

The Black Abbey

In the thirteenth century William Marshall, the younger, was Lord of Leinster. He founded this monastery for the Dominicans, also known as the Black Friars, or the Order of Preachers.

The order was founded by St. Dominic and its first house in Ireland was built in 1224 A.D. in Dublin. In the following year, The Black Abbey in Kilkenny was built.

Kilkenny was a walled town in the middle ages, and the Black Abbey was built outside the town wall.

The photograph shows part of the old buildings, restored for use by the Dominican order in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.



This gate on the left, called Black Freren Gate connected the monastery to the Hightown, the main part of Kilkenny. You are looking at the Black Abbey from inside the town wall through what remains of the gate. In the middle ages, the friars of the Black Abbey had a key to this gate.

Below, the town wall is seen from the Black Abbey.



The Abbey was dissolved in 1543 and the buildings and lands belonging to the Dominicans were granted by the King to the Sovereign, Burgesses and Commons of Kilkenny. The Sovereign was the same as the modern Mayor.