

## **General Bem's Kraków Route**

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The distinguished Poles associated with Kraków include General Józef Bem. Born in Tarnów in 1794, he spent his childhood near Kraków. While he lived with his parents in the Gaj estate, he attended St. Anne's Gymnasium in the years 1801-09. The hall of the 1st Secondary School of General Education features a portrait of General Bem among its favourite graduates.

Józef Bem, general of the Polish, Hungarian and Turkish troops, participated in the 1812 campaign and the November Uprising of 1830-31. During the Spring of Nations he led the Hungarian army in Transylvania, and after the fall of the uprising he stayed in Turkey where he died in 1850.

In 1927 the Polish authorities started endeavours to bring the remains of the General from Aleppo.

After the exhumation in 1929 the coffin was transported by train to Kraków. On the 29th of June 1929 it was moved via the "Royal Road" to Wawel. From the Bernardine Square generals carried the coffin to the arcade courtyard where it was made available to the Nation. On the next day the solemn funeral procession with a cannon salute bid farewell to the General leaving for his home town of Tarnów where his remains rest in the Mausoleum.

General Bem's Kraków Route leads from Borek Fałęcki through Kobierzyn, Sidzina and Libertów to Gaj.

Borek Fałęcki is a part of district IX of Łagiewniki. The Borkowska Mount is dominated by the Church of Our Lady of Victory erected in 1936. Opposite, in the historical park, there is a classicist mansion dating back to the middle of the 19th century which houses the Institute of Plant Raising and Acclimatisation of the Polish Academy of Sciences. At the so-called Piaski (Sands) in the years 1942-44 there was the "Stalag 369" Nazi penal camp for French and Belgian prisoners of war which accommodated the total of 17,000 prisoners. At this site a commemorative stone was placed in 1966.

Kobierzyn is a part of district VIII of Dębniki. The name comes from the old car pet weavers, and the first reference dates back to 1350. In Kobierzyn there is the J. Babiński Neuropsychiatric Hospital established in the years 1912-17. The area of about 20 ha holds developments and park with a chapel entered to the heritage register. During the Second World War, after murdering the patients (particularly Jews), the Hitlerjugend formations were accommodated here, and then the complex was turned into a military hospital.

Incorporated in Kraków in 1973, Sidzina also belongs to district VIII of Dębniki. The old village of the 11th century used to belong to the Tyniec abbey and was known for its mineral springs and medieval salt works. In the vicinity of the local school there is a classicist mansion of 1803 and a granary surrounded by an Italian park with numerous monuments of nature. Today it is a private property with the "Pegaz" casting laboratory.

Libertów is a village at the edge of Pogórze Wielickie (Wieliczka Foothills) neighbouring in the south with Kraków. In the centre there is the modern Church of St. Albert Chmielowski. Nearby



**Magiczny  
Kraków**

there is a classicist mansion of the 19th century with Polish mansard roof surrounding by a landscape park with old growth forest.

Gaj, a village situated among the valleys and hills of Pogórze Wielickie, was first mentioned in 1088 when it belonged to the Benedictines of Tyniec. At the site of the 13th century wooden church another one was built in 1626 with the miraculous painting of Our Lady of Gaj to be later reconstructed in the 17th century in the Baroque style. The building of the old mansion developments of the Bem family has been preserved. At the John Paul II's School Complex there is a granite plaque in the form of an open book commemorating General Bem's stay in Gaj in the years 1801-09.