

Leaning Tower of Nevyansk

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The article presents the short history of the Nevyansk tower and explores the purpose of its inclination.

The Leaning Tower of Nevyansk is a tower placed in the town of Nevyansk Russia, built in the 18th century. Its construction was funded by a famous Russian manufacturer Akinfiy Demidov.

The height of the tower is 57.5 m. The deviation of the top part of the tower from a right angle is currently 2.20 m. There is still no evidence to this day as to when exactly the Nevyansk Tower was constructed. Russian historians believe that it was built between 1725 and 1732. Also, there is no information about the architect of this unique edifice.

Historians are still debating about the exact purpose of the Nevyansk Tower. Some say that Demidov used it as a "bank safe", others believe it was either a watchtower, or a belltower, or a prison, or even a laboratory for conducting chemical experiments and producing counterfeit money. Some historians think that the tower was supposed to embody the might of the Demidov family and serve as some sort of an architectural symbol of their dynasty [1].

During the restoration works in the tower, archaeologists were able to determine the purpose of some of the rooms. It appears that the first floor of the tower was used for conducting some sort of "secret work" with the help of shackled serfs. The second floor may have been Demidov's "office", where he kept his archives and other papers. There is one mysterious room in the tower. Archaeologists dubbed it the "acoustic room". It is a 20 m² room. If a person stands in one corner of this room, he or she can whisper words to another person in the opposite corner and they will be perfectly audible.

One of the legends states that the inclination of the tower was an idea of some talented architect. They say that the tower was purposely inclined to face southwest in the direction of Tula, Demidov's birthplace. Supposedly, this is how Akinfiy wanted to demonstrate his affection for his former home. Another legend claims that right after the end of the construction of the edifice Akinfiy Demidov and the architect went on top of the tower. There, Demidov asked him whether he could build anything better than the Nevyansk Tower. The architect answered "yes", and Demidov ordered him thrown down from the top of the building. The next morning the locals supposedly noticed that the tower had leaned forward a bit and water had started trickling down the walls as if the tower was "crying". Interestingly enough, one can still see some water constantly dripping down the southwest wall of the tower to this day. However, there are a number of natural explanations for this phenomenon [2].

The restorers say that there is no evidence to even assume that the Nevyansk Tower was purposely built inclined. The current surveying data shows that the defect had to be obvious during the construction. It appears that drifting grounds were to blame for the inclination of the tower from the very beginning. Scientists believe that an uneven subsidence took place when the tower had already been partially built [3].

Current measurements indicate that there is a 3-degree deviation of the base part from the axis. Following the restoration, the Nevyansk Tower was opened to the public.

Bibliography:

1. *Itogi Weekly Magazine*, May, 2008.
2. <http://7.ural.ru>
3. Paul Ioan, Revista "*Magazin*", 18 aprilie 2006; p. 27.