

THE BEGINNINGS OF TOURISM AND ESCORTED TOURS IN THE RZESZÓW REGION RELATED TO THE ACTIVITIES OF THE POLISH GYMNASTIC SOCIETY “SOKÓŁ” IN RZESZÓW

Agnieszka HUZARSKA, Maciej HUZARSKI

Faculty of Physical Education, Rzeszow University, Rzeszów, Poland

Keywords:

- development of tourism,
- Rzeszów Region,
- cultural tourism,
- Gymnastic Society “Sokół”.

Abstract:

The article briefly shows the history of tourism in Poland paying attention, inter alia, to people important for its development and events which were essential for tourism movement in Poland and later in particular partitions. The main aim of this article is to show how the type of tourism, which is now known as cultural tourism, developed in the area of today’s Rzeszow Region. In the period discussed in the paper, that is late XIX and early XX centuries it was hard to advance tourism because it was the time of partitions. However, in spite of difficulties, it can be stated that tourism in the Rzeszów region developed and it was based mainly on sightseeing trips. Tourism activities were connected with education and the activities of the Gymnastic Society “Sokół”. The article particularly describes different kinds of escorted trips such as trekking excursions to the neighbouring areas, trips to other towns, cycling trips, trips to take part in national celebrations and trips to “Sokół” slets. During all trips the members of the society visited places in the Rzeszów Region, developed closer relations with other “Sokół” nests, strengthened patriotic attitudes and took part in cultural events. The activities of the Gymnastic Society “Sokół” became the foundation of the escorted trips, both for young and adult people, and helped to advance tourism in the Rzeszów Region.

A contemporary view on tourism in the Rzeszów Region is considerably different from a common understanding of travelling in the late XIX and early XX centuries. The beginnings of tourism in Poland are closely related to trips abroad which aimed at gaining education. The types of travelling around Poland oriented at entertainment and leisure were rare, with an isolated example of Beata Łaska who went to the Tatra Mountains in 1563. From the fourteenth till the sixteenth centuries the most common destination for Polish young people was Italy and their goal was to study there. The interest of Polish people in Italian culture increased when the King Sigismund I the Old married Bona Sforza of Milan. The other reason was the foundation of the Jagiellonian University and the scientific contacts between the Polish and Italian lecturers.

The second half of the eighteenth century brought significant changes in the development of tourism. The political contacts between Warsaw and Dresden made people travel more. As a result people learned about the healing and relaxing properties of some places in Lower Silesia. In addition, the reforms by Stanisław Konarski and later by the Educational Commission of Poland raised the level of nobility’s education. The political situation of Poland was extremely difficult at this time due to partitions (in 1772, 1793 and 1795). As a consequence Poland disappeared from the map of Europe for over 120 years and

its land was divided between Russia, Prussia and Austria. Even though the history of tourism in Poland until the time of regaining independence was connected with the tourism of the invading countries, there were many examples of great Polish patriots in this field.

The activities of Stanisław Staszic and Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz showed the right course for the progress of Polish tourism. Stanisław Staszic was the first person who travelled by carriage, on a horseback or on foot and he aimed at getting knowledge. He visited many parts of the country including the Beskid Mountains and the Tatra Mountains. He reached the summit of Babia Góra and in August of 1805 he became the first Pole to climb the top of Łomnica which was then regarded as the highest mountain in the Tatra Mountains. He brought lots of observations, exhibits and notes from his journeys which he later used as material for his scientific studies. In the view of Staszic learning about the country was not only a pleasure and entertainment but also a tool to govern the country's existence and economy. He also visited Italy, France and Germany. Another Pole, Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz in his *Pamiętniki czasów moich (The Diary of My Times)* and *Podróże historyczne (Historical Trips)* described his trips around Poland, Europe and even the United States of America and he often referred to historic events. Staszic and Niemcewicz introduced a cognitive element into Polish tourism. Staszic's love for nature and Niemcewicz's love for history became the foundations of Polish sightseeing and their practical approach of getting to know everything which was new and interesting paved the way for tourism tracks in the country.

Wincenty Pol followed the example of Stanisław Staszic. His works were filled with the feeling of love for his country and he showed the beauty of Poland: *Rzut oka na północne stoki Karpat (A glance at the Northern Hillsides of the Carpathian Mountains)*, *Północny wschód Europy pod względem natury (Wildlife in the North of Europe)* and *Historyczny obraz Polski (The Historical Image of Poland)*. Next, other outstanding Polish scientists used the same model and thanks to them the idea of learning about Poland became more popular (Kazimierz Brodziński, Fryderyk Skarbek, Józef Morawski, Dezydery Chłapowski, Antoni Edward Odyniec, Roman Zmorski, Ludwik Kondratowicz, Teodor Tripplin, Maria Steczkowska, Łucja Rautenstrauchówna, Seweryn Goszczyński, Ludwik Pietrusiński, Wojciech Jastrzębowski, Oskar Kolberg). At that time *Geographical Dictionary of the Kingdom of Poland* by Filip Sulimierski, Bronisław Chlebowski, Władysław Walewski and others became the compendium of knowledge about Poland.

The increasing interest in sightseeing tourism contributed to the foundation of the "Galician Tatra Society" in 1874. It was the first Polish tourism organization. Later the society was renamed into "Tatra Society" and in 1919 there was another change for "Polish Tatra Society". Its activities were particularly creative and pioneering. First of all, they started the meteorological research in the Tatra and Carpathian Mountains and they maintained some meteorological stations in the mountains. They also did potholing research in caves in the Tatra Mountains and researched the areas of Lemko people, Czarnohora area and the Low Beskid Mountains. In addition, a monography on Łomnica was worked out and in 1907 the first thesis about the geological model of the Karkonosze range was written. Then, different studies were published on: nature protection, settlement, pastoral life, highland robbery and liberation movements in the Podhale region. In 1903 the Tourism Section of the "Tatra Society" was established and it was based on an Alpine model. In 1912 the Tatra Protection Section was created and it was responsible for the protection of nature and landscape¹.

At that time Cracow, Zakopane and Lviv became the main tourist centres. There were more sightseeing trips organized and their goal was to learn about historical places and treks to the Karpaty, Beskidy and Tatra Mountains. In the Prussian partition the inhabitants of the Great Poland region had rich traditions because it was where Stanisław Staszic came

¹ Kulczycki Z., Zarys historii turystyki w Polsce, Warszawa 1985, s. 78

from so many travellers followed his example. In particular, young people went on self-education trips and on religious pilgrimages. Emerging tourist societies helped to develop tourism (the Gymnastic Society "Sokół", the Rowing Society, sports clubs) but the tourist movement was limited due to political reasons. In the Russian partition tourism activities were initiated by new societies which came into being. It was possible thanks to some changes in Warsaw. Rich townspeople supported tourism movement as a kind of entertainment. The foundation of the Polish Sightseeing Society in 1906 was a very meaningful moment². The society had its roots in two sports organizations: The Warsaw Rowing Society (1878) and the Warsaw Cycling Society (1884)³. Apart from sports activities, the societies dealt with tourism and educational activities. The people responsible for establishing the Polish Sightseeing Society were Aleksandra Janowska, Kazimierz Kulwieć, Zygmunt Gloger and some others⁴. One of society's aims included in the Statute was showing the beauty of the homeland. The society's work was dominated by two goals: tourism and sightseeing⁵. They collected and diffused news on sightseeing, gathered scientific collections and organised different trips above all⁶.

There were new tourism opportunities after the First World War. During the formation of the new Polish state tourism was included in the Ministry of Public Works. As the subsidies were very low, the activity of the Tourism Office were not satisfactory. It consisted only in helping different communities to do tourism activities. Soon tourism got support from other ministries such as Communication, Religion and Public Enlightenment, Foreign Affairs and Military Affairs. In 1924 Interdepartmental Tourism Commission of the Ministry of Public Works was established. The second stage of forming stage administration for tourism included two actions: the establishment of Interdepartmental Commission for Tourism Issues Investigation in 1928 and next the General Tourism Department of the Ministry of Communication in 1932⁷.

The services of the Gymnastic Society „Sokół” and education were very valuable. They drew attention to the educational role of sightseeing trips. More hiking, cycling and canoeing trips, rallies, regular, walking and summer camps were organized. School programs of physical education emphasized the role of trips and schools started cooperation with the Polish Sightseeing Society and the Polish Tatra Society. Other factors which influenced tourism development were: more and more hostels and youth organizations which were founded in schools, such as youth sightseeing clubs and youth societies left-wing and right-wing oriented.

The rapid development of tourism in the Rzeszów Region was closely connected with the activities of the Gymnastic Society „Sokół”. It should be clearly stated that that society was a precursor of organized tourism in the region. The organization used proven models of trips taken from Cracow and Lviv. As tourism was a new phenomenon in the XIX century it was understood in many different ways. At first it was associated with a trip activity and the

² Gaj J., *Dzieje turystyki w Polsce*, Warszawa 2006, s. 44-47

³ Ferens W., *Powstanie pierwszych zrzeszeń sportowych w Warszawie*, w: „Wychowanie Fizyczne i Sport” nr 1 z 1957, s. 257

⁴ Bieńczyk G., *Polskie Towarzystwo Krajoznawcze, a Turystyka kwalifikowana. Materiały z konferencji naukowej z okazji 100 – lecia powstania Polskiego Towarzystwa Krajoznawczego „Przeszłość – Teraźniejszość – Przyszłość”*, Gdańsk 2006, s. 159

⁵ Kulczycki Z., *Historia turystyki*, Warszawa 1982, s. 110

⁶ Leszczycki S., *Rola Polskiego Towarzystwa Krajoznawczego w rozwoju krajoznawstwa i turystyki w Polsce 1906-1950*, w: PTTK w 20 - leciu PRL, Warszawa 1967, s. 42-43

⁷ Gaj J., *Zarys historii turystyki w Polsce w XIX i XX w.*, Poznań 2001, s. 21-26

Polish Gymnastic Society „Sokół” used this name”⁸. In the first statue of „Sokół” in Lviv in 1867, „trip movement” was used as a foundation for creating the „Sokół” idea⁹. Trips occupied an important role in the activities of the society’s Galician nests. Occasionally, they were even graded higher than gymnastics as „matching the „Sokół” idea more”¹⁰. Z. Pawluczuk decided that the „Sokół” society was a pioneer in making tourism a mass activity”¹¹. In the 1870s and 1880s the „Sokół” trip movement was dominated by excursions to the countryside, meetings in other „Sokół” nests, visiting places of national remembrance and trips to take part in national celebrations (important for the Polish culture). There were also first mountain trips and after 1893 – cycling trips. Edward Kubalski was a person in the Galician „Sokół” who played an important role in making walking tours more popular. „The Gymnastic Review” published his article which became an instruction how to organise „Sokół” trips and what functions they were supposed to perform. The article said: „This is show I imagine a gymnastic trip and I would like to have a trip like this. Lots of sunshine, greenery, freedom, movement and songs. This is what I want for young people”. And more: „Such a trip would be a combination of a stroll, marching and exercising in the fresh air, without any instruments. It would arouse friendship and social life, it would be an opportunity to exchange opinions on the basis of common impressions and adventures”¹².

In the period of partitions, tourism in the Rzeszow Region had a very limited reach. It can be assumed that it was based mainly on sightseeing trips. It was the result of the area’s geographical position. The limited access to the activities of the Galician Tetry Society was the reason why tourism development depended mostly on schools’ activities and on the Gymnastic Society „Sokół”. One of the main obstacles was the lack of proper substructures. Other obstacles were connected with transportation so the trips had to be organized in the area close to the participants place of residence.

In spite of serious difficulties in the period, the beginnings of tourism can be discussed, also cultural tourism in the area of Rzeszow Region. Tourist activities in the period can be described by contemporary definitions of cultural tourism which describe tourism as „culture-motivated travelling such as study trips related to art exhibitions, cultural trips, travelling to take part in festivals and other cultural events, seeing the sights, pilgrimages, trips to learn about nature, folk culture and art”¹³.

General tourism and cultural tourism were promoted while the programme of the Gymnastic Society “Sokół” was being implemented in the society’s branches across the Rzeszów Region. The Gymnastic Society “Sokół” in Rzeszów was one of the best examples because the tourism as a form of active relaxation connected with learning about the natural surroundings appeared very early. In the first year of its operation they organised trekking excursions in the areas surrounding Rzeszów trying to take care of body and spirit. At first there were only strolls in the areas close to Rzeszów, but later trips to Odrzykoń and Iwonicz

⁸ Orlewicz-Musiał M. *Turystyka górską w Towarzystwie Gimnastycznym „Sokół” w Galicji do wybuchu I wojny światowej (1867-1914)*. [w:] ZAborniak S., Obodyński M. (red.) *Wkład Towarzystwa Gimnastycznego „Sokół” w rozwój kultury fizycznej na ziemiach polskich*. Wyd. UR, Rzeszów 2008, s. 85

⁹ Wolańczyk M. *Macierz Sokola w 60-letnim rozwoju*. Lwów 1927, s. 35.

¹⁰ Rut J. *Działalność Towarzystwa Gimnastycznego „Sokół” w Rzeszowie na polu turystyki pieszej i rowerowej w latach 1886-1914*. [w:] Cynarski W., Obodyński K., Mirkiewicz M. (red.) *Z dziejów Towarzystwa Gimnastycznego „Sokół” w Polsce w 135 rocznicę powstania*. Wyd. PTNKF, Rzeszów 2002, s. 108

¹¹ Pawluczuk Z. *Polskie Towarzystwo Gimnastyczne „Sokół” – prekursor turystyki masowej i usportowionej*. [w:] Zaborniak S., Obodyński M. (red.) *Wkład Towarzystwa Gimnastycznego „Sokół” w rozwój kultury fizycznej na ziemiach polskich*. Wyd. UR, Rzeszów 2008, s. 159.

¹² E. Kubalski: *Wycieczka gimnastyczna*, w: „Przegląd Sokoli”, Kraków 1899, nr 6, s. 94-95

¹³ Jest to definicja sformułowana przez World Tourism Organization (WTO) w 1985 r., a przytoczona w publikacji: Mikos v. Rohrscheidt A. *Turystyka kulturowa – wokół definicji*. „Turystyka kulturowa” Nr 1/2008, s. 7.

were organized¹⁴. In 1892 trips to Łańcut and Strzyżów were organized and the members of “Sokół” received old Polish hospitality. In the same year a trip to Tyczyn was organized and its aim was to encourage neighbouring towns to establish “Sokół” nests¹⁵. In 1893 the “Sokół” branch in Rzeszów passed a resolution which stated that they would organize regular trips to surrounding nests to “make the ties stronger and the nests closer”¹⁶. This kind of trips became regular activities of the “Sokół” in Rzeszów. In 1895 during the trips to Ropczyce, Łańcut and Jasło the scouts from Rzeszów contributed to arousing the “Sokół” idea in those places.

In the mid and late nineties of the XIX century a new form of trips appeared and it was connected with cycling. Every week the Cycling Section organized group trips to small towns and the area surrounding Rzeszów. In 1895 there were several big group trips and the most interesting one was to Odrzykoń, Krosno, Iwonicz and Rymanów on 21st of July. One of the attractions was a visit to Odrzykoń Castle¹⁷. There were also longer cycling trips (some covered even 80 kilometres) and they were organized on Sundays. They often started at 2 p.m. and the programme included, apart from sightseeing, visiting cyclists in other “Sokół” nests.

Another form of activities organized by “Sokół” nests were trips to celebrations regarded as national ones: “This is a sacred duty for “Sokół” to point out at all possible occasions that it is a fully national society and it takes an active part with all the nation in the country’s both mourning and joyful celebrations”¹⁸. The representatives of the “Sokół” in Rzeszów participated in different events in Lviv, Przemyśl, Łańcut, Strzyżów and Tyczyn¹⁹.

„Sokół” slets constituted a very specific type of trips. For the first time this kind of trip was organized in 1891 and it was a trip to a general slet arranged by the Czechs in Prague. In Poland this form of meetings for representatives of the “Sokół” movement appeared in 1892. The purpose of the slets was to promote the idea of “Sokół” through festive parades, mass shows of gymnastic exercises, cultural events (theatre and choir performances) and social gatherings (festivals, dancing parties). The members of Galician nests took part in all general slets organized by the Association of Polish Gymnastic Societies in Austria. Until the First World War there were five slets of Polish “Sokół” members (Lviv 1892, Lviv 1894, Cracow 1896, Lviv 1903 and Cracow 1910). District slets and anniversary slets of particular nests were organized much more frequently. Although their coverage was smaller, they included similar elements in the programme. For members of the Gymnastic Society “Sokół” the trips to slets abroad must have been a big attractions (for example, Prague 1901, Zagreb 1906). Having analysed historical archives it can be concluded that participation in those events was for the members of “Sokół” in Rzeszów both a social and cultural event. The presence at slets made them feel united and they felt they really contributed to the promotion of the “Sokół” culture which they equated with Polish culture. Slets were organized under anniversary celebrations, historical events important for Polish people, to emphasize their national character. The best examples would be the following: the slet in Lviv in 1894 was organized for the Common National Exhibition at the centennial of Kościuszko Uprising; the slet in

¹⁴ Sprawozdanie z czynności wydziału Towarzystwa Gimnastycznego „Sokół” w Rzeszowie za rok 1887, Rzeszów 1888, s. 4, Biblioteka Muzeum Okręgowego w Rzeszowie, sygn. 1171

¹⁵ Sprawozdanie z czynności wydziału Towarzystwa Gimnastycznego „Sokół” w Rzeszowie za rok 1892, Rzeszów 1893, s. 6, Biblioteka Muzeum Okręgowego w Rzeszowie, sygn. 1176

¹⁶ Sprawozdanie z czynności wydziału Towarzystwa Gimnastycznego „Sokół” w Rzeszowie za rok 1893, Rzeszów 1894, s. 5, Biblioteka Muzeum Okręgowego w Rzeszowie, sygn. 1177

¹⁷ Sprawozdanie z czynności wydziału Towarzystwa Gimnastycznego „Sokół” w Rzeszowie za rok 1895, Rzeszów 1896, s. 9-10, Biblioteka Muzeum Okręgowego w Rzeszowie, sygn. 1179

¹⁸ *Księga pamiątkowa ku uczczeniu dwudziestej piątej rocznicy założenia Towarzystwa Gimnastycznego we Lwowie*. Nakładem TG „Sokół”, Lwów 1892, s. 54.

¹⁹ Sprawozdanie z czynności wydziału Towarzystwa Gimnastycznego „Sokół” w Rzeszowie za rok 1892, Rzeszów 1893, s. 6, Biblioteka Muzeum Okręgowego w Rzeszowie, sygn. 1176

Lviv in 1903 for the 40th anniversary of January Uprising; the slet in Cracow in 1910 to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Battle at Grunwald. The historical archives show that while organizing trips to slets for “Sokół” members, different nests included visiting places of national remembrance and cultural heritage monuments in the plans of the trips (apart from taking part in parades and physical exercises). In addition, the organizers of slets included sightseeing of historical places in their programmes themselves and they made them central in the agenda. For example, in Lviv slet participants visited the High Castle, the Dziaduszyński and the Ossoliński museums or the Raławice Panorama²⁰. In Cracow they visited Wawel Castle, Mariacki Church and Kościuszko Mount²¹.

Another form of trips which appeared in the Galician “Sokół” nests, as well as in the branch in Rzeszów, were trips organized by scout teams which functioned within the society since 1911. They were mostly trekking excursions and their programmes included terrain recognition, imitation of military activities and even exercises with weapons²². At times they turned into trips to take part in immediate slets. In July of 1913 there was even a trip of 42 Polish scouts to a slet in Birmingham in Great Britain²³. Trekking excursions for Permanent “Sokół” Teams was a variation of such trips with adult participants of Gymnastic Societies. This form dominated tourism activities of “Sokół” in the years before the outbreak of the First World War.

After the scout organization was created in the „Sokół” in Rzeszów (1911), the scouts took the initiative of promoting different forms of tourism. In 1912 those scouts took part in 17 trips to remote parts of the Rzeszów Region. The biggest trip they had was the one to Lviv – a four-day trip with 27 participants. They also organized trekking trips to Czudec and Odrzykoń (the part of the route from Rzeszów to Strzyżów and from Rymanów to Rzeszów was done by train). Moreover, scouts were involved in the trips to “Sokół” slets. In 1913 they visited Lviv where they saw the High Castle, the Dziaduszyński and the Ossoliński museums, the exhibition of 1863 souvenirs and the Raławice Panorama. On the following day they went to Drohobycz to visit the orphanage of Count Skarbek and they covered 24 kilometres on foot. That was not the end of the trip and after some rest at night the scouts went to Stebnik where they visited a salt mine and saltworks guided by the engineers working there. They learned about making artificial lakes in order to bring oil from the lakes to the saltwalks. Around midday they walked to the Terms in Truskawiec and next to Borysław and Tustanowice. On the last day, after breakfast, the group went to the railway station and went to Sanok by train. In Sanok they visited the factory of railway carriages and machines.

As the threat of a war grew and military mobilization started, the trips in the scouts organization changed their goals. More frequently they were combined with battlefield exercises. In 1913 there were 34 trips like this, always on Sunday afternoon. In addition, the female team had 6 trips²⁴.

In conclusion, it must be emphasized that the Gymnastic Society “Sokół” played an essential role in the development of tourism in the Rzeszów Region. The society became the foundation of tourism and escorted tours for both young and adult people. Thanks to this organization, escorted trips, mostly culture-oriented, became a very important type of tourism as a form of spending free time.

²⁰ Sprawozdanie z czynności wydziału Towarzystwa Gimnastycznego „Sokół” w Rzeszowie za rok 1913, Rzeszów 1914, s. 11, Biblioteka Muzeum Okręgowego w Rzeszowie, sygn. 1197

²¹ Sprawozdanie z czynności wydziału Towarzystwa Gimnastycznego „Sokół” w Rzeszowie za rok 1910, Rzeszów 1911, s. 11, Biblioteka Muzeum Okręgowego w Rzeszowie, sygn. 1194

²² „Przegląd Sokoli” 1910, nr 17 – 20, s. 102.

²³ *Wycieczka skautów polskich do Anglii*. „Przegląd Sokoli” 1913, nr 8, s. 63.

²⁴ Sprawozdanie z czynności wydziału Towarzystwa Gimnastycznego „Sokół” w Rzeszowie za rok 1913, Rzeszów 1914, s. 11, Biblioteka Muzeum Okręgowego w Rzeszowie, sygn. 1197