

The Olsztyn Castle is located about 10 kilometres from Częstochowa in the area called The Trail Of The Eagles' Nest on the Kraków-Częstochowa Upland. It is a stretch of land covered with many white rock formations called limestones. The softness of the limestones makes it easy for the elements to create a picturesque and fabulous landscape. Also many caves are scattered through the scenery.

It belonged to a system of fortifications built by the Polish king Kazimierz Wielki. The landmark was built in 14th century but the first record of the castle comes from 1306. It is supported by the fact that in the year 2006 people celebrated the 700th anniversary of the Olsztyn castle. The fortress was meant to stop the attacks and keep the south-west part of the country safe. It was located near the border with the Czechs and it was one of the most important points of defence. Its importance can be highlighted by how many great individuals visited the castle. The list includes King Waclaw II, King Kazimierz Wielki, King Wladyslaw Jagiello, King Zygmunt I Stary, King Zygmunt August and many more.

Also it served another function, not only defensive one. It was used as the prison for Polish nobility. One of them named Maczko Borkowic who was plotted against the King and was sentenced to death from starvation in the castle's dungeon. The locals tell stories about the ghost hunting the castle even these days.

After the King Kazimierz died, the castle was handed down to the Prince Wladyslaw Opolczyk by the contemporary King Ludwig Węgierski for political agenda in 1370. Unfortunately the Prince had an affair with Knights of the Cross which angered King Wladyslaw Jagiello, which led to his incursion into the castle in 1391. It took a week to take control of the castle. During the next centuries the castle was attacked a few times, as a result it got damaged with time. After 1613 the building got into hands of one of the noblemen who neglected the castle. The Swedish attack called the Swedish Deluge turned out to be the nail in the coffin. Afterwards the building was in ruins and it was not worth fixing up. In the 19th century the castle was demolished for the building materials.

The walls of the residential part, the cylindrical main and square tower, fragments of the walls of farm buildings and some cellars have survived to this day. Today the castle is the property of the local community, which charges a small fee at the entrance to the castle. At the weekends the Olsztyn Castle is packed with local people who escape from the busy Częstochowa to relax in the nature admiring the beautiful landscape with the castle in the background.

Written by Stasiu Picture by Daria Photo by Tomek





Sources:

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