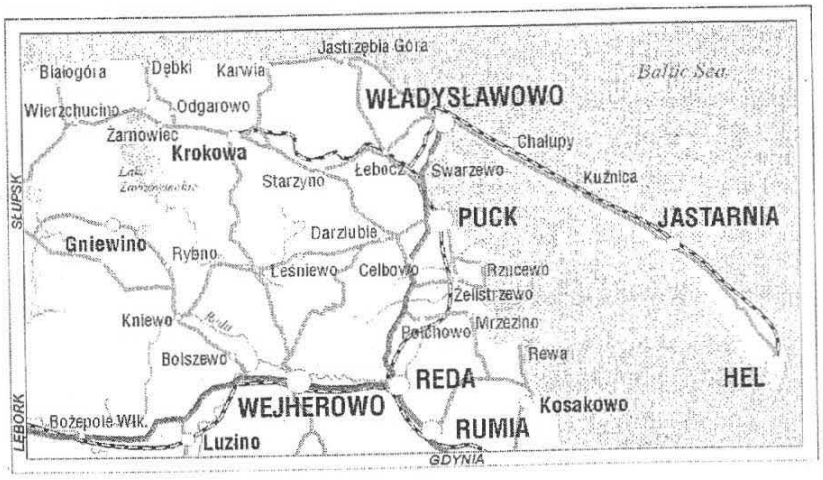
The Puck Region

by Jarosłow Ellwart
(from Tourist Guide Kashubia, translator E. Turek)

The Puck Powiat is made up of the central part of the Pomeranian coast, comprising the districts situated on Puck Bay and the Baltic, from the mouth of the Reda to the mouth of the Piaśnica. There is no need to extol the sandy beaches, the unique Hel Peninsula and the marvelous Darżlubie Forest. The Kashubian Riviera with its old fishing settlements, lovely woods and fields and ever-changing sea has long been a destination for thousands of holiday-makers. The main urban center of the powiat is the centuries-old town of Puck, although in recent years the much younger Władysławowo has been catching up with it. Other well-known resorts are Jastrzębia Góra, Kużnica, Jastarnia, Jurata, Hel and Rewa, now enjoying its second youth. The Puck Powiat is not just beaches and pleasant towns and villages, but also Puck Bay the "Little Sea", also known affectionately as "Pucific" or the "Puck Puddle" (*Puck Plëra)*. Here there are the best conditions in Pomerania for a variety of water sports, including good winds, water that is not too deep, a network of moorings and harbors and well-developed water sports centers. If the weather is not favorable or the east wind brings in cold water, there is no need to wait around on the coast when a world of Kashubian villages and natural wonders awaits discovery in the Darżlubie Forest, around Żarnowiec or on the broad woodland of the Kępa Swarzewo or Kępa Oksywie.

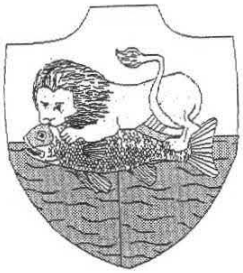


The Puck Region

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Town of Puck (Putzig)

The powiat town of Puck, 40 km from Gdynia and 30 km from Wejherowo, has long been a symbol of the Polish presence on the Baltic.



There was already a harbor there in the VIIth century and archaeological finds attest to the wide trading contacts of "Puccan". Puck became an administrative center in the XIth century. After the Teutonic Knights had taken possession of Pomerania an official of the order responsible for "fishing matters" was based in Puck. On receiving its town charter in 1348 the fortifications were strengthened and a brick castle built to replace the walled town. During the Thirteen Years' War the town was given as security to Gdańsk, but in 1457 the nobles of Gdańsk handed it over to the Swedish King Karl Knutsen. In 1466, when Pomerelia was joined to Royal Poland after the war, Puck became the center of a *starostwo*. The growing importance of sea trade and the aspirations of Sweden led in 1567 to the creation of a port there for the new naval fleet. During the Swedish Deluge, Puck and Gdańsk alone were able to repel the invaders. From June 1656, these towns besieged from the sea, were protected by 42 Dutch men-of-war, to which ten Danish warships were added in September.

After the wars of the XVIIth century, stagnation set in and the town went into decline, made worse by the First Partition of Poland, in which Puck was assimilated into Wejherowo Powiat. In the early XIXth century the castle and town walls were demolished. By the mid-XIXth century, however, Puck was beginning to undergo a transformation. Buick-built townhouses began to replace the half-timbered and wooden buildings, making the town center more attractive, while a Lutheran church was built on the Bay. After the victory in the war with France in 1870 a statue of a German soldier was put up in the marketplace. The regeneration of the town's economy benefited from the reorganization of the state, with the administrative headquarters of the powiat being re-established in Puck. The construction of a railway line, completed in 1898, was also of great importance for the town. In 1912 a power station came into operation, at first supplying the largest factory in Puck, the Magdsicka plant, which produced agricultural machinery, but later providing energy for the whole town. In the years 1911-1912, barracks, a basin for sea planes and an airfield for Zeppelins were built on the Bay.

In 1920, after Poland had gained independence, the ceremony of the Marriage of Poland to the Sea was held in Puck and a commemorative pillar set up, which may be seen today. The airfield was taken over by the Polish armed forces and the Polish Naval Air Arm created there. Unfortunately the machinery left by the Germans quickly became museum pieces. Lack of equipment at the beginning of the 1930s meant that the Puck Division ceased to play any military role whatsoever. Despite this, the airfields at Puck were the pride of the nation and it was Puck that was targeted by the first raid of the German Luftwaffe in September 1939.