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## A HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF OSVEYA SETTLEMENT

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Osveya is a settlement that possesses a significant historical, cultural and architectural heritage, as well as unique recreational natural surroundings. The article describes the historical development of the settlement since ancient times, and marks the most important events, which resulted in Osveya attaining its historical, cultural and architectural potential.

Nowadays Osveya is a town in the Verhnedvinsk district, Vitebsk region, located on the southern shore of Osveiskoye lake (Figure 1).

It's known that ancient settlements of pagan tribes existed in these places after the retreat of glaciers. Archaeologists have found the remains of ancient settlements around the perimeter of the lake. Artifacts date back to the VII century BC – AD III century [1].

Osveya was mentioned in chronicles for the first time in 1503 as a local center in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania [2]. The owners of Osveya changed through its history and some of them contributed a lot to its growth and development. In 1585 Osveya became the property of the Ignatians [2], who founded a monastery and school there.

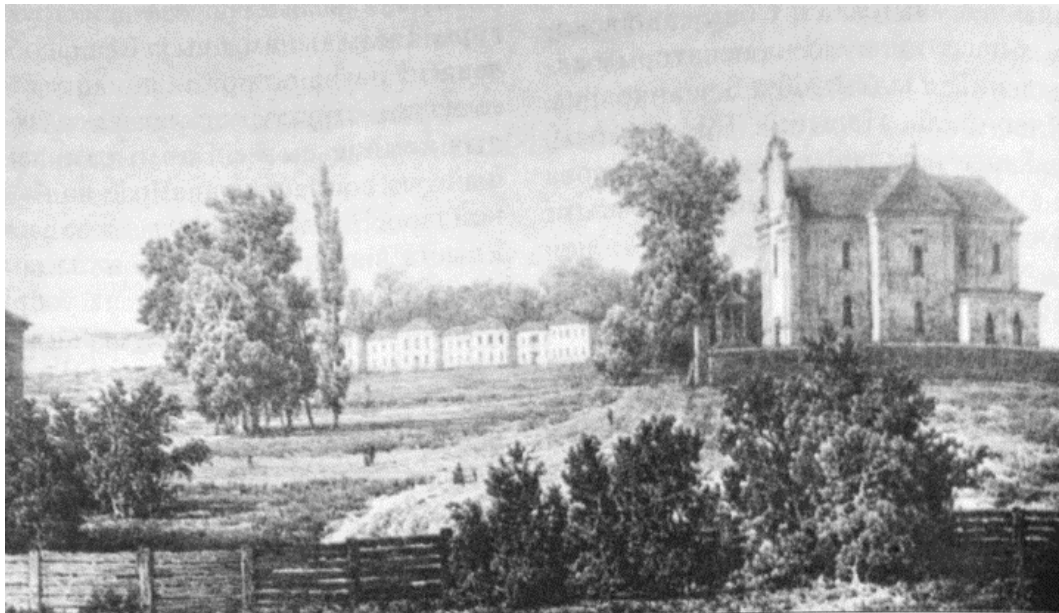
Yan Gilzen built a residence in Osveya—a palace and park complex with a total area of 30 hectares. [3], which remains the most valuable architectural object in the settlement (Figure 2). In the Baroque period, the construction of the residence palace was accompanied by erection of religious building [4], and so the Osveya palace and park ensemble was preceded by the Baroque Trinity Church, built in 1782. By virtue of the Gilzen family, Osveya became a famous center of education in the territory of Belarus. This period can be considered as a time of prosperity in Osveya.

Patronage was a necessary part of activity for aristocracy. Nobleman directed money for building temples, hospitals and schools. The Enlightenment activity of the Gilzens family was extremely active and brought many benefits to northeastern part of Belarus. They contributed a lot in building stone temples in towns and villages of the current Vitebsk region. The leading architects of their time—Jan Glavbits Ludwig Grintsevich and Anthony Parako were invited for that purpose. A. Parako had a direct influence on Osveya: he managed a large-scale town-planning work, which formed a new residential areas with stone buildings. In the center of town was organized a spacious market square. Its appearance was necessary because the Osveya of those days lay at a busy trade route from Russia to Poland and Lithuania. [5] In addition, twice a year (in May and June), the town held a trade festival—"kirmash". The population also grew and at the end of the eighteenth century there were eight thousand people in Osveya.

After the first partition of Poland in 1772 Osveya was already a territory of the Russian Empire. And the Earls Shadurskie became the next owners of the estate.



**Figure 1. – The main directions of roads passing through Osveya**



**Figure 2. – The palace and the church in Osveya. Drawing by N. Orda 1875-76**

They continued a the patronage mission of Gilzen and annually paid a large sum for the support of the students at schools and monasteries in their estates. Thus, the largest Belarusian fund was created in Osveya, which financed the development of education during a long time, until patronage activities were ceased by the Russian government, which did not support Catholicism

In 2007 Osveya received the status of town. According to the data of 2010 year the population of the settlement reached 1,3 thousand of residents.

Currently, several historical objects of Osveya are under state protection: The former monastery hospital (code 212G000224, category 2) and park ensemble (code 213G000225, category 3), a mass grave of the Great Patriotic War (code 213D000226, category 3) [6], and the ruins of Gilzen Palace were introduced into the Cultural Properties of Belarus.

Thus, Osveya and many other small towns in Belarus (for example, Druja, Lintupi) seem unremarkable, but they have an amazing past that we must study to preserve and recover the historical, cultural and architectural heritage of our country.

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