



English

When Stockholm was founded in the 13th century, Riddarholmen was a rock in Lake Mälaren where locals grazed their goats. In the late 13th century, the Franciscan order built a monastery and church on the island. The church and nearby buildings have walls from that time. When Gustav Vasa, king from 1521–1560, introduced his Reformation, the monastery's activities ceased, although the city's hospital and poor house remained on the island until the mid-16th century. Gustav Vasa built fortifications along the west of the island, facing Lake Mälaren – remnants can be seen in the lower part of Birger Jarl's Tower and the south tower of Wrangelska Palace.

In the 17th century, Queen Kristina gave land to deserving noblemen, who built splendid palaces to adorn the city. The island changed character, gaining a new name – Riddarholmen (Island of the Nobility). Most of the palaces were built by the water, and the island still features the old land division with no regulated street plan.

After the palace fire of 1697, the Royal Family moved into *Wrangelska palatset*. Other palaces were requisitioned for the Crown administration, and central agencies have since come to dominate the island. Along with the Old Town, Riddarholmen makes up the historic heart of Stockholm and Sweden.