

Town history

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Puławy was established in the beginning of the 17th century as a small trade and fishing settlement situated at the bank of Vistula river. In the years 1671-76 Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski - the grand crown marshal - decided to have a defensive residence erected here in baroque style under the direction of the architect - Tylman of Gameren. In 1702 Puławy became the property of the Sieniawski family. During the Northern War in 1706 the Swedish troops led by king Charles XII passed Vistula and burnt the settlement. Its reconstruction was undertaken by Elżbieta Sieniawska and her daughter Zofia, the wife of August Czartoryski. In this way Puławy passed on to the Czartoryski family. Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski's marriage with Izabela of the Flemming, as well as their removal to Puławy, open a new chapter in the settlement's history. Puławy, also known as 'Polish Athens' became a known centre of political and cultural life of the country. Many noteworthy personae of the Polish Enlightenment sojourned on the court, among others Franciszek Dionizy Kniaźnin, Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, Grzegorz Piramowicz, Jan Paweł Woronicz, painters ; Piotr Norblin and Zygmunt Vogel, as well as musician and composer ; Franciszek Lessel and many others. When Poland lost its independence, Duchess Izabela, driven by patriotic feelings, decided to raise the Sybil's Temple. A prominent architect ; Chrystian Piotr Aigner ; was the author of the project. Stylized on antique mode, the building became the first Polish national remnants museum. Nearby, the Gothic House was built. It was designed to gather collections from the country and abroad, among others famous paintings such as: 'Lady with a Weasel', by Leonardo da Vinci or 'Charitable Samaritanian', by Rembrandt.

After the failure of the November Uprising in 1831 the Puławy goods were confiscated by the tsar's government, and in 1845 Puławy carried the name 'New Alexandria'. In 1862 in Puławy the Polytechnical and Agricultural-Forest Institute was created, renamed in 1869 to Rural and Forestry Institute, which exists till today as Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation. In this way Puławy became an important scientific centre; this tradition is still continued by numerous scientific-research institutions. In 1906 the New Alexandria was given municipal rights. After Poland's gaining independence in 1918 the name of the town was once again changed from New Alexandria to Puławy.



During the I World War the Russian troops built a wooden bridge on Vistula river in Puławy, destroyed in 1939 and rebuilt in the first years after the war. During the II World War the town was destroyed in 60 %. Thanks to the decision of the construction of Nitrogen Works in Puławy - a factory producing fertilizers for the agriculture - an intensive economic development of the town began. Already in the semiwar period Puławy became an important scientific centre (on the basis of the created by tsar's authorities in 1869 Polytechnical and Agricultural-Forest Institute). Presently the town is the seat of many scientific posts of national importance: Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation, Apiculture Division of the Institute of Floriculture, National Veterinary Research Institute, New Chemical Syntheses Institute, Diagnostic Centre of Biohazard Combat of the Military Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology. The economic character of the town is given by Zakłady Azotowe "Puławy", S.A. ; the largest Polish producer of nitrogen fertilizers, melamine and caprolactam.

Over the years there have been many annual events of international rank organized in Puławy, such as: the International Jazz Music Workshops, Chamber Music Workshops, Polish Traditional Dance Tournament "O Pierścień Księżnej Izabeli", ; National Championships and National Meetings of Puppet-Show Artists. In June, on the occasion of the "Days of Puławy" and "Days of the Chemist", cycles of concerts, theater performances and exhibitions are organized.

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