its editorial office was located in a near tenement at Bykowska 55. Other magazines printed by the State Printing Office included "Gazeta Ludowa" (People's Magazine), "Gazeta Polska" (Polish Magazine), and "Chłopska Sprawa" (People's Cause).

6. Train Station of the Warsaw-Vienna railway, Polskiej Organizacji Wojskowej 12 Street - Continuing our walk today's Wojska Polskiego Street, we can notice two beautiful tenements at 75 and 77. One of them was the building of the Benevolent Society for Christians, which helped the citizens of Piotrków in the hard times of war. The second is the former State Bank, from which the Russians leaving the town transported away the deposits of the town, throwing Piotrków into a serious debt. If we turn right, we will reach the former Żelazna (now P.O.W.) Street, where the historic building of the Train Station of the Warsaw-Vienna railway stands. It was the building which "greeted" the volunteers coming to the town to join the Legions. It can also be said that the station was the place of "forming" the first personnel of the Legions' football team, the future famous Legia Warsaw, recruiting known football players directly at the station.

7. Hotel Comfort – Jarosława Dąbrowskiego 9 Street – Built in 1914, Hotel Comfort was considered one of the most luxurious and popular places of that kind in Piotrków Trybunalski. According to contemporary opinions, both the equipment and the staff were not inferior to the best Warsaw hotels like "Bristol" or "Polonia". The one responsible for creation of the hotel and its first owner was Pętkowski, an engineer and the owner of villa "Wanda". The chief of the Military Department in the SNN, Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces during the Second World War Władysław Sikorski lived there. The wife of Józef Piłsudski, Maria, also lived there. The future Marshal of Poland visited her in Piotrków; however, because he was in conflict with Sikorski, he would not enter the hotel to avoid meeting his personal enemy.

8. Villa Wanda – Jarosława Dąbrowskiego 14 Street – The building was designed as a dwelling house in 1904 - 1905 by Feliks Nowicki. It is the only structure representing Art Nouveau style in Piotrków. In 1914 – 1915, the Recruitment Centre of the Military Department was located there. Volunteers who joined the Legions ended up here, and then moved to the 4th and 6th Brigades of the Polish Legions. According to the documents of the Military Department, the Archives and the Museum of the Legions were also placed at the seat of the Centre.

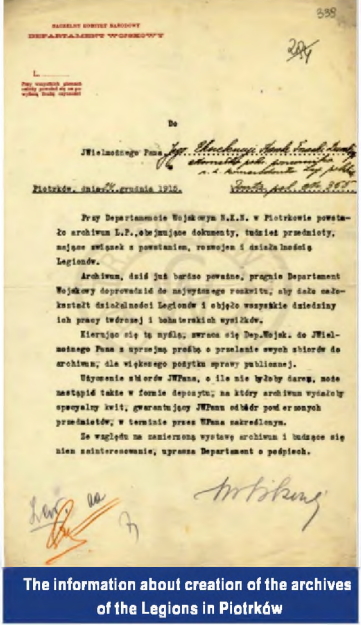
9. The office of the Polish National Organisation – Jarosława Dąbrowskiego 18 Street – In the tenement house at Dąbrowskiego 18, the Polish National Organisation (formed a month before by Józef Piłsudski) opened its office in October 1914. The idea of the future Marshal of Poland was that the office would be responsible for recruiting new soldiers for the Legions. Although it had worked only for a month, PNO managed to organise the first public mass meeting with over 500 people present.

10. Polish Printing Office – Juliusza Słowackiego 23 Street – Besides State Printing Office, another important publisher of patriotic publications in the Legionary period was the Polish Printing Office, owned by Józef Walecki. It published magazines of organisations like the Polish National Organisation, National Workers' Union or Polish Socialist Party.

11. Henryka Sienkiewicza Street – This street involves the history of one of the biggest patriotic manifestations in Piotrków. In May 1916, at the 125th anniversary of the Constitution of 3rd May, a huge spontaneous manifestation marched across the street, demanding the rebirth of the Republic. The marchers decided on a whim to change the name of the street to honour the Constitution. The choice was not random. It was on the Pocztowa Street where the main office of the governorate were placed, so it was commonly called "the Russian Street". The spontaneous name change by the society was meant to be a mark of the patriotic rebirth and a sign of the will of regaining independence. A year later the authorities decided that the name of "3rd May" will be given to the most representative street in the town instead, the old Aleksandryjska. It holds the name of the first constitution in Europe to this day.

12. The Shield of Legions – Park of John Paul II near the Monastic Church of Bernardines, Juliusza Słowackiego Street – Shield of Legions is an Austrian tradition developed after the start of World War I. The purpose of such monuments was to bring help to victims of the conflict. The money received from selling nails with the names of donors and founders, which were impaled into the shield, were mostly used for needs of widows and orphans of fallen Legionaries. The Shield in Piotrków was placed in August 1916, at the second anniversary of the departure of Józef Piłsudski's First Cadre Company from Kraków. Until World War II, the Shield was kept in the so-called Bernardine Garden, between the John Paul II statue and the Monastery.

13. The Constitution of 3rd May Plate - Monastic Church of Bernardines – One of the crucial patriotic events in Piotrków in the times of the Legions were the manifestations involved with the Constitution of 3rd May anniversary. The first demonstration took place already in 1915. It started at 11:00 a.m. with a holy mass around a chapel (built specifically for this occasion), decorated with blue material. The Legionaries listening the mass then went to do Bernardines Church. The defilade was greeted by the citizens with fiery shouts: "Long live the Legions!", "All hail the Polish army!", "Long live Poland!". A year later the celebration was joined by the ordinary citizens as well as members of the Military Department in the SNC. In memory of this, they put a memorial plate at the northern wall of the church. The hundred year old plate is the main place of celebration of the 3rd May National Holiday in Piotrków to this day.



The information about creation of the archives of the Legions in Piotrków



The information about creating the Museum of the Legions in Piotrków

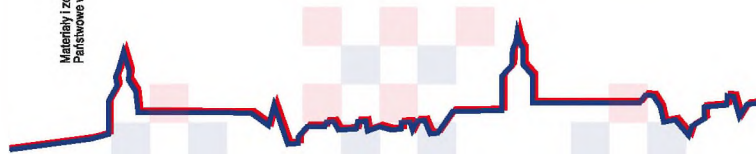


The Shield of the Legions Monument



The Polish Legions celebrating Corpus Christi in Piotrków Trybunalski

Materiały i zdjęcia: Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, UN Piotrków Trybunalskiego, Muzeum w Piotrkowie Trybunalskim, Archiwum Państwowe w Piotrkowie Trybunalskim. Tłumaczenie: Dominik Woźniak.



URZĄD MIASTA PIOTRKOWA TRYBUNALSKIEGO www.piotrkow.pl

Pasaż Karola Rudowskiego 10

97-300 Piotrków Trybunalski

czynny: poniedziałek - piątek 7.30 - 15.30

wtorek 7.30 - 17.00

INFOLINIA: 800 241 251

E-mail: e-urząd@piotrkow.pl

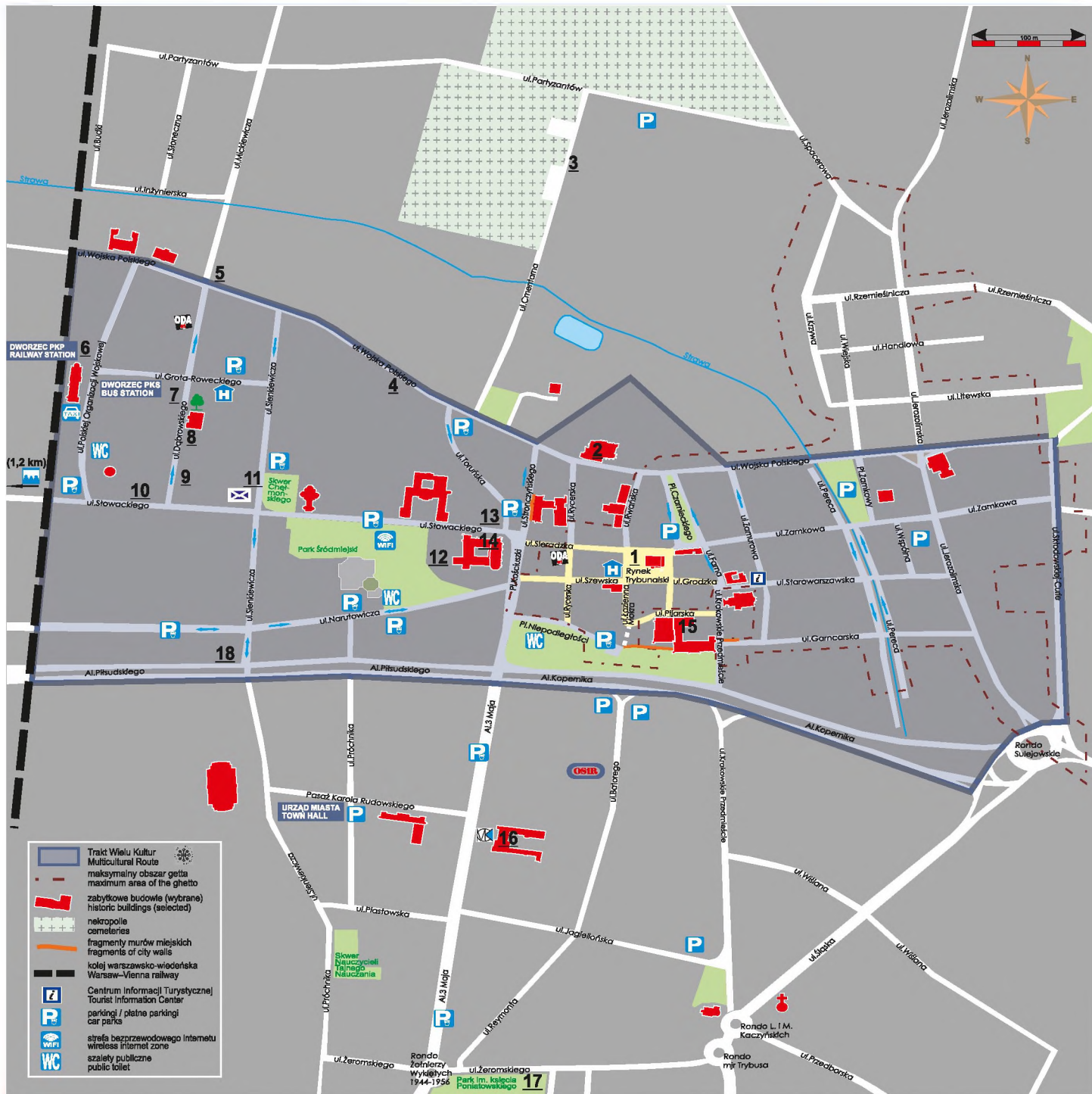
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ul. Zamurowa 11 - tel (+48) 44 732 60 50, (+48) 44 732 60 49

E-mail: cit@piotrkow.pl



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14. The house of Stefan “Grot” Rowecki – Juliusza Słowackiego 1 Street – One of the most famous Polish heroes of both World Wars in Piotrków is Stefan Rowecki, born in our town in December 1895. It was in Piotrków where he organized a scouting movement and was the first leader of a secret scouting organization. In 1913, he joined Polish Rifle Squads, and at the end of 1914 he joined the Polish Legions. He fought in the First Brigade and was wounded three times. After the so-called Oath crisis he was sent to the internment camp in Beniaminów (August 1917). Later he became the commander of the Home Army, the biggest underground army of World War II. He was murdered in prison by the Gestapo.

15. Polish Scouting Organisation – Pijarska Street – One of the ways to qualify young men to patriotic work and serving in Legions was creating the associations inspired by the British scouting organisations. In 1915 the Polish Scouting Organisation with Jan Kazimierz Sikorski as the president was established. Its statue was approved by the Supreme National Committee. Our town was also the host of the first scouting congress in May 1915. It was decided there that Piotrków would be the official seat of the Polish Scouting Organisation. PSO also published its press (“Scouting News”) in the town. In November 1916 in Warsaw there was a meeting of representatives of scouting organisations. They decided that the Polish scouts will have the scouting cross of the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association and the lilies of the Polish Scouting Organisation as their logo. These symbols are still being worn by the Polish scouts.

16. The former Craft House – 3 Maja 12 Street – A Neo-Baroque building built in 1912 - 1913 by Feliks Nowicki. In the period of World War I it was one of the most important places shaping the patriotic stance in the citizens. In its rooms in January 1917 the National Committee wrote, passed and sent the official documents to the Council of State, which was – in the documents – considered a temporary Polish government. Piotrków called for an end of the occupation of the Polish lands and to make the Kingdom a one hole organism again. In the next documents, the National Committee demanded to form a new Polish army, release Józef Piłsudski and other interned Legionaries and restore independence.

17. Józef Poniatowski Park – Parkowa Street – One of tangible effects of the patriotic awakening caused by the Legions in Piotrków is the memorial stone of Tadeusz Kościuszko, which we can find in the Town Park of Józef Poniatowski. The monument was founded thanks to generosity of Piotrków citizens in 1917. A permanent prove of numerous celebrations that took place in Piotrków at that time is the name of the square – Tadeusz Kościuszko Square.

18. The Polish Legions Monument – the cross of Henryka Sienkiewicza and Józefa Piłsudskiego Street – The monument built in 1999 reminds about the place where there was a tenement in which the Military Department of the Supreme National Committee had its seat. It was there where the volunteers were joining the Legions. It was in our town as well as in smaller towns nearby (Radomsko, Rozprza, Łochyńsko, Kamieńsk, Milejów) where squadrons and regiments of the Third Brigade of the Legions were formed. The squadrons and regiments formed in this area fought in the famous Battle of Jastków (31st July – 3rd August 1915), one of the biggest military clashes of the Polish Legions in the Congress Poland. They also fought in the Volhynia, most notably in the Battle of Kostiuchnówka (4th – 6th July 1916). The Third Brigade,

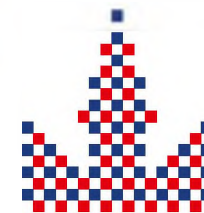
just like the First, was under the influence of Józef Piłsudski. Most of the Legionaries declined to take an oath to the German Emperor and ended up in internment camps in summer of 1917.

More information

„Biblioteka Piotrków 800”, dostępnych w Centrum Informacji Turystycznej:

Aleksy Piasta, Piotrków Trybunalski w latach pierwszej wojny światowej, Piotrków Trybunalski 2007.

Marta Walak, Legiony Polskie w Piotrkowie 1914-1917, Piotrków Trybunalski 2013.



Piotrków Trybunalski

Piotrków of the Polish Legions



Zawiadomienie.

7 dnem dzisiejszym otwarty zostaje w Piotrkowie Komisariat Polskiej Organizacji Narodowej.

Ma on za zadanie, po za sprawianiem ściśle z organizacją Wojsk Polskich związanem, dbać również o uzyskanie możliwie normalnego biegu życia w ziemi Piotrkowskiej.

Adres Komisaryatu: ul. Bankowa 18-1p. m. 3. Godziny biurowe, od 9-12 i od 3-5.

Stefan Boguszewski

Komisarz Józef. Org. Nar.

Piotrków, 12 października 1914 r.



In 2018 we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the restoration of the Polish independence. Very few people know that the independence was born in Piotrków Trybunalski, thanks to the work of the Supreme National Committee, the Polish Legions and numerous patriotic publications. Since 1915, Piotrków has been the heart of the Independent Republic...