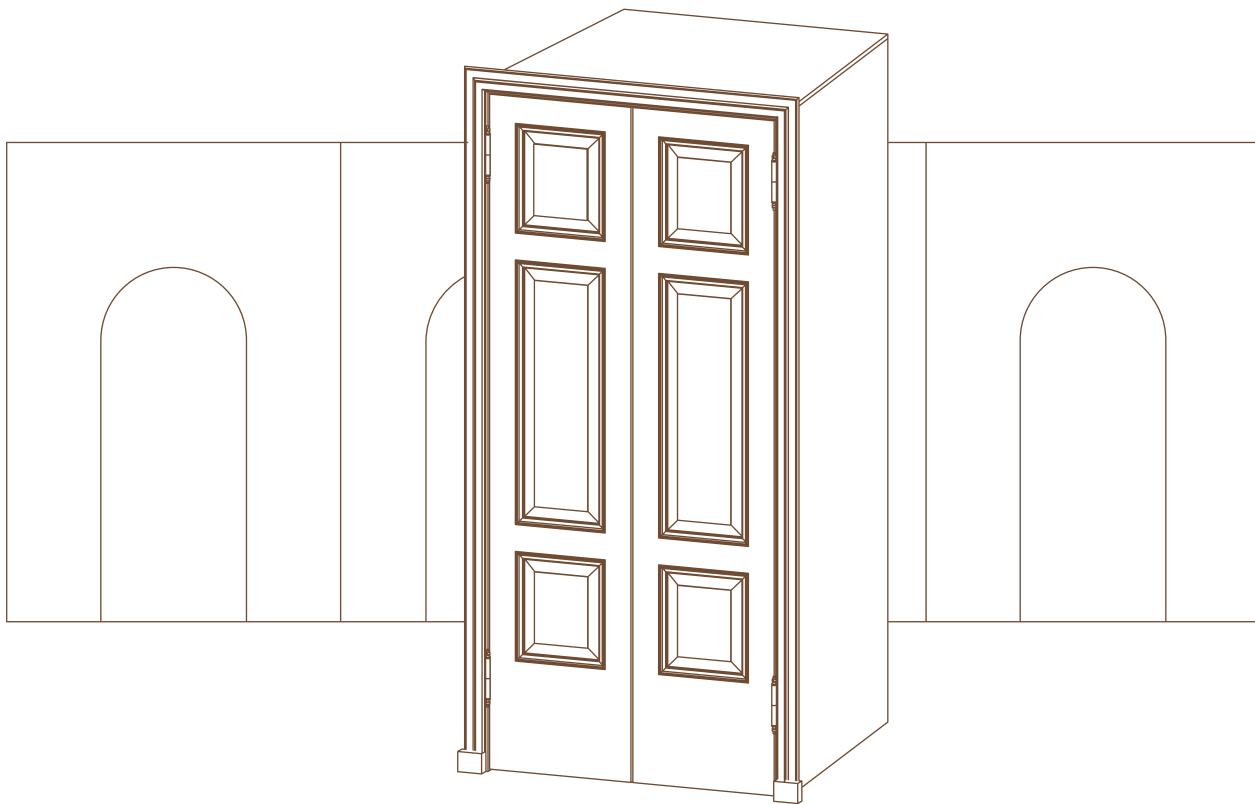


## EXPLORER'S ATTIC

# WELCOME TO THE EDUCATION ROOM of the Latvian National Museum of History!

The renovated premises of Riga Castle's upper floor – the “Explorer’s Attic” is a specially equipped education room, available for families with children and schoolchildren. We invite you to explore the history of Latvia and Riga Castle through a variety of interactive experiences!



The exploration cabinets (“cabinets of curiosities”) located in one section of the attic encourage visitors to engage with the course of Latvian history by researching objects from the museum’s collection and replicas. These cabinets offer a rich array of facts, presenting the 12 000 years of the Latvian history.

# EXPLORER'S ATTIC

The Education room's exploration cabinets



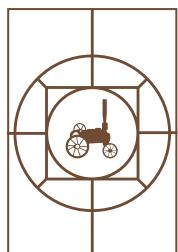
STONE AGE  
EARLY METAL AGE



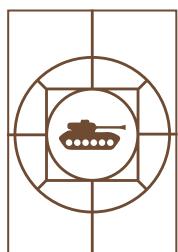
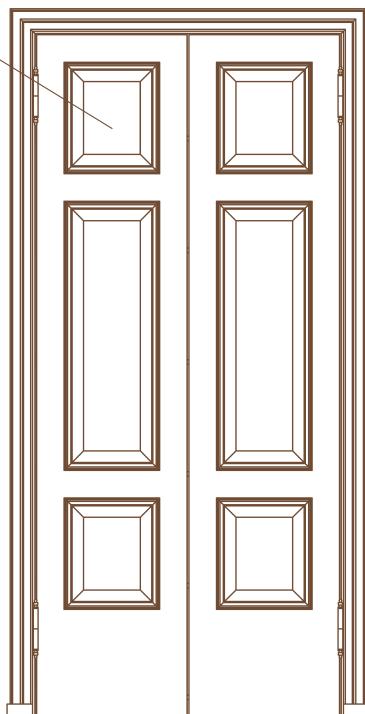
IRON AGE



MIDDLE AGES  
EARLY MODERN PERIOD



MODERNIZATION  
LATVIAN NATIONAL AWAKENING



OCCUPIED LATVIA



FIRST WORLD WAR  
INDEPENDENT REPUBLIC  
OF LATVIA



RESTORATION OF LATVIA'S  
INDEPENDENCE

The symbols can be found on the doors of each cabinet.

## EXPLORER'S ATTIC



### STONE AGE AND THE EARLY METAL AGE (~10 500 BC– ~1 AD)

The first inhabitants arrived in the territory of Latvia 12 000 years ago. In the earliest period of history – the Stone Age – people settled near rivers and lakes. They fished, gathered edible plants and hunted. They hollowed out single-wood boats for fishing, made nets and hooks, and went hunting with harpoons, bows and arrows. Tools and weapons were made of natural materials – bone, antler, wood and stone. At the end of the Stone Age, people learned to make clay pots, which allowed them to cook and store food.

About 3000 years ago, during the Early Metal Age, people discovered a new material – bronze: an alloy of copper and tin, which was obtained through trade. It could be used to make weapons and jewellery. People also knew how to cultivate the land and grow crops, as well as raise livestock: sheep, pigs, cows, and horses. To protect their property, they built settlements in hard-to-reach places, creating hillforts.

*Find out, how the earliest inhabitants of the territory of Latvia lived – research historical objects, touch replicas of the Stone Age objects, watch a video about flint processing, create your own pottery pattern and do much more!*



### IRON AGE (~1<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY–1200)

Two thousand years ago, people discovered how to extract iron from bog ore. Iron was used to make weapons and tools – axes, sickles and ploughshares – which made work faster. Crafts also developed, and blacksmiths, jewellers and potters became separate professions. Equally important was the exchange, purchase and sale of goods, which was carried out by merchants.

The territory of Latvia was inhabited by several ancient peoples: the Curonians, Semigallians, Selonians, Latgarians, Livonians and Vends.

Each had a different culture – traditions, clothing and jewellery. A thousand years ago, larger centres of craftsmanship, trade and power began to form. Leaders and their armies lived in fortified castles on hillforts. They ruled across larger territories – lands. Near the hillforts were settlements where craftsmen, merchants and farmers lived.

*Find out what changes happened during the Iron Age – grind grain, try on reconstruction of clothing and jewellery, research everyday objects and do much more!*

## EXPLORER'S ATTIC



### MIDDLE AGES AND EARLY MODERN PERIOD (1200–1800)

In the 13th century, clergymen and crusaders from German-speaking lands introduced Christianity to Latvia. The local peoples were not always willing to accept the new faith, so crusaders were organized against the pagans. By subjugating the local ancient peoples' leaders and their lands, Livonia was established.

Churches and stone castles were built as centres of the new power. Towns also began to form – Rīga, Cēsis, Kuldīga and others.

Over time, peasants lost their freedom and became serfs who had to work for the manor. German was more commonly spoken in cities and manor estates, while peasants spoke Latvian. About 500 years ago, a unified Latvian written language was also created. However, traditions, clothing, and jewellery continued to differ from region to region, because after the wars of the 17th and 18th centuries, the lands of Latvia were part of various countries – Poland-Lithuania, Sweden and Russia.

*Explore the territorial changes that affected Latvia from the 16th to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, research the model of Medieval Rīga, discover, what life was like for nobles, townspeople and peasants, and do much more!*



### MODERNIZATION AND THE LATVIAN NATIONAL AWAKENING (1800–1914)

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a time of rapid change throughout Europe. New technical inventions made it possible to travel faster and produce many more goods. Changes also took place in society. Serfdom was abolished in the countryside, and peasants were freer to choose their place of residence and occupation, and to buy property. People from the countryside moved to cities. People received information much faster. Newspapers became popular, and book publishing flourished. Most people could read, and even farmers' children were more likely to attend university.

Education awakened the nation's self-confidence. Latvians studying at the University of Tartu in Estonia in the 1850s expressed the idea that it was necessary to study and respect the Latvian language, to ensure that Latvians acquired knowledge and became skilled farmers. The idea of Latvians as an independent nation with their own culture, rich language and common goals grew into a powerful movement that paved the way for the establishment of the Latvian state.

*Get to know more about the technical inventions, find out at which universities the Latvians studied, listen to a song that could have become the national anthem and do much more!*

## EXPLORER'S ATTIC



### FIRST WORLD WAR (1914–1918). INDEPENDENT REPUBLIC OF LATVIA (1918–1940)

The First World War began in 1914. More than 100 000 Latvian residents were drafted into the Russian army, where Latvian Riflemen Battalions were formed.

More than half a million people were forced to flee their homes. The war weakened the Russian and German empires. An opportunity arose to establish the state of Latvia.

On 18 November 1918, Latvia's independence was proclaimed. Soon after, the War of Independence began, in which the Latvian army fought against Soviet Russia and other enemies. The victory over the Russian and German armies led by Pavel Bermondt in Riga on 11 November 1919, gave a great boost to the soldiers and the whole society. After the victory in the war, the constitution (the *Satversme*), was drafted, and democracy was introduced in Latvia for the first time. The people's elected representatives in the Saeima (parliament) passed laws and confirmed Jānis Čakste, Gustavs Zemgals and Alberts Kviesis as presidents. Democracy was severely restricted by Kārlis Ulmanis, who illegally seized power on 15 May 1934, and established an authoritarian regime. Agriculture was the most important sector of the Latvian economy. Industrial sectors also developed. For the first time, Latvia was able to invest the money earned in these sectors directly into strengthening its culture and education.

*Explore the events of the First World War with the help of a timeline, in the screen follow the territorial changes during the War of Independence, view close-ups of the Freedom Monument's figures and do much more!*

## EXPLORER'S ATTIC



### OCCUPIED LATVIA (1940–1990)

Latvia lost its independence during the Second World War in 1940, when it was occupied by the Soviet Union, or USSR. After a year, the Soviet occupation was replaced by the occupation of Nazi Germany, but at the end of the war, Soviet rule returned, keeping Latvia within the USSR until 1990.

The USSR and Germany were totalitarian states where only one ideology was allowed. Society was completely controlled by the authorities, and those who thought differently were destroyed.

Latvia lost one in four of its inhabitants during the war and post-war years. Tens of thousands died in the war, up to 200 000 suffered under Soviet and Nazi repression, and nearly 200 000 more fled Soviet rule and went into exile to the West. Those who remained in Latvia were forced to submit to the occupying power, but the bravest resisted, knowing that they would be punished.

Over time, people adapted to life under Soviet occupation. However, this period was characterized by censorship, restrictions on freedom, and disregard for Latvia's interests and the needs of its people. At the same time, propaganda in schools, the mass media, and elsewhere lied about the just, progressive, and ideal Soviet regime.

*Get to know about the repressions carried out by the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, research the everyday life objects, the deficit and hidden objects, find out the stories of resistance to occupation regimes and much more!*

## EXPLORER'S ATTIC



### RESTORATION OF LATVIA'S INDEPENDENCE (1987–...)

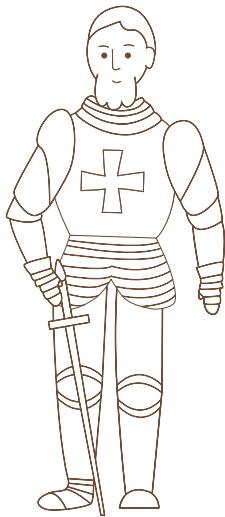
In the mid-1980s, people in the Soviet Union were able to express themselves more freely and began to openly criticize the shortcomings, lies, and historical injustices of the Soviet regime. A popular movement began – the Third Awakening. The first courageous actions took place at the Freedom Monument in Riga in 1987. Latvia's determination to restore independence was demonstrated by the Baltic Way campaign on 23 August 1989, when around 2 million people in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia joined hands to form a 600 km long human chain. The independent state was restored on 4 May 1990, with the adoption of the declaration "On the Restoration of Independence of the Republic of Latvia." The people were determined to defend their independence against the supporters of Soviet rule.

This was demonstrated by their courage during the Barricades in January 1991. After regaining independence, Latvia faced many challenges – building its economy and monetary system, restoring private property, removing Soviet troops from Latvia, and returning to the European community. Democratic governance and respect for human rights and freedoms were restored. Every one of us can build a better Latvia right now.

*Explore the posters used in protests during the Third Awakening, listen to the music and play games characteristic to this period, discover the things present-day Latvia is proud of and do much more!*

## EXPLORER'S ATTIC

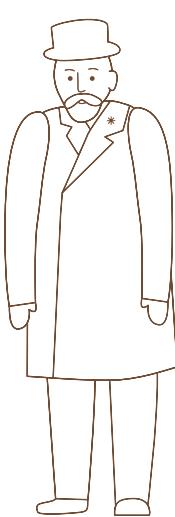
The other part of the education room is mostly dedicated to the history of Riga Castle.



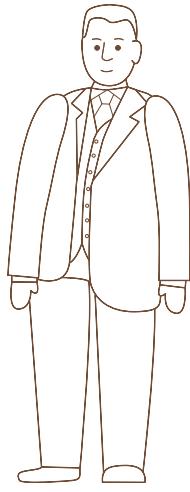
WOLTER VON PLETenBERG,  
MASTER OF THE TEUTONIC ORDER



SWEDISH ARMY  
SOLDIER



JĀNIS ČAKSTE,  
PRESIDENT OF LATVIA



KĀRLIS ULMANIS,  
PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER  
OF LATVIA

In the theatre section you can follow a timeline highlighting the key events of the Castle's more than 500 years of history, view artifacts found during archaeological excavations, create characters of the Castle's historical inhabitants using magnetic shapes, or build a wooden block model of the Castle.

