

Map Corner

A Rare Sketch of Gródek

by Jay Osborn,
Gesher Galicia Digital Maps Manager

THE HABSBURG MONARCHY'S surveyors and cartographers used cadastral maps to precisely document the boundaries and features of private, community, and government property across the empire to determine appropriate taxation. Prior articles in the Map Corner series have highlighted the value of historical cadastral maps and property records in locating the sites of Galician family homes in the modern geography of Polish and Ukrainian cities, towns, and villages. The preceding family history article by Eva Robotnick (pp. 30–36) provides us with an opportunity to feature an unusual type of cadastral map and explain what makes this map type uniquely valuable for genealogists.

Eva notes in her Raab family timeline that the All Galicia Database indexes show several Raab births recorded in Gródek (later known as Gródek Jagielloński, and now as Horodok, Ukraine) at different house numbers. In this article, we will focus on two of those house numbers—84 and 79—to illustrate the value of cadastral maps in family history research.

We will work with the 1879 cadastral map of Gródek, which is depicted on the next page. It is also published in interactive format in the online Gesher Galicia Map Room and can be found at maps.geshergalicia.org/cadastral/grodek-horodok-1879/.

The Gródek map is called an "indication sketch" (*Indikationsskizze*, in German), a term used to identify one of the stages in tax map development. Indication sketches are rare in Polish and Ukrainian archives. In fact, in the Gesher Galicia map collection, we have only three indication sketches to date from almost 150 cadastral maps of all types.

A Hybrid Map

Indication sketches are prepared in between the early and late stages of map development. In the regular development sequence, the first stage consists of initial field sketches, which are typically very rough geographically, but valuable, because they indicate house numbers directly on or near every house on the map. (See Osborn, Jay, "Map Corner: Nadwórna 1847 Field Sketch," December 2018, pp. 27–30.) The final development stage of cadastral maps is always very accurate geographically, but the annotations on the maps only indicate parcel numbers, which are used for tax purposes, not house numbers. As a result, contemporary property records are required to correlate buildings on a cadastral map to the families who lived in them. (See Osborn, Jay, "Map Corner: Research with the Rozdół Cadastral Map of 1850," March 2017, pp. 21–23.)

Created after the field sketch and before the final cadastral map, the indication sketch is a hybrid, which includes building and land parcel numbers as well as associated house numbers, making the indication sketch very helpful in family research. Like other creations in the middle of metamorphosis, however, indication sketches can be confusing to study. We will use the two Raab family houses in Gródek to demonstrate how to interpret them. (For those reading this article in print, we encourage you to go online, if possible, to the Gesher Galicia Map Room to see the Gródek indication sketch in full color and follow along.)



Later-stage cadastral maps use black numbers to identify building parcels and red numbers to identify land parcels; indication sketches do the same. House numbers for the owners of these properties are also drawn on indication sketches, but in the reverse color scheme: red house numbers on buildings and black house numbers on land parcels. Additional marks on the map contribute to the visual clutter: property splits and other boundary changes, land use types, owners' names, smudges, and wear.

Locating the Raab Family

House number 84, where several Raab children were born, is easy to find on the 1879 map. It's at the eastern side of the bridge across the Wereszyca River, circled on the full-page excerpt of the map on the preceding page. It also appears in the detailed image at the top of this page, where house number 84 in red and building parcel number 181 in black are marked on a rectangle that depicts the footprint of a masonry building, with its entrance facing the bridge road. The building parcel also includes a small building inside the bottom of the circle, most likely a wooden service building of some type. (For those viewing the map in color, we know that the rectangular building is brick or stone because it is shaded in pink, and the service building is wooden because it is shaded in yellow.)

Also circled on the full-page map excerpt on the preceding page is house number 79. It's northeast of house number 84, just past a small church. As shown in the detailed image to the right on this page, a red number 79 straddles a small wooden house (in yellow), which is also marked with the black building parcel number 254, for tax recording.

The detailed image of house number 79 provides an example of how indication sketches can help us understand a historical family's situation. The land parcel just above the house is marked with number 158 in red. This land parcel is also marked



House number 84 (building parcel number 181), just east of the bridge.

with house number 79 in black, though it is hard to read. In other words, this parcel was owned by the same family that owned the wooden house and was perhaps used as a large kitchen garden or in some other way to support the family livelihood. We can learn such information about the Raab family, and about other families on this map, without the need for contemporary property records, many of which no longer exist in the archives.



House number 79 (building parcel number 254 and land parcel 158), just east of the church.

For Further Study

A more detailed review of cadastral map development stages and property numbering can be found in the journal of the East European Genealogical Society (Lenius, Brian J., *East European Genealogist*, 2016; 24 (3), pp. 7-17).