We wish to revive in memories, and to see in reality the places where the historical events of 1812 took place. Perhaps, the landscapes didn't change a lot for the last 200 years, the names of settlements, palaces which by miracle remained or even ruins, remained from buildings of that time, and they will be able to rouse thrilling emotions. After all there weren’t local cataclysms on this land like a flood that hid a legendary city of Kitezh – the Russian Atlantis. But the governments, cultural values, economic structures were changing several times. Now we can see signs of revival of the many monuments.

With Caulaincourt’s memoirs in our hands, we started the road... Traveling from Moscow to Smorgoni and Vilno and back through the former Prussia to Moscow we learned which buildings where Napoleon stayed still exist and how the memory of the events of 1812 is now preserved.

In this article I will limit myself to the description of the places where Napoleon stopped in the territory of modern Belarus and Russia (excluding the Kaliningrad region). The route was long: it took the Emperor 142 days.

During the 1812 campaign, Napoleon’s headquarters were always located on the main army route.
Having stayed 18 days in Wilna, the Emperor left the city on July 16th, 11 p.m. Having passed Sventiany¹ (modern Švenčionys) where he stayed in the house of the District Treasurer Onufriy Kaminsky, in the same room where the Tsar Alexander I had stayed few weeks before during the retreat of the Russian army, the Emperor continued to follow the Vitebsk road. Late in the evening, Napoleon's carriage crossed the modern Belarusian border and on July 17th at noon arrived at the town of Glubokoye, situated on the border of Wilna and Vitebsk Governorates. Glubokoye and its neighbourhood belonged to the Prince Dominik Radziwill². He was in charge of the 8th Regiment of Uhlans, part of the 5th (Polish) Corps of the Grande Armée.

The morning he arrived at Gloubokoje, a fine monastery in a very fertile stretch of country.³

¹ Шишков А. С. Краткие записки, веденные в бывшую с Французами в 1812-м и последующих года войну. Балтийский архив. Русские творческие ресурсы Балтии. Проверено 26 ноября 2008. Архивировано из первоисточника 22 марта 2012.

² Голубович А. К. Архив Радзивиллов-Витгенштейнов в Бундесархиве, Германия. НИАБ. Проверено 29 июля 2012. Архивировано из первоисточника 9 августа 2012.

³ Here and below citations from the Mémoires of General de Caulaincourt are italicized.
In these days, it was a large Carmelite monastery built of stone already in the middle of 17th century. Its main church would later become the Orthodox Cathedral of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin. Fifty Carmelite monks lived in the monastery, under the Abbot Piasecki. The brick building of the monastery had two floors. The kitchen, the dining room, the pharmacy and the library were situated on the ground floor, connected by a long corridor. The first floor had ten rooms. Napoleon occupied the last rooms on the first floor. From his window, he could see the monastery garden. On the photo, the windows of the first floor are bricked up and plastered. This change took place in 20th century when the building belonged to a local canning factory.

After resting in Glubokoye, Napoleon mounted his horse Embelli and visited the surroundings of the town. Back in monastery, he dictated a letter to the Foreign Minister.
Maret, telling him that the area between Sventiany and Glubokoye was beautiful: “there are not many forests here, and the crops are magnificent”.

On July 19\textsuperscript{th}, Sunday, Napoleon came to the mass in the monastery church. After the service, he spoke with the Reverend Father Piasecki, asking him a lot of questions, some of them tricky: “Are there poisonous flies in this area?” Later in the evening, Napoleon examined the bakeries and inspected newly arrived brigades of Bavarian light cavalry.

On July 20\textsuperscript{th}, during his daily ride, the Emperor visited the hospital in the Borovoye village, 25 km from Glubokoye. The next day, he approved the new bulletin of the Grande Armée, adding two phrases with his own hand: “One often sees beautiful castles and big monasteries here. At Glubokoye alone there are two monasteries, each one of them has place for twelve hundred patients”. Apparently, what he called the second ‘monastery’ was the Church of the Holy Trinity.

Before going away, Napoleon appointed the General Gomes Freire de Andrade to supervise the whole region and the garrison he was leaving behind. The garrison stayed in Glubokoye until November 1812.

\textit{His Majesty left Glubokoje on the twenty-first, and slept at Kamen on the twenty-third.}

At the moment of his departure, Napoleon looked once more at the cathedral and said: “It is a pity I cannot take your cathedral with me to Paris. Notre-Dame would not be ashamed to have it as a neighbor”.

During the Second Partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Glubokoye became a part of the Russian Empire. When Dominik Radziwiłł died in 1813, Princess Stefania inherited his domains situated in the north-west of the Russian Empire. In 1921, in accordance with the Treaty of Riga, the territory was ceded to Poland. Since December 15\textsuperscript{th}, 1940, the town was a part of Belarus.

From Glubokoye the imperial headquarters moved to Ushachy, along a tortuous route with a great number of logroads and catwalks. Ushachy, a village counting 150 houses, belonged to the Counts Plater. The exact place where Napoleon slept is unknown. He ordered to transform the local Basilian monastery into a hospital. He probably passed the night in another monastery, the Dominican one. Leaving a small garrison in Ushachy, Napoleon departed from the village at 6 p.m., in the direction of Kamen, a small town situated between two lakes near a large road. Napoleon could stay either in the church of St. Casimir or in the estate of the local landowner Rosen. No other place was suitable for him. Neither the estate nor the church survived. The church has been destroyed already in 1914.\textsuperscript{4}

The palace and park ensemble in a modified form still stands to our day in Beshenkovichi. The Emperor was staying in the rooms prepared for him in the magnificent

palace. The two-storey palace built in Classicism style, surrounded by a park with flower beds
and greenhouses, was on the northern outskirts of the town. Its owner, count Irenei Mikhail
Khreptovich, who was the son of the last chancellor of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and an
actual privy councilor and marshal of the Russian imperial court, was at that time staying in
Saint-Petersburg.

In late 18th century, Beshenkovichi had the status of a town and had a thousand and a
half households. The streets were paved with stone, there were 60 trade shops, and the town
had a Polish Roman Catholic church, an Orthodox churn and a Uniate church. The small town
was thriving thanks to extensive trade. From the 29th of June to 24th of July the famous annual
kirmes (fair) was to take place, but most inhabitants had left the town.

Beshenkovichi is situated on the high bank of the Western Dvina River. Napoleon used
a raft bridge to cross the river. Stopping near the village of Kovalevshchina, he passed some
time to look through a spyglass at the road from Polotsk to Vitebsk where the Russian army had
recently passed.

On July 26th, Napoleon mounted his horse Varsovie and reached Ostrovno where he
inspected the battlefield of the day before. He did not return to Beshenkovichi.
In the middle of 19th century one could still see on the right bank of the river the ruins of the bridgeheads. In the beginning of the 20th century, according to Vladimir Dobrovolski, the historian of the region, the palace room where Napoleon had once lived stayed intact. Even a file was preserved, apparently forgotten by Napoleon’s secretary during the departure. Both sides of the file carried depictions of eagles, bees and stars.

A 400-year-old oak in the backyard of the Secondary School #2 in front of the Chreptowicz Palace, was connected with the memory of Napoleon’s visit. According to a local legend, it was under this oak that Napoleon was depicted by the painter Albrecht Adam. Unfortunately, the oak died shortly before 2012.

From Beschenkowitschi to beyond Witepsk we were always in bivouac or under canvas.

Napoleon’s tent and the camp of his headquarters and guards were located at the outskirts of the small village Komary, on the left side of the Vitebsk road, between Kukovyachino and Dobreyka. He arrived there on July 26th, at 11 p.m. and four hours later went back to his army.

The army again began to advance and on the morrow we found ourselves in presence of the enemy, who was occupying the heights crowning a great plateau in front of Witepsk.

The Emperor was on horseback before daybreak [July 27], and the reconnaissances pushed as far as the Lutchies a River found a strong body of enemy cavalry in position.

The Emperor was cheerful and already beaming with pride, so confident was he of measuring his strength with the enemy and obtaining a result that should give some colour to his
expedition, already too far-flung. He spent the day in the saddle, reconnoitred the terrain in every
direction, even at a considerable distance, and returned to his tent very late, having actually seen and
checked everything for himself.

Next time, the Emperor camped by a burnt windmill on the left bank of the Luchosa
River. Three tents were set: one for the Emperor and two for his retinue. The place where
Napoleon’s camp sprawled is now a part of the city of Vitebsk; 1st Luchosskaya Street passes
here.

In the early morning of July 28th, Napoleon entered Vitebsk. Here is the description of
the event by a local historian, Major General Mikhail Bez-Kornilovich: “An hour later, French
infantry regiments started to enter the city and ranged on both sides of all the streets...Napoleon
dismounted and sat on the big road, his feet in a ditch, and looked at the army that
was passing by. At exactly 7 o’clock he entered the city, surrounded by his marshals and
generals...

A deputation of nobles led by the retired general Chrapowicki, presented the
conqueror with the keys to the city. Later his wife was seen at the threshold of their house,
entertaining passing French officers with wine”.

Back then, Vitebsk was 2 kilometer long and 1 kilometer wide. The city was divided
into seven quarters and had 1,500 houses and more than 15,000 inhabitants. Two dozens of
churches and monasteries adorned the city. Its large streets were paved with stone and the
downtown was illuminated with streetlights.

Napoleon stayed in the rooms of the Governor General’s palace prepared for him. A
beautiful and spacious mansion on the high left bank of the Western Dvina that had previously
belonged to the Kudinovich noble family was bought in 1806 by the government and
transformed into the palace of the Governor General of Byelorussia. Before Napoleon, the
palace was occupied by Duke Alexander of Württemberg, Tsar’s uncle. The reception room, the
living room and the study of the Governor General were situated on the first floor of the main
building. The second floor had luxury rooms. A year before the war, a new wing was added to
the palace, with two floors. The ground floor had various offices, and the first floor had a large
dining room and a theatre hall. Napoleon ordered to transform this hall into his own church,
with masses celebrated by Polonski, the Catholic priest of Vitebsk. To arrange the square in
front of the palace, the Guards destroyed several wooden houses and the unfinished Church of
Holy Transfiguration. Nowadays, a there is a public garden in the square, with an obelisk
dedicated to the events of 1812. As for the former palace of Governor General, it is now a jewel
adorning Vitebsk. After the 1917 Revolution, the new authorities took over the palace. The
building was badly damaged during the Second World War but after the war it was renovated.
It belongs now to the regional direction of KGB but there are plans to convert the building into
museum.

The Emperor bivouacked at Lochesna with the Guard, and remained there through part of
the following day [July 29], waiting for news.
The Emperor left Witepsk on the twelfth at eleven o'clock in the evening. On the morning of the thirteenth he was at Rossasna on the left bank of the Dnieper; the Guard arrived during the day. A very weak garrison had been left at Witepsk with the sick and wounded. The Emperor planned to fight a big battle and drive back the enemy so that he should be able to rest his army and organize the country for winter-quarters, while his corps on the Dwina should act with the same end in view.

A quarter of century later, the events were described by the marshal of the nobility from Babinovichi: “… Napoleon himself went away from Vitebsk, passing through the domain of the General Gurka Krinka, district capital Babinovichi, villages of Rudnya, Ozyory, Redki, taking the least significant country road leading to Rasasna… Passing through the town, he entered the house of Girsha Yudkin, a Jew, and, seeing the untidiness of the house, he ordered to set up his tent in a forest, above the Dnieper River…” It was surrounded by beautiful conifer forests used to make mast timber for the Russian and even the British fleet.

The next morning [August 14] he was in the saddle at daybreak. When night fell the Emperor returned to the Guard’s bivouac near Liadoui. The information obtained from some wounded prisoners put an end to all the Emperor’s uncertainties and confirmed his knowledge of a movement by Barclay de Tolly on the right bank, which he had been led to suspect since midday by the report of a reconnaissance. All corps were ordered to press their march on Smolensk. The Emperor set out with the Guard before daybreak, hoping to reach the place in advance of the Russian army, in front of which we had unknowingly defiled in going to Rossasna by way of Babinowitschi.

A little before coming to the town of Liady, Napoleon stopped to have a breakfast in the open air together with his retinue. It was almost on the old border of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Russian Empire, the modern border between Belarus and Russia. On the eastern bank of the Merech River one can see a modest obelisk erected to commemorate a 100th anniversary of the French invasion.
Very early in the morning of the fifteenth he galloped off to the advance-guard, at the gates of Smolensk.

On August 16th, Napoleon approached Smolensk and settled in a manor house in Lyubnya village. The general headquarters approached Smolensk and took quarters 6 km to the southwest from Smolensk, in the great village of Rozhdestvenskoye. In 17th century, Rozhdestvenskoye belonged to the Tyutchev noble family. Napoleon slept here and on the next day it was from here that he observed the battle of Smolensk and saw the city burn. In 1812, the French army passed the village twice. During the retreat, it was completely burned. In our day, the village exists but has different name, Mikhnovka.

The Emperor mounted his horse, reconnoitred the enceinte on the east, and entered the town by an old breach in the wall. He went all round the city at once, and eventually stationed himself at the bridge, where he spent the day hastening its repair.

On the seventeenth the Russians were compelled to evacuate all their positions outside the walls. The Emperor brought up the siege batteries and placed thirty pieces to break down the bridge, which was plainly visible now that we were close to the town. This battery so harassed the enemy that his columns defiled across it at the double. They were clearly in full retreat.

On August 18th, the Emperor saw the retreat of Russian troops from the balcony of the Gateway Church of the Icon of the Holy Virgin of Smolensk, situated near the bridge, on the bank of Dnieper. During the French occupation the church was transformed into a baker shop.

Napoleon stayed over in the residence of the Civil Governor of Smolensk, a house built in 1781.
His Guard also camped here, in the Blonye Garden, right in front of the house of the Civil Governor. Many tents were set; documents and maps from the Governor’s chancellery and archive were used as bed sheets and as fuel for the fire. The building itself remained almost intact and continued to serve as Governors’ residence after the war. In the second half of the 19th century, a second floor was added to the building.

After the 1917 Revolution, it became a seat of various government institutions. During the Second World War and the Nazi occupation of Smolensk in 1941-1943, the building was badly damaged but it was quickly restored after the war because it was situated in the historical part of Smolensk and was very important from the architectural point of view. Since 1963, the former residence of the Governors of Smolensk hosts the Tenisheva Children’s Artistic School.

*But these hopes were too sanguine, and accorded too well with the Emperor’s own views, not to sweep him off his feet. He left Smolensk in all haste [one A.M., August 25]. The Guard moved ahead in echelon to support the King of Naples if necessary, and was ordered to press forward; and once again the Emperor was running a blind risk, to some degree against his will. Reaching Dorogobouje on the twenty-fifth, he stayed there through the twenty-sixth.*

Dominic-Jean Larrey, the surgeon-in-chief of the Grande Armée, wrote: “When we came to Dorogobouje, we found that all the houses that could have offered us some resources were set on fire. The fire spread quickly, and we had to sleep at the camp.

*Several corps received bread at Dorogobouje—an unusual occurrence.*

The only food the French could find in Dorogobuzh was numerous cabbages in the town’s vegetable gardens. They even nicknamed Dorogobuzh a ‘cabbage town’. Napoleon stayed two days here. The house he lodged in was situated on the town rampart. It was an
administrative building previously occupied by the mayor. At that time, Dorogobuzh was mainly a wooden town. When captured by the French, two-thirds of the town burned.

From Dorogobouje the army marched almost in line, the King's cavalry, the Guard, the First Corps and Marshal Ney's corps on the road, the Poles on the right, the Viceroy [Prince Eugene] on the left. We found ourselves on the highest plateau in Russia, the watershed from which the Volga flows into the Caspian Sea, the Dnieper into the Black Sea, and the Dwina into the Baltic.

In 1789, the Prince Konstantin Drutski-Sokolinsky built the stone church of the Intercession of the Holy Virgin and of St. Nicolas in the Slavkovo village, making it an important rural centre. Nothing survived till our day, neither the church nor the house that hosted Napoleon under its roof.

My brother entered Wiasma in hot haste with some sharpshooters. The town was already on fire in several places.

The Collection of Monuments of architecture and of monumental art of Russia contains the description of the house in Viazma that hosted the headquarters of Napoleon in August 1812 and the headquarters of General Miloradovich in October 1812:

“A two-storey house with an attic on the frontal line of the street is the biggest 18th-century residential building in Viazma. At first, the house was rectangular. During the renovation of 1860-s – 1870-s the whole décor of the façade was removed. Now the brick walls are plastered. On the end façades, trapezoid pediments survived. Each of them has two rectangular and two round windows, characteristic of Viazma Baroque residential buildings. The last proprietor of the house was a prominent landowner Dmitry Nikolayevich Maslennikov”.

General Kutusof, who had been summoned to the command in deference to the opinion of the nobles, joined it at Tsarevo, between Ghjat and Wiasma, on the twentyninth, without the Emperor Napoleon being aware of the fact.

On August 29th, in the morning, when Napoleon was in Viazma, Mikhail Kutuzov, recently appointed Commander-in-Chief, arrived at Gzhatsk. It was in the outskirts of Gzhatsk that the local inhabitants, happy to see Kutuzov, unharnessed his horses and brought his carriage to the town with their own arms, taking the Marshal to the house of the merchant Tserevitinov. Acclaimed by everyone, Kutuzov passed only two hours at Gzhatsk, leaving the town to join the Russian army in Tsarevo-Zaimishche, 20 km southwestwards.

When Napoleon came to Gzhatsk, he learned about the arrival of a new Commander-in-Chief at the Russian army. He decided it meant a change of strategy and expected Russian army to prepare for a pitched battle.

We found Ghjat [September 1] partly burned and still smoking. They had been caught at work sooner than at Wiasma. Attempts were made to stop the fire. The Emperor made an extended
reconnaissance in front of the city and all round it; he visited the hospital, which lay at the town gate and had not been burned. He speeded up the rebuilding of the bridges and the crossing of the troops.

He spent the second and third at Ghatj in order to collect his troops and give the cavalry and artillery a little rest.

“We crossed it [Gzhatsk] just the same as two previous towns, surrounded by flames” – wrote Larrey who entered Gzhatsk the day of the great fire. The town was mostly destroyed by fire. One of the best streets of Gzhatsk, Moskovskaya Street, vanished almost without trace.

The 1900 Historic-Statistic Sketch tells us: “On the St. Petersburg Street one can still see a three-storey stone house currently occupied by the barracks, which, according to a legend, hosted Napoleon in 1812 on his way to Moscow, while on his way back from Moscow Napoleon stopped on Smolenskaya Street, in the house that now belongs to Korostylev”. The only historic house that still stands in Gagarin (formerly Gzhatsk) is Tsarevitchov’s house that was visited by Kutuzov.

On the fourth, headquarters were in bivouac near Prokofewo, and on the fifth near Borodino.

On September 5\textsuperscript{th}, Napoleon with a small retinue crossed the bridge over the full-flowing Novlanka River, a left tributary of Kolocha\textsuperscript{5}. The bridge has been previously destroyed by Russian pioneers but already restored by the French. Then Napoleon crossed the Shokhovo village, where a wonderful sight appeared before his eyes. It was the Kolotsky monastery, on

\textsuperscript{5} http://www.museum.ru/1812/Library/Ivanov2/part06.html
top of the hill, dominating all the surrounding area. Napoleon stopped in the monastery just two days after Kutuzov who left it to take position at Borodino.

In the monastery, Napoleon climbed internal wooden stairs and arrived at the belfry. Eight arch spans with bells allowed him to look in all directions. The Shevardino Redoubt, distant 8 versts from Kolotsky monastery, was in plain sight.

Napoleon did not climb on top of monastery in vain. He could see a lot from there. He could also take many decisions about his further actions. At 4 p.m., Napoleon already took the Smolensk Road to arrive to Valuyev. Many belfries left behind soon were employed by the Grande Armée to install the helio-telegraph mirrors linking Napoleon with Paris with the help of signals similar to the Morse alphabet but functioning only on sunny days. Napoleon could also see the Valuyev field, on a high plateau, the place where he would pass the next uneasy night, the night before the great battle. On September 7th, the day of the battle of Borodino, Napoleon set his tent between the Shevardino Redoubt and the Doronino Mound.

On September 8th at 5 p.m., Murat’s first vanguard approached Mozhaïsk but did not manage to capture the town. In the evening, the stores of victuals were set ablaze in Mozhaïsk to deny them to the enemy. Napoleon had to stop before Mozhaïsk and pass the night in the village Uspenskoïe (today Kriushino), 16 versts from the Kolotsky monastery.
The Emperor established himself in the village in front of Mojaisk; the enemy evacuated the town during the night, and our troops entered it the next day at dawn. The Emperor went into the town towards noon.

After the Battle of Borodino, Russian army continued to retreat towards Moscow. On the morning of September 11th, Bagration, mortally wounded, was brought to Bol’shiye Vyazyomy, to the manor of the Golitsyn family. At noon, Kutuzov’s headquarters also arrived there. The manor had a large library divided into two parts: books in foreign languages were located on the ground floor and books in Russian on the first floor. Kutuzov chose the lower library as his study. He stayed in the manor till September 13th.
The same day, Murat who led the vanguard of the French army came to the manor. And on September 13th at noon Napoleon himself arrived. He stopped in the same lower library as Kutuzov and slept the night in the same bed. Next day, on September 14th, at 7 a.m. Napoleon left Bol’shiye Vyazyomy.

The manor was not pillaged, unlike the Church of Transfiguration where soldiers camped.

The manor house in Bol’shie Vyazyomy that survived till our day was built in 1784 by the colonel Nikolay Mikhailovich Golitsyn, great-grandson of the Prince Boris Golitsyn, one of the close collaborators of Peter the Great. Pushkin who often came to Bol’shie Vyazyomy,
described the Golitsyn Palace in his famous novel Eugene Onegin. It is considered that the
description of Onegin’s domain was based on Bol’shie Vyazyomy while the neighbouring
Zakharovo became the model for the Larin domain.

After a renovation of the manor house on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the
War of 1812, a new exposition was installed, dedicated to the war. On the walls of the entrance
hall there are portraits of famous Napoleonic marshals and generals: Jérôme Bonaparte, Murat,
Bessières, Junot, Berthier.

Behind the table, we can see a mannequin dressed up as a Captain of the Imperial
Corps of Engineers-Geographers of the General Headquarters of the Grande Armée in 1809-1812, and in the show-benches one can see the authentic cutlery of the French officers.

At ten o’clock in the morning of the fourteenth the Emperor was on the heights overlooking
Moscow, called the Sparrow Hills, when he received a note from the King of Naples informing him that
the enemy had evacuated the city and that a Russian staff officer had been sent with a flag of truce to
ask for a suspension of hostilities while the troops were crossing the city.

He stayed near the bridge all night, his headquarters being established in a mean tavern
built of wood at the entrance to the suburb.
Where did Napoleon pass the last night before he entered Moscow? Till recently, the place was unknown, though it was the last wooden house in Dorogomilovo. It was occupied by a construction department. Igor Tarasov, a specialist in local history, studied archives and came to a conclusion that the last place where the Emperor slept before coming to Moscow was precisely this house, the Number 47 on Malaya Dorogomilovskaya Street, built already in the end of the 18th century according to a ‘model’ project created in the workshop of the famous architect Domenico Tresini. In 1812, it belonged to a local innkeeper. The small house in Dorogomilovo, fortunately spared by the great fire, survived until the beginning of the 21st century but was destroyed because of dilapidation on April 25th, 2004.

The Emperor and the Guard did not leave Moscow until about noon on October 19.

We slept at the manor house of Troitskoie where we stayed during the whole of the twentieth to rally our forces, for many men and transports had again fallen behind. It was here that the Emperor finally decided to abandon Moscow.

Napoleon stayed in the village Fominskoye almost a whole day – from the noon, October 22nd, till 9 a.m., October 23rd. According to a legend, Napoleon slept in an old wooden church. The old land survey plan allows to see that the Church of St. Nicolas the Miracle-Worker was situated near the bridge, at a distance of around 100 sazhens (200 metres) from the right side of the Borovsk Road, behind the Gvozdnya (Gvozdenka) River.
The Emperor could stay in the manor but it was safer to sleep in the church because the Russians would not fire on the sacred building. Retreating French burned the wooden church of St. Nicolas the Miracle-Worker in Fominskoye. The stone church of St. Nicolas, built at a different location, was consecrated on the 40th anniversary of the victory in the War of 1812.

The weather was bad [October 21-22] and the ground so sodden with rain that we had great difficulty in making Borowsk in two marches across country.

The Emperor reached Borowsk on the twenty-third.

The Emperor moved back to spend the night [October 24-25] in a hut near the bridge at Ghorodnia, a small hamlet one league from Malo-Jaroslavetz.

In Borovsk Napoleon stayed in a large and beautiful house situated in the city centre. It was built in the end of 18th century by the rich merchant Bolshakov. Napoleon’s army crossed Borovsk twice: on its way from Moscow to Maloyaroslavets and, after the Battle of Maloyaroslavets, on its way back to the Smolensk Road. The town was completely burned and devastated but Bolshakov’s house survived. During the Soviet time, it hosted various institutions. Nowadays, the house is abandoned. Unfortunately, the regional authorities cannot renovate it because since 2006 Bolshakov’s house belongs to a private person. In 2007, following an order from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport of Kaluga Region, Bolshakov’s house was put on the list of identified objects of cultural heritage. In 2012, following an initiative of the Governor of Kaluga Region, the authorities started working on getting the house back in municipal property.

The first private owner of the house was the businessman Viktor Baturin. He planned to create a hotel in the house, allocating a part of it to a museum dedicated to the War of 1812 and the visit of Napoleon to Borovsk. But the building only dilapidated further when owned by him.

On the twenty-seventh the Emperor passed the night at Werei.

The following day, the twenty-eighth, we passed within sight of Mojaisk but did not enter it.

My eyes never saw a sight so horrible as the march of our army forty-eight hours after Mojaisk.

On the twenty-eighth the headquarters staff halted at Ouspenskoje [a ruined manor house between Mojaisk and Borodino].

Next day after Mojaisk, the French army crossed the field of Borodino still covered by the corpses of those who died in the great battle. Then they came to the Kolotsky monastery. Heinrich von Roos, the surgeon of the Westphalian troops, remembered: “A cold night passed...
We did not sleep much because we felt very disturbed in the Kolotsky monastery, crowded with troops; everyone was preparing for the departure; Napoleon also slept here...

On the next day, October 29, we were at Ghjat. The cold was already intense.

Here at Ghjat the winter was already more noticeable. Since leaving Wereia, I had taken to travelling on foot.

On the thirtieth, we made Weliczewo our headquarters for the night. This fine manor, however, had not a single rafter left, and we had difficulty in collecting enough material from the wreckage to patch up one room for the Emperor and one for the chief-of-staff. The billiard-table was the only piece of furniture still intact. Here we received the delayed despatches. On the following day, the thirty-first, the headquarters and the Guard were stationed at Wiasma, where we stayed through the first of November.

Neither Russians nor French wanted a battle near Vyazma. Napoleon and his Guard here on October 31th. He stopped in the house of the merchant Gorodzhankin that survived till our day and is located on Dokuchaev Street, in front of the Monastery of John the Baptist. It was necessary to give rest to the Guard that has hastily retreated accompanying the Emperor. The next day, the Emperor left the ton.

On the second we halted at Samlowo; on the third at Slawkowo, where we had the first snow.

According to a legend, in the night of November 2nd/3rd Napoleon slept in the church of Semlyovo, considering it to be the safest place he stayed on his way from Moscow.

“Napoleon himself slept on the altar. An icon of the Holy Virgin was used to cut beef and the horses stayed in the church”. Only a part of the manor park still exists. The church did not survive.

On the fifth, we spent the night at Dorogobouje. The despatches continued to arrive regularly. The weather, which had been milder for thirty-six hours before, became suddenly colder.

On the sixth, headquarters were at Mikhai’lewska. It was a day of bad news.

On the way to Pnevo [November 7] he was repeatedly asking me if I couldn’t see the courier.

For several days the Emperor had discussed his plan of going into quarters at Smolensk; but on that day he announced openly that the army would do so at Witepsk and Orcha.

http://kukovenko.ru/istoricheskie-materialy/vojna-1812-goda-podmoskove
On the seventh, we were at Pnewo. The cold was becoming more and more intense, but everyone thought we were coming to the end of want, and so to the end of our worst misfortunes, when we reached the stores of Smolensk and the quarters that the Emperor promised. Every face looked brighter.

On the eighth, headquarters were at Beredikino. For a moment the Emperor thought of pushing forward as far as Smolensk himself.

It was on the ninth, about noon, that we came once more within sight of Smolensk.

The Emperor left Smolensk on November 14, after ensuring a sufficient supply of flour for the Duke of Elchingen, who, acting as rear-guard, was due to arrive that same night. We halted at Korytnia [fifteen miles on], where we arrived quite early.

The frost was more severe than ever, and the road therefore more difficult. The country was more hilly; the steep descents had become impracticable. It is impossible to form any idea of the difficulties that the artillery and transport had to surmount on this march, or of the number of horses lost by the former. We had reached our destination [Liadouï] by a road that descended so steeply, that was so sunken, and a part of whose frozen surface had been so polished by the large number of horses and men who had slipped on it, that we were obliged like everyone else to sit down and let ourselves slide on our posteriors. The Emperor had to do likewise, for the many arms that were offered to him provided no adequate support.

In two hundred years, the relief has not much changed. Even the descent is still very steep despite the new road.

At Liadouï there were inhabitants and some food supplies. Chickens and ducks ran about in the courtyards, to everyone's great astonishment. We had seen no such signs of plenty since crossing the Niemen; and every face cheered up, and everyone began to think that our privations were at last at an end.

We made our way from Liadouï” to Doubrowna

At 5 p.m., the new quarters taken by Napoleon were in the palace of Princes Lyubomirski, owners of the town. It had more than 400 houses and was located on picturesque banks of Dnieper. The owners of Dubrowna restored and adorned the residence built in the 18th century by Sapieha, the chancellor of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Maria Lyubomiskaya, née Naryshkina, happy to hear from Napoleon that he knows well the name Naryshkin, asked him to proceed further without violence and not to pillage Dubrowna. The Emperor agreed but the time and the wars completely destroyed the architectural and historic heritage of Dubrowna.

On the nineteenth, headquarters was established at Orcha, where the Emperor was relieved to find that his vanguard had arrived. Our troops had the bridge well in hand.
In 1812 there were around 3,000 inhabitants in Orsha. With its wooden izbas and dirty unpaved streets it seemed an enormous village. The General Headquarters and the Emperor himself were hosted in a group of buildings that belonged to the Jesuit college, in the centre of the town. Napoleon took a room in a two-storey monastery building under a gable roof.

After his arrival at Orcha on the nineteenth, the Emperor had spent part of the day on the bridge. He had inspected the environs as if there were still some chance that the town could be held. Although there was no news of Marshal Elchingen, we continued to hope. Every delay made our plight worse, and so the retreat continued. The Viceroy was put in charge of the rear-guard; and on the twentieth, in the afternoon, headquarters were transferred to the manor-house of Baranoui", a short way beyond Orcha and a quarter of a league off the road.

Two bridges across Dnieper were protected by têtes-de-pont and gun batteries installed on the heights at the left bank of the river. The remains of bridgeheads created by the French are still visible: locals call them shantsy (sconces). The military road built by Napoleon’s engineers is the modern Krasnoarmeyskaya Street (the Street of the Red Army).

Soon after the war against Napoleon, the Jesuits were banned from Russia. Their church in Orsha was destroyed and their monastery converted to prison; it served as such for a century and a half. In 2008, it was renovated and became an exhibition centre. The exposition on the history of the building includes materials about Napoleon’s stay in 1812.

On the twenty-first, headquarters were at Kamienska.

The manors that hosted the General Headquarters did not survive. And even the Kamenka village itself disappeared from the face of the Earth.
On the twenty-second he stopped at Tolotchine, in a convent of some kind.

On November 22nd, in the evening, Napoleon arrived in the town of Tolochin that belonged to the Princes Sanguszko, situated near the main road, mostly on the left bank of the Drut River. The town was greatly damaged by the passage of the army: every fifth house was burned, as well as many stores and other buildings. The Emperor’s quarters took a two-storey building of the Orthodox Church of Intercession of the Holy Virgin. It had formerly (until 1804) belonged to the Uniate Church.7

![Toloshin](image)

The building where Napoleon passed the night became for a long time a district military registration and enlistment office. When Belarus became independent, the former church complex was restored, given to an Orthodox convent and put on the list of the historic and cultural treasures of the Republic of Belarus. The parish includes the territory adjacent to the building. According to the Belarusian architect Evgeny Kolbovich, “The church of the Intercession of the Holy Virgin is the only one in Vitebsk Region to preserve its original form since 1604. From any point of view, the convent may easily be included in the UNESCO World Heritage list.”

From Tolotchine to Bohr, where we arrived on the twentieth, the road was even more thickly covered with dead horses than on preceding marches.

At first he stopped near a mill on the Skha River, near the entrance to the town of Borisov. Then he came to the cathedral square, left his carriage to mount a horse, and started inspecting the area. The fate of the army and its Commander-in-Chief depended on where to cross the Berezina River and he was going to make that choice. When it became dark, he left the town and at 10 p.m. came to Old Borisov. Roos, the Württemberg surgeon, remembered that Napoleon stayed over in the house of Baron Korsak, land steward of the Prince Michał Radziwiłł. Only the cellar of that house is still there. The parc and fragments of the domain also survived.

Between Tolochin and Molodechno, the Emperor had to stay in miserable huts. A good description of such a stay is offered by Caulaincourt when he depicts the night in Stayki:

*We had not hitherto had such a bad lodging. Staiki was nicknamed "Miserowo." The Emperor and the chief-of-staff each had a little niche seven or eight feet square.*

In Studyonka, Napoleon occupied the only house that was not destroyed. Other 25 houses were demolished to build the bridges. After the passage of the Berezina River, this house was demolished as well and used for firewood.
The General Headquarters took place in the small hamlet Zanivki where there was one house and two barns. Zanivki ceased to exist shortly after and even the precise location of the hamlet stood is unknown.

On the road from Molodechno to Lithuanian border, the General Headquarters stayed over in the palace of Ogiński in Molodechno, in a beautiful manor in Benitsa, in the rich domain of the landowner Karol Dominik Przeździecki. But all these memorable places were destroyed by the time and the wars.

Still, the memory of the War of 1812 is preserved by the monuments installed along all the route of the Grande Armée. In 1901, the local landowner Ivan Kholodeyev commissioned two obelisks to be erected in the front of the bridges thrown by the French from the left bank of the Berezina River, carrying bas-reliefs of Napoleon and Alexander I. In 2002, one of these obelisks was restored. There are six monuments on the right bank, all installed in different periods. In 1997, a monument to the fallen Napoleonic soldiers was unveiled.

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