

## **From Sacke through Paulshafen to Pāvilosta**

The present-day town of Pāvilosta is not very old. Pāvilosta was founded in the 19th century, although the exact date of foundation is often associated with the construction of a harbour and the establishment of a settlement in the 1870s. Pāvilosta is located on the territory of the former parish of Sacken (Latvian: Saka), which is a historical area in the western part of Latvia, in the Kurzeme region.

A place inhabited by Curonians at this location was first mentioned in writing in 1253. The place belonged to the Bishopric of Courland and became part of the Courland Governorate in the Russian Empire in 1795. In 1879 the local landlord from nearby Bächhof manor, Otto Friedrich von Lilienfeld, started extensive construction works for a small port. The new port town was named Paulshafen, after baron's brother, General governor of the Courland Governorate Paul von Lilienfeld, who was governor of Courland from 1868 to 1885. However, development of the town was not as quick as von Lilienfeld has planned. Many construction plots were available for rent but during ten years only ten buildings were built. The port was used only by several fishermen and three small sailboats owned by nearby manors.

The real development of the town started in 1893 when construction of the Liepāja military port (Karosta) began. In particular, the numerous boulders and other large stones found on the coast of Pāvilosta were used to build the quay walls in Liepāja. The harbour also played an important role in the export of timber. Over time, Pāvilosta developed into a popular place for fishing and trade. The port was adjusted for stone shipment and many builders, workers and sailors came to the town. When stone shipments stopped, the town already had a good port and shipping infrastructure. Until First World War there were three shipyards in the town where small one mast ships were built. However, several bigger two-masted schooners for international voyages were also built in the town. A total of 15 ships were built in the Pāvilosta.

The harbour was badly affected by the First World War. The only economic activity in the 1920s and 1930s was fishing. After the Second World War, a large fishing collective farm was formed in Pavilosta, which was the main employer. Fishing still plays an important role in the local economy. The village was granted town rights in 1991.

Pavilosta ist part of the Saka region. The Sacken/Saka region is characterised by coastal landscapes, forests and the Sacke/Saka River, which flows into the Baltic Sea. The river Saka is formed by the confluence of the rivers Tebra (right) and Durbe (left) north of the castle hill near the settlement of Saka in the Latvian district of Dienvidkurzeme. It flows 6 kilometres through the Piemare plain. The width of the river is 25-30 metres at the beginning and 45 metres

at the mouth. The estuary is surrounded by harbour piers. From the 13th century, the estuary served as a harbour, but in accordance with the provisions of the Peace of Oliwa, in which the Swedish sovereignty over Livonia and Riga, which had existed since the 1620s, was confirmed, the harbour was rendered unusable after 1660.

The parish of Sacken was founded in the Middle Ages and belonged to the Piemare region of the Duchy of Courland and Semgallen. Historically, the population of Sacken Parish consisted mainly of Couronians and Livonians, with some minorities such as Germans during the Livonian and later Curonian periods. Between the turn of the millennium and 1253, the year not only of the baptism of the Lithuanian king Mindaugas but also of the partition treaty between the Bishop of Courland and the Livonian Order, Piemare was one of the main Curonian kihelkonds (districts) with an administrative centre in Esestua (Seeburg), today Grobina, before the 13th century. It was located between Bandava, Duvzare and the Baltic Sea on the territory of present Liepāja district in Latvia. For the first time, the territory was mentioned in the memorandum between Lammekinus, king of Esestua and Baudouin of Aulne Abbey, cistercian monk, vicelegate of Pope Gregory IX on 28 December 1230. In 1253 the territory came under the rule of the Bishop of Courland.

The parish of Sacken represents an important part of the history and culture of the Courland region in Latvia. As everywhere in the present-day states of Latvia and Estonia, it was mainly German-Baltic, but also Swedish noble families who determined the fate of the country until recent times. A large proportion of the German-Baltic noble families originated in Westphalia. Thus, for the lands in question here, the "von der Osten" family is said to have originated in the area around Paderborn in Westphalia. From the 13th century onwards, this family also spread to the Baltic region, where it belongs to the Baltic original nobility and goes back to Arnoldus dictus Lyndale, who was enfeoffed with the house and territory of Sacken (later the parish of Sacken) by Bishop Otto of Courland in 1386. In 1395, as Arnoldus de Sacken, he was enfeoffed with Erkuln and Goldingen / today: Kuldīga in a document, later adding land and manorial rights in Hasenpoth/Aizpute, Dondangen/Dundaga and elsewhere. The former Sackenhause estate with Bächhof Castle, which was owned by the von der Osten family from 1385 to 1714 and later called von der Osten-Sacken, is only about 2 km from the centre of Pavilosta. After that, the owners changed frequently. From 1878 to 1920, the von Lilienfeld family was the owner. The Sackenhause estate originally had a small harbour at the mouth of the Sacke/Saka into the Baltic Sea. This harbour is mentioned as early as 1253. A castle, presumably Sackenmünde, was built to protect the harbour, which no longer exists today. As already mentioned, the harbour itself was rendered unusable in 1660 and only rebuilt in the 19th century.

Sackhof Castle was the headquarters of the estate administration until 1891 and Bächhof Castle from 1891 onwards. Bächhof Castle was destroyed during the riots of the independence movement in 1905.

The parish of Sacken was also historically an important religious centre in the region. The main church was the Sacken Church (Sakas baznīca), which served as a spiritual centre. Today's Evangelical Lutheran church in Sackenhausen/Saka is one of the oldest rural churches in Kurland/Kurzeme. The exact date of the church's construction is not known, but it was first mentioned in 1560. The church was remodelled and repaired several times during its existence. The first major repairs took place around 1590, but the church took on its current appearance in 1743 when it was rebuilt from rubble. The bell tower was added to the church in 1844. The church was restored in 1928 and for the last time in 1995.

In the 19th century, the area of today's Saka municipality was formed from the municipalities of Ulmale, Saliena, Ostbaka, Pilsmuižas, Mācītājs muižas, Stembre, Sarkanažas muižas and Minde, which existed in this area and from which a single municipality was formed in 1866, which was called Upesmuižas until 1923.