

Pijarzy w Werenowie i Lidzie (1735-1845)

The Piarists at Werenowo and Lida (1735-1842)

SUMMARY

The article presents the history of the Scipio de Campo family Piarist foundation in the town of Bolotne (Werenowo), which was later, in 1756, moved to Lida, probably as results of an agreement with Jesuits. For a short time – at least until 1773, the Piarists were active in both places, but then they resided only at Lida, where they ran a school until 1834. In 1842 a fire destroyed most of the order's property in the town, and soon afterwards the Russian authorities transferred the remainder to the Orthodox Church.

The study is based on source materials from the Archives of the Polish Province of the Piarists in Cracow, the Archives General of the Piarist Order in Rome, and the Archives of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) in Warsaw; it also makes use of the published reports by inspectors of the Commission for National Education, active at the end of the 18th century. An especially valuable source is constituted by the account of the last rector of Lida, Jozafat Wojszwiłło, which has been preserved in a hand-written copy made by Rev. Tadeusz Chromecki. The article presents the history of the foundation, describes the obligations stemming from it, the financial support of the college, the property lawsuits in which the Piarists were involved, and the condition of the monastery and school buildings. The article also discusses the functioning of the school (its classes, curriculum, teachers, pupils and the library), which could never boast of very high educational standards, and never had a very large number of students.

In the history of the college and school, several distinct periods can be recognized; the Werenowo and Lida period before the establishment of the Commission for National Education, the stormy period of the Kościuszko Insurrection and the Napoleonic Wars, and the final period, marked by the Piarists' attempts to find their place in the reality of Poland after its partitions, which ended in the closing of the school, loss of property, and the Piarists leaving the town. The history of the Piarists centre at Lida provides an example of the functioning of those of the order's schools in Lithuania, in the 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries, which had only little money and not too much equipment to rely on.