**MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF LITHUANIAN EDUCATION**

Audioguide

Roots of education go back to the old times. From generation to generation, humankind has always passed on its experience and moral attitudes. Folklore and ancient rituals indicate that in pre-Christian times Lithuanians attended to children’s education and upbringing. Practical experience and spiritual wealth was delivered verbally. The first schools in Lithuania were established in the late 14th century; the education system in three levels, i.e. primary, secondary and higher, however, was developed only in the 16th century.

The museum of the history of Lithuanian education aims to show that the education system in our country was built upon the foundation of Christian Europe, and to also highlight what makes unique a long way that the Lithuanian school has walked. The exposition presents the history of education from the 14th till the 20th century. A valuable collection of learning means from different historical periods was built up in years – textbooks and other education-related objects are presented in three halls. Museum visitors have an opportunity to get introduced to famous personalities, publications, and significant facts in the history of Lithuania.

**History of the building and the founding of the museum**

A three-story building where the museum is located was built in the first half of the 20th century. It is unknown who it originally belonged to. For some time it was owned by the Jewish community – there was a rest-home and a hospital for the Jewish people. During German occupation, the Nazi government targeted on the building, whereas Soviet government nationalized it and adapted for public needs. Professional school of mechanics persisted here for the longest period of time. In 2002, the Pedagogical Museum of Kaunas Region was moved here.

One of the oldest Lithuanian museums – the Pedagogical Museum was established in 1922 by Kaunas city municipality. The initiator and its long-term director was a renowned educationist, textbook author and a public figure Vincas Ruzgas. Thanks to his efforts, the museum not only turned into the centre for teacher training and youth education but also became the core of Kaunas cultural life.

In 2010 the museum changed the title, now it is called the Museum of the History of Lithuanian Education. Nowadays some of the information here is delivered with the help of modern technologies. Unconventional ways of displaying are employed to present original exhibits.

1. **“Lithuanian-German and German-Lithuanian Dictionary” by Friedrich Wilhelm Hack**

In the first hall the museum visitors are introduced with Lithuanian education system of the 14th-19th centuries – from the earliest Lithuanian publications till when the ban on Lithuanian press was lifted.

The museum cannot boast the originals of the very first Lithuanian publications, but everyone can nevertheless get to know the history of the Lithuanian education of the 14th-17th centuries through information stands at the start of the exposition – they present textual information, maps, and engravings.

The oldest example of a printed book preserved at the museum is the “Lithuanian-German and German-Lithuanian Dictionary” by Friedrich Wilhelm Hack published in 1730. The dictionary, like the first educational book in Lithuanian – “Catechism” by Martynas Mažvydas, – was published in protestant Prussia. The editor of the dictionary was a lexicologist, translator and a priest from Lithuania Minor Friedrich Wilhelm Hack. In the beginning of the 18th century he taught Lithuanian at the University of Halle; the dictionary, thus, was designed for the students of the Lithuanian seminar. It is one of the first dictionaries with a short introduction to Lithuanian grammar dedicated to language learners.

1. **“Sermons on Sundays and Holidays throughout the Year” by Petras Skarga**

The book was published by Vilnius University Press in 1595. The museum holds a reissue that appeared at the end of the 18th century.

Petras Skarga was a writer, a Jesuit, one of the leading figures of the Counter-reformation and a renowned public figure of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of the 16th-17th centuries. In 1579 Jesuits founded Vilnius University and Petras Skarga was appointed its first rector. In years, the university became not only the key school in Lithuania where teachers were trained, but also a cultural centre. Petras Skarga was the head of Vilnius Academy for five years till 1584 when he came back to Krakow where he became a court preacher to King Sigismund III Vasa.

1. **“Polish, Lithuanian and Slavic Antiques” by Joachim Lelewel**

Joachim Lelewel was a 18-19th century Polish historian, cartographer, pioneer of European numismatics, and the professor of the universities of Vilnius, Krakow and Brussels. He worked at Vilnius University when Lithuanian national consciousness was being born here, and it became the centre of resistance against the Tsarist ideology. During the “Philomath Process”, Joachim Lelewel was dismissed from the university as an ideological leader of Philomath Society. While in emigration, in 1842 he published a study “Polish, Lithuanian and Slavic Antiques”. The museum holds its first part where an inventory of the numismatic collections in Poland is presented. This publication is a rare exhibit not only in Lithuania but in Europe as well.

1. **A slate board and a slate pencil**

In the 19th century primary school it was the main medium used for writing used – the most popular exercise book not only in Lithuania but in the rest of the world too. As handmade paper was really expensive, slate boards were what poor people could only afford to learn to write on.

1. **The manuscript of Simonas Daukantas**

Despite various bans by Tsarist government, there were people in Lithuania who cherished nationalism and Lithuanian word. Till the middle of the 19th century, the education of Lithuanians was in the hands of a torchbearer and a Catholic bishop of Lithuania Motiejus Valančius and his allies, a historian and writer Simonas Daukantas being one of them.

It was believed for a long time, that the manuscript was originally written by the historian himself. A recent analysis on handwriting, however, revealed that it does not belong to Simonas Daukantas’ pen – it could be written by someone from his immediate milieu. It is evidenced by cheap manufactured paper that, according to specialists, the renowned historian would never choose to write on.

1. **Graduation certificate from Veiveriai Teachers’ Seminary**

After the January Uprising in 1863-1864, the government of the Russian Empire banned Lithuanian press in Latin alphabet. Subjects in Lithuanian schools were taught only in Russian. Two institutions, however, disregarded the ban – these were Boys Gymnasium in Marijampolė and Veiveriai Teachers’ Seminary. The latter played an exceptional role in the system of education in the late 19th century in Lithuania. It became a very popular school as among its subjects was the course of Lithuanian language and grammar.

1. **“A Book of Readings for the Schools in North-Western Russia”**

Special textbooks were published for the schools in the territory of Lithuania. It was one of the main means of Russification. This particular book of readings published in Vilnius is a typical example of what were the means for shaping a true Russophil. The book contains an ode to Nicholas II of Russia and orthodox prayers.

1. **A prayer-book “The Old Altar of Gold”**

To make people get used to the Russian language as quick as possible, popular Lithuanian editions were republished in a newly introduced civil script popularly named “graždanka”, which meant that Lithuanian texts were written in Russian alphabet. Prayer-books rewritten in “graždanka” were published for a highly religious Lithuanian nation. One of them was a Lithuanian prayer-book “The Old Altar of Gold”, an essential religious attribute in every Lithuanian household of the second half of the 19th century. Its Latin version was, indeed, supposed to be substituted with the newly coined “graždanka” edition.

1. **Pokutnik**

It was forbidden to speak Lithuanian at schools – either during the lessons or breaks. A pupil who broke the rule would get as a punishment a small board called “Pokutnik” hanging around his or her neck. It was a tool of intimidation and humiliation invented by Russian educationalists.

1. **A newspaper “Aušra”**

“Aušra” was the first social, political and cultural monthly published in Lithuanian and dedicated to readers all across Lithuania Proper. The first editor-in-chief of the “Aušra” was a doctor, scholar and political activist Jonas Basanavičius. The monthly was published in 1883-1886 in Ragnit and Tilsit and secretly circulated in Lithuania and other places of the Russian Empire. This publication was of particular importance to the Lithuanian national movement, it teamed up Lithuanian intellectuals and shaped their further actions.

1. **A pen made out of a cartridge-case**

Till Lithuanian Press Ban, an important educational role was performed by Lithuanian Catholic congregational schools. After 1864 the Russian Government started to close them down. With no schools left parents would normally choose to teach their children at home. Sometimes teachers were hired and asked to work at a farmer’s house. Teachers had only very modest means of teaching – an example of pure imagination is the metal pen made of a cartridge-case and used by the teacher Mitkus. As it is evidenced, thus, military waste may also be used for peaceful purposes.

1. **“ABC” by Juozas Damijonaitis**

This hall presents the development of Lithuanian education since the Lithuanian press ban was lifted till the first Soviet occupation, paying the most attention to inter-war period.

After having lifted the Lithuanian press ban, Lithuanian print could again be published, and private Lithuanian schools started to emerge. Textbooks for schools were being written by intellectuals. One of the first textbooks was published in 1906 – it was a primer for reading and writing “ABC” by Juozas Damijonaitis. The author was a teacher and public figure, and also worked for the press. His greatest merit was the so much wanted first textbooks for newly established schools. His “ABC” book was, indeed, very popular and widely used at Lithuanian schools throughout interwar period. The cover of the book was designed by a painter and composer Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis.

1. **Juozas Vokietaitis’ fountain-pen**

Having declared the independence of Lithuania in 1918, the Lithuanian intelligentsia tackled the problems related with the establishment of national schools. The process involved a number of public and culture figures of that time. One of them was a teacher and a founder of the national school Juozas Vokietaitis. The gilded fountain-pen with a warranty paper for 25 years was given to him as a present by former students. The beloved teacher cherished the present a lot. In the surviving photographs he is seen with this pen both in official events and casual environment.

1. **Historical map of Lithuania**

A model of a school class as it was at the beginning of interwar period is being displayed together with the historical map of Lithuania till the middle of the 16th century.

This map, an important teaching instrument, was drawn by a historian and teacher Ona Girčytė-Maksimaitienė. She was one of the pioneer specialists of historical cartography, who made maps for textbooks and atlases. The map presented in the exposition was not only an essential visual mean in teaching history but also a symbol of patriotism – the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania extends here as far as to the Black Sea. In the twenties and the forties of the 20th century Lithuania was left deprived of Vilnius and Klaipėda regions; the map was, thus, a vivid reminder of glorious and great history of Lithuania.

1. **Newspaper “Saulutė”**

In the beginning of the 20th century children’s after-school activities were as much important as lessons themselves. Children’s newspapers and journals were published. One of “Saulutė” editors-in-chief was a teacher and writer Antanas Giedrius-Giedraitis, a number of illustrations was drawn by a famous Lithuanian painter Kazys Šimonis.

1. **“Charity list” by parents committee of Švėkšna “Saulė” Gymnasium”**

Active societies existed in Lithuanian teaching institutions of the 20th century – they took care of the education of poor but talented children. Primary schooling was cost-free whereas studies in secondary school cost 100 litas a year. Talented pupils were offered financial support which was collected in various forms. In one of the best known schools in Samogitia – Švėkšna “Saulė” Gymnasium” – lotteries in support of poverty-stricken children were organized. The charity list made by the order of the school director Pranas Samulionis includes chanterelles, onions, apples and other alimentary products as a possible form of support.

1. **Stereoscope**

In years, Lithuanian schools of the early 20th century obtained more and more visual teaching means. Teachers and pupils would come to the Pedagogical Museum in Kaunas to see technological novelties designed to make the learning process more productive and to deepen the knowledge. A stereoscope is an optical device that creates the illusion of depth – viewed through it, the object appears as three-dimensional. The effect is achieved by presenting each eye with a separate image – these images depict the same object but it is viewed from a slightly different angle. In interwar years this device was used to also check children’s vision.

1. **A uniform cap of “Aušra” Boys Gymnasium in Kaunas**

Schools of the independent Lithuania usually had hallmarks – flags, caps, badges, etc. Here we can see a blue uniform cap of “Aušra” Boys Gymnasium with initials of the gymnasium. “Aušra” Gymnasium is one of the oldest and most renowned gymnasiums in Kaunas; a number of truly enlightened Lithuanians graduated it. Initials “ABG” indicate that the cap belonged to a boy – the letters means “Aušra Boys Gymnasium”.

1. **An official document from the board of Lithuanian Jewish Teacher’s Union “Hamorė”**

The Constitution of the independent Republic of Lithuania ensured national minorities with the right to national education. In primary and secondary schools pupils of foreign origin were taught in their mother-tongue, and had an opportunity to get introduced with the fundamentals of their religion. An official document from the board of Lithuanian Jewish Teacher’s Union was dedicated to Antanas Vokietaitis, an inspector for Kaunas primary schools. The document reflects a public-spirited position of Jewish community – an public servant is invited to attend a general congress of “HAMORĖ” members.

1. **An application “Pleading” by teacher Norkaitė**

Aiming at better teaching quality, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Lithuania initiated summer courses for teachers in 1919-1938. Teachers from provincial primary schools were particularly motivated to attend these courses, for this was a perfect chance to broaden what they learnt at Teachers’ seminaries. The application PLEADING by teacher Norkaitė where she asks to be admitted to courses for the third time in a row only proves how popular and useful were these courses, and also how peculiar, from nowadays perspective, is the official discourse of the document.

1. **University graduation certificate**

In the first years of independence, after Lithuania was deprived of Vilnius region and the efforts to re-establish Vilnius University failed, the University of Lithuania was founded in Kaunas in 1922. It had the faculties of humanities, theology and philosophy, law, mathematics, medicine and engineering. This was the biggest higher education institution in Lithuania. The certificate of a graduate of the Faculty of Humanities, the Department of Philosophy and Pedagogy, and a future scholar of pedagogy Jonas Laužikas is distinguished for its original heraldic stamps.

1. **Juozas Jatulis’ primary school graduation certificate**

In 1940 the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania. Soviet government assumed reorganisation program for Lithuanian schools. Its main goal was to promote Soviet ideology.

The change of political regimes and the adoption of governmental policy to school curriculum is best represented by that part of the exposition where documents and teaching aids from the occupation period are presented. One of the exhibits is a primary school graduation certificate issued to Juozas Jatulis, with the coat of arms of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic and an impress. Graduation certificate issued by another teaching institution and bearing the coat of arms of the independent Lithuania only proves that the majority of people did not believe that Soviet power would endure.

1. **Leonas Puskunigis’ personal belongings**

In 1941 Germany started a war against the Soviet Union and shortly afterwards occupied the territory of Lithuania. Repressions were taken against Lithuanian people: universities were closed down, 48 famous Lithuanian intellectuals taken to Stutthof concentration camp. Leonas Puskunigis, the participant of the first Lithuanian national Olympic Games, a coach of athletes, was also imprisoned there. He was responsible for pupils’ physical training. Repressions were taken against him because his students ignored Nazi call-up and refused to be conscripted into German army.

1. **Character reference of Stasė Lapaitė**

As the Second World War approached the end, one occupant’s government was changed by another. In 1944-1945 for the second time in occupied Lithuania the regime of intimidation and terror set in. The dark period is evidenced by a character reference of Stasė Lapaitė that was presented to the director of Kaunas Adult School. Such character reference was required when entering a teaching institution. There should have been indicated not only social status but also relationships with relatives who emigrated to the West or were exiled or belonged to the resistance.

A closet that stands across the hall symbolizes the Soviet Iron Curtain that cut off Lithuania of the world. Behind the doors of the closet are displayed various exhibits that reveal what was the Soviet system of education in Lithuania.

1. **Olympic torch of the Sports games of the pupils of Soviet republics**

A major focus of the Soviet system of education and healthcare was to ensure normal physical health of the young generation. To encourage competitiveness, sports games for pupils were organized whether local or all-union. The trophies were signs of soviet populism and gigantomania. This torch is a transferable symbol of sport fights – it was used during the 15th games in 1978 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan; and during the 16th games in 1981 in Lithuania.

1. **“The Order of the Red Banner of Labour”**

Despite their personal convictions, whether for or against Soviet regime, teachers had to nevertheless promote Soviet ideology at schools. Earnest, dutiful teachers who did not demonstrate their discontentment with Soviet regime were awarded “Certificates of Honour”, “Medals of Labour”, and “Badges for a Teacher of Merit”. The teacher Adelė Gerulaitienė received “The Order of the Red Banner of Labour” in 1960.

Having seen the exhibits of the Soviet school let us now move towards a wall stand representing a pulled apart page of the history of the education in Lithuania. High above hangs a suitcase of an exiled teacher that symbolizes Lithuanians scattered around the world during and after the Second World War. On the other side of the closet everyone can find information about Lithuanian education in exile.

1. **“Journal of academic achievement” of Juozas Kazakevičius**

In 1944 when the Soviet Army was approaching Lithuanian border a number of intellectuals moved to the West. Most of them ended up in refugee camps in Germany. They could not find a job according to their profession so they attended courses and mastered various crafts. It may be evidenced from Juozas Kazakevičius’ “Journal of academic achievement”. In Lithuania he was the owner of a small business whereas while in emigration he studied for electrician which should have helped him to find a job.

1. **A test-paper by a pupil from Montessõri primary school in Ravensburg**

When in 1944 the majority of intelligentsia emigrated from Lithuania, there were teachers among them. They sought to provide Lithuanian pupils with a continuing education in their mother-tongue. In a refugee camp in Ravensburg, the followers of Maria Montessori’s philosophy of education Adomas Varnas, Marija Varnienė and Domicelė Petrutytė applied montesori educational method to Lithuanian schools there. Their work is represented by a test-paper of the final Lithuanian exam by Luana Pilkaitė from Montessori Lithuanian School in Ravensburg.

1. **The photograph of the community of Maironis Lithuanian school**

The photograph made in 1963 captures a group of pupils and teachers from Maironis Lithuanian School in New York along with members of the national committee of Lithuanian community. After the Second World War, the majority of emigrants from Lithuania settled in Australia, the Americas, or Canada. Lithuanian communities whose primary concern was to educate countrymen were emerging there. Maironis Lithuanian School in New York was founded in 1959 by Ona Abromaitienė.

1. **The book “Educational Reform”**

The content and methods of Soviet education system started to degrade long before the fall of the Soviet Union. National revival movement gaining momentum, a meeting of Teachers’ movement was held in Vilnius in 1988. Delivering a speech at the meeting, a PhD Meilė Lukšienė presented the idea of an educational reform which was necessary in order to make the school a foundation of the strong and firm state, society and nation. The author of the displayed publications, the founder of the National School, the architect of the concept of education in Lithuania, a scholar, a teacher and literary researcher Meilė Lukšienė was awarded UNESCO Comenius medal in 2004 for her scholarly studies in the history of Lithuanian education and teaching practice.

The development of the educational system in Lithuania after the re-establishment of Lithuanian Independence is absent from the exposition. The museum collects information and related exhibits that reflect the processes that Lithuanian education and science is going through at the moment; it is, thus, expected that in the near future the exposition will be enriched with a section dedicated to this period.

The museum now boasts a collection of more than fifty thousand items that reveal Lithuania’s long and diverse history of education. It also organizes exhibitions on various subjects from the history of education or contemporary education as well as on famous Lithuanian educators, Lithuanian and foreign schools. The museum is also engaged in various educational activities, students and teachers present here their creative works.