



# Wierzbice

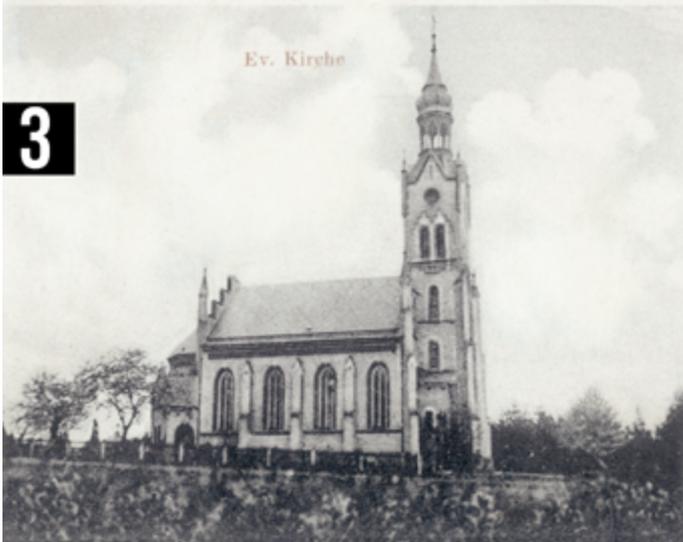
Wirbicz (1336), Gross Wirbitz (1403), Wirwitz (1743), Wirrwitz (1845), Konradserbe (1937), Wierzbice (1948)



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Postcard sent in 1931

1. Baroque palace from 1730, now housing the Child Care and Treatment Center run by Sisters of St. Joseph
2. Late gothic Corpus Christi church
3. Evangelical church from 1890s, rebuilt from a burial chapel of the von Kramst family (does not exist; it was located in the southern part of the village, in the area of the present cemetery)
4. Löwe's store



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5. The Baroque palace was located between courtyard and garden (entre cour et jardin); the garden was at the back of the palace

6. The coat of arms of Baron Hildebrand Rudolf von Hund can be seen at the northern entrance to the palace; the date 1730 on the second cartouche refers to the baroque reconstruction of the palace

7. Main altar from the parish church from 1592, depicts Last Supper (middle section) and scenes from Christ's life (side wings)

8. Personification of Love from the Mannerist epitaph in the chancel (fragment) dedicated to Hans and Barbara von Reibnitz

9. Gallery of stone gravestones of former Wierzbice owners set into the church wall

The name of the village has a topographic character and means „a place overgrown with willows”. The name from 1937 probably referred to the first known by name owner of Wierzbice - Konrad von Wirbicz.

Wierzbice is a typical linear settlement, the old buildings are located along Lipowa Street. The most important monuments can be seen in the center of the village: a medieval church and Baroque palace.

The small late Gothic church dates back to the end of the 15th century (chancel) and the beginning of the 16th century (nave). The building is surrounded by a historic wall with loopholes, which contains a collection of several 16th and 17th century sandstone tombstones and a granite cross, considered to be the Cross of Reconciliation.

It is worth noting the Mannerist altar painted on the board in the interior of the church. It is a triptych with scenes of the Last Supper (in the main field), Birth of Christ, Circumcision, Baptism in the Jordan and Resurrection. Stone epitaphs of the von Reibnitz family and two women from the von Hoberg family are built into the walls of the chancel and nave. The oldest element of the equipment is the late Gothic sculpture of the Virgin Mary with Child.

On the other side of the street there is a palace and park complex. Probably in the Middle Ages, there was a residential tower here, in the place of which a Renaissance manor house was built (nowadays, the east wing), transformed in 1730 into a baroque residence by Baron Rudolf von Hund, according to the design of a well-known Silesian architect - Christoph Hackner. The building was rebuilt in the 19th century and extended in the 21st century for the purposes of the Child Care and Treatment Center run by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

There are many legends connected with the village, the heroes of which are ghosts, misfires and apparitions from the afterlife. One of the legends tells of a menacing black dog with glowing eyes running at night across the surrounding fields, which is the spirit of the former owner of the village, Baron von Hund (der Hund in German means „dog”).

In the village there is a library and a community room, a playground, a train stop (about 2 km from the village). The village has 761 inhabitants (as of 15.08.2021).

## Wierzbice

Why was Wierzbice thought to be a haunted village and what can we read from the epitaphs and tombstones in the Wierzbice cemetery?

The sandstone Baroque sarcophagus of Baron Rudolf Hildebrand von Hund is worth seeing in the church cemetery. According to local legend, his ghost appears at night in the surrounding fields in the form of a dog (der Hund in German means „dog”). It is said that the Baron did not like it when curious people disturbed his eternal rest. When people looked into the crypt in the church, where a stone sarcophagus stood until 1939, the furious Baron von Hund supposedly got up from the coffin and slapped the intruders.



The Baron rather had nothing to do with the misfires that appeared at night in the surrounding fields, which mischievously confused wanderers and misguided the hosts returning home late. Probably many housewives were fooled by such explanations, when their husbands did not come home for the night after returning from the inn.

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In the church wall and inside the Wierzbice church there is a gallery of figures depicted on stone tombstones and epitaphs, showing the owners of Wierzbice and members of their families who used to be buried in the local cemetery from the 16th to 18th century. Thanks to the images of the noblemen and inscriptions carved in stone, we can learn a lot about several of them, including Diprand von Reibnitz, Diprand's son, and his family. Grave slabs placed secondarily in the church wall and a beautiful renaissance epitaph in the chancel have been preserved.



The sandstone slab depicts a man in his prime (he died at the age of sixty), with uncovered head and abundant facial hair - a mustache and long thick beard. He is standing in a slight contrapposto, his right hand resting on his hip, his left hand on the hilt of his sword. He is dressed in plate armor, a helmet with a plume lies at his feet.

There are the coats of arms in the four corners: on the father's side (right) - Reibnitz (shield with two stripes) and Jenkwitz, on the mother's side (left) - Gohlau and Elbel. Diprand died on the 2nd of May in 1575.

A slab with the figure of a woman is placed near her husband, this is Hedwig, née Unwürde. She outlived her much older husband by twelve years, and died in 1587, at the age of forty.



The epitaph of the couple is located in the chancel of the church, to the right of the entrance. It depicts the risen Christ and the founders and their family adoring him. The epitaph conveys hope in eternal life with a quote from the book of Job: „ For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth...”.



The second man looking at us from the cemetery wall is Hans von Reibnitz, who died in 1596, the lord of Biskupice Podgórne and Piotrówko near Niemcza. Next to the young man dressed in armor there is a tombstone of a child, Hans' son, little Frederick, who died four months after birth. He is portrayed as the Risen Christ, dressed in a mortal crepe shirt, holding a cross and an apple - the symbol of eternal life.

A particularly beautiful epitaph dedicated to Hans von Reibnitz and his wife Barbara, née Kanitz, made of marble and gabbro, with alabaster carvings depicting the virtues of Love and Patience is found in the church chancel on the left. In the center, there is a bas-relief veil of Veronica with the image of Christ reflected on it; the motto guiding the deceased is from Matthew's gospel: "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."

