

6. THE RUINS OF ST. NICHOLAS CHAPEL

In the valley of the Brusienka stream, on its left bank, stand the ruins of St. Nicholas Chapel. The structure was built of regularly worked blocks of local stone, most likely in the third quarter of the 19th century. Initially, a stone figure of the chapel's patron stood inside. After World War II, the chapel was abandoned and fell into ruin. A spring—recognized for its miraculous properties—flows from beneath its southern foundation, serving as one of Brusienka's sources. In the past, local Greek Catholic parishioners celebrated the Feast of the Epiphany (Jordan) each year (January 19) at this spot on the Brusienka.

Above the chapel ruins, one can still see a stone cross funded by the local community in 1842, carved in local stonemasonry workshops. According to tradition, it commemorates the original parish church located on the hill above. A former church cemetery with stone crosses once stood there as well.

The first wooden parish church was burned by the Tatars in 1672. Its furnishings included a double-sided processional icon depicting Christ on one side and the Mother of God on the other. According to local legend, as the church burned, this icon rose into the air before the eyes of both the villagers and the invaders, and was then carried by the wind to the opposite side of the Brusienka. There, it hung by a cord from a linden tree. This event was deemed a miracle. The terrified Tatars fled, and the surviving residents, in gratitude for their deliverance, built a second church on the new site. Inside it, until the 20th century, hung the miraculous icon on its distinctive cord. An inscription with the date 1653 was visible on the icon.

A bell dating to 1615 also survived the Tatar raid. It had hung at the original church, warning villagers of danger. After the church was burned, the bell cracked, fell silent, and sank into the ground. Only years later was it washed out by springs flowing from beneath the hill. Though it was damaged, out of respect for the relics of the past, the residents hung it in the bell tower of the new church. It remained there until the end of the Brusno parish and its church.

(compiled by: Janusz Mazur)

