

MSI Bielsko-Biała

City Information System

A historical black and white photograph of a street in Bielsko-Biała. The street is wide and paved, with several vintage cars from the early 20th century parked along the side. In the background, a prominent church with a tall, ornate spire stands out against the sky. The buildings lining the street are multi-story, with various architectural details like windows and balconies. A few people are visible walking on the sidewalks. The overall atmosphere is that of a busy, historic urban center.

**Explore Bielsko-Biała.
Tourist Routes.
Guide**

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Bielsko-Biała

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**Explore Bielsko-Biała.
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*Guide***

Cultural heritage of Bielsko-Biała.

Historic trails in the area of the city

Bielsko-Biała is a city in Southern Poland at the foot of the Beskids [Polish Beskidy], upon the Biała River separating for centuries the historic Silesia from Lesser Poland [Polish Małopolska]. It is the capital of the region called Podbeskidzie [region at the foot the Western Beskids] with 175 thousand inhabitants. This mainly associated with motor and electro-technical industry as well as until recently the 2nd textile centre after Łódź, is with regard to the development potential listed among the first ten Polish cities.

For many people Bielsko-Biała is just a place they go through when travelling to Slovakia and Hungary or Czech Republic, Austria and further to the South of Europe. Whereas others, particularly the inhabitants of Upper Silesia [Polish: Górny Śląsk], pass it on their holiday trips to the Beskids. However, to those who stay here for longer the city can tell its history; not this great history from textbooks, but the history that still is equally interesting, that some may even find surprising and arising reflection on transience and variable fortune.

Bielsko-Biała is not a former metropolis that lives on memories of bygone splendour attracting tourists with its historic palaces and manors, romantic parks or magnificent churches. Neither is it a drowsy, semi-agricultural Galician town enchanting with its landscape and picturesque buildings. Time has not stopped here! In the past two centuries Bielsko and Biała thanks to industrial development transformed from provincial craft centres into a totally modern industrial-trade and cultural centre. They owed that metamorphosis mainly to the enterprise and hard creative work of their inhabitants. Already one hundred years earlier that lively, cosmopolitan and multinational twin-city maintained contact with almost entire world and renown goods of the local industry reached clients on all continents. This run of luck lasts to this day.

The increasing wealth has been reflected in the way Bielsko-Biała looks today. The city that managed to get off historic storms enchants with its picturesque nooks and enraptures with pearls of the 19th and 20th century architecture. It abounds in post-industrial heritage, in particular buildings of former factories that can be found almost in the city centre. Historic build-

ings and monuments so carefully restored return to their past splendour thus enjoying eyes and hearts of both locals as well as through-passers. Churches of two religions, public utility structures, magnificent residential and post-industrial buildings all surrounded by the beauty of greens at the background of mild range of the Beskids – all this makes the climate of the twin-city upon Biała River unique, creates its specific genius loci. If you stop here once you will always keep on returning.

Walking along streets and nooks of Bielsko-Biała we pass historic structures of various epochs standing side by side, buildings of various function and purpose – the city tells its history incoherently jumping from one subject to the other. The system of historic trails that this guide is an element of puts this history in order dividing it into 9 chapters. Going to “From a Medieval Settlement to a City” or sightseeing “Medieval Bielsko” we can learn about the oldest days of settlement on the Silesian bank of the Biała. Following “The Imperial Route” we get to know the early modern history of Bielsko and Biała in the era preceding the great industry development. Sightseers of “Little Vienna” will have an opportunity to admire splendid architecture of the wealthy town of the turn from 19th and 20th century, whereas the post-industrial heritage will become more familiar after a round along the trail of “Industrial and Technical Monuments”. The industry growth and the inflow of Poles dominated by German nation of Bielsko and Biała initiated the development of the “Polish National Movement”. Three last trails focus on the history of faiths and religions that coexisted here till the World War II: Catholics, Lutherans and Jews.

These trails unite historic monuments located within the widely-understood city centre and in the South part of Stare Bielsko district. But for the latter one reaching on foot the most distant places from Bolesław Chrobry Square should not take longer than half an hour. The trail system includes not only the structures that exist till today, but also the ones that have not lasted (e.g. synagogues) or have lasted but in a vestigial state (elements of urban fortifications). Next to the history of buildings also the history of most significant streets and squares is presented. Some structures are included in more than one trail. In the “transition times” short stops at information boards are taken into consideration, however, sightseeing of structures is not (churches, cemeteries etc.).

Before hitting the trails get acquainted with a grasp of information showing the changes regarding the national status and population relationships of Bielsko, Biała and surroundings for centuries. This issue having repercussions on all aspects of the city history is discussed in more detail in descriptions of individual trails.

Today's Bielsko-Biała consists of two formerly separate urban organisms as well as 11 former villages gradually joined to the city between 1925 and 1977. Bielsko located in Cieszyn Silesia and founded in the Middle Ages belonged from 1327 to the Kingdom of Bohemia to be then ruled over in 1526 by Austrian Habsburgs. From the year 1572 it was the centre of the feudal, the so-called state-country which in the middle of the 18th century was promoted to the rank of a constituent duchy. The Lesser Poland's Biała established in the 16th century on the opposite bank of the river, in Poland, was granted civic rights in 1723 and in 1772 it found itself in Galicia annexed by Austria. Until 1918 both towns remained within the borders of the multinational Danubian monarchy transformed in 1804 into the Austrian Empire and in 1867 in Austria-Hungary. The elimination of the state border functioning for over three centuries upon Biała River gave rise to the process of both towns amalgamation, already since the middle of the 19th century it has been spoken of and written about "Bielsko-Biała" emphasising, in particular with reference to the industry, that they formed an inseparable entirety.

During the Interwar Period in reborn Poland Bielsko became a part of the autonomic Silesian Province, whereas Biała belonged to Province of Krakow. In the years of the World War II both towns were for the first time connected in one entirety and annexed to the Third Reich. After 1945 the former division was restored only for a short time as the towns were finally united to form one administrative organism in 1951.

For centuries Bielsko and Biała as well as their surroundings have been inhabited by Germans and Poles, divided since the Reformation into Catholics and Lutherans and joined by Jews in the 18th century. In 1910 German was used by 88% permanent residents of Bielsko and 69% of Biała population. Bielsko was one of the most important Protestant centres in catholic Austria; though the number of Lutherans in time decreased gradually still at the beginning of the 20th century over 27% of them lived in the town and 50% in the adjacent Silesian villages. In Biała was Lutheran since the be-

ginning of the 18th century the number of evangelicals during the next two centuries dropped to ca. 12%. At the beginning of the 20th century Jews constituted over 16% of Bielsko population and nearly 15% of Biała population.

In 1910 Bielsko was inhabited by 18.5 thousand people and 12.3 thousand lived in neighbouring Silesian villages – today's districts of the town. The population of Biała amounted to over 8.6 thousand inhabitants, whereas in the neighbourhood Galician villages there were 20.2 thousand inhabitants. The total number of population residing permanently within today's Bielsko-Biała amounted to nearly 60 thousand with a crowd of workers coming from the neighbourhood.

During the Interwar Period due to change of the national status some of the former inhabitants emigrated and became replaced by Polish population flowing both from the closest neighbourhood as well as from further regions of Poland (clerks, intellectuals, the military). The process of Polishisation progressed and according to official statistics in 1931 only 46% of Bielsko population and 18% of Biała population used German daily, similar changes took place in neighbourhood villages. In terms of religion in 1931 in Bielsko there were 56% Catholics, 23% Lutherans and 20% of Jews, in case of Biała this proportion amounted to 79%, 8% and 13% respectively. Before the outbreak of the World War II the population of both towns as well as of their neighbourhood (Komorowice Śląskie and Krakowskie, Stare Bielsko, Aleksandrowice, Wapienica, Kamienica, Olszówka Górna and Dolna, Mikuszowice Śląskie and Krakowskie, Bystra Śląska and Krakowska, Straconka, Lipnik and Hałcnów) amounted to 70 thousand people.

The World War II brought an end to the multinational and religiously differentiated Bielsko-Biała. During the Occupation by Nazis Jews were sent to extermination camps and in 1945-1946 Germans were banished from the town. Poles from neighbourhood villages, repatriates from Eastern Borderlands (Polish: Kresy Wschodnie) and newcomers from central Poland took their place. In the 60's and 70's of the 20th century the growth of industry, in particular the foundation of the Fabryka Samochodów Małolitrażowych (known with acronym FSM), brought about another wave of migration to the city. In 1975-1998 Bielsko-Biała was the capital of the province and in 1992 the city became a home for the Bishop's Curia of a newly established Bielsko-Żywiec Catholic Diocese. Since 1999 the city has been the seat of the township and country district.



1. Medieval Bielsko

The latest archaeological research revealed that the old town hill was inhabited as early as the beginnings of the 13th century. Then the main settlement centre within the territory of the today's city was the medieval settlement [Polish: *grodzisko*] in Stare Bielsko. After 1281 an independent Duchy of Cieszyn and Oświęcim separated from the great Duchy of Opole covering the historic area of Upper Silesia. Tens of settlements, including Bielsko as well as neighbouring villages: Komorowice, Stare Bielsko, Lipnik, Kamienica and Mikuszowice owe their creation to the great colonization conducted by Mieszko I, Duke of Cieszyn [Polish: *Mieszko I Cieszyński*] († ca. 1316).

In Bielsko, of which the existence was mentioned for the first time in the document dated from the year 1312, important commercial routes met leading from Krakow towards Cieszyn to Moravia and to Czechs as well as from Upper Silesia through Żywiec to Hungary. The ford upon Biała River was most probably guarded by the wooden dwelling that used to be in place of the today's castle, whereas the newly established town situated on the natural hill on the area of ca. 4ha with ca. 80 residential plots of land were enclosed by the first fortifications: an earth bund finished with a palisade and a dry moat. Its citizens were mainly occupied with agriculture, information about craft guilds come only from the 15th century.

Around 1316 as a result of another division an independent Duchy of Oświęcim was separated, i.e. upon Biała river a district border was established and Bielsko became a border town within the demesne of Cieszyn Piast Dynasty. The border location has played since then a significant role in the history of the city and most probably in the next years the hitherto retrenchment was gradually replaced with more solid masonry fortifications.

In 1327 Upper Silesian duchies, including of Cieszyn and of Oświęcim, were isolated from Poland to be found within the borders of the Kingdom of Bohemia to which they were incorporated finally in 1348. Przemyslaus I Noszak [Polish: *Przemysław I Noszak*], the Duke of Cieszyn († 1410), a close collaborator of Charles IV Luxembourg [Polish: *Karol IV Luksemburski*] erected in Bielsko in the second half of the 14th century a brick castle inspired by the imperial residence in Karlstein. At stormy time of Hussite Wars the fortifications of the castle and the town were enforced by Przemyslaus's successor, Boleslaus I, Duke of Cieszyn [Polish: *Bolesław*

I] († 1431). From ca. 1452 to 1474 Bielsko was the permanent headquarters of Wenclaus I of Cieszyn [Polish: Wacław I] from Piast dynasty and its neighbourhood was for the first time isolated from the principality of Cieszyn as an independent territory. As the analysts report in 1447 the construction of St Nicholas's Catholic Church, to which the seat of the parish of Bielsko was transferred, was to be completed.

In 1457 when the rowdy Duke of Oświęcim – Janusz IV was forced to sell his duchy to Casimir Jagiellon [Polish: Kazimierz Jagiellończyk], King of Poland, Bielsko became a border town of the Kingdom of Bohemia and for over three hundred years Biała marked the state border.

From 1468 over two decades the Duchy of Cieszyn, including Bielsko, formally belonged to Hungary. After the death of Matthias Corvinus [Polish: Maciej Korwin], the King of Hungary in 1490 these lands along with Silesia and Moravia returned under the reign of Vladislaus Jagiellon [Polish: Władysław Jagiellończyk], the King of Bohemia whose trusted collaborator was Casmir II of Cieszyn [Polish: Kazimierz II] († 1528), the last one from the medieval Cieszyn Piast dynasty. That Duke from time to time resided in Bielsko where in 1489 he founded a vast castle garden. In his times a fish sector developed in the duchy, in the valley of Vistula River [Polish: Wisła] and along its mountain tributaries, as well as in the valley of the Biała tens of ponds were created.

Information about Lower Suburb [Polish: Dolne Przedmieście] of Bielsko that developed gradually along Niper brook flowing down to Biała River come from the end of the 15th century.

The trail:

The Castle (1) – a castle tower: **Medieval Lower Gatehouse* (2)** – Władysława Orkana Street – **Remains of Outer City Wall (3)** – Józefa Pankiewicza Street – **Inner City Wall (4)** – Kręta Street – **Flanking Tower (5)** – Ludwika Waryńskiego Street – **Upper Gatehouse* (6)** – **City Moat* (7)** – Świętej Trójcy Street – św. Mikołaja Square – **St Nicholas's Catholic Church (8)** – Kościelna Street – **Old Market Square (9)** – Old Market Square – **Excavations (10)** – Schodowa Street – Terrace along Zamkowa Street – **The Castle (1).**

* non-existing structures

Length of the trail: 1.2 km

Time needed: 30 min



Medieval
Bielsko



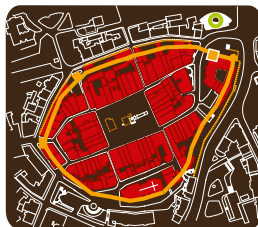
1. The Castle

Built by Przemysław I Noszak, Duke of Cieszyn in the 14th cent., in its time it has belonged to the Cieszyn Piast dynasty (until 1572), the Hungarian Sunnegh barons (1592–1724) and the Sułkowski princes (1752–1945). It has been frequently remodelled, the last time between 1855 and 1864 in an eclectic “historical” style.

Information board: ul. Wzgórze 16



Medieval
Bielsko



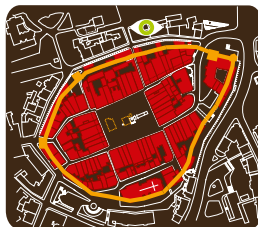
2. Medieval Lower Gatehouse*

This imposing gatehouse was constructed in the 14th cent. Remnants of the vaulted passage, the gate portal and paved entry road can still be seen. The nearby castle was expanded sometime in the 15th cent. and the gatehouse was incorporated as a corner tower.

Information board: ul. Wzgórze 16



Medieval
Bielsko



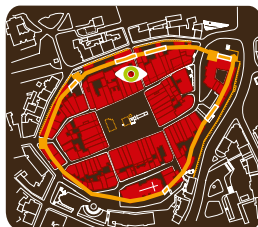
3. Remains of Outer City Wall

This formed a second ring of fortifications that ran very close to the inner city wall and was also made of fractured limestone blocks. It was built sometime in the 16th cent. to strengthen the city's defences against the threat of Turkish invasion.

Information board: ul. W. Orkana 15



Medieval
Bielsko



4. Inner City Wall

Built in the 14th cent., the city's first defensive wall was high and made of fractured limestone blocks. Alongside it ran a narrow street which is now Pankiewiczza Street. Remnants of the wall have been uncovered in many locations around the old city.

Information board: ul. J. Pankiewiczza 2



Medieval
Bielsko



5. Flanking Tower

Built in the 2nd half of the 14th cent. or the 1st half of the 15th cent., this square, half-open tower probably housed a wicket-gate, enabling pedestrian access from the marketplace to pasture grounds outside the city wall. Only the foundations have survived.

Information board: ul. Kręta



Medieval
Bielsko



6. Upper Gatehouse*

It protected the western entrance to the medieval city and protruded into the moat. Extended in the 16th cent., when the outer city wall was created. The gate's tower can be observed in this etching from 1801. Only the foundations survive today.

Information board: ul. Piwowska 3



Medieval
Bielsko



7. City Moat*

Constructed in the early 14th cent., the 10m-wide dry moat was an important part of the city fortifications. Its path ran along present-day Świętej Trójcy Street (Holy Trinity St.), cut obliquely across św. Mikołaja Square (St Nicolas' Sq) and down Schodowa Street (Stair St.). Wooden stakes, diagonally driven into the sloped bank, were discovered on the city-side of the moat.

Information board: pl. św. Mikołaja – ul. Schodowa



Medieval
Bielsko



8. St Nicholas's Catholic Church

The masonry church probably dates to the mid-15th cent. It fell victim to fire on many occasions. Its present-day monumental character stems from the 1908–1910 expansion by the Viennese architect, Leopold Bauer. Until 1783 the church was surrounded by the city cemetery.

Information board: pl. św. Mikołaja



Medieval
Bielsko



9. Bielsko Old Market Square

Bielsko Old Market Square. The main square was measured out in the early 14th cent. when Bielsko received its municipal rights. The old town hall, a weigh-house and a pillory once stood here; it also was the site of weekly markets and big fairs. It remained Bielsko's administrative and trade centre until the 19th cent. In 2012 a commemorative plaque of Mieszko I, Duke of Cieszyn - the town founder was uncovered on the building no. 23.

Information board: Rynek 24



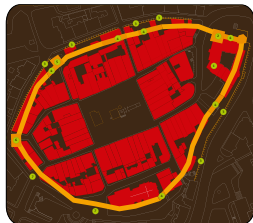
Medieval
Bielsko



10. Old Market Square – Excavations

Excavation work on the west side of the Market Square has revealed the foundations of houses built from the Middle Ages up to the 19th cent. They were of wooden construction with stone cellars. Each of the 6.5m x 43m plots contained outbuildings in the centre, and gardens, cesspits and wells to the rear.

Information board: Rynek 4



10a. Medieval Bielsko

The city received its municipal rights at the beginning of the 14th cent. The spatial grid of the Old Town replaced an earlier settlement and was typical of cities founded according to German town law, with a central market square (c. 60 x 80m). Streets ran perpendicularly from its corners, marking out blocks divided into narrow plots (c. 6.5 x 43m). The city was ringed by fortifications. The market square was the administrative and trade center; remnants of a medieval town hall were discovered there, as well as a 16th-cent. wooden cistern, a 17th-cent. well with a stone casing, remnants of a wooden water pipe system, and in the western part, a building thought to have been a weigh-house.

Information board: ul. Wzgórze 14



10b. Bielsko Fortifications

The earliest city fortifications were probably composed of an earthen wall surrounded by a dry moat, but the city's frontier location made it necessary to have it replaced by a rampart of fractured limestone blocks in the first half of the 14th cent. The city was entered and exited via two gates: a lower one by the castle, and an upper one at the intersection of present-day Piwowarska, Św. Trójcy and Waryńskiego streets. In the 16th cent., an outer city wall was constructed, also of fractured limestone, to strengthen the defensive system of the city which was threatened by Turkish invasion. Only small fragments of the defensive walls have survived; both were demolished in the 18th and 19th cent. The castle played an important role in the city's fortification system, and was one of its key defensive elements from the very beginning.

Information board: ul. W. Orkana 15



2. From a Medieval Settlement to a City

The first medieval settlement within the area of present Bielsko-Biała was a gord in Stare Bielsko founded on the trade route leading from Krakow to Czechs at the end of 12th or at the beginning of 13th century. That was the period of feudal fragmentation in Poland and Mieszko Tanglefoot [Polish: Mieszko Płatonogi], the Duke († 1211), as a result of fratricidal fights took over the reins of Upper Silesia. He called himself the Duke of Racibórz and after conquering the regional district of Opole in 1202 - the Duke of Racibórz and Opole. It might have been Mieszko, the protoplast of Upper Silesian Piast Dynasty who ordered the gord of Stare Bielsko surrounded with a bulwark and a moat to be built. Its inhabitants were occupied with among others melting and processing of iron, working probably for the benefit of the Castellany in Cieszyn. The entire locality covered 3ha, the latest research has revealed the existence of over 20 residential structures arranged regularly around the centrally located rectangular square. Thus most probably it was not a gord, as it was supposed, i.e. a so-called refugium, where local people used to come in case of danger, but it was a permanently resided settlement. According to the recent research concerning the beginnings of towns in Germany, Czechs and Moravia such localities could be a form of early urban settlements. Despite the fortified settlement being destroyed by sudden fire at the end of 13th century, although abandoned it continued to function until the end of the next century. Later on the so-called manor farm of the old Bielsko was located there. Impressive bulwarks and the moat survived, but only till the middle of the 19th century, after a Lutheran church was built the local pastor Jan Gloxin ordered their demolition at great expenditure of work.

Next to the gord at the end of the 13th century a village called Bielsko was founded, later on called Stare Bielsko. A typical for that epoch Waldhufendorf type village (characterized by "long, narrow fields that were cut back into the forest behind each new holding" Polish („łańcuchówka") with built-up area running along the valley of Starobielski stream and fields located upright the main road. In its centre, according to the legend, in the place of a pagan oak grove a wooden church was built. The founder of the masonry church under the invocation of St Stanislaus the Bishop [Polish: Stanisław Biskup], built in

the second half of the 14th century was most probably Przemyslaus I Noszak [Polish: Przemysław I Noszak], the Duke of Cieszyn. Originally the church was to be the seat of the parish in Bielsko that was only moved to the town in 1447 when St Nicholas's Church was built.

Till the imperial highway i.e. today's Cieszyńska Street was put into use in the 80's of the 18th century, people travelled from Bielsko towards Cieszyn along present Jana III Sobieskiego Street. This is the sector of the medieval salt road leading from the salt mine in Wieliczka and Bochnia in the west to Czechs. The road from the gord to the town is almost 2 km long and thus it is worth going along on foot following local peasants who used to travel to Bielsko to sell their land commodities and in return purchase salt from urban warehouses and craft goods for centuries.

But for various travellers, merchants, knights and diplomats the retinues of the highest ranking used to travel through Bielsko along the salt road. At Biała River the border between the Duchy of Cieszyn and the Duchy of Oświęcim was crossed as in 1457 the Biała became a state border to serve that function for over three hundred years. The role of a "border crossing" was fulfilled by a ford located in the place of today's bridge in the route of Stanisława Stojalowskiego Street.

The trail:

Pod Grodziskiem Street – **Fortified Settlement at Stare Bielsko (11)** – Wał Szwedzki Street – Jana III Sobieskiego Street – **St Stanislaus's Catholic Church (12)** – Jana III Sobieskiego Street: **Salt Road (13)** – Celna Street – Market – Wzgórze Street – Franciszka Smolki Square – 11 Listopada Street – **Biała River (The White River) (14)**.

Length of the trail: 3.5 km

Time needed: 60 min

NOTE: The distance will be shortened by 0.4 km, if the sightseeing starts at St Stanislaus's Catholic Church.



From a Medieval
Settlement to a City



11. Fortified Settlement at Stare Bielsko

Dating from the 12th – 14th cent., it had a ring shape and a diameter of over 200m. It was surrounded by two earthen ramparts and a 15m-wide moat. Parts of the inner and outer ramparts have survived. The remains of many dwellings, wells, utility-hollows, and bloomeries for the smelting of iron were discovered here.

Information board: ul. Pod Grodziskiem



From a Medieval
Settlement to a City



12. St Stanislaus's Catholic Church

This Gothic church, probably founded by Duke Przemysław I Noszak in the 2nd half of the 14th cent., stands in the centre of what was then Bielsko village. It has a single nave and a pentagonal chancel made of fractured stone. It houses a valuable Gothic triptych and 14th-17th-cent. polychromes.

Information board: ul. św. Stanisława



From a Medieval
Settlement to a City



13. Jana III Sobieskiego Street – Salt Road

Part of a trade route, used since the 13th cent. to transport salt to Bohemia and Moravia from the salt mines at Wieliczka and Bochnia. It ran from the ford on the Biała River, through the lower gatehouse, along Wzgórze Street, across the Old Market Square, up Celna and Sobieskiego streets, then out towards St. Stanislaus's Church at Stare Bielsko.

Information boards: Jana III Sobieskiego 2, ul. Jana III Sobieskiego 63



From a Medieval
Settlement to a City



14. Biała River (The White River)

Silesia's border with Lesser Poland. It used to divide the Kingdom of Bohemia from the Kingdom of Poland (1457–1526), the Habsburg Empire from Poland (1526–1772), Austrian Silesia from Galicia (1772–1918) and Silesia district from Krakow district (1922–1950). Until 1950 it also divided Bielsko from Biała.

Information board: ul. 11 Listopada 10



3. Imperial Route

A hike along the Imperial Route takes you to pre-industrial Bielsko and Biała: a provincial, though still significant centre of drapery on the Silesian and Galician border, the town of craftsmen and merchants, a stop on the route of mail coaches from Vienna to Lvov; here you will see the historic buildings developed by the middle of the 19th century.

Since 1526 Bielsko shared the fate of Silesia and Bohemia and was reigned by Austrian Habsburgs. Cieszyn Piast Dynasty and then successive owners of Bielsko state country: Karol Promnitz (1572-1582), Adam Schaffgotsch (1582-1592) and Sunnegh family (1592-1724), cared for development of the town, supporting in particular the craft. Numerous drapers settling outside the town wall along the route to Cieszyn since the middle of the 16th century gave rise to the Upper Suburb [Polish: Górne Przedmieście]. Thanks to its peripheral and border location Bielsko generally avoided great history and its inhabitants could live a relatively calm life.

The town development was overshadowed by the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). Long-lasting military quartering was particularly devastating to the town and in 1646 it was conquered and robbed by Swedes. In the years 1659 and 1664 Bielsko was devastated by fires as a result of which the existing wooden buildings were gradually replaced with the masonry ones. In 1682 it was plundered by Hungarian rebels and a year later Polish Relief Army under the command of Sieniawski, the Hetman passed through the town going to the rescue of Vienna.

Those misfortunes did not hamper development of Bielsko and the town welcomed the 18th century as the biggest craft centre in Cieszyn Silesia attracting new inhabitants from the entire Central Europe. After the extinction of Sunnegh family Count Henry Wilhelm Solms (1728-1741) became the owner of the town and its neighbourhood to be followed by Fridrich Wilhelm von Haugwitz (1742-1752), a minister of the Empress Maria Theresa. In 1752 the state country was raised to the rank of a principality and was taken over by a Polish magnate - Aleksander Józef Sułkowski and then inherited by his successors.

As a result of the First Silesian War (1740-1742) the most of Silesia was seized by Prussia. The rest of Silesia, including Bielsko, became the so-called

Austrian Silesia: on the North of the town the border with Prussia was determined by the Vistula river [Polish: Wisła]. The Second Silesian War (1744-1745) and the Seven Years' War (1757-1763) strengthened the division of Silesia. Bielsko was cut off from the existing metropolis, i.e. Wrocław and simultaneously won importance as the drapery centre still remaining in Austria and focusing mainly on the lost Lower Silesia. Moreover, its role as a trade town also increased, among others in 1742-1772 the main transhumance route from Poland towards Vienna passed through Bielsko.

On the other bank of Biała river there was Lipnik - one of the biggest settlements of the Duchy of Oświęcim, the seat of the Council [Polish: starostwo] leased by Polish magnates, among others by Zebrzydowscy (1548-1598) and Komorowscy (1598-1633). In the year 1564 a 13-cabin-hamlet of Lipnik called Biała situated in the lower course of Niwka stream was for the first time referred to in documents. This locality developed quickly, also thanks to drapers from neighbouring Bielsko who came to settle there; in 1613 Biała became an independent village. After 1648 there was an influx of Lutheran emigrants from imperial Silesia to Biała. In 1723 Frederick Augustus I [Polish: August II Mocny], King of Poland granted civic rights to Biała upon request of the then Councillor [Polish: starosta] of Lipnik and the Governor of Chełm - Jakub Zygmunt Rybiński. Soon afterwards a market was marked out and a town hall was built. In the middle of the 18th century the town of Biała was the strongest drapery centre in the western Lesser Poland [Polish: Małopolska] and an important border trade centre. During the Bar Confederation [Polish: Konfederacja Barska] (1768-1772) Biała served for as the main headquarters of the uprising authorities - a so-called Generality [Polish: generalność].

As a result of the First Partition of Poland in 1772 the town belonged to Austria, to the newly established province – Galicia. Difficult initial economic situation improved in 1784 after abolition of customs barriers on the border with Silesia, and most of all in 1789 when Biała became a royal free town and a separate parish making itself independent from the dominium of Lipnik.

Construction of the imperial route connecting Vienna and Lvov in the 70's and 80's of the 18th century played an important role in the process of both towns amalgamation, marking out and developing a new urban

axis connecting Bielsko and Biała: today's 11 Listopada Street, in particular. The buildings of the Lower Suburb [Polish: Dolne Przedmieście] in the north of present Franciszka Smolki Street in Bielsko became more compacted, whereas to the east from the Market, since then called the Old Market [Polish: Stary Rynek] (Wojska Polskiego Square), the New Market [Polish: Nowy Rynek] (Wolności Square) was created. That is how the contemporary centre of the twin-city with the bridge over the Biała connecting both localities was established.

The trail:

Cieszyńska Street – **Imperial Highway (15)** – **Bielsko Municipal Council (1849/1850-1950) (16)** – Cieszyńska Street – Market – **Bielsko City Hall (1759-1819) (17)** **Bielsko City Hall 1819-1849 (18)** – **Podcienie Street (Arcade Alley) (19)** – **The Old Post Office (20)** – **Wzgórze Street – Kałuża's House (21)** – **Nad Niprem Street (22)** – Bolesława Chrobrego Square – **formerly Pottery Place (23)** – Franciszka Smolki Square - **formerly Lower Market Square (24)** – **St Anne's Hospital Church * (25)** – 11 Listopada Street: **formerly Vienna Street (27)** – Stojalowskiego Street - **formerly Nad Niwką Street (26)** – 11 Listopada Street – Wojska Polskiego Square – **Biała Old Market Square (28)** – **Old Marketplace Building * (29)** – **Biała Old Town Hall (30)** – 11 Listopada Street – Wolności Square – **Biała New Market Square (31)** – **Biała Cloth Guild House (32)** – 11 Listopada Street – **Köntzer's Manor House (33)** – Żywiecka Street – **The Second Imperial Highway (34)** – Daughters of Divine Charity Convent – **formerly Lipnik Manor (35)**.

* non-existing structures

Length of the trail: 2,6 km

Time needed: 60 min



Imperial Route



15. Cieszyńska Street – Imperial Highway

Marked out in the 1780s as part of the Imperial Highway which connected Vienna and Lvov. One and two-storey buildings from the 18th and 19th cent. housed many clothiers' workshops.

Information boards: ul. Cieszyńska 25, ul. Cieszyńska 66



Imperial Route



16. Bielsko Municipal Council (1849/1850 – 1950)

Originally, two separate buildings on the Imperial Highway. The first, in Świętej Trójcy Street (Holy Trinity Street) housed the city authorities from 1849. The second, in Kopernika Street (Copernicus Street), replaced an older building in 1887. Both buildings were converted to their present-day form in 1938–1939.

Information board: ul. Cieszyńska 10



Imperial Route



9. Bielsko Old Market Square

Bielsko Old Market Square. The main square was measured out in the early 14th cent. when Bielsko received its municipal rights. The old town hall, a weigh-house and a pillory once stood here; it also was the site of weekly markets and big fairs. It remained Bielsko's administrative and trade centre until the 19th cent. In 2012 a commemorative plaque of Mieszko I, Duke of Cieszyn - the town founder was uncovered on the building no. 23.

Information board: Rynek 24



Imperial Route



17. Bielsko City Hall (1759–1819)

The Town of Bielsko bought this 17th cent. building from the merchant Ferdinand Koronsay in 1759 for its city hall. Destroyed in the great fire of 1808, it was rebuilt and then sold to the Austrian State Treasury in 1814. Until 1918 it housed the Customs Bureau.

Information board: Rynek 7



Imperial Route



18. Bielsko City Hall (1819–1849)

Constructed to replace two municipal buildings destroyed in the great fire of 1808. From 1849 to 1903, together with No. 10, it housed the district authorities, the courts, treasury offices and council chambers. Later, it was the headquarters of the city guard and a police station. From 1906 to 1941 the second floor housed the city museum.

Information board: Rynek 9



Imperial Route



19. Podcienie Street (Arcade Alley)

These arcaded houses were built to replace older wooden ones destroyed by fire in the mid-17th cent. The street originally ran a little below the arcade; in 1844, its inclination was sloped to match the incline of castle hill.

Information board: ul. Podcienie 1



Imperial Route



20. The Old Post Office

Bielsko formed part of the regular passenger/mailcoach route established in 1775 between Vienna and Lvov. The post service, introduced to Bielsko in 1744, was housed in this building from c. 1790 until 1873. The gateway led to large stables at present-day No. 5 Wzgórze Street.

Information board: Rynek 22



Imperial Route



21. Kałuża's House

Merchant Johann Bartelmuss, constructed this tenement in the 2nd half of the 18th cent. near the lower gatehouse and city moat. It is the only surviving example of the Late-Baroque style in the city. From 1879 to 1917 it was owned by the bookbinder Karl Kałuża. The lower part of the facade has been repeatedly rebuilt.

Information board: ul. Wzgórze 15



Imperial Route



22. Nad Niprem Street

The Niper brook, vaulted and channelised in 1863, flows along this street into the Biała river and merges with the Młynówka stream at the foot of the castle. Until the mid-19th cent. the main development of the lower suburb, which existed since the 15th cent., followed the path of the Niper.

Information board: ul. Nad Niprem 2



Imperial Route



23. Bolesława Chrobrego Square – formerly Pottery Place

A square called Tar Market replaced some demolished houses by the Niper brook in the mid-19th cent. Around 1890 its name changed to Pottery Place to reflect the new trade in ceramics. Soon after its current name was introduced in 1925, the last house separating it from Wzgórze Street was pulled down.

Information board: pl. Bolesława Chrobrego 1



Imperial Route



24. Franciszka Smolki Square – formerly Lower Market Square

This was Bielsko's commercial centre in the 19th cent. Wool and textiles, so important to the city's prosperity, were traded in this square which, by the 1890s, had become known as "stock exchange square". It received its present name in the 1920s. In 1973 the eastern side was redeveloped as Stojłowskiego Street.

Information board: pl. F. Smolki 1



Imperial Route



25. St Anne's Hospital Church*

Funded by Baron Karl Promnitz in the 1570s; the tower was added in 1781. The church was part of an estate containing a municipal hospital, an orphanage and a cemetery. After its destruction in the great fire of 1808, it was replaced by a Clothiers' Guild House, and in 1914, by the present building.

Information board: pl. F. Smolki 3



Imperial Route



26. Stojałowskiego Street – formerly Nad Niwką Street

In the 16th cent., here where the Niwka brook joins the Biała river, stood the very first houses of Biała hamlet. Between 1916 and 1973, the brook from the river to Opatrzności Bożej Square (Divine Providence Square) was channelised and vaulted in stages to form Stojałowskiego Street.

Information boards: ul. ks. St. Stojałowskiego 5 / Krótka;

ul. ks. Stojałowskiego 37 / Konfederatów Barskich



Imperial Route



27. 11 Listopada Street – formerly Vienna Street

Until 1890, Vienna Street, later Main Street, formed part of the Imperial Highway (1777–1785) which connected Biała to Lvov. The Biała – Bochnia section was opened in 1781. The townhouses and tenements which line the street are fine examples of architecture from the period of Emperor Joseph II.

Information board: ul. 11 Listopada 15, ul. 11 Listopada 35



Imperial Route



28. Wojska Polskiego Square – Biała Old Market Square

King Augustus II the Strong granted Biała a town charter in 1723 and the 80m x 100m square was laid out soon after. Biała town hall and its weigh-house stood here until 1827. Between 1890 and 1918 it was named Joseph Square. Thursdays and Saturdays were market days and four fairs a year were held here.

Information board: pl. Wojska Polskiego 17



Imperial Route



29. Old Marketplace Building*

The last wooden house on Biała Old Market stood here until c. 1890. Its style was characteristic of small townhouses built in Lesser Poland in the mid-18th cent.: a gable-wall facing the square, traditional arcades and a small gallery on the first floor.

Information board: pl. Wojska Polskiego 2



Imperial Route



30. Biała Old Town Hall

Biała's second town hall was built here c. 1780. The original wooden structure was replaced by a two-storey brick building in 1827. Around 1870, Emanuel Rost modernised the building and added a third storey. It served as Biała's civic offices until 1897.

Information board: ul. 11 Listopada 38



Imperial Route



31. Wolności Square – Biała New Market Square

Created next to the Imperial Highway at the end of the 18th cent. as one of Joseph II's urban improvements, it measures 57m x 80 m. Between 1890 and 1918 it was called Franz Square. Fairs held here specialized in wooden and wicker merchandise.

Information board: pl. Wolności 10



Imperial Route



32. Biała Cloth Guild House

Built in 1812, bought by Biała textile manufacturers in 1825, it was the seat of the Cloth Guild until its dissolution at the beginning of the 20th cent. The first secondary school in Bielsko-Biała operated here from 1850 to 1874. Between 1941 and 1945, the building housed the Regional Museum.

Information board: pl. Wolności 7



Imperial Route



33. Köntzer's Manor House

The estate was built in Classical style at the end of the 18th cent. on the Imperial Highway by Johann Thomke, a merchant of Lipnik, as an inn and a forwarding post. Later it was owned by Julius Köntzer (d. 1873), a merchant and spirit manufacturer. Some of the buildings were demolished in the 1970s.

Information board: ul. 11 Listopada 102



Imperial Route



34. **Żywiecka Street – The Second Imperial Highway**

Żywiecka Street, constructed between 1818 and 1820 and starting by the Thomke Manor House, was called the second Imperial Route. It replaced the old Żywiec tract, present-day Broniewskiego Street, which ran closer to the Biała river.

Information board: ul. Żywiecka 1



Imperial Route



35. **Daughters of Divine Charity Convent – formerly Lipnik Manor**

The fortified manor house of the Lipnik governors stood here from the beginning of the 17th cent. Sometime before 1845 it was replaced with a two-storey palace in the Classical style. In 1885, the Daughters of Divine Charity settled here and founded St Hildegard's Convent. The constructor, Emanuel Rost Jr, added an upper storey and a chapel in 1896.

Information board: ul. Żywiecka 20



4. Little Vienna

As a result of sudden economic growth and the consequential increase of wealth among inhabitants the twin-cities at the foot of the Beskids transformed in the second half of the 19th century into a modern industrial centre already then called Bielsko-Biała.

In terms of the administrative division Bielsko belonged to Austrian Silesia with its capital in Opava. From 1851 it was the seat of district [Polish: powiat] and council [Polish: starostwo] and in 1869 due to its special meaning gained a special status of a town with district rights. Whereas Biała was in Galicia whose capital was Lvov. Since 1855 it was a district town belonging to Wadowice and in 1867 it became a seat of council.

In 1855 the railway siding of Kolej Północna [North Railway] running from Dziedzice to Bielsko connected the town with the railway network of Europe. Soon afterwards the first impressive tenement houses were built along today's Barlickiego (former Kolejowa) and Cechowa Street. Numerous new factories were erected in subsequent years within the area of Lower Suburb [Polish: Dolne Przedmieście] expanding northwards as well as of Żywiec Suburb located south of the centre. In 1862 the municipal gasworks started to operate and most of important streets were illuminated.

The period of the greatest architectural changes was initiated in Bielsko by the construction of railway tunnel in the town centre to Żywiec and its commissioning in 1878. Demolitions associated with the investment were continued in subsequent years: at the expense of the old buildings town streets were regulated and widened, squares were made, representative public edifices and impressive middle-class tenement houses were erected in order to meet the rank of the town. New streets were marked up, along with beautiful residential districts with houses for merchants, fabricants and officers surrounded by parks and greens. The latest civilisation facilities were introduced: telecommunication network (1888), a power plant (1893), a tram line and water supply pipeline (1895). As far as edifices of public utilities are concerned the following structures, were built: a theatre (1890), a hospital (1893) and a central government building (1903). At the turn of the 19th and 20th century Max Fabiani – a Viennese architect developed

a municipal spatial development plan which constituted grounds for further development of the town.

In Galician Biała which sometimes used to be called a poorer sister of Bielsko changes started later and were not so extensive. In 1888 on the Northern outskirts of the town a railway line from Bielsko to Kalwaria was laid and a railway station was built. The building of Kasa Oszczędności [Savings Bank] (1895-1897) became the most impressive structure of the town, next to it an municipal cinema-theatre was built (1913). Numerous new tenement houses located mainly on both markets appeared, a water supply pipeline (1900) and a district hospital (1909) were constructed.

From the economic and urban point of view both towns amalgamated almost in a single entirety, whereas neighbouring villages being a reservoir of labour force for the industry became more and more suburban in nature. Official census shows a huge growth of population. The number of people permanently registered within the area of today's Bielsko-Biała in 1869 amounted to ca. 36.5 thousand and to nearly 60 thousand in 1910.

The spatial development was accompanied by the social and cultural development. Bielsko became an important supralocal centre of German education; in the town there were among others: a high school [Polish: szkoła realna] (1860), and gymnasium (1871), a lutheran teacher training (1867) and a state industrial school (1881). Till 1918 Polish educational institutions were established only in Biała and neighbouring Galician villages. Year by year there were more unions, associations and organizations and in 1914 as many as 126 of them were reported in Bielsko (some of them jointly for both town) and 39 in Biała.

The national status and consequential economic and cultural associations, in connection with the local national relations shaped the image of Bielsko-Biała at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. Impacts of Czech and Austrian culture, in particular of the capital i.e. imperial Vienna, became more visible. Until the present day the architecture of Bielsko-Biała as well as its specific atmosphere common for all towns of former Danubian monarchy: from Bregenz to Chernivtsi, from Krakow to Zagreb is the evidence of that epoch.

The Trail :

Main Post Office (36) – Theatre (37) – Castle Garden* (38) – Castle Bazaar* (39) – Wzgórze Street – Komunalna Kasa Oszczędności [Communal Saving Bank] (40) – 3 Maja Street – formerly Emperor Franz Joseph Street (41) – Hotel “President” (42) – 3 Maja Street – Bielsko New Railway Station (43) – Jana Matejki Street – Adama Mickiewicza Street – Teodora Sixta Street – Państwowa Szkoła Przemysłowa [State Industrial School] (44) – Strzelnica [Shooting Gallery] (45) – Fryderyka Chopina Street – Bartosza Głowackiego Street – Stanisława Wyspiańskiego Street – Municipal Hospital (46) – Grunwaldzka Street – Infantry Barracks (47) – Jana III Sobieskiego Street – Słoneczna Street – Wita Stwosza Street – Grunwaldzka Street – Stanisława Wyspiańskiego Street – Andrzeja Frycza-Modrzewskiego Street – Juliusza Słowackiego Street – Central Office Building (48) – Secondary Schools Building (49) – Jarosława Dąbrowskiego Street – Adama Mickiewicza Street – Schneider’s Villa (50) – Sixt’s Villa (51) – Korn’s House (52) – Henryka Sienkiewicza Street – 3 Maja Street – Barlickiego Street – formerly Railway Street (53) – 11 Listopada Street – Burda’s Tenement (54) – 11 Listopada Street – Wojska Polskiego Square – Strzygowski’s Palace (55) – The “Frog” House (56) – District Council (57) – Komorowicka Street – Rost’s Tenement (58) – Towarzystwa Szkoły Ludowej Street – Legionów Street – Marszałka Józefa Piłsudskiego Street – Wyzwolenia Street – Biała District Hospital (59) – 11 Listopada Street – The “Black Eagle” Hotel (60) – 11 Listopada Street – Ratuszowa Street – Biała Town Hall (61) – Bohaterów Warszawy Street – Thomasa Woodrowa Wilsona Street – Hugona Kołłątaja Street – 1 Maja Street – Bank Austro-Węgierski [Austro-Hungarian Bank] (62) – 1 Maja Street – Park Włóknarzy (Textile Workers’ Park) (63) – Leszczyńska Street – Cavalry Barracks (64).

* non-existing structures

Length of the trail: 8.9 km

Time needed: 2 hours 40 min

NOTE: Since the trail is quite long, sightseeing can be divided in to two phases: first monuments of Bielsko (36-54; 3,8 km), then monuments of Biała and Żywiec Suburb of Bielsko (55-64; 5,1 km). The time for Bielsko sightseeing will get shorter by 20 minutes if we do not visit remotely located Infantry Barracks (47) and go towards the Central Office Building (48) straight from the Municipal Hospital (46).



Little Vienna



36. Main Post Office

This Neo-Baroque building was built in 1898 by Karl Korn to designs issued by the Austro-Hungarian Post Construction Office in Vienna. It once housed a telegraph and the city's telephone exchange. Statues of Jupiter and Mercury stand beside the crowning dome.

Information board: ul. 1 Maja 2



Little Vienna



37. Theatre

Built 1889–1890 as the City Theatre, in 1945 named the Polski (Polish) Theatre. The Viennese architect Emil Ritter von Förster used theatres in Vienna and Budapest for his inspiration. The facade features statues of the muses Melpomene and Thalia in niches, and Apollo atop the pediment. The building was extended in 1905.

Information board: ul. 1 Maja 1



Little Vienna



38. Castle Garden*

In 1489 the city of Bielsko gave part of its pasturelands to Casimir II, Duke of Cieszyn, as a garden for the castle. In the 1930s this historic park, which stretched from the castle to the bend in the Biała river, was sold by Prince Alexander Sułkowski and developed some time later.

*Information boards: ul. Bohaterów Warszawy / Zamkowa
ul. Bohaterów Warszawy / kpt. A. Kunickiego*



Little Vienna



39. Castle Bazaar*,

The board managing the Sułkowski princes' estates decided to remove a section of the old city wall in 1899 and construct a parade of 16 shops with a terraced roof garden. The brick revetment facing the Polski Theatre dates from this period. The bazaar was demolished in 1974 to enable the widening of Zamkowa Street.

Information board: ul. Zamkowa – castle retaining wall



Little Vienna



40. Communal Savings Bank

The castle's lower mill stood here and, later, a cloth factory which burned down in 1886. This present-day neo-Renaissance building was constructed in 1889 on its ruins by Karl Korn to house the Bielsko Savings Bank. The ground floor of the right wing housed Café de l'Europe, the first Viennese coffee house in the city.

Information board: ul. Wzgórze 19



Little Vienna



41. 3 Maja Street – formerly Emperor Franz Joseph Street

Built in 1889 to service the new main railway station, it quickly became the city's most elegant artery. Early on all the buildings lining it were designed by the Bielsko architect Karl Korn. In 1898 it was officially named Emperor Franz Joseph Street. After 1918 it was renamed to mark Poland's Constitution Day.

Information boards: ul. Przechód 1 / 3 Maja 2, ul. 3 Maja Street in the vicinity of the railway station



Little Vienna



42. Hotel "President"

This Neo-Renaissance building, built by Karl Korn in 1893, is the oldest still-functioning hotel in the city. Originally the "Kaiserhof", it was changed to "President" just after 1918 in honour of US President Woodrow Wilson. A new ballroom, currently the seat of the Federation of Engineering Associations, was added in 1928.

Information board: ul. 3 Maja 12



Little Vienna



43. Bielsko New Railway Station

The original station opened in Bielsko in 1855 and formed part of Emperor Ferdinand's North Railway (KFNB). The line was constructed 1836–1856 and connected Vienna to Krakow. This new building, designed by the architect Karl Schulz and constructed by Karl Korn, was opened in 1890.

Information board: ul. Warszawska 2



Little Vienna



44. State Industrial School

This Neo-Baroque main building and its complex of workshops housed a technical school to train specialists for the textile and machine industries. The school was founded in 1881 from the merger of two older educational institutions. The buildings were erected 1910–1913 by the Viennese architect, Ernst Lindner.

Information board: ul. T. Sixta 20



Little Vienna



45. Shooting Gallery

The park and its two buildings – the smaller from 1831, the larger from the 1880s – belonged to the Bielsko-Biała Shooting Society. The city acquired the site in 1895 to use as a venue for meetings, balls and concerts. The property was modernised 1980–1988 to become the Bielsko Cultural Centre.

Information board: ul. J. Słowackiego 27



Little Vienna



46. Municipal Hospital

Founded thanks to the efforts of city mayor Heinrich Hoffmann (d. 1893). The first buildings were completed in 1893 by Karl Korn's company. The porters' lodge was built in 1900, building IV (infectious diseases) in 1901, and building III (surgical ward) in 1912. Until 1918 it was known as "Emperor Franz Joseph Hospital".

Information board: ul. St. Wyspiańskiego 21



Little Vienna



47. Infantry Barracks

Erected in 1894–1895 by the city of Bielsko to a design by engineer Erwin Rieger, it housed a 400-strong Austrian infantry battalion until 1914. From 1920 it quartered two battalions of the 3rd Podhalański Rifle Regiment, 21st Mountain Infantry Division. In 1959 it became the Children's Hospitale.

Information board: ul. Jana III Sobieskiego 83



Little Vienna



48. Central Office Building

Built in 1902–1903 as the seat of Bielsko District Council, the district court and the treasury. Its neighbour, the sports hall of the Bielsko-Biała Gymnastic Society, was built in 1898 by Andreas Walczok.

Information board: ul. J. Słowackiego 15



Little Vienna



49. Secondary Schools Building

This Neo-Renaissance building was built by the Biała architect Emanuel Rost Sr in 1873–1883. In its history, it has housed secondary school (est. 1860), a liberal arts college (est. 1871) and an industrial school (until 1913). Between 1921 and 1939 it was a German high school.

Information board: ul. J. Słowackiego 24



Little Vienna



50. Schneider's Villa

This Neo-Baroque/Art Nouveau villa was built in 1904 for Hermann Schneider, co-owner of the "Unia" Jute Industry Joint-Stock Company in Mostowa Street. It is one of the most beautiful residences of the so-called "villa quarter" which evolved around the turn of the 20th cent. between Sienkiewicza and Piastowska streets.

Information board: ul. A. Mickiewicza 27



Little Vienna



51. Sixt's Villa

A Neo-Renaissance villa built by Karl Korn in 1883 for the Bielsko industrialist, financier and philanthropist, Theodor Sixt of Wirtemberg (d. 1897). This was the first villa-residence built north of the city centre. On his death, he bequeathed it to the city of Bielsko.

Information board: ul. A. Mickiewicza 24 a



Little Vienna



52. Korn's House

This 1883 Neo-Renaissance Italianate mansion was the personal residence of the celebrated architect and builder Karl Korn (1852–1906). He worked extensively throughout Austrian Silesia and Galicia, and built many of Biel-sko-Biała's buildings.

Information board: ul. A. Mickiewicza 21



Little Vienna



53. Barlickiego Street – formerly Railway Street

Between 1855 and 1889 this was the only access road to the main railway station and was intensively developed. Numerous statelystenements, offices and hotels populated the street, including "The Grand" (No. 15), built in 1885 for the Viennese hotelier Ignaz Amster.

Information board: ul. N. Barlickiego 11



Little Vienna



54. Burda's Tenement

This Neo-Baroque tenement was designed and constructed in 1893 by Karl Korn for the imperial councillor Victor Burda. It was the first four-storey building in 11 Listopada Street. At river level one can observe the vaulted outlet of the Niper Brook.

Information board: ul. 11 Listopada 10



Little Vienna



55. Strzygowski's Palace

Built after 1878 for the textile manufacturer Franciszek Strzygowski (1828–1904), on the site of a 1766 house which used to belong to the mayor of Biała, Karl Męcнарowski. After 1910 it was the property of Strzygowski's daughter Elvira, wife of the paper manufacturer Alfred Fiałkowski.

Information board: ul. Ratuszowa 1



Little Vienna



56. The “Frog” House

This Art Nouveau tenement was erected in 1903 by the Biała architect Emanuel Rost Jr for Rudolf Nahowski, owner of a wine bar originally located in the building’s ground floor. Figures of carousing frogs over the north entrance are modelled on a character in Wilhelm Busch’s fairy tale.

Information board: pl. Wojska Polskiego 12



Little Vienna



57. District Council

In 1855 Biała became a district town and, in 1867, the seat of the local government. The council offices were originally located in the municipal building at No. 2 Ratuszowa Street. In 1876 they were relocated to a tenement leased from the von Pongráz family where they functioned until 1939.

Information board: pl. Wojska Polskiego 11



Little Vienna



58. Rost's Tenement

This combined office and residence, with its rich Neo-Rococo facade, was erected by Emanuel Rost Jr (1848–1915) in 1903 for his personal use. He also designed Biała Town Hall, the “Frog” house and the expansion of St. Hildegard's Convent.

Information board: ul. Komorowicka 48



Little Vienna



59. Biała District Hospital

Built on the grounds of an old farm by Emanuel Rost in 1908–1909, it replaced a hospital which had functioned since 1846 in adapted buildings in presentday Dmowskiego Street. The new hospital was actually in Lipnik village, because it lay beyond Biała's border which used to run along Wyzwolenia Street.

Information board: ul. Wyzwolenia 18



Little Vienna



60. The “Black Eagle” Hotel

This fine example of the Neo-Baroque was built in 1906 on the grounds of an old inn which had traded on the Imperial Route since the beginning of the 19th cent. During the conversion, the outside of the three-storey east wing, which houses a beautiful ballroom, was left unchanged.

Information board: ul. 11 Listopada 58



Little Vienna



61. Biała Town Hall

This Neo-Renaissance structure was built by Emanuel Rost Jr in 1895–1897 for Biała Municipal Council and the Communal Savings Bank. Since 1951 it has housed the municipality of conjoined Bielsko and Biała. Between 1913 and 1967, a theatre designed by Arthur Corazza stood on the next plot.

Information board: pl. Ratuszowy



Little Vienna



62. Austro-Hungarian Bank

In 1864 a branch of the Austrian National Bank was opened in Bielsko. In 1878 it became the Austro-Hungarian Bank. In 1900 it moved to premises in what was Pastornak Street. From 1919 until 1931 the building housed the Polish Bank.

Information board: ul. 1 Maja 6



Little Vienna



63. Park Włókniarzy (Textile Workers' Park)

This part of Bielsko used to be called "Bleach Alley" because, in the past, linen was bleached here. Beginning in 1895, the city gardener Franz Chlupacz formed the park step-by-step by landscaping meadows and wasteland close to the riverbank. In the winter of 1896, an ice rink opened where the tennis court now is.

Information board: ul. 1 Maja / PCK



Little Vienna



64. Cavalry Barracks

Erected by the city of Bielsko in 1902–1903, the 5 dormitories, 6 auxiliary buildings, 2 riding halls and 10 stables accommodated 530 soldiers and 477 horses. In 1918–1926 it housed the 2nd “Rokitna” Light Horse Regiment, and later the 21st Light Artillery Regiment.

Information board: ul. P. Bardowskiego 2



5. Industrial and Technical Monuments

The contemporary town of Bielsko-Biała was shaped by the 19th century industrialization. However, the local industry, in particular the textile industry, did not appear suddenly, but originated from the guild craft that had developed for several centuries.

The activity of drapers in Bielsko is evidenced by the privilege of the year 1548 granted by the Duke of Cieszyn – Wenceslaus III Adam [Polish: Wacław III Adam]. In the town at the foot of the Beskids there was plenty of pure mountainous water indispensable for fabric dyeing and finishing, whereas sheep grazing on mountainous pastures provided desired wool. During the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) that brought the craft in many European towns to an end Lutheran drapers escaping from religious prosecutions settled in Bielsko and Biała. The manufacture of cloth developed and its sale in Poland became even easier thanks to the privilege granted by King John Casimir [Polish: Jan Kazimierz] in 1660. Soon afterwards in 1667 the guild of drapers was established in Biała. At the beginning of the 18th century Bielsko was already the largest craft centre in the Duchy of Cieszyn and local cloths were considered the best of Silesian and Czech goods. 271 craftsman masters of weaving worked in the town in 1734, there were cloth shearers engaged in cloth finishing as well as dye-works and a few fulling-works were there.

Reforms initiated in Austria by Maria Theresa and Joseph II after losing Silesia annulled numerous anachronous guild regulations hampering economic growth, thus enabling transfer into factory production. In Bielsko the first manufacture of wool started to operate in 1760, richer craftsmen put more looms into operation and goods were sold by merchants-wholesalers. Apart from sale in Poland production for the Hungarian market and to the countries of Turkish empire became more and more important.

The epoch of Napoleonic Wars at the turn of the 18th and 19th century was at the same time the period of the greatest growth of guild drapery, mainly thanks to deliveries for the army. To satisfy orders first weaving machines were brought to the town in 1806, which initiated a revolution in the existing production method. The use of a steam machine in 1826 was another landmark. At the beginning of the 40's the first line factories of

cloths were established with all technological processes: from wool washing through spinning, weaving and dyeing to finishing. In 1855 the railway facilitated the sale of goods and delivery of hard coal from Prussian Silesia. The industry development was speeded up by the liberalization of the domestic policy in Austria after 1859. Traditional small-size craft being pushed aside by mass factory production finally disappeared at the end of the century.

At the beginning of the 20th century in Bielsko there were 75 bigger and smaller cloth factories, spinning-mills, dye-works, weaving plants and finishing plants; whereas in Biała there were 15 of them. Other plants operated in Komorowice, Aleksandrowice, Wapienica, Kamienica and Mikuszowice. Bielsko along with Biała won the third place of the wool industry centres in Austria-Hungary, right after Moravian Brno and Czech Liberec, at the same time they were the most important textile industry centre within the entire territory of Silesia, including its Prussian part. The local goods were delivered to clients on all continents.

From the middle of the 19th century other branches of industry whose importance reached far away beyond the local borders developed. Within the framework of the textile industry linen and jute spinning-mills as well as hat factories appeared, the metal and machine industry developed and so did spirit, food, paper, wood and building industries.

In the Interwar Period in the changed political and economic situation Bielsko-Biała was, after Łódź, the second centre of textile industry in Poland though the mass goods in Łódź, mainly the cotton ones could not compete with the high-quality cotton produced in Bielsko. 13% of woollen cloth produced locally was exported from Bielsko-Biała in 1928 mainly to the countries of the former Danubian monarchy: Austria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary and further to Italy, Balkans, Middle East and to North Africa. Once the economic crisis taking place at the beginning of the 30's was overcome 13% of Polish textile goods were produced in the twin-city and sales revenue exceeded $\frac{1}{4}$ of textile production profits of the entire country.

In the years of the World War II in Bielsko, Biała and their neighbourhood there were as many as 150 production plants and many of them worked for the Army Industry of Nazi Germany. Small firms were merged into larger enterprises. The merger of nationalized plants was conducted in the times of the People's Republic of Poland: in 1947 there were 28, in 1950 – 13 and

in 1964 – 9 large plants of woollen industry. Similar situation characterized other sectors. Thanks to diversified production Bielsko-Biała won the name of the “town of one hundred industries”, in 1965 within the borders of the town as many as 266 plants operated. Construction of Fabryka Samochodów Małolitrażowych [Low-Capacity Car Factory] was the largest investment project in the years 1972-1978.

Despite modernization and development of the leading woollen industry the last decade of the 20th century brought its decline. Only numerous post-factory buildings transformed into shopping and service centres remind of the bygone importance of this manufacturing sector.

The Trail:

Weaver's House (65) – Jana III Sobieskiego Street – **Bielsko Old Fire Station (66)** – Listopadowa Street – **Bielsko New Fire Station (67)** – Grunwaldzka Street – Jarosława Dąbrowskiego Street – Esperanto Square – **Bielsko Old Railway Station (68)** – **Bielsko New Railway Station (43)** – Pedestrian Bridge – Podwale Street – Jana Kilińskiego Street – Michała Grażyńskiego Street – **Fiałkowski Brothers' Paper Factory (69)** – **Schwabe's Factory (70)** – Stefana Okrzei Street – **Engineering Plants in Podwale Street (71)** – Stanisława Dubois Street – **Gasworks (72)** – Gazownicza Street – **CH „Sfera” - Factories along the Biała River * (73)** – **Sternickel & Gülcher Textile Factory (74)** – Mostowa Street – **Schlesinger's Dyeworks (75)** – Marszałka Józefa Piłsudskiego Street – **Hess's Cloth Factory (76)** – Legionów Street – Wolności Square – **Lukas's Cloth Finishing Works (77)** – 11 Listopada Street – Żywiecka Street – **Gross's Spirit Refinery and Liqueur Factory (78)** – **Tugendhat's Cloth Factory (79)** – Władysława Broniewskiego Street – Kierowa Street – **Thetschel Brothers' Cloth Factory (80)** – Ratuszowy Square – **Biała Fire Station (81)** – **Franciszek Vogt's Cloth Factory (82)** – along the bank of Biała river – Fabryczny Square – **Karl Jankowski & Son Cloth Factory (83)** – Franciszka Smolki Square – Wzgórze Street – Zamkowa Street – **Railway Tunnel (84)** – Żwirki i Wigury Square – **Büttner's Cloth Factory (85)** – Sukiennicza Street – **Mänhardt's Dyeworks (86)** – 1 Maja Street – **Karl Piesch's Cloth Factory (87)** – **Wolf's Finishing Works and Dyeworks (88)** – 1 Maja Street – Powstańców Śląskich Street – **Graubner's Cloth**

Factory (89) – Josephy’s Machine Factory (90) – Partyzantów Street – J.G. Bathelt’s Sons Cloth Factory (91) – Mänhardt’s Card Covering Factory (92) – Tadeusza Regera Street – Josephy’s Metal Foundry (93) – Partyzantów Street – Power Station (94) – Tram Depot (95).

* non-existing structures

Length of the trail: 7.9 km

Time needed: 2 hours 20 min

NOTE: Since the trail is quite long it is worth sightseeing the Weaver’s House separately (65) and see the Old (66) and the New (67) Fire Station. Sightseeing other structures can be divided into two phases: firstly post-industrial historic monuments and buildings in the north part of Bielsko (68-73) and in Biała (74-82; 4.0km), then structures in the centre of Bielsko and on Żywiec Suburb (83-95; 1.8km). Giving up the visit at the Fiałkowski Brothers’ Paper Factory (69) we shorten our walk by 10 minutes.



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



65. Weaver's House

A faithful reconstruction of a mid-18th-cent. house typical of old Bielsko's suburbs. Until the beginning of the 20th cent. it was inhabited by clothiers who made the famous Bielsko cloth on handlooms. In 1992 a permanent exhibition was created to demonstrate the daily life and work of the weavers.

Information board: ul. Jana III Sobieskiego 51



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



66. Bielsko Old Fire Stations

Built in 1884, Karl Korn's station for the Bielsko-Biała Volunteer Fire Brigade (est. 1864) was financed by the city authorities and equipped with a then-modern telephone exchange. In 1913 a storey was added over the left entrance gate. From 1930 it housed the Red Cross emergency service.

Information board: ul. Jana III Sobieskiego 6



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



67. Bielsko New Fire Station

Built in 1930, this new home for the Bielsko-Biała Volunteer Fire Brigade was funded by the city and remained operational with the State Fire Service until 2009. Designed by Alfred Wiedermann and Antoni Müller, it was widely acknowledged as the most beautiful fire station in Poland.

Information board: ul. Grunwaldzka 20



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



68. Bielsko Old Railway Station

Used in 1855–1890, initially as the terminus of the Dziedzice – Bielsko branch of Emperor Ferdinand's North Railway (KFNB). The construction of a tunnel and viaduct in Wałowa Street (1876– 1878) allowed the line to be extended to Żywiec. The old terminus building accommodates railway offices.

Information board: ul. 3 maja 18



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



43. Bielsko New Railway Station

The original station opened in Bielsko in 1855 and formed part of Emperor Ferdinand's North Railway (KFNB). The line was constructed 1836–1856 and connected Vienna to Krakow. This new building, designed by the architect Karl Schulz and constructed by Karl Korn, was opened in 1890.

Information board: ul. Warszawska 2



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



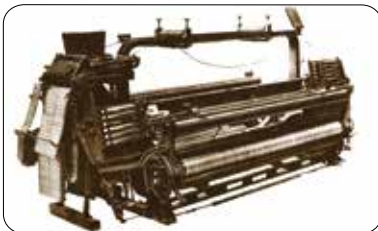
69. Fiałkowski Brothers' Paper Factory

Rajmund (d. 1880) and Aleksander (d. 1905) Fiałkowski established their company in 1868. By 1900 they had expanded it to include plants in Biała and Czaniec. In 1907 it became the Galician Paper Factory and since 1921 was the property of the S.W. Niemojewski joint-stock company.

Information board: ul. M. Grażyńskiego 38



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



70. Schwabe's Factory

The R.J. Gülcher loom and electric motor factory was established in Biała in 1878. In 1894 it became the Gülcher & Schwabe Co. In 1900 it moved to new premises in Bielsko. In 1906 its sole owner became the industrialist and inventor Georg Schwabe (d. 1924).

Information board: ul. M. Grażyńskiego 20



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



71. Engineering Plants in Podwale Street

Quissek & Geppert, est. 1883, produced boilers, steam engines, pumps and fittings (No. 31). Moritz Bartelmuss's textile equipment factory, built 1889, after 1901 manufactured screws and bolts (No. 33). Enamel & Metalware Factory was open in 1899 (No. 45).

Information board: ul. Podwale 45



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



72. Gasworks

Opened in 1861 by The Bielsko-Biała Gas Production Society, a joint stock company. The city of Bielsko bought it in 1902 and transformed it into the Municipal Gasworks. Between 1914 and 1916 it was modernised and a new coal tower and furnace building were erected.

Information board: ul. Gazownicza 14



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



73. Factories along the Biała River*

Three textile mills dominated the banks of the Biała river at Cechowa Street for almost 150 years before the “Sfera” shopping complex was built on their site: Gustaw Molenda & Son (No. 14–18, from 1886), Landesmann & Kornhaber (No. 22, from 1912) and Karl Riesenfeld (No. 24–26, from 1901).

Information board: ul. Mostowa



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



74. Sternickel & Gülcher Textile Factory

Called “the Dutch cloth factory”, it was opened in 1843 as a branch of the works in Eupen (presentday Belgium). At the time it was the largest and most modern textile factory in Biała. The main buildings, originally higher, were partly damaged by fire in 1932.

Information board: ul. Cyniarska 30



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



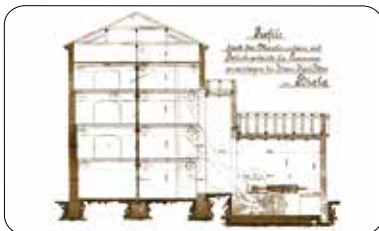
75. Schlesinger's Dyeworks

Ernst L. Nitsch established his dyeworks here c. 1770, but the Fritsche family took it over around 1790. From 1864 on it was the property of the Schlesinger family who built the present-day plant. Between the wars the factory was owned by cloth manufacturers Rabinowitz & Son).

Information board: ul. Marsz. J. Piłsudskiego 7



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



76. Hess's Cloth Factory

Simon Duczek established a cloth-finishing works here in 1843. Karl Geyer took it over in 1869 and transformed into a cloth factory, only to sell it to Karl Hess in 1876. The expanded and modernised company, later run under the name Karl Hess's Sons, was one of the largest in Białą.

Information board: ul. Komorowicka 38



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



77. Lukas's Cloth Finishing Works

In this building, dating from the 1830s, Johann Georg Lukas, a cloth-shearer, used one of the first steam engines in Galicia to mechanise his trade. His sons extended the factory to include cloth manufacturing as well as finishing. In 1916 the factory was bought by Max Polatschek).

Information board: pl. Wolności 8



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



78. Gross's Spirit Refinery and Liqueur Factory

The company established by Jakob Gross (d. 1901) in 1849 operated on these premises from 1857. The factory dates from the 1880s and its tall chimney is one of the last few remaining in the city. Gross also owned the tenement at No. 78 – 82 11 Listopada Street.

Information board: ul. ks. St. Stojałowskiego 61



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



79. Tugendhat's Cloth Factory

Originally a cloth factory built for Theodor Zagórski in 1871–1872. Emil Schirn bought it in 1881 and expanded the premises. In 1902 Theodor Pollak turned it into a Turkish fez factory. After 1910, under the ownership of Samuel Tugendhat, it once again operated as a cloth factory.

Information board: ul. Żywiecka 15



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



80. Thetschel Brothers' Cloth Factory

David Grunewald built the original factory in 1827. In 1844 Christian W. Zipsper converted a neighbouring factory to add as a spinning mill. The Thetschel brothers further expanded the plant during their 1850–1875 ownership. Later it became Fiałkowski's paper mill, then, from 1907, a branch of the J.G. Bathelt cloth factory.

Information board: ul. S. Sempołowskiej 13



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



81. Biała Fire Station

Constructed by Emanuel Rost Jr in 1890 to a design, by Karl Korn for the Biel-sko-Biała Volunteer Fire Brigade. Part of the building was shared with the emergency ambulance service from 1909, and then a trade school after 1914. The upper storey was added in 1928.

Information board: pl. Ratuszowy 9



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



82. Franz Vogt's Cloth Factory

Built in 1869 as a simple three-storey factory, later substantially extended. There is a glazed hall to the north of the building, erected by Karl Korn's construction company in 1922. Fryderyk Tislowitz's cloth factory from 1932. In 2001 it was converted into local government offices.

Information board: pl. Ratuszowy 6



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



83. Karl Jankowski & Son Cloth Factory

Cloth finishing works of Karl Jankowski & Son, established in 1814 at No. 4 Fabryczny Square, merged with Frederic A. Zipser's cloth factory in 1914. In 1856, the latter had taken over J.G. Mänhardt's, Bielsko's first woollen factory established in 1760.

Information board: pl. Fabryczny 4



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



84. Railway Tunnel

Built 1876–1878, this 268m-long railway tunnel under the heart of the city centre was a significant engineering achievement and substantially re-shaped the face of the city. It enabled the Działoszyn – Bielsko line of Emperor Ferdinand's North Railway (KFNB) to be extended to Żywiec.

*Information boards: ul. Zamkowa – ul. Bohaterów Warszawy
ul. L. Zamenhofska*



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



85. Büttner's Cloth Factory

Established by Karl T. Büttner (d. 1884), later run by his sons. The first building, with courtyard workshops, was erected at No. 8 1 Maja Street in 1869. The second factory building in Sukiennicza Street was constructed in 1888, and the third on present-day Żwirki i Wigury Square in 1900–1907.

Information board: ul. Sukiennicza 7



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



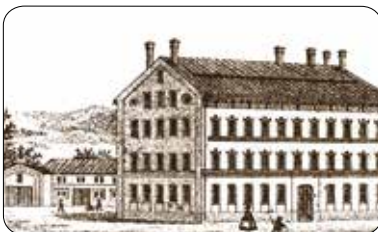
86. Mänhardt's Dyeworks

The complex of buildings between 1 Maja Street and Przekop Street was erected in 1822 for Franz Mänhardt (d. 1880). In 1888 it became the property of Franz Geyer (d. 1906) who converted it into a cloth factory. The impressive residence was the only building of its type in the city.

Information board: ul. 1 Maja 12



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



87. Karl Piesch's Cloth Factory

The factory building erected c. 1860. A decade later it became a tenement. From 1877 the property of the J. Bernaczik & Son company (cloth finishing works at No. 19 1 Maja Street). Thanks to the change of function the building has survived practically unaltered as an early example of factory architecture.

Information board: ul. 1 Maja 17



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



88. Wolf's Finishing Works and Dyeworks

In 1848 Karl Wolf Sr (d. 1895) established a linen mill in Bielsko. The factory, built in 1856 and later considerably extended, was turned into a woollen fabric finishing works and dyeworks in 1878. In 1907 the city's first multi-storey reinforced concrete production hall was constructed here.

Information board: ul. 1 Maja 18a



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



89. Graubner's Cloth Factory

The brick edifice of Moritz Graubner's (d. 1916) cloth factory (est. 1875) was built c. 1880 in what was then known as Factory Street. The plant, which in 1910 employed 180 workers, was inherited by the founder's son, Karl Graubner (1879–1964), who later sold it to Jan Macha in 1926.

Information board: ul. Powstańców Śląskich 3



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



90. Josephy's Machine Factory

This small textile machine construction and service company was founded here in 1851 by Gustav Josephy (d. 1857). His successors made it into the largest machine engineering company in the region. In 1948 it was nationalised as "Befama", the Bielsko Textile Machine Factory.

Information board: ul. Powstańców Śląskich 6



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



91. J.G. Bathelt's Sons Cloth Factory

Johann Gottlieb Bathelt (d. 1888) bought Julius Fritsche's tannery in 1851 and turned it into a cloth factory. At its peak expansion in 1910 it employed 450 workers. In 1929 Bielsko-Biała's longest running firm (est. 1809) collapsed.

Information board: ul. Partyzantów 27



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



92. Mänhardt's Card Covering Factory

The factory building (1870) and twin villas (1878) were built for Hähnel, Mänhardt & Co. After 1894, Adolf Mänhardt (d. 1922) and his successors were the sole owners of the company, which from 1860 produced card coverings and leather accessories for the textile industry.

Information board: ul. Partyzantów 22



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



93. Josephy's Metal Foundry

Built in 1901, this branch of Gustav Josephy's machine factory was connected to its parent plant at No. 21 Partyzantów Street by a narrow-gauge railway. The foundry was enlarged westwards in 1913–1914 and again in the late 1920s.

Information board: ul. T. Rejtana 3



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



94. Power Station

Poland's third electric power station, "the electric centre", was built by F. & C. Schulz Brothers in 1893 for the Viennese firm Internationale Elektrizitäts Gesellschaft (IEG), to whom city authorities granted a 50-year licence to generate and supply electricity.

Information board: ul. Partyzantów 66



Industrial and
Technical Monuments



95. Tram Depot

The Bielsko-Biała Electric & Railway Partnership (from 1951, City Transport Company of Bielsko-Biała) operated a tram service between the main railway station and Cygański Las from 1895 to 1971. The depot, constructed in 1895 by F. & C. Schulz Brothers, held 16 trams.

Information board: ul. Partyzantów 64



6. Polish National Movement

In 1867 the Austrian Empire was transformed into Austria-Hungary and the liberal constitution provided civil liberties and the equality of rights to all nations of the multinational country. The development of Galician autonomy and the introduction of Polish language into schools (1867) and offices (1869) unsettled Germans dominating in Biała. In 1872 for fear of the town Polonisation they petitioned for its exclusion from Galicia and incorporation into Austrian Silesia which arouse outrage among Poles and gave arise to the period of nationalistic conflicts in both towns upon Biała River.

The first centre of Polish national life was Polish Reading Room established in 1873 with its seat in the "Black Eagle" Hotel. Initially, it united officials from district authorities functioning in the town since 1867, farmers and craftsmen; it played an important role in propagation of Polish culture, education and patriotism among local people. In 1893 Polish Reading Room was moved to its own seat in a new building at today's Wolności Square, providing room for a few Polish organizations, e.g. Towarzystwo Szkoły Ludowej (TSL) [Society of Popular Schools] founded in 1894.

TSL functioned in Galicia since 1891 and its task was to defend Polishness in the area of West and East Borderlands [Polish: Kresy] particularly in the field of education. The German School Association (Deutscher Schulverein) established in Vienna in 1880 set itself similar objectives, for this reason at the turn of the 19th and 20th century both organizations started to compete in Biała and in its neighbourhood, e.g. by bidding which organization founded more schools. In 1898 at today's Legionów Street a Polish popular school under the name of Tadeusz Kościuszko was opened in the newly erected impressive building. In 1907 a male teacher training college was founded and three years later it was moved to its own building at Komorowicka Street; in 1908 in the building of the popular school the first Polish gymnasium was opened and at the opposite side of the street a female popular school was opened in 1911, it was the Queen Jadwiga Polish Primary School.

The Christian and national activity of the priest Stanisław Stojalowski (1845-1911) played a significant role in the awakening of social and national consciousness of Polish proletariat. In Bielsko-Biała the fortunes of German and

Jewish fabricants grew to a larger extent on the exploitation of cheap Polish labour force. Most workers came to work from Galician villages, and for fear of polonisation and dissemination of socialism German self-governments of Bielsko and Biała counteracted settlement of larger number of workers in the twin-city.

Priest Stojałowski conducted agitation among Polish workers since 1891. The catholic Stowarzyszenie Domu Robotniczego [Working House Association] founded on his initiative managed the Konsum chain [a special factory store] and the circles of political parties founded by him operated there. Since 1904 in the so-called Drukarnia Polska [Polish Printing-House] managed by Karol Studencki at the then św. Jana Street magazines issued by priest Stojałowski were printed, with the most popular one being "Wieniec-Pszczółka".

On the initiative of priest Stojałowski the first Polish national centre was founded in Bielsko: i.e. the famous Dom Polski [Polish House] purchased in 1902 by Spółka Ochrony i Pomocy Narodowej [National Protection and Aid Company] established especially for this purpose. As the seat of Polish organization the Dom Polski became the target of German attacks. The culmination of the conflict was the so-called Battle of Biała of June 28, 1914 when delegations of Polish organizations from Galicia and Cieszyn Silesia that came to Bielsko to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the local centre "Sokół" fought with the crowds of Germans protecting the entry into the city and to Dom Polski.

Dom Katolicki [Catholic House] in Biała opened in 1917 at Żywiecka Street was another centre of Polish national movement: in the huge hall on the 1st floor performances of amateur theatres were held. In the adjacent building at present 11 Listopada Street a Christian Konsum Robotniczy and organizations of Polish Christian workers had their seat.

After 1918 Bielsko and Biała became a part of reborn Poland. The national work, which contributed to acceleration of the Polonisation process of both towns, was continued. The Army Community Centre put into operation in 1925 became a new centre of Polishness promotion, and two years later in Bielsko a modern building of a Polish gymnasium that competed effectively with German schools was built. Under changed geopolitical realities of the Interwar Period old nationalistic antagonisms became even more fierce to find its apogee in the tragedy of World War II that brought an end to the longterm co-existence of Poles and Germans in the twin-city upon Biała River.

The Trail:

Komorowicka Street – **Biała Teacher Training College (96)** – Towarzystwa Szkoły Ludowej Street – Legionów Street – **Tadeusz Kościuszko Primary School (97)** – **Queen Jadwiga Polish Primary School (98)** – Wolności Square – **Polish Reading Room in Biała (99)** – 11 Listopada Street – Żywiecka Street – Opatrzności Bożej Square – Władysława Broniewskiego Street – Army Community Centre in Biała – Dworkowa Street – Stefanii Sempołowskiej Street – Park Włókniarzy – Partyzantów Street – **Polish House in Bielsko* (101)** – Tadeusza Regera Street – Józefa Lompy Street – Cieszyńska Street – Mikołaja Kopernika Street – Listopadowa Street – **Bielsko Polish High School (102).**

* non-existing structures

Length of the trail: 3.9 km

Time needed: 1 hour 30 min

NOTE: You can get from Polish House in Bielsko (101) to Bielsko Polish High School (102) by MZK bus (stops: Mickiewicza Square – Piastowska/Lubertowicza Street), thus shortening the walk by 1.4 km (20 min).



Polish National
Movement



96. Biała Teacher Training College

Biała's first Polish high school, it was designed in the Modern style by the Krakow architect Sławomir Odrzywolski, and built in 1908–1910 for the Society of Popular Schools. It is one of only two examples of the “Krakow school” of Young Poland architecture in the city.

Information board: ul. Komorowicka 27



Polish National
Movement



97. Tadeusz Kościuszko Primary School

Biała's first Polish educational institution was designed in the Modern style by the Krakow architect, Sławomir Odrzywolski, and built for the Society of Popular Schools 1897–1898. In 1908 a high school was also opened here which, in 1919, was named after the poet Adam Asnyk.

Information board: ul. Legionów 25



Polish National
Movement



98. Queen Jadwiga Polish Primary School

This Neo-Gothic primary school for girls, built for the Society of Popular Schools and opened in 1911, was to relieve overcrowding in the nearby Tadeusz Kościuszko primary school.

Information board: ul. Legionów 24



Polish National
Movement



99. Polish Reading-Room in Biała

Building bought in 1893 with the contributions of Polish Reading Room members (established in 1873) and donations of Poles of three partitions. The seat of Polish organizations: inter alia: Catholic Association of Handicraftsmen (established in 1888), Association of Popular School (established in 1894), "Sokół" (established in 1900). There was a restaurant on the ground floor.

Information board: pl. Wolności 2



Polish National
Movement



100. Army Community Centre in Biała

Leopold Landau's design in the "Zakopane Style" was erected between 1924 and 1928 for the Soldiers Care Committee of Bielsko-Biała garrison to house social and cultural events. It was financed by public donation on land presented by Archduke Karl Stephan Habsburg.

Information board: ul. W. Broniewskiego 27



Polish National
Movement



101. Polish House in Bielsko*

Bought in 1902 on the initiative of priest Stanisław Stojałowski, in 1921 enlarged by an adjacent building the so-called New Polish House. By 1939 it had been the seat of numerous Polish organizations related with the nationalist movement, there was a restaurant on the ground floor. Both houses were demolished in 1973.

Information board: pl. A. Mickiewicza



Polish National
Movement



102. Bielsko Polish High School

This was Bielsko's first Polish high school. The prestigious investment was part-financed by the Silesian regional authority and built by Wiedermann, Gieler & Raszka in 1925–1927. In 1936 it was named after Marshal Józef Piłsudski.

Information board: ul. Listopadowa 70



7. Catholics in Bielsko and Biała

For centuries Biała River marked the border of the Bishopric of Wrocław and Krakow (and temporarily in 1783-1805 of Tarnów) and since 1925 it separated the Diocese of Katowice from the Diocese of Krakow. In 1992 Pope John Paul II created a new diocese of Bielsko-Żywiec that was subordinate to the Archdiocese of Kraków.

According to the tradition in the Silesian part of today's town the function of a parish church was initially performed by St Stanislaus's Church in Stare Bielsko, only in 1447 after the St Nicholas's Catholic Church had been built the seat of the parish was moved to the town. However, there must have been some temple, probably a wooden one, within the town walls evidenced by the arrangement of medieval parcels. The Parish covered Bielsko and the following villages: Stare Bielsko, Kamienica and Mikuszowice, then a newly founded Bystra (after 1570) and Wapienica (before 1571) were incorporated as well. In 1547 in Kamienica a wooden affiliate St Margaret's Church [Polish: św. Małgorzaty] was built and at the end of the 16th century St. Laurence's Church [Polish: św. Wawrzyńca] in Upper Suburb (existed till the middle of the 17th century in the place of the present children's hospital) and St Anne's Hospital Church in Lower Suburb.

In the second half of the 16th century as a result of the Reformation influence on the inhabitants all churches in Bielsko and surroundings became churches of Lutherans. When in 1631 after many years the first catholic parson came to the town he met there only few followers of this religion. Despite a severe counter-reformatory action conducted in the catholic monarchy of Habsburgs in next decades the number of Catholics in Bielsko and its neighbourhood increased very slowly. Till the 19th century they belonged to the poorer class of the local society.

After the division of Silesia and separation of Wrocław metropolis by the state border (1742) Bielsko still remained within the limits of this Bishopric in its so-called Imperial-Royal part. In 1808 the great fire of the town destroyed St Nicholas's Parish Church and St Anne's Church, and only the former one was rebuilt. In the course of subsequent years affiliate churches of Holy Trinity [Polish: św. Trójcy] (originally a lutheran church), St Stanislaus [Polish: św. Stanisława] in Stare Bielsko and St Margaret [Polish: św. Małgorzaty] in Kamienica were subordinate to the Parish of Bielsko. In 1889 a chapel in Bystra Śląska was built and in 1902 an

independent parish in Kamienica was formed, where in 1898 a new neo-gothic church, the so-called jubilee church, was erected (the old wooden temple was demolished). In 1931 a new chapel was built in Wapienica, whereas in post-war years next parish units were formed.

The number of Catholics grew in the 19th century and increase of their wealth was reflected in new buildings erected in the neighbourhood of St Nicholas's Church. The School Sisters of Notre Dame engaged in the education of Catholic girls and care for orphans acting in the town since 1859 built an orphanage and a female school (1897, 1908); earlier in 1889 a Catholic male school was built at the expense of the town. The alteration of the parish St Nicholas's Church was the most important investment (1908-1910), then the so-called old school opposite the main entrance was demolished and the high tower of the church has become a characteristic dominant of the town panorama.

After closing the cemeteries at St Nicholas's and St Anne's Churches in 1783 Catholics were buried in Holy Trinity Cemetery that functioned till 1889 and till the 60's of the 19th centuries also on the so-called choleric cemetery founded in 1831 in the region of Słowackiego Park. In 1884 a new Catholic cemetery was opened at Grunwaldzka Street.

Since Middle Ages in the Lesser Poland and then Galician part of the twin-city there were two parishes in Komorowice and in Lipnik. In 1829 from the former one an independent parish was separated in Hałcnów and in 1789 from the latter one - a parish of Divine Providence [Polish: Opatrzności Bożej] in Biała and in 1889 a parish in Straconka. Whereas in 1894 there was established an independent parish in Mikuszowice Krakowskie, previously subordinated to the church in Wilkowice.

In 1708 in Biała a Jesuit mission was established which initiated over one hundred-year-severe conflicts with evangelists. The progress of re-Catholicisation here was faster than in neighbouring Bielsko, as early as in the middle of the century there were more Catholics than Lutherans here. In 1708 a merchant Baltazar Damek founded a wooden chapel of Divine Providence, in place of which a masonry church was built in 1760-1769, later on developed to the present form. Originally it was surrounded by a cemetery liquidated after 1790 when burials were moved to a new last-resting place used till now.

Since 1787 Catholic children were taught in the Lutheran school, and in 1812 they moved to a separate building upon the Niwka and finally in 1874 to a new

school building at present Marszałka Józefa Piłsudskiego Street. In 1885 Sisters from the Daughters of Divine Charity Convent [Polish: Zgromadzenie Córek Bożej Miłości] were brought from Opava and opened in the former Lipnik Manor the St Hildegard Scientific and Educational Centre [Polish: Zakład Naukowo-Wychowawczy św. Hildegardy] that educated girls.

In 1922 the areas of the so-called Dolny Lipnik and Leszczyny were connected to the parish of Bielsko thus enlarging its area. In 1924 an affiliate chapel was built in Leszczyny, at which in 1946 an independent parish under the invocation of Christ the King [Polish: pw. Chrystusa Króla] was established.

The trail:

St Stanislaus's Catholic Church (12) – Jana III Sobieskiego Street – Grunwaldzka Street – **Catholic Cemetery in Bielsko (103)** – Stanisława Wyspiańskiego Street – Jana III Sobieskiego Street – **Holy Trinity Catholic Church (104)** – Świętej Trójcy Street – św. Mikołaja Square – **St Nicholas's Catholic Church (8)** – **The Sisters of Notre Dame Convent (105)** – gen. Władysława Sikorskiego Street – **Bielsko Catholic School for Boys (106)** – **Bielsko Orphanage & Catholic School for Girls (107)** – Schodowa Street – Wzgórze Street – **Castle Chapel of St Anna (108)** – Wzgórze Street – Franciszka Smolki Square – **St Anne's Church* (25)** – ks. Stanisława Stojalowskiego Street – **Old Catholic School in Biała (109)** – Konfederatów Barskich Street – 11 Listopada Street – pl. Wolności – Legionów Street – Marszałka Józefa Piłsudskiego Street – **New Catholic School in Biała (110)** – Szkolna Street – Opatrzności Bożej Square – **Catholic Church of Divine Providence (111)** – Żywiecka Street – **Daughters of Divine Charity Convent – formerly Lipnik Manor (35)** – Cmentarna Street – **Biała Catholic Cemetery (112).**

* non-existing structure

Length of the trail: 5.0 km

Time needed: 1 hour 30 min

NOTE: A walk will be shorter by 1.5km (20 min.) if we visit St Stanislaus's Church located furthest away from the town centre in Stare Bielsko separately (it can be reached by MKK bus).



Catholics
in Bielsko and Biata



12. St Stanislaus's Catholic Church

This Gothic church, probably founded by Duke Przemysław I Noszak in the 2nd half of the 14th cent., stands in the centre of what was then Bielsko village. It has a single nave and a pentagonal chancel made of fractured stone. It houses a valuable Gothic triptych and 14th-17th-cent. polychromes.

Information board: ul. św. Stanisława



Catholics
in Bielsko and Biata



103. Catholic Cemetery in Bielsko

Established in 1884 to replace the parish cemetery at the Holy Trinity church, it boasts Neo-Gothic galleries, a memorial to the Polish Legions (1936) and the tombs of the distinguished Polish patriots of the inter-war period, Klemens Matusiak and Zygmunt Lubertowicz.

Information board: ul. Grunwaldzka 28



Catholics
in Bielsko and Biata



104. Holy Trinity Catholic Church

This Late-Gothic church was originally built outside the city walls by Lutherans in 1604–1608. In 1654 it became a Catholic church. Destroyed by fire in 1808 and rebuilt in 1830. Later, the nave was extended (1933–1934) and a tower added (1939–1947). The cemetery closed in 1896.

Information board: ul. Jana III Sobieskiego 10



Catholics
in Bielsko and Biata



8. St Nicholas's Catholic Church

The masonry church probably dates to the mid-15th cent. It fell victim to fire on many occasions. Its present-day monumental character stems from the 1908–1910 expansion by the Viennese architect, Leopold Bauer. Until 1783 the church was surrounded by the city cemetery.

Information board: pl. św. Mikołaja



Catholics
in Bielsko and Biąta



105. The Sisters of Notre Dame Convent

The Sisters came to Bielsko from Wrocław in 1859 on a mission to educate Catholic girls. The buildings at No. 4 and No. 6 Schodowa Street were erected in 1866 and 1886. An upper storey was added to the former before 1925. The sisters later opened an orphanage and, in 1907, a women's teacher training college.

Information board: ul. Schodowa 6



Catholics
in Bielsko and Biąta



106. Bielsko Catholic School for Boys

Erected in 1888–1889 with city funds on the grounds of an old parish garden by the builder Moritz Thien. From 1945 it functioned as a Trade School, from 1980 as an Art School and since 2002 it has been the Art School Complex.

Information board: ul. gen. W. Sikorskiego 8



Catholics
in Bielsko and Biata



107. Bielsko Orphanage & Catholic School for Girls

The Catholic Women's Society and the Sisters of Notre Dame financed this education complex at present-day Gen. Sikorskiego Street. Built by Andreas Walczok on the site of an old parish garden, No. 4a opened in 1897, followed by No. 4b in 1908.

Information board: ul. gen. W. Sikorskiego 4a



Catholics
in Bielsko and Biata



108. Castle Chapel of St Anna

Prince Ludwik Sułkowski commissioned the chapel to commemorate his wife Anna, daughter of Baron von Dietrich, who died in 1853. The construction was completed in 1855 on the site of an earlier chapel, destroyed by fire in 1836. It became the place of interment for all subsequent rulers of the castle.

Information board: ul. Wzgórze 16



Catholics
in Bielsko and Biąta



25. St Anne's Hospital Church*

Funded by Baron Karl Promnitz in the 1570s; the tower was added in 1781. The church was part of an estate containing a municipal hospital, an orphanage and a cemetery. After its destruction in the great fire of 1808, it was replaced by a Clothiers' Guild House, and in 1914, by the present building.

Information board: pl. F. Smolki 3



Catholics
in Bielsko and Biąta



109. Old Catholic School in Biąta

In 1812 the merchant and mayor of Biąta, Joseph Pratobevera (d. 1820), donate his former residence for use as a Catholic school. The building served as a school until 1874.

Information board: ul. ks. St. Stojałowskiego 33



Catholics
in Bielsko and Biąta



110. New Catholic School in Biąta

Originally erected in 1874 by Emanuel Rost to replace the old Catholic School, it was the Municipal Primary School from 1895. In 1918 it became the new home of the Tadeusz Kościuszko Primary School No. 1 (previously in Legionów Street).

Information board: ul. marsz. J. Piłsudskiego 47



Catholics
in Bielsko and Biąta



111. Catholic Church of Divine Providence

A Late-Baroque edifice built by the Jesuits in 1760–1769, and finished 1789–1792. Later, the nave was extended to the east (J. Appelt 1849–1850), the tower raised and the facade rebuilt (E. Rost Sr 1886–1887). The interior contains Rococo fittings from the second half of the 18th cent.

Information board: pl. Opatrzności Bożej



Catholics
in Bielsko and Biąta



35. Daughters of Divine Charity Convent – formerly Lipnik Manor

The fortified manor house of the Lipnik governors stood here from the beginning of the 17th cent. Sometime before 1845 it was replaced with a two-storey palace in the Classical style. In 1885, the Daughters of Divine Charity settled here and founded St Hildegard's Convent. The constructor, Emanuel Rost Jr, added an upper storey and a chapel in 1896.

Information board: ul. Żywiecka 20



Catholics
in Bielsko and Biąta



112. Biąta Catholic Cemetery

Laid out in 1790 on the grounds of the earlier Bar Confederate cemetery, it was expanded in 1865, 1882 and 1921. It boasts Neo-Renaissance cloisters (c. 1888) and tombs of important citizens. The grandfather of Pope John Paul II, Maciej Wojtyła, is buried here.

Information board: ul. Cmentarna



8. In the Footsteps of Lutherans

In the history of Bielsko-Biała Evangelists (Lutherans) played an important role, for centuries they were the leading religious group, particularly in respect of economy, of which the undeniable evidence are 3 churches, 8 cemeteries with 3 chapels as well as many other buildings belonging to three Evangelical-Augsburg (Lutheran) parishes in Bielsko, Biała and Stare Bielsko.

In Bielsko a Lutheran parish was created as early as in 1550, half a century later almost all inhabitants of the town belonged to it. Catholic churches became evangelical churches and in 1608 Lutherans completed construction of the cemetery of the Holy Trinity Church [Polish: św. Trójcy]. The Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) initiated persecutions of protestants within the areas subordinate to the authority of catholic Habsburgs. In Bielsko after the churches had been taken away in 1654 and with ban on public cult they gathered during a secret divine services at homes and local forests. The hardest period ended in 1709 upon establishment of evangelical church called the church of mercy in Cieszyn, which gathered even inhabitants of Bielsko.

In 1781 the Edict of Tolerance issued by the Emperor Joseph II ended the epoch of religious oppression in Austria the so-called Anti-Catholics supported by the state. In Bielsko a quarter called Evangelical Zion with a masonry gospel hall (1787-1789) and two schools, the so-called old one (1783) and a new one (1794) were created and the local parish included almost the entire Duchy of Bielsko (a separate Protestant Church was created in Jaworze). Then Lutherans constituted almost half of Bielsko inhabitants, whereas in neighbouring villages they constituted the majority. God's word was preached in both languages used by community members, one of two pastors had to speak Polish.

In 1803 Bielsko became a part of a newly established Moravian and Silesian Superintendency where in 1807 the Silesian seniority was created: functions of superintendents were performed by many pastors of Bielsko. In 1829 an independent parish separated from the Protestant Church of Bielsko including Stare Bielsko, Aleksandrowice, Wapienica and Kamienica as well as Mazańcowice, Ligota, Bronowo and Zabrzeg with Polish residents – the latter villages became a part of a parish in Międzyrzecze in 1866. A new lu-

theran cemetery was founded in 1833 in Bielsko (presently called the Old Cemetery) to leave Holy Trinity Cemetery used by both religions to Catholics.

Evangelists of the entire Monarchy owed to the activity of Bielsko pastor Karol Samuel Schneider on the forum of the first Austrian Parliament in the years 1848-1849 the annulment of the most arduous restrictions aimed at them, e.g. their Gospel Halls to which towers could then be built became official churches. The construction of a church tower in Bielsko that was given the name of the "eye of Protestantism in Austria" was completed in 1852. However, the final equalization of rights for Evangelists took place in 1861.

It is mainly thanks to Lutherans that the education of Bielsko developed, a particular role was played by the lutheran teacher training college opened in 1867 that was the first of the kind in the Monarchy. Since the 80's evangelical magazines for readers all over Austria were issued in Bielsko. There were numerous building investments in the town. In 1881 the church nave was rebuilt in the neo-gothic style and its tower in 1896. A year later the building of a female school was erected and in 1900 the contemporary Kościelny Square was decorated with the monument of Martin Luther. Dom Diakonisk [Lutheran Residence for Deaconesses] was opened in 1905 and an orphanage building – in 1907. In 1911 a second cemetery was opened, the so-called new one, two other were situated in Komorowice and Mikuszowice.

Evangelists contributed also significantly to the development of Biała located in the Republic of Poland. Due to its peripheral location and a small number of Catholics the settlement enjoyed a religious peace for a long time; religious conflicts were initiated by the foundation of the Jesuit mission in 1708. Despite royal privileges guaranteeing complete equalization of rights (1730, 1757, 1766) restless times did not allow Evangelists of Biała to found and build their Protestant Church, though for a long time they had their own cemetery in the centre of the settlement.

In 1772 as a result of the First Partition of Poland Biała found itself under the reign of Austria. Under the Warsaw Treaty [Polish: Traktat Warszawski] of 1768 recognized by Austria in the partition treaty guaranteeing religious freedom to dissenters in 1781 the Emperor Joseph II allowed evangelical inhabitants of Biała to establish a parish and to build a church. The same year a temporary gospel hall was erected and in 1792-1798 replaced with a masonry church with a tower and bell that reminded about privileged position

of Galician Protestant Churches. A storied school building with a pastor's flat built beside was used to educate the youth till 1870 when on the opposite side of the yard a two-storied new lutheran school was built. Since 1783 the deceased were buried on the newly marked parish cemetery and in 1866 another cemetery was established in Lipnik. In 1905 a storied lutheran orphanage was built at 21 Komorowicka Street.

Since 1803 Biała was the seat of the West Superintendency of Galicia and Bukowina and two local pastors (Jakub Hönel and Herman Fritsche) served as superintendents. The vast area of western Galicia was subordinated to this parish, however, but except for Biała and Lipnik the number of Evangelists was scarce.

During the Interwar Period there were 7 protestant churches in Poland, parishes of the Silesian part of the twin-city became a part of the Evangelical–Augsburg Church in Warsaw, whereas Biała became the part of the Evangelical–Augsburg Church and Calvinist Church in the Lesser Poland. Polish members of protestant churches were still in minority, however, the cooperation of both nationalities, Polish and German, was good.

After 1945 as a result of Germans' abandoning the town the number of local Lutherans dropped drastically; presently they constitute only 1.7% inhabitants of Bielsko-Biała. The town is the seat of the Bishop of Cieszyn Diocese within 70% Polish evangelists living here.

The trail:

Jana III Sobieskiego Street – **Holy Trinity Catholic Church (104)** – Ludwika Waryńskiego Street – Marcina Lutra Square – **Old Lutheran School in Bielsko * (113)** – **Martin Luther Monument (114)** – **New Lutheran School in Bielsko (115)** – **Lutheran Church of Our Saviour (116)** – **Lutheran Teacher Training College For Men (117)** – **Lutheran Primary School for Girls (118)** – Andrzeja Frycza Modrzewskiego Street – **Alumneum (119)** – **The Old Lutheran Cemetery in Bielsko (120)** – **Lutheran Orphanage (121)** – **Silesian Lutheran Residence for Deaconesses (122)** – Listopadowa Street – **New Lutheran Cemetery in Bielsko (123)** – taking a MZK bus – Jana III Sobieskiego Street – **Lutheran Church of St John the Baptist (124)** – taking an MZK bus – Stanisława Staszica Street – **Old Lutheran School in Biała (125)** – **Martin Luther**

Church (126) – Komorowicka Street – **New Lutheran School in Biała (127)** – Marszałka Józefa Piłsudskiego Street – **Lutheran Cemetery in Biała (128)**.

* non-existing structure

Length of the trail: Holy Trinity Church (104) – New Lutheran Cemetery in Bielsko (123) – 1.5 km Old Lutheran School in Biała (125) – Lutheran Cemetery in Biała (128) – 0.5 km

Time needed: 40 min Holy Trinity Church (104) – New Lutheran Cemetery in Bielsko (123) – 40 min Old Lutheran School in Biała (125) – Lutheran Cemetery in Biała (128) – 10 min

NOTE: 1. From the New Lutheran Cemetery in Bielsko (123) to the Lutheran Church of St John the Baptist (124) travelling by a MZK bus, stops: Piastowska/Lubertowicza – Piastowska/Sobieskiego (on foot Piastowska Street 1.4 km, ok. 20 min). 2. From Lutheran Church of St John the Baptist (124) to Old Lutheran School in Biała (125) travelling by a MZK bus (stops Piastowska/Sobieskiego – Piłsudskiego).



In the Footsteps
of Lutherans



104. Holy Trinity Catholic Church

This Late-Gothic church was originally built outside the city walls by Lutherans in 1604–1608. In 1654 it became a Catholic church. Destroyed by fire in 1808 and rebuilt in 1830. Later, the nave was extended (1933–1934) and a tower added (1939–1947). The cemetery closed in 1896.

Information board: ul. Jana III Sobieskiego 10



In the Footsteps
of Lutherans



113. Old Lutheran School in Bielsko*

The school, the first permanent structure of Bielsko's Protestant community, stood here from 1782 to 1987. After a newer school was built in 1794, it served as a residence for pastors and teachers. Between 1860 and 1865 some of the rooms were used by the first high school in Bielsko.

Information board: pl. M. Lutra 3



In the Footsteps
of Lutherans



114. Martin Luther Monument

This 1900 work by Viennese sculptor Franz Vogel was one of only two monuments to the reformer in the whole Austro-Hungarian Empire, and after 1918 the only one in Poland. Bielsko and its environs were among the strongest Protestant centres in the Habsburg Empire: in 1890 every third inhabitant of the city was a Lutheran.

Information board: pl. M. Lutra



In the Footsteps
of Lutherans



115. New Lutheran School in Bielsko

The school, completed in 1794, originally had a clock tower with a miniature bell. There were four classrooms on the ground floor (in use until 1914) and two apartments on the first floor – one for the pastor and one for rector of the school.

Information board: pl. M. Lutra 12



In the Footsteps
of Lutherans



116. Lutheran Church of Our Saviour

This church was the centrepiece of Bielsko's Protestant community, officially recognised thanks to Emperor Joseph II's 1781 Edict of Tolerance. The nave was built in 1787–1789, the tower added in 1849–1852 and the building remodelled in the Neo-Gothic style in 1881.

Information board: pl. M. Lutra



In the Footsteps
of Lutherans



117. Lutheran Teacher Training College For Men

This was the first Lutheran training college in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and was built in 1863–1866 by the architect Emanuel Rost Sr. The college became co-educational from 1921 but closed in 1936. A Lutheran boys' school also functioned here.

Information board: pl. M. Lutra 8



In the Footsteps
of Lutherans



118. Lutheran Primary School for Girls

Erected by constructor Moritz Thien, 1896–1897. It also housed a girls' high school (1897–1913) and a Lutheran women's teacher training college (1907–1921). The top storey was added in 1906.

Information board: pl. M. Lutra 7



In the Footsteps
of Lutherans



119. Alumneum

Also called the "Lauerbach Foundation", it provided accommodation for students of the Lutheran teacher training college. It was opened by the Lutheran community in 1870 with considerable financial support from Paul Eugen Lauerbach, a resident of Paris.

Information board: ul. A. F. Modrzewskiego 12



In the Footsteps
of Lutherans



120. The Old Lutheran Cemetery in Bielsko

Opened in 1833, it was greatly enlarged to the east in the early 1860s and the Neo-Renaissance gate dates to this period. The tombs of many members of Bielsko's elite – pastors, teachers, merchants and industrialists, e.g. Theodor Sixt (d. 1897) – can be found here. It was closed to interments after World War II.

Information board: ul. A. F. Modrzewskiego 14



In the Footsteps
of Lutherans



121. Lutheran Orphanage

Built by Bielsko's Lutheran community in 1906–1907, it replaced an older building used for the same purpose. It was managed by the Lutheran Women's Union which had run an orphanage for girls from 1872 and, thanks to a donation from Theodor Sixt, also for boys from 1897.

Information board: ul. A. F. Modrzewskiego 25



In the Footsteps
of Lutherans



122. Silesian Lutheran Residence for Deaconesses

In 1906, the Lutheran community provided this residence for the deaconesses who staffed the city hospital, the Lutheran orphanage and the nursing home. The architect Karl Schulz blended Art Nouveau and Gothic styles. It was further extended in 1936.

Information board: ul. A. F. Modrzewskiego 31



In the Footsteps
of Lutherans



123. New Lutheran Cemetery in Bielsko

Designed by the Viennese architect Hans Mayr, the cemetery, its church and an interesting ancillary complex of galleried buildings opened in 1911. In addition to the numerous tombs of the Bielsko elite, the memorial to soldiers who died in local hospitals during the First World War.

Information board: ul. Listopadowa 92



In the Footsteps
of Lutherans



124. Lutheran Church of St John the Baptist

This Classical church was constructed 1818–1827 with an originally south-facing entrance. The tower was added in 1849–1852 and everything was finally completed in 1867. Close to the church is a cemetery with 19th and 20th cent. gravestones. The parish house is Stare Bielsko's former manor house.

Information board: ul. Pod Grodziskiem 9



In the Footsteps
of Lutherans



125. Old Lutheran School in Biała

Erected by Johann Feuerabend in 1782–1783, the building provided classrooms, in which both Protestant and Catholic children were educated from 1787 to 1812, and accommodation for the pastor and teachers. In 1823 merchant Johann F. Seeliger financed the addition of the north section.

Information board: ul. St. Staszica 2a



In the Footsteps
of Lutherans



126. Martin Luther Church

This Classical church was built by Biała Lutherans in 1792–1798, on the grounds of an old cemetery. In 1832 its wooden galleries were replaced with brick ones and the church was vaulted. The interior houses a beautiful altar from 1835 and an 1848 organ from the famous Karl Kutler factory in Opava.

Information board: ul. St. Staszica 2



In the Footsteps
of Lutherans



127. New Lutheran School in Biała

Built by Emanuel Rost Sr in 1870 to supersede the old Lutheran school in Staszica Street. The school's simple facade, shallow central projection and uniform windows with characteristic semi-circular arches make it a fine example of the so-called "arcade style" of architecture.

Information board: ul. Komorowicka 13



128. Lutheran Cemetery in Biała

The city's oldest cemetery was founded in 1783. It contains tombstones of many of the city's eminent industrialists, a grand monument to mayor Rudolf Theodor Seeliger (d. 1883) and an obelisk with pastor Jakob Hönel's medallion (d. 1885). The cemetery was enlarged to the east in 1867.

Information board: ul. marsz. J. Piłsudskiego 15



9. The Jewish Route

In the 19th century Bielsko was the largest Jewish population centre in the territory of Cieszyn Silesia and one of the largest in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. In Biała the followers of Judaism also constituted a significant percent of inhabitants. They were mainly the so-called reform Jews who became assimilated in the circle of German culture, a group of orthodox Jews lived mainly in Biała and Lipnik. They played an important role in the economy of the twin-city, in this respect giving way to Evangelists only.

Till the middle of the 18th century only individual Jews used to live in Bielsko: lordly toll collectors, lessees [Polish: *arendarz*] or distillers. After the division of Silesia (1742) a rapid development of local drapery resulted in the increased demand for wool and in this connection; since 1750 Jewish buyers from Poland, Silesia and Moravia came regularly to the town to deliver needed raw material and to buy ready goods.

At that time 5 Jewish families lived in this important Danubian trade centre. After the First Partition of Poland and the incorporation of Galicia to Austria (1772) other Israelites settled in Bielsko situated along the main route from Vienna to Lvov; in 1781 there were as many as 11 Jewish families living there, half of which made their living trading with Poland and Hungary. Economic reasons, likewise in case of Evangelists, made the Emperor Joseph II issue the Edict of Tolerance (1781) ensuring religious freedom for Jews as well as the possibility of pursuing craft and establishing manufactures. The annulment of travelling restrictions facilitated trade and migration resulting in a fast influx of Jews to Bielsko in the subsequent decades; between the year 1790 and 1837 their number increased from 86 to 426 persons. They monopolized the trade of wool and cloth in the developing woollen industry and in the 30's of the 19th century first of them opened factories.

As early as in the beginning of the 19th century the Jewish of Bielsko belonging to the so-called "Jewry of Cieszyn" outnumbered their fellow-believers in Cieszyn and constituted an organized, though unofficial, community. Since 1800 they had their house of prayer, probably in 1816 they employed a rabbi and in 1839 they completed of construction their own

house of prayer at the street which started to be called Tempelgasse – Temple (present Cechowa Street).

The changes initiated in 1848 by Springtide of Nations [Polish: Wiosna Ludów] brought equalization of rights to Jews in Austria. Enjoying full rights they engaged themselves vigorously in business activity and contributed significantly to the development of Bielsko in the course of subsequent decades. In 1863 as many as 153 Jewish families already lived in the town and many of them were fabricants, wealthy and educated people. In 1849 Jews of Bielsko established their own cemetery in Aleksandrowice and shortly afterwards they opened a school. In 1865 they finally made themselves independent from Cieszyn and established their Jewish Community in Bielsko. In 1872 a new school building was erected and in 1881 a great synagogue, the so-called temple, was ready and replaced the old house of prayer. Next to it an impressive building designed to be the Community seat was built in 1904. Construction of the Chaim Bialik Jewish Community House [Polish: Żydowski Dom Ludowy im Chaima Bialika] was the last large investment in 1935. In the area of today's Franciszka Smolki Square a small orthodox house of prayer functioned since 1870.

On the other side of Biała River in the Council [Polish: Starostwo] of Lipnik first Jews appeared as early as at the end of the 17th century. Here they also acted as merchants, lessees leasing lordly breweries and inns. This influx to Biała took place in the 40's of the 18th century due to the increased importance of the town as the trade centre on the border with Austria. Thanks to the support of prefects [Polish: starosta] and their administrators they created a Jewish colony with a synagogue and a cemetery within the territory of an independent starost jurisdiction right outside a royal city [Polish: jurydyka starościńska] and neighborhood areas of Lipnik which was competitive for the town. As a result of a severe conflict with citizens they were banished from Biała in 1765 and the town was given the right to prohibit Jews from settling within its territory, maintained by Austrian authorities after 1772. This right was in force till 1848, however, it was not observed.

Jews returned to Lipnik as early as at the end of the 18th century and in Biała they appeared again in ca. 1805, a notable number of them settled in Komorowice (Krakowskie). In 1849 they established their cemetery and in 1872 they separated from fellow believers in Oświęcim to create their Jew-

ish community: Biała-Lipnik. Many Jews lived in the so-called urban part of Lipnik adjacent to Biała: at today's streets: 11 Listopada and Krakowska. It was here that they built their impressive synagogue in 1889. Orthodoxies used several private houses and in 1912 a charity organization - "Ahawas Thora" built a synagogue in Biała in which a Talmudic school was opened, the building was situated at today's Romana Dmowskiego Street.

In the Interwar Period the number of Jews in Bielsko and Biała increased. They bought lots of real estates from the inhabitants who decided to leave the town, they also invested in new buildings. Many of them started their business in the woollen industry establishing small companies running production in leased halls of large factories.

Likewise in other regions of Poland the World War II brought the extermination of Jewish population in Bielsko and Biała. After the invasion of Nazi army synagogues were burnt down and demolished; Jews were gathered in the ghetto in Biała and then sent to concentration camps. After 1945 only few of them returned to the town.

The trail:

Bielsko Jewish Cemetery (129) – taking a MZK bus – 3 Maja Street – Adama Mickiewicza Street – **Bielsko Synagogue (1881-1939) * (130)** – **Jewish Community House (131)** – **Jewish Community Building (132)** – Henryka Sienkiewicza Street – Zygmunta Krasińskiego Street – **Jewish Primary School (133)** – Henryka Sienkiewicza Street – Esperanto Square – Wałowa Street – Cechowa Street – **Old Bielsko Synagogue (1839-1881) * (134)** – ks. Stanisława Stojałowskiego Street – **Polish House Of Prayer (1870-1939) * (135)** – ks. Stanisława Stojałowskiego Street – Konfederatów Barskich Street – Głęboka Street – Wyzwolenia Street – 11 Listopada Street – Krakowska Street – **Biała Synagogue * (136)** – 11 Listopada Street – Wyzwolenia Street – Biała **Jewish cemetery * (137)**.

* non-existing structure

Length of the trail: Bielsko Synagogue 1881-1939* (130) – Biała Jewish Cemetery * (137) – 2,8 km

Time needed: Bielsko Synagogue in 1881-1939* (130) – Biała Jewish Cemetery * (137) – 50 min

NOTE: From the Bielsko Jewish Cemetery (129) to the Bielsko Synagogue (130) take a MZK bus no. 7, stops: Cieszyńska/Osiedle Słoneczne – 3 Maja/Prezydent Hotel.



The Jewish
Route



129. Bielsko Jewish Cemetery

The cemetery was established in 1849 just outside the city in Aleksandrowice by the Bielsko Jewish community, and expanded in 1924. The pre-burial house was designed by Karl Korn in 1885 and contains beautiful polychromes. In the 1960s many tombstones from the closed Biała Jewish Cemetery were relocated here.

Information board: ul. Cieszyńska 92

The Jewish
Route



130. Bielsko Synagogue (1881–1939)*

The unusual Moorish style of the building, designed by Ludwig Schöne and Karl Korn, was modelled on synagogues in Budapest, Vienna and Szombathely. It was burned down by Germans in 1939 after they invaded Poland.

Information board: ul. H. Sienkiewicza 1



The Jewish
Route



131. Jewish Community House

This building, erected in 1935, stood next to the synagogue and was named after Chaim Nachman Bialik (1873–1934), the Volhynia-born poet, writer and journalist, called the “nation’s bard”. The building was destroyed by Germans in 1939. The site was redeveloped in the 1950s and is now home to the “Banialuka” Puppet Theatre.

Information board: ul. 3 Maja 11

The Jewish
Route



132. Jewish Community Building

Built in 1904 by Karl Korn to Ernst Lindner’s and Theodor Schreier’s design. The building housed the offices of various Jewish associations, a Jewish school and apartments for the rabbi and cantors. In 1931 Jews comprised 20 per cent of Bielsko’s population.

Information board: ul. A. Mickiewicza 22



The Jewish
Route



133. Jewish Primary School

The Jewish community of Bielsko commissioned their own school from the constructor, Karl Kunz, in 1872. When it opened, the school employed 4 teachers who taught 200 children. A kindergarten also operated here during the inter-war period.

Information board: ul. Z. Krasieńskiego 17

The Jewish
Route



134. Old Bielsko Synagogue (1839–1881)*

The first synagogue in Bielsko, called Tempel, stood on the site of building No. 20 in 1839–1881. Originally a simple prayer house, in 1865 it became a synagogue of Bielsko's autonomous Jewish community, until then dependent on Cieszyn.

Information board: ul. Cechowa 22



The Jewish
Route



135. Polish House Of Prayer (1870–1939)*

In this place stood a house which was used by orthodox Jews as a place of worship. It was demolished by Germans in the Second World War. The neighbouring houses were later cleared to allow ul. Stojałowskiego to be developed in 1970.

Information board: ul. ks. St. Stojałowskiego 8

The Jewish
Route



136. Biała Synagogue*

The Neo-Romanesque building was designed and built by Karl Korn in 1889 for the Lipnik-Biała Jewish community. It was attended by Reformed Jews (Orthodox Jews preferred several private prayer houses). It was set ablaze by Germans during the night of 13th September 1939, and was later demolished.

Information board: ul. Krakowska / Kazimierza Wielkiego



137. Jewish Cemetery in Biała*

Established in 1849, liquidated by Communist authorities in 1966. After a partial exhumation of the deceased in the place of the cemetery „Pol-sport” - Sport Equipment Plant was built here. Some grave monuments were moved to the cemetery in Bielsko, others were damaged or used for construction purposes.

Information board: ul. Wyzwolenia 59

Boards with theme-oriented tourist trails



Wall-mounted and free standing information modules


Tłumaczenie: E. Imperial-Bonin

Stara poczta

W tym budynku od końca XVIII w. do 1873 r. działała stacja pocztowa w Biełsku, utworzona w 1744 r. Tu zatrzymywały się dyliżanse linii Wiedeń – Lwów kursujące regularnie od 1775 r. Sień przejazdowa prowadziła do obszernej stajni, znajdujących się w miejscu dzisiejszej kamienicy przy ul. Wągorze 5.



The Old Post Office

Bielsko formed part of the regular passenger/mail-coach route established in 1775 between Vienna and Lvov. The post service, introduced to Bielsko in 1744, was housed in this building from c. 1790 until 1873. The gateway led to large stables at present-day No. 5 Wągorze Street.


Tłumaczenie: E. Imperial-Bonin

Ewangelickie Seminarium Nauczycielskie

Główny zbudowany w latach 1863–1866 wg planów architekta Emanuela Wosta seniora dla męskiego seminarium nauczycielskiego, pierwotnie ewangelickiej szkoły tego typu w Austrii. Seminarium, od 1921 c. kontynuacja, działało do 1936 r. Część budynku zajmowała ewangelicka szkoła ludowa dla chłopców.



Lutheran Teacher Training College For Men

This was the first Lutheran training college in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and was built in 1863–1866 by the architect Emanuel Wost. The college became an educational from 1921 but closed in 1936. A Lutheran boys' school also functioned here.

Posts with information boards



Illuminated boards with historical and functional maps



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