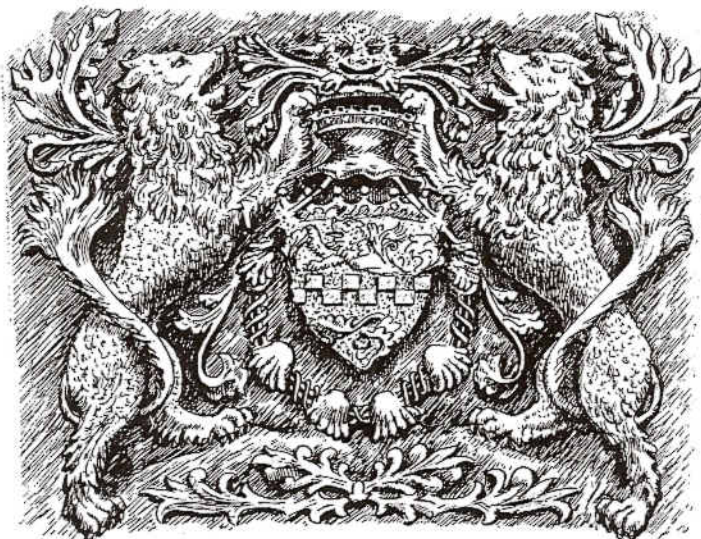
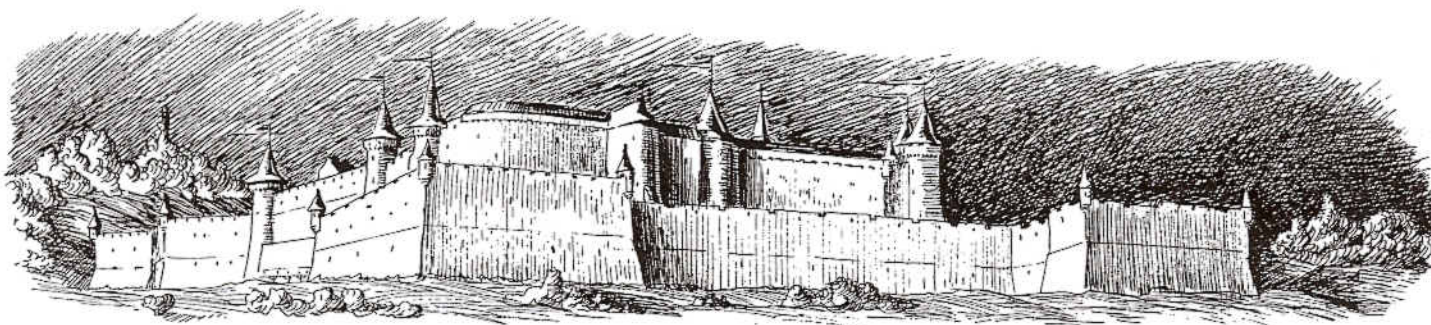


Visit of the Historium



*Welcome
in the largest castle in Europe from the Middle Ages.*



*Please follow the arrows and the numbers, have a look at the display panels.
We do hope that this leaflet will contribute to make your visit pleasant.*

2) The Rock Room

In the 1420^{ies}, a rich German lord, Evrard de la Marck first decided to build here a fortified castle. This first castle had a triangular shape and was increased later. The headland on which it was built, was used as a career. You can still see a side of this room left in its natural state. Observe the different states of the construction on the panels : it covered a surface of 35.000m² during the 16th century.

In fact, we are here in the lower casemate of the bastion du Roi. This bastion, finished around 1573, was a later addition to the original castle which had to advance with the progress of the defence system. In the event of an alarm, the soldiers shot by the openings.

Continue your visit upstairs : you'll arrive just above this room.

3) The upper casemate of the Bastion du Roi

Here, the soldiers are handling hook canons. To allow the decompression of air and the evacuation of gases and smoke, large openings were cut out in the vault. Thus, the bastions were highly efficient structures. As you see on the panels, the castle was equipped with 4 bastions located one at each corner. The distance in between each bastion was planed according to the range of arms : so, they could cross their shots and defend completely the joining wall. Moreover, the shape of the bastion eliminated the dead angles.

When leaving this room, have a look how the bastion was positioned next to the medieval wall and go outside on top of the second level.

4) The Great Chatelet

This castle entrance was modified several times during centuries. On the wall with loopholes which border this terrace, the dates engraved in the stone testify of the last period of works undertaken during the 19th century.

The present door, surmounted by "Quartier Turenne" is also from the beginning of the 19th century. A stone grave about the 1st world war, on your left, recalls that the castle was used by the German, as a prison and a place of execution.

But lets go back in time to the 15th century.

Above the present entrance is a stone relief of the arms of the La Marck. The lord's crest was placed above the entrance, in fact, the second entrance of the castle, which was axed in a different direction. This entrance was built by Evrard's son, Jean de la Marck. To protect it, a triangular wall (a châtelet) was added : you can still see 2 towers of this châtelet from were the guards supervised the entries and could decide to bring up or down the draw-bridge.

Please go onto the other end of this platform.

5) The Princes' Palace

While looking through the opening of this wall, you can see the "Palais des Princes". At the end of the 16th century, Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne marries Charlotte, the last princess of the La Marck family. After the death of his wife, Henri becomes lord of Sedan but he is suffering of gout so he decides to have a new residence (built beginning of the 17th century), much more comfortable than the old castle.

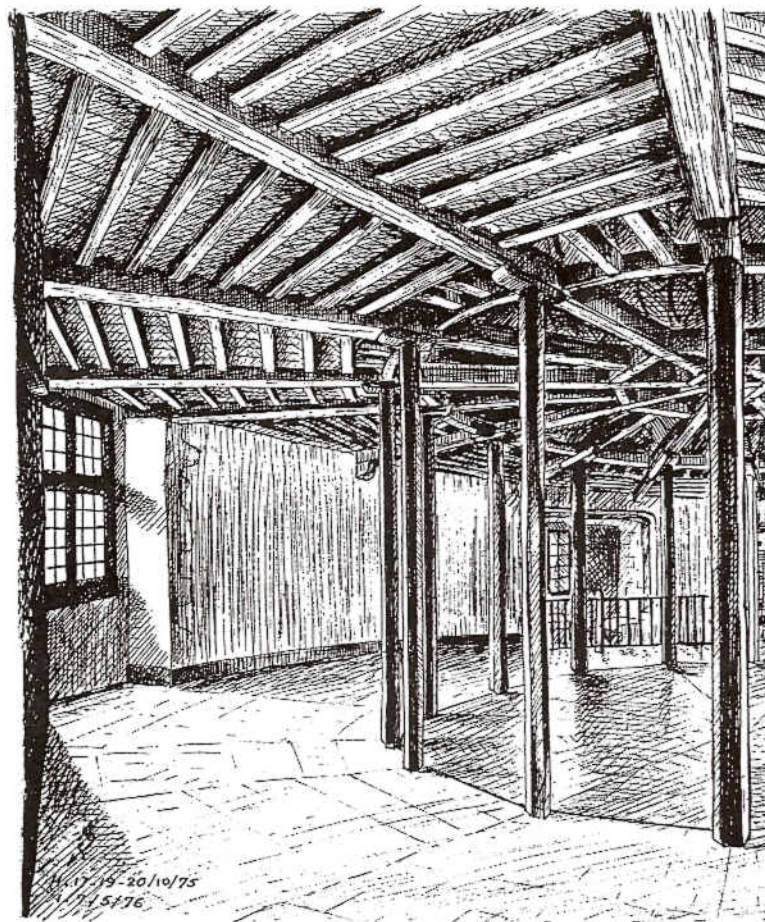
Follow the arrows towards the south terrace.

6) The South Terrace

From here, it's possible to see 5 different generations of fortifications. First of all, above this terrace, there is a large medieval wall which belongs to the original castle of Evrard de la Marck.

Just near you, a round tower called "large tower", marks the point of contact in between two periods. In fact, it consists in 2 towers, one inside the other. The small one inside, was the angle tower of the primitive castle. It's now included in the big one which is 7 meters in diameter.

The third period you can see, is the ramparts dating back to the end of the 15th century. They protected the old medieval walls against artillery fires. The canons became then much more précis and had more power, thanks to a new gun powder. The canon balls were made of cast iron and striked of all their mass. Imagine : the walls which were 4.60 m thick, became 26 m thick ramparts. Their top was a terrace where the canons could take place and be easily removed.



The tower behind you, which you just crossed, was built at the same time as the rampart. It's an artillery tower. Inside it, there were 2 levels for defence. Have a look : you can see the embrasures for canon shooting.

The 4th period of fortification is when they built the 4 bastions. Behind you is the bastion du Roi. At the other end is the bastion des Dames.

The last and 5th period is represented by the 3 openings which were cut out under the bastion des Dames. They're from the 19th century and were used to shelter the canons in peace time.

Over there, at the corner of the bastion des Dames, the watch tower was a shelter for the guards.

Looking towards the town, you can guess that a large ditch was cut out in between the castle and the town.

Just walk up to the top of the bastion des Dames.

7) The Bastion des Dames

The bastion on which you are now is from the 16th century just like the bastion du Roi. It was called the "ladies' bastion" because, in peace time, they would have a walk on it.

Have a look towards the castle : you can see the 1st entrance formed by 2 twin towers. This entrance was protected at first by a "châtelet" which is a small triangular wall. But when Jean de la Marck extended his father's castle and moved the entrance to the west side, this



châtelet wasn't necessary. Instead, a very effective artillery tower covering the châtelet was built with 32 firing stations,. Later, the artillery tower on which you are now, was included during the 16th century.

Go on, following the arrows, down to the twin towers entrance.

8) The Twin Towers

This is the entrance of the castle built by Evrard de la Marck, in between 1424 and 1430. The visitor could stand here, exactly 7 m low down because the level of the entrance was raised later at the time of building ramparts. Just imagine this door much deeper than now, flanked with 2 towers.

By the hole in the masonry above the door, a big stone could be thrown down and kill the enemy : it's the murder hole.

Now, pass through the door . Have a look, on the right hand side, at the enormous upper hinge of the old door. If you look up, you can also see a split in the vault for the iron portcullis. The iron ring in the middle held a beam which, in peace time, kept the portcullis lifted.

Now, go up the steps to the guard room.

9) The first Guard Room

The twin towers had an important role in defending the entrance of the castle. The soldier stands here, ready to

fire his crossbow. This was how the entrance could be effectively protected.

If however it was taken by force, there were still other means of defence available.

To gain access to this room, it was necessary to climb a ladder which led to the opening seen in the floor. Straw was always kept to the foot of the ladder. If the attackers had managed to make a forced entry, the guard could set light to the straw, burning the ladder and cutting out the access.

Follow the passage, between the 2 towers, you'll see 2 holes for the chains of the portcullis.

The tour continues at the 2d level.

10) The Rest Room

This room was used by off duty guards. They could have their meals here and warm themselves but remained always in alert.

Remember the stairs you went up : on one side, they are intentionally uneven and have a full stairway above them making this passage low so, if one was pushed down, he would hurt the back of his head against the top step.

In a case of alarm, a secret passage led to the lord quarters so he could be informed.

Continue your visit passing outside. Go up on the right and have a look down in the yard.

11) The Court Yard of the Castle

In the centre of the yard, you can see the remains of Saint Martin church built in the 11th century by the monks of the Benedictine abbey of Mouzon. During the 13th century, the monks added a priory to the church building a square tower. You can still see it in front of you.

In 1424, Evrard de la Marck chased out the monks in order to build his castle including the priory ; the square tower became the keep.

As you can see, it had the shape of a closed triangle and the yard had the same limits.

In the corner of the courtyard, directly opposite, you can see the narrow Renaissance façade of the lord dwelling constructed during the 16th century.

The tour continues now by the East tower at the top of the slope.

12) The East Tower

We are now at the top of the tower which protected the eastern point of the first castle. When Jean de la Marck extended his father's castle, this tower had a double wall making it a real defence structure.

From here, you can see over the remains of the bastion du Gouverneur built in the middle of the 16th century. After the 1870-71 war, the old fortifications became obsolete and the castle had to be declassified. Experiences were carried up with dynamite. This was how this bastion was destroyed.

Walk along to the top of the twin towers.

13) The panoramic view

From here, you can see one of the best views on the town. Three panoramic displays can be used to locate different sites near the castle.

Now, go down the steps and enter in the museum.

14) The Princes' Gallery

This gallery shows portraits of important figures which made the history of Sedan and of France. In the rooms opening onto this gallery, there are objects from everyday life.

Take your time to stroll around. The tour continues in the room situated at the end of this room, the Turenne room, so named because the great Turenne, Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne and Elisabeth de Nassau's son is supposed to have been born there.

15) The Turenne Room

The date is the 15th of October 1591. Here, in front of you, under the kindly gaze of the future King Henri the 4th, Charlotte de la Marck and Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne are signing their marriage contract. Charlotte, only 16 years old, is the last descendant of the La Marck. Unfortunately, Charlotte does not live long ; in 1594, she has a son who dies at birth and Charlotte dies of sadness.

Before going up to the next level, have a look at the panel which shows the different Princes and Princesses of Sedan.

16) The Rotonde

This tower was built by Jean de la Marck round the small tower of the original castle.

Note the superb framework holding the roof : it's made of oak and dates from the 15th century.

Below, you can see a scene of the family life in the castle at the end of the 15th century. Robert the 1st, Jean de la Marck's son, is sitting facing his wife. Young Robert, the future Robert the 2d, is standing in front of his father.

From this room, please go into the Princes' chapel and after, visit the panoramic room where the tour continues.

17) The panoramic room

This room is dedicated entirely to the battle of Sedan. At the end of the room, you can see a panoramic display the entire battle field.

Napoléon III declared war in Prussia in 1870. In one month, the battle for the frontiers was lost in Alsace and Lorraine. Everywhere, Germans in great number were superior in artillery and command in spite of the courage of the French troops. Napoléon III resigned himself to capitulate and brought the fall of the 2d Empire.

The battle of Sedan marked the height of a spiral of violence which, from 1870 until 1945 and through 3 wars, bringing France and Germany against each other.

Go back towards the Rotonde and pass by the stair case on your left.

18) Passage in between the two towers

This staircase is situated in between the small tower to the right and the outside wall built by Jean de la Marck to the left. At the bottom of the stairs, guards are alerted to defend the castle with their crossbows.

The visit is now finished. We do hope you enjoyed it and wish to see you again soon.



Bedankt voor uw bezoek en tot binnenkort !