

Foreword

This resource document reflects the history and cultural heritage of Alberta's Estonian community.

The collection of historical records and contributions by members of the community highlights the history, people and cultural life of the province's Estonian diaspora since the arrival of the first settlers in 1899. The Centennial Celebration at Linda Hall in 1999 was the largest gathering of Albertans with Estonian heritage. A visit by Estonian President Lennart Meri in 2000 and the formation of the province-wide Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS) in 2005 were significant events leading to renewal of interest in Alberta's Estonian history. The newsletter 'AjaKaja' began publication in 1989 as Estonia approached independence. AjaKaja continues to provide an important thread that ties the community together.

This resource document contains information about Alberta's Estonian heritage assembled during the last quarter-century. In 2007, a documentary DVD "Alberta's Estonians" was produced. This was followed a few years later by publication of the book "Freedom, Land & Legacy: Alberta's Estonians 1899-2009", dedicated to Estonian pioneers 'who made this land our home'. Concurrently, work commenced on the development of a website to preserve Alberta's Estonian heritage as part of an online learning resource. "The Albertans: Who Do They Think They Are?" was developed by the Heritage Community Foundation (HCF). This is part of the Alberta Online Encyclo-

pedia collection on the University of Alberta Archive-It website.

The HCF website became part of the AEHS website aehs.ca. Stories about Alberta's Estonian pioneer and immigrant families were provided by relatives, or assembled from written records available in libraries and archives. Articles about Alberta's Estonian communities, cultural activities and achievements published in AjaKaja provided invaluable material for this collection.

Financial support by the Government of Estonia, the Estonian Foundation of Canada, Estonian (Toronto) Credit Union, Governments of Canada and Alberta, and the Heritage Community Foundation enabled the development of this heritage project, and the printing and distribution of this document.

Alberta's Estonian history and its rich cultural heritage have been preserved for generations to come. Future updates of this publication will be posted on aehs.ca.

Dave Kiil and Eda McClung
October, 2016
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Credits:

Cover design by Janet Matiisen, currently a freelance graphic designer. She is a proud Estonian-Canadian with deep roots in both countries.

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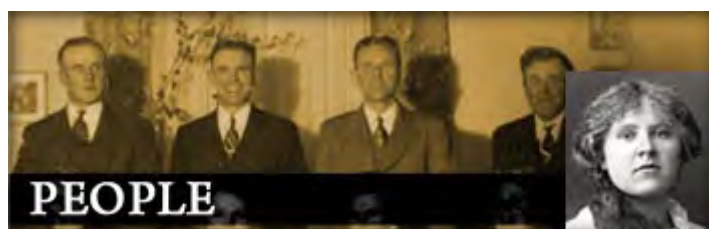
Alberta's Estonian Heritage

Collection of Historical Records, 1899-2012

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HISTORY

This section provides a brief history of Estonia, including social and political conditions during the 19th and 20th centuries that influenced emigration. The section is divided chronologically, allowing for an in-depth look at Estonian immigration to Alberta and an analysis of social developments decade by decade.



CANADIAN MAP HIGHLIGHTING ALBERTA



ALBERTA ESTONIAN SETTLEMENTS

The following statistics are documented population totals in Alberta's Estonian communities in a given year. Much of the statistical data presented below is gleaned from "Estonians in Alberta" by Howard and Tamara Palmer in Peoples of Alberta: Portraits of Cultural Diversity.

Sylvan Lake

1899 - Kingseps settle near Sylvan Lake.

1900-1901 - The arrival of Kristjan Kingsep's family along with the Piht and Kask families bringing the total number of Estonians living in the area to 16.

1902 - Kingseps and other Estonian families moved to Medicine Valley.

1904 - 22 Estonian families living in Sylvan Lake (exact numbers are unavailable).

1920 - Nearly 200 Estonians living in Medicine Valley.

Stettler

1903 - Estonians settlers located land in Stettler area.

1905 - 60 Estonians living near Stettler.

Barons

1904 - Estonians from Crimea, via South Dakota, settled in the Barons area.

1908 - 26 families living near Barons (exact numbers are unavailable).

Alberta

1918 - Approximately 500 Estonians living in Alberta.

1918 - 1941 - Approximately 50 Estonians immigrated to Alberta.

Post Second World War

During the late 1940s and throughout much of the 1950s, approximately 400 Estonians immigrated to Alberta. Generally, they settled in either Calgary or Edmonton.

1951 - The Government of Canada Census states that there are 819 people of Estonian ethnic origin living in Alberta.

1961 - The Government of Canada Census states that there are 1,115 people of Estonian ethnic origin living in Alberta.

1996 - The Government of Canada Census states that there are 1,735 people of Estonian ethnic origin living in Alberta.

2006 - The Government of Canada Census states that there are 2,160 people of Estonian ethnic origin living in Alberta. Of the 2,160, 360 responded that both parents are of Estonian ethnicity. The remaining 1800 identified multiple ethnic origins, including Estonian, reflecting the assimilation of Alberta's Estonian population.



Medicine Valley:

1899: First Estonian settlers arrive at Sylvan Lake

1902: Estonians settle at Medicine Valley

1916: 160 Estonian settlers farm 10,000 acres of land

1920s and 30s: 46 new Estonian settlers arrive in Medicine Valley
1948-1954: 58 Estonian immigrants arrive
1965: 74 Estonians living in Medicine Valley area
1990s: Approximately 10 Estonian families living in Medicine Valley

Other Estonian settlements in Alberta:

Sylvan Lake: 61 Estonians settled by 1903
Stettler: 171 Estonians settled by 1910
Big Valley: 15 Estonian families living here in 1905
Barons: 77 Estonians settled by 1908
Foremost: 9 Estonian homesteads started by 1912
Walsh: 12 Estonian families living here in 1907
Peace River: 30 Estonians living here by the 1920s

BARONS

Family Name	Given Male Name	Given Female Name	Maiden Name	Arrived with Family	Arrival Year	Moved to
Erdman	Jacob	Mari	Tint	Yes	1904	
Erdman	Gustav	Magda	Liik	Yes	1904	
Watman		Helena			1904	
Kulpas	Anton	Miina	Erdman	Yes	1904	Oregon 1928
Kulpas	Jack	Phyllis	Bastin		1904	
Lentsman	Peter	Anna	Reinstein	Yes	1904	Vancouver 1919
Lentsman	John				1904	
Reinstein		Julia		Yes	1904	
Kivi	Jaan				1904	Montana 1912
Palkman	Mihkel	Lena	Musten	Yes	1904	Montana 1910
Kivi	Aleksander	Maria	Usvel		1904	Grande Prairie 1918
Kotkas	Jaan	1-Emilie	Shelbaugh			
		2-Helena	Erdman		1905	
Kulpas	Gus	Alide	Erdman		1905	
Kulpas	John	Julia	Reinstein		1905	Montana 1910
Silbermann	Martin	Lisa	Erdman		1905	
Malberg	Jakob				1905	Montana 1910
Musten	George	Claudine	Sumitavet		1905	Montana 1910
Musten	Nick	Martha	Kewe		1905	Montana 1910
Musten	Charles	Lena	Kewe		1905	Montana 1910
Musten	Joe				1905	Montana 1910
Krikental	Gustav	1-Julie				
		2-Liisa	Reiner		1906	Montana 1910
Minnick	Hans				1906	Montana 1910
Musten	Peter				1906	
Musten	Karl	Julia			1906	
Maar (Meer)	Peter				1906	
Malberg	John	Natalie	Kivi/Kewe		1906	Montana 1912
Pertel	Hans	Juline	Mathieson		1909	Stettler 1924
Krasman	Mikele	Helena			1909	Champion, Alberta 1930
Keldrauk					1909	USA 1910

Aarik						USA 1910
Laas						USA 1910
Musa	Juri	Wilhelmine	Maar/Meer		1909	Washington State 1923
Erdman	Siim	Pauline	Roos		1910	
Erdman	Gustav Johannes	Linda	Jurman		1910	
Lustwerk		Anna			1913	Lacombe, Alberta early 1920s
Saffel	John	Lisa			1914	
Lustwerk	George (Jüri)	Miina		Yes	1920s	Bonanza, Peace River Region, early 1920s
Hebenik	Alex	Lydia	Bakkila	Yes	1916	
Ehrenverth	Villem	Sinaida	Milosei	Yes	1916	Peace River 1926
Thompson	August					Peace River 1926
Jurman		Linda			1921	
Salmon	Robert	Anna	Taevere		1923	
Palkman	Mike				1923	
Sepp	John	Maria	Kotkas		1924	Idaho 1932
Sepp	George	Anna			1924	Peace River 1924
Hebenik	August	Alma	Selge		1926	
Selge		Alma			1927	
Sibelin	Jaan	Elli			1928	Medicine Valley 1932
Sibelin	Villu				1928	
Ellik						
Taevere		Anna				
Andrekson	George	Sally			1929	
Flink	Jaan					

Explanation of List

1. Family names are used and initials if given names not known.
2. List is arranged by year of arrival at first known location in Alberta.
3. Note that early arrivals came to Sylvan Lake area, but most moved on to Medicine Valley or

Stettler.

4. Single women with known dates of arrival are listed in the Family Name column. Where applicable, names of their husbands are shown in the same row. The arrival dates of the husbands is not known.
5. List of names is based on material published in the following but is not exhaustive:
 - Peoples of Alberta by Howard & Tamara Palmer
 - Eestlased Kanadas (Estonians in Canada) A. Kurlents, Toronto 1975
 - Juri's Children - Barbara Gullickson, 1989
 - History of Medicine Valley Estonian Society by Voldemar Matiisen
 - Homesteads and Happiness Eckville and District Historical Society 1979.
 - AjaKaja
 - Family Histories

Compiled by Juri Kraav with assistance by Barbara Gullickson, Marion Collin, Irene Kerbes, Lillian Munz, Eda McClung, Dave Kiil.

The following list contains names of Estonian pioneers arriving in Alberta between 1899 and 1941 with the vast majority arriving before World War I.

It is a representative but not exhaustive record. Many changed the spelling of their names and some changed their names altogether. Many adopted different first names or English derivatives.

Discrepancies in spellings and arrival dates exist in the available source material. The list will be expanded as new source material becomes available.

Additional information can be found in Communities - Rural Communities - Barons

STETTLER

Family Name	Given Male Name	Given Female Name	Maiden Name	Arrived with Family	Arrival Year	Moved to
Hennel	Kristjan	Annie Marie		Yes	1903	
Hennel	Joseph	Marie	Kerbes	Yes	1903	
Kerbes	Johannes	Sophia	Vaartnou(Wartnow)	Yes	1903	
Liiv	Alexander				1903	
Kerbes	Johannes				1903	
Klaus	Jaan	Anna		Yes	1903	
Klaus	Juri	Marie	Korge	Yes	1904	
Klaus	William	Elizabeth	Hennel	Yes	1904	
Saar	Ado (Ando)				1904	
Saar	Alex	Pauline	Kopas	Yes	1904	
Kroon	Oskar			Yes		
Olower	Martin	Maria	Peet	Yes	1904	
Kets	Jaan				1904	
Kelu					1904	
Saar	Juhan	Elizabeth	Hennel	Yes	1905	
Kuusik	J.				1905	
Kuusik	Felix					
Tamberg	Juri				1905	
Kask	Denis				1905	
Magi	Kristjan				1905	
Neegolt					1905	
Roots					1905	
Wagenstein	Alex	Pauline	Hennel	Yes	1905	
Johanson	Hans	Lena		Yes	1905	
Asberg	Hans				1905	
Yurkin	Carl				1905	
Wait	Juri				1907	
Nicklom	Gustav	Maria	Kopas	Yes	1908	
Hennel	William	Ida	Stern	Yes	1909	
Kerbes	Mihkel	Liisu		Yes	1910	
Kerbes	Jaan	Annette	Hansman	Yes	1910	
Onton					1910	
Kerbes	Peter	Julia	Kaasik/Cussack	Yes	1911	

Krisbi (Krisby)	Alexander	Riina	Peet		1911	
Kopas				Yes		
Kolga	Jaan					
Yorki	Charles					
Klaus	Otto	Olga	Soop	Yes	1922	
Soop	Alex	Elvine	Klaus	Yes	1925	
Tippie		Elizabeth	Bruckel		1929	
Koppelmick	Martin	Alide	Kerbes	Yes		
Anton	Karl	Riina		Yes		
Anton	Juhan					
Wiik	J.					
Kolk	J.					
Peet	J.					
Kadaks	Albert					
Treimuth	Kristjan					
Redeer	Madis					

Explanation of List

1. Family names are used and initials if given names not known.
2. List is arranged by year of arrival at first known location in Alberta.
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some changed their names altogether. Many adopted different first names or English derivatives.

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Additional information can be found in Communities - Rural Communities - Stettler

SYLVAN LAKE AND MEDICINE VALLEY

Family Name	Given Male Name	Given Female Name	Maiden Name	Arrived with Family	Arrival Year	Moved to
Kingsep	Hendrik	Emilie	Saar	Yes	1899	USA 1902
Kingsep	Kristjan	Tiina		Yes	1899	
Kask	Jaan	Minnie	Piht	Yes	1900	
Piht	Peeter				1900	
Piht	Mihkel				1900	
Herman	Peeter				1901	
Kask	Anton				1901	
Kask	Alex				1901	
Oru	Juhan	Lisa	Rahu	Yes	1901	Stettler 1904
Rahu	Mihkel	Lisa	Kupos	Yes	1901	Stettler 1904
Neithal	Juhan	Minnie	Rahu	Yes	1901	Stettler 1904
Kask	Johan				1901	
Vaartnou	Mihkel			Yes	1901	Stettler 1904
Herman	Johan				1902	
Wall	Madis				1902	
Posti	August	Millie	Pallo	Yes	1902	
Kinna	Hendrik				1902	
Karuse					1902	Red Deer 1902
Tipman	Magnus	Sophia	Rahu	Yes	1902	Stettler 1904
Parjel	Otto				1902	
Kinna	Juhan	Marie		Yes	1903	
Kinna	Jaak	Widower			1903	
Kinna	Samuel				1903	
Tipman	Juhan	Lena	Oro	Yes	1903	Stettler 1904
Raabis	Jaan	Rosalie		Yes	1903	
Perler	Peter	Elizabeth		Yes	1903	
Koot	Paul	Aliide		Yes	1903	
Koot	Peter	Marie		Yes	1903	
Langer	Karl	Anna	Teener	Yes	1903	
Lestman	Les				1903	
Moos	Fred	Lilli			1903	
Muru	Karl	Mari			1904	

Muru	Jaan	Kati			1904	
Langer	Paul	Lydia	Perler	Yes	1904	
Raabis	Karl	Olga		Yes	1904	
Tipman	Joosep	Lena	Maar/Meer	Yes	1904	Stettler 1904
Wall	Gustav				1904	
Reinglaas				Yes	1904	Stettler 1904
Kudras	Mihkel				1904	
Parjel	Otto				1904	
Kingsep	Otto				1905	
Kinna		Tiina			1905	
Muru	Juhan			Yes	1905	
Sestrap	Mart	Emma			1905	
Sestrap	Mihkel	Fanny			1905	
Sestrap	Gustav	Jenny			1905	
Sestrap		Juuli			1905	
Teener	Jaan	Eva	Kinna	Yes	1905	
Wernik	Juhan			Yes	1905	Okanagan, B.C. 1916
Palu	Hendrik				1905	
Anton	Karl				1905	
Anton	Juhan				1905	
Matteus	Adam	Anna		Yes	1905	
Pihuoja	August	Hilda		Yes	1905	
Ahman	Jaan					
Saag	Daniel				1907	
Pallo	Hendrik	Salme	Kingsep	Yes	1908	
Maesepp	Jaan				1908	
Toomingas	Jaan	Emma	Kinna		1908	
Molkov		Lily	Cassimer Moos	Yes	1908	
Mottus	Juhan	Lena		Yes	1910	
Mottus	Gustav	Linda	Kingsep		1910	
Muru	Henri	Anna			1912	
Pihuoja	Juhan	Vanda	Schlak		1912	
Pihuoja	Karl				1912	
Vares	Jaan			Yes	1912	
Huul	Karl				1912	
Huul	August			Yes	1914	

Mottus	Oskar	1-Juuli		Yes	1914	
		2-Anni		Yes	1914	
Mottus		Kati	Jaan Muru		1914	
Hermanson	Juri	Maria			1914	
Saag	Jaan				1915	
Kingsep	Lembit				1916	
Potivar	Jaan				1923	
Viin		Salme			1925	
Wernick	Henry				1925	
Suits		Elma	Ludvig Mottus		1926	
Osul	Karl				1926	
Meltsas	Paul				1926	
Liivam	August	Alma	Sestrap		1926	
Soerd	Leo	Erna	Langer		1926	
Rosenthal	Henry				1926	Peace River 1927
Pukk	Voldemar				1928	
Kalev	Nikolai	Hilja	Raabis		1929	
Matiisen	Alfred	Amanda	Moro		1929	
Soerd	Voldemar				1929	
Veiman	August				1929	
Neuman	Hugo	Ella	Kinna		1930	
Lapp	Herman	Emma	Kingsep		1931	
Rosenbaum	Gustav				1932	
Renne	Konstantin	Julie		Yes	1936	
Matiisen	Arnold	Salme	Koni		1937	
Timm	Enno	Hilja			1937	Red Deer
Elvey	Carl	Martha	Tihkane			
Raie		Milda	Peter Moro		1938	
Luts		Hilda	Ed Moro		1941	

Explanation of List

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Additional information can be found in Communities - Rural Communities - Sylvan Lake and Medicine Valley

PEACE RIVER

Family Name	Given Male Name	Given Female Name	Maiden Name	Arrived with Family	Arrival Year	Moved to
Rosenthal	Henry				1927	
Koivopuu	Bernhard				1928	
Kutt	Alfred				1928	
Kilgas	Ernest				1928	
Simm	Paul				1929	
Klement	Gustav					
Kala	Peeter					
Lepik	Maynard	Lea	Kala			
Peetso	Oskar					

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expanded as new source material becomes available.

Additional information can be found in Communities - Rural Communities - Peace River

WALSH

Family Name	Given Male Name	Given Female Name	Maiden Name	Arrived with Family	Arrival Year	Moved to
Smith	Juhan				1904	
Fridolin	Anthony	Minnie	Tipman		1904	Stettler 1907
Fridolin	Aleks				1904	
Fridolin	Juhan				1904	
Tihkane	John	Anna			1904	
Jurkin	Jaan					
Jurkin	K.					
Orman	Jaan					
Orman	Karl					
Orman	August					
Witser	R.			Yes		
Elvey	Karl	Martha	Tihkane		1937	Red Deer

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Additional information can be found in Communities - Rural Communities - Foremost and Walsh

WARNER AND FOREMOST

Family Name	Given Male Name	Given Female Name	Maiden Name	Arrived with Family	Arrival Year	Moved to
Maar (Meer)	Otto	May		Yes	1907	
Maar (Meer)	John	Anna		Yes	1907	
Maar (Meer)	Hans	Pauline		Yes	1907	
Maar (Meer)	Martin	Katie		Yes	1907	
Maar (Meer)	Jacob				1907	
Krasman	Mihkel	Helena		Yes	1909	Barons 1924
Linderman	Martin	Lucy	Cassidy		1911	
Linderman	Robert	Rosalie			1911	
Sepp	Al	Lea				
Mursa	Juhan					
Nugis	Voldemar					
Nugis	Jaan					
Senna	Gustav					

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OTHER LOCATION IN ALBERTA

Family Name	Given Male Name	Given Female Name	Maiden Name	Arrived with Family	Arrival Year	Settled
Sillak	Rev. John	Anna	Lorberg		1901	Medicine Hat
Holtswell	August	Helmi			1923	Calgary
Holtswell		Helmi			1928	Calgary
Roorman	August					Calgary
Roorman	Richard					Calgary
Paal	P.					Bellevue
Roboweitra	Gustav	Emma			1910	Bellevue
Ountok	A.					Bellevue
Welberg	H.					Bellevue

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BEGINNINGS

Estonia is a relatively small country situated on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea in northern Europe. Latvia is its direct neighbour to the south, while the Gulf of Finland separates Estonia from Finland to the north. Directly east lies the vast, sprawling country of Russia. The Estonian language, along with its European counterparts Finnish and Hungarian, belongs to the Finno-Ugric languages. In fact, many Estonians consider themselves more closely aligned with their Scandinavian neighbour to the north than with other countries in Eastern Europe, particularly Latvia and Lithuania, who, along with Estonia, collectively form Europe's Baltic nations. In the 13th century, Estonia was largely controlled by Teutonic Knights. Known as Livonia, the region adapted Christianity and remained subservient to the Teutonic order until the 16th century when Swedish, Danish, Russian, and Polish forces each claimed portions of Livonia. Later, the northern region of Livonia became known as Estonia. (*Eestland*). Geographically, Estonia contains over 1,000 lakes, numerous rivers, and various bogs—often indicative of a cold, wet climate.



Estonian National Symbols



Estonia's national colours (blue, black and white) date back to the end of 19th century. At that time, the Baltic states, including Estonia, were under Russian Tsarist rule. The colours were chosen in 1881 by a young group of intellectuals belonging to the Estonian Student's Society. Though there are numerous explanations for why they chose these three particular colours it is generally accepted that the colours make reference to a historical metaphor. In this case, blue represents ancient freedom, black symbolizes lost independence while white promises a better future. This era in

Estonian history was known as the National Awakening whereby Estonians came to acknowledge their right to self-government and thus sought ways in doing so.

The Estonian national anthem, *My Native Land*, is a choral-like melody arranged by Fredrik Pacius in 1843. The Government of Estonia officially adopted the song in 1920. However, during the decades of Soviet occupation that were to follow, the melody was strictly forbidden and people were sent to Siberian gulags for singing the anthem.

Other national symbols of national significance include the cornflower (national flower), the barnswallow (national bird) and limestone (national rock). For more on Estonia's history and national symbolism please visit www.estonica.org or www.vm.ee/estonia.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS



Estonia's miniscule size and geographical proximity to large powers have meant that throughout its history, it has been politically and economically dominated by other countries. From the 13th to the early 18th centuries, Estonia's development was largely shaped by European powers. By the early 1700s, the Russian empire acquired Estonia from Sweden through the Treaty of Nystad. Estonia was thrust into a difficult situation whereby its political landscape was controlled

by Russian Tsars. Meanwhile, a large majority of the Estonian population remained subservient to the wealthy German landlords who owned much of the land. Spurred on by increased attempts of Russification in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Estonian nationalism soon developed as a cultural and political response. Culturally, Estonian nationalism was exemplified by the establishment of Estonian language literature, music, and theatre. Politically, many Estonians longed for greater autonomy. These discontents were expressed through massive emigration and, eventual independence from the Russian empire.

Dissatisfied with the status quo in their homeland, many Estonians opted to venture by foot across Europe and to establish several communities in Russia's vast empire, including Tver and other locations in the Ural Mountains. One such notable location was Crimea, situated on the northern tip of the Black Sea. Seeking better living conditions and greater freedoms, migrant Estonians soon discovered that Crimea was barren and desolate, primarily the result of the violent and economically disastrous Crimean War (1853-1856). They were generally not discouraged however, as Crimea provided workable land free of German economic interests. Through industrious, ambitious, and productive work, Estonians settling in Crimea soon became prosperous landowners.



Despite these economic gains, Estonians living in Crimea remained politically subservient to the Russian empire. While Crimea experienced relative freedom in the 19th century, it formally fell under Russia's jurisdiction. Mandatory military service for example, was required for all men over the age of 18. This rule applied to most Estonian men. As many families did not want to lose their sons to the Russian Army, the possibility of moving, once again,

became a distinct reality.

WHY ESTONIANS SETTLED IN ALBERTA

During the first decade of the 20th century the government of Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier advertised in northern and eastern Europe the offer of free homesteads in the Canadian prairies to those willing to clear land and develop farms. This program became extremely popular and millions of Europeans facing poor prospects or living under repressive regimes emigrated to settle in the western provinces.

During this period, political and economic factors in Estonia led many families to emigrate to Alberta. Opposition to the Czarist regime and its Russification policy--the attempt to assimilate Estonians and other nationals in Russian-occupied eastern Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries--and economic difficulties making land acquisition almost impossible for the majority of small farmers, were among the main reasons for mass emigration at the turn of the century. While some agrarian reform took place in Estonia after the abortive Russian revolution of 1905, the eldest son continued to inherit the family farm, leaving other siblings to look for land or jobs elsewhere.

With the 1905 revolution, the advent of new ideologies including those of Marx and Engels, and the subsequent Estonian revolt against the Czarist regime and powerful German landlords led to new waves of economic and political refugees. Several of these new emigrés settled in the Sylvan Lake area.

Many of these newcomers believed it was easier to build a new life and a better society in the New World than to fight repression in their homelands. Their idealism and views on agrarian reform deeply affected the Alberta community. The settlers drained the marshes and established farm and food co-operatives. These ideals, which other European immigrants also brought with them to communities in Alberta and Saskatchewan, eventually led to the co-operative movement in Western Canada.



Janet Kask

1860-1900

There are two conventional reasons that explain mass Estonian emigration to Canada at the end of the 19th century. The first has its roots in the poor social and political conditions that were present in the homeland, leaving many Estonians ostensibly dissatisfied. Maintaining a farm and raising a family were becoming increasingly strenuous objectives, and moving abroad could mitigate much of the hardship. Stories describing the large, vast lands of North America appealed to numerous Estonians eager to rid themselves of oppression. Canada's open immigration policy formed the second reason for mass departure. The land in Western Canada was extraordinarily cheap as the Canadian government wanted to populate the territory. For a mere \$10, any settler over the age of 21 could obtain one quarter section (0.65 square km) as a homestead. If after three years the settler had cultivated at least 15 acres of land, he could obtain ownership with the possibility of purchasing more land.



Migratory Routes: From Estonia to Alberta



Estonians travelled various routes across Europe. Some ventured north and travelled by boat until they reached Britain while others used Europe's train system. One family boarded a small ship in Riga, Latvia and sailed across the Baltic and North Seas until they reached Hull, England.

Upon arriving in Britain, families boarded large vessels which took them across the Atlantic. Conditions on board these ships were less than appealing. Often, families had no choice but to travel in unsanitary and overcrowded cattle liners. Moreover, ships transporting immigrants did not leave on a regular basis; instead, families would wait days, if not weeks, before boarding a ship traversing the Atlantic Ocean. It took over a week to navigate the rough ocean waters. Torrential storms and unrelenting waves exacerbated the already paltry conditions.

Some families arrived in Halifax, Nova Scotia while others pushed further south, docking in New York City. Trains travelling from Eastern Canada and the United States to the open plains of the West were often overcrowded. Fortunately, boxcars were separated into two categories with units transporting people and others carrying their belongings, including livestock. A few families from Crimea headed west by train and eventually arrived in South Dakota. While some

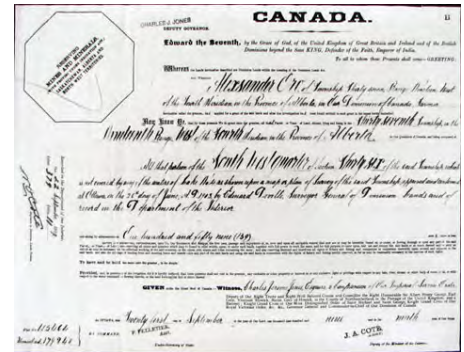


stayed, others found the land disagreeable and continued toward the Northwest Territories. (Prior to 1905 Alberta was considered part of the Northwest Territories). Initially, settlements were established by one family or by various families arriving from one particular area. For example, a community near Stettler-Big Valley grew with pioneers from Nurmekunde, an Estonian settlement in western Russia, while Barons was initially settled by families from Crimea arriving via South Dakota. Word of mouth or written letters exchanged between friends and families were the most popular methods of encouraging others to settle in particular areas. Families were interested in attaining freedom and cheap workable land, and were willing to travel almost anywhere to find their niche.

1901-1914



The last few years of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century marked the arrival of Alberta's first Estonian pioneer families.



The era was characterized by the Government of Canada's desire to populate the West. And with Alberta's subsequent membership into the Canadian Federation, Alberta officially became a province in 1905. With acres and acres from which to choose, Alberta's Estonian families sought land that reminded them of their birthplace. Moreover, they were seeking workable, spacious, and profitable farmland that could serve the needs of their expanding network of friends and relatives.

For the Estonians, this era marked a new beginning in unfamiliar territory. However, Estonian settlers were optimistic about their new opportunity as they were no longer subject to Russian and German oppression. traditions and cultures With the passing of the *Dominion Lands Act* in 1872, Estonians could afford to settle and expand in the vast prairie fields of the Canadian west.



AGRICULTURE

As with any other rural settlement in the western plains, agriculture was paramount to the survival of the early pioneer family. In central Alberta clearing the land was a strenuous task in the area's cool, wet climate. Further south however, in the warmer, drier climate of southern Alberta, lack of moisture and soil erosion were among the chief concerns for pioneer families. Cooperation with other nearby families was essential in producing a successful crop. In fact, households and gardens were operated individually but the fields were managed collectively. Grain crops were difficult to grow in the virgin lands as the fields required machinery and draft animals, luxuries which Estonian farmers could simply not afford. In the first few years, vegetables such as potatoes, carrots, cabbage, onions, and turnips were most common. As the soil improved over the years, the settlers raised rye, barley, and oats and established dairy herds.



Central Alberta's topography also provided ideal hunting and fishing locations. Nearby streams and dense forests for example, provided fish and game. Hunting and fishing were important supplementary activities to farming and emphasized the ruggedness of the early settlers' lifestyle. In the first few years of settlement, finding employment in the cities or nearby towns was necessary since most Estonian settlers had little cash.

Working on the Canadian Pacific Railway for 10 hours

per day, for instance, could generate \$1.33 for the average worker. However, as agricultural technology advanced and the soil improved, Estonians often found other ways of generating profit. Between 1908 and 1910, grist mills, windmills, and dams were built to complement the Estonian agricultural lifestyle.



SETTLEMENTS



The Estonian pioneers who settled in Alberta travelled extensively, often making numerous stops and using multiple modes of transportation. At the turn of the 20th century, Red Deer saw the end of the railroad. This marked the starting point for the search for land on which to homestead. Hendrik Kingsep along with his family, was the first Estonian to settle in Alberta. The Kingsep's settled a piece of land near Sylvan Lake in 1899. His brother Kristijan and his family soon

arrived and settled directly adjacent to Hendrik's home. Initially, the Kingsep's found the area around Sylvan Lake adequate as there was an abundant supply of timber and fresh water. Moreover, there were reports of Finnish people settling in the area. This made the Kingseps' settlement slightly more comforting as Estonians and Finns are closely related linguistically and culturally. Within a few years, the Kingsep's were joined by other Estonian families eager to settle in the immediate area. By 1903 there were 61 men, women and children of Estonian descent on 16 farms.

The topography of the Sylvan Lake area reminded many Estonians of their birthplace so much so that they aptly titled their settlement "Livonia." However, the area quickly became a popular settlement for other nationalities. It soon became evident that the land could no longer accommodate newly arriving Estonian families. Consequently, Hendrik Kingsep moved to the Medicine Valley, some 40 kilometres to the west in search of more



open land. The Medicine Valley, with its rich, dark soil and tree-dotted landscape, again reminded many Estonians of their birthplace. Within the decade Estonian settlements were established across Alberta. For example, the Erdman's and several other settlers established the community of Barons. Within a short time, numerous other families settled nearby. Seven years later the Stettler area had become home to 45 families. Within a few years Eckville, situated in the heart of the Medicine Valley, hosted roughly 40 families. There were other sparse Estonian settlements in the northern and southeast regions of Alberta; Estonians settled in the towns of Foremost, Walsh and Peace River. Estimates of Estonians settling in Alberta by 1916 suggest that 100 families and several unmarried men moved out west. This accounted for a total population of approximately 500 Estonians.

1915-1939



In the 1920s, a significantly large portion of immigrants entered Canada. According to data available, 612 Estonians immigrated to Canada from 1922 to 1930. This trend however, dissipated in the 1930-40's as the Great Depression forced the Canadian government to place restrictions on immigration. There were years in which Canada received one or less Estonian immigrant (i.e., 1930, 1931). During the inter-war era a relatively small

number of Estonians settled in Alberta. Estonians who did immigrate to Canada, in effort to escape Estonia's uncertain political environment, were more attracted to Canada's eastern provinces rather than the prairie settlements. Employment in a variety of different sectors was more attainable in Canada's larger cities. The demographic makeup of the new settlers varied from decades earlier; the majority of Estonians were young, single men and women who described themselves as tradespeople, small merchants, domestic servants, and manual labourers.

Discussion of the inter-war period is not complete without mention of the Great Depression and its impact on Alberta's economic and social landscape. Most Albertans, including many Estonians, could not escape the devastation caused by the Great Depression. Unemployment skyrocketed in the early 1930s, wheat prices dropped substantially, drought engulfed much of the prairies, and grasshoppers ravaged farmers' fields.



In 1934, a hailstorm caused significant damage in Stettler and surrounding areas. Thousands of acres of wheat were ruined while horses, chickens and herds of cattle perished. One historian even noted that "the Depression became a term engraved on people's minds and was the decisive factor in most personal decisions". For Alberta's Estonian community, cooperation and preservation of the traditional concept of family not only ensured the continuation of Estonian culture in Alberta, but it also served as a useful tool against the hardship brought forth by the Great Depression.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

During this time, Alberta's Estonian community developed several projects on a cooperative basis. Estonian Albertans united voluntarily in order to meet collective economic, social and cultural needs. The formation of co-operatives reflected the importance of openness and caring for others - valued characteristics of the Estonian community spirit. For instance, the Eckville and Gilby Co-operative Company was created through joint effort. It was a fire insurance company as well as a cattle sales cooperative and bank. The establishment of the Estonian School in 1909 also expressed collective spirit by ensuring that children of Estonian descent received an education. In the 1920s, many Estonians staunchly supported the United Farmers of Alberta. Formed in 1909, the UFA actively sought to improve conditions for Alberta's rural communities. In one such election a UFA candidate received 102 of the 107 votes cast at Gilby, located in the Medicine Valley.



1940-1990



Between 1946 and 1951 13,500 Estonian refugees arrived in Canada. Of this number, only 400 came to Alberta. This accounts for roughly 2.9 percent of the Estonian immigrant population, indeed a significantly disproportionate statistic. As mentioned previously, the larger urban centres were more attractive to Estonian immigrants relative to prairie settlements. Moreover, the Canadian Government preferred single, unskilled immigrants suitable for manual labour and other

vacancies. As a result, families wanting to immigrate required sponsorship from a Canadian family. Alberta's Estonian community graciously sponsored some Estonian families, as did the Lutheran Church of Canada. By the post-World War II period, Estonian immigrants were generally well educated. They had acquired over the years a wealth of tangible work experience, complemented by an assortment of professional degrees and diplomas. Unfortunately, Estonian teachers, doctors and lawyers, among other professionals, could only claim refugee status if they were to work as farmhands. Most of these professionals did not have prior farmhand experience and were unfit to contribute to Alberta's agricultural economy. Others simply detested the work. After serving their one-year contract, many sought more suitable employment opportunities in the urban environment. Much of the work available in Alberta's larger centres was blue-collar employment, an obvious disappointment for educated and experienced Estonian professionals. Nonetheless, they accepted the challenge and worked hard to become established in their new communities.

In the post-WWII era, Alberta witnessed an unwavering increase in urbanization. By the late 1940s, Estonian organizations were established in Edmonton and, years later, in Calgary. According to a 1966 survey there were 87 Estonians in Edmonton while Calgary's Estonian population reached upwards of one hundred and twenty. A variety of events and social gatherings were planned in Alberta's two major cities although primary interests centered on



celebrating Estonian Independence Day.

Calgary's Estonian community would often frequent Estonian arts and crafts exhibits at local multicultural events celebrating Calgary's diverse ethnic community. In 1955, Calgary's Estonian community entered a float in the province's Golden Jubilee Parade. Members of the Estonian community, dressed entirely in traditional Estonian garments, waved to the crowds.

Leaving the city to appreciate Alberta's diverse landscape was another popular activity. Weekend excursions to the Rockies or to other Alberta Provincial and National Parks were frequently scheduled. In Edmonton, organizing sporting events and other such leisure activities was popular among members of the Estonian community. Maintaining close contact with Estonia's Baltic neighbours, Latvia and Lithuania, was important in fostering a Baltic identity in Alberta's capital city.



By combining the three ethnic communities, events were much larger, showcasing a diverse agenda. For instance, for a few days in October 1967, Edmonton's Baltic Festival hosted a concert, an exhibition, a gala reception, and a banquet attended by several prominent government representatives.



1991-PRESENT

Over time, the small Baltic nation has made impressive strides both economically and socially. The early 1990s had brought unprecedented promise to the country of Estonia. Russia had finally lost its grip over the small nation and Estonian Albertans were sure to celebrate Estonian Independence Day. Within Alberta, the small Estonian community remains vigilant in maintaining traditions and customs that have been a part of Alberta's history for over a century. Centennial celebrations have occurred in various towns. Communities commemorating Estonian pioneers have included Stettler (1999), Medicine Valley (2001), and Barons (2004). Honouring important individuals, sampling Estonian cuisine, and experiencing Estonian song and dance have been part of these celebrations and helped capture the spirit and legacy of Alberta's Estonian heritage. A visit to Alberta in 2000 by Estonian President Lennart Meri provided new impetus for the Estonian community to preserve and promote Estonian culture and traditions.



With so many Estonians dispersed across the province, maintaining a sense of collective identity has become the largest challenge facing Alberta's Estonians today. In light of this predicament, the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society was formed with the specific intent to promote Estonian heritage and culture throughout Alberta. In doing so, AEHS organizes social events and advances knowledge. Annual events like

Jaanipäev (midsummer solstice celebration) reaffirm the commitment to preserving Estonian heritage in Alberta. The web site will promote and preserve Estonian heritage by facilitating the availability of Estonian history, culture, traditions and achievements online. Finally, the creation of an online resource available worldwide provides an invaluable tool accessible to Estonian descendents living throughout Alberta, North America and, beyond.

ESTONIANS IN ALBERTA

By
HOWARD and TAMARA PALMER

"ESTONIA" HAS NEVER BEEN a household word in Alberta; nor have most Albertans been aware of the Estonian presence in the province. Nevertheless, Estonians have been a small but significant part of Alberta's development since before the turn of the century. The relative, obscurity of Alberta's Estonian community is partly due to the small size of its ancestral country. Estonia is one of three small Baltic nations (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) situated on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea in northern Europe. Albertans have not been alone in their general ignorance of this tiny country; it has never had a high international profile.

In 1899 two Estonian brothers, Hendrik (Henry) and Kristjan Kingsep and their young families immigrated to Canada and settled in central Alberta, just east of Sylvan Lake. Their arrival was important, both to the overall history of Estonians in Canada, as well as to the development of parts of central and southern Alberta. The settlements that the Kingseps and other Estonians founded at the turn of the century were the only significant concentrations of Estonians in Canada until after World War Two. In large part, the history of the organized Estonian community in Canada prior to World War Two is a history of Estonians in Alberta. Though small in numbers, the Estonians were able to make a notable contribution to the development of several communities in Alberta through their agricultural and technological inventiveness, their strong interest in cooperatives, and their emphasis on music and education.



When the Kingsep families decided to emigrate from Estonia, they left behind a country of about one million people which was under the control of the Russian Czarist regime and which faced many economic, political and social problems. For the rural sector of Estonia's population, economic conditions throughout the 19th century had been harsh, indeed often hopeless. Serfdom of the peasants had been abolished prior to 1820, but their working conditions were difficult, their wages were low and they had to pay high rent to German landlords for use of the land they tilled. For the majority of Estonian peasants, to be able to pay their debts to their landlords and become independent was only a distant dream. One of the few ways to achieve this dream was to emigrate. During the mid-1800s, many did so, moving to southern Russia where people were needed to colonize the vast, empty lands of the Crimea. But by the late 1800s, those who had immigrated to the Crimea were equally dissatisfied with conditions there; consequently, like many of those who had remained in Estonia, they were eager for new opportunities. Nor were conditions favorable for Estonia's aspiring urbanized middle class. Increasing numbers of young Estonians were graduating from universities in the late 1800s with aspirations of social and economic advancement, but their mobility was often blocked by the powerful presence of the Baltic Germans, who owned the land, the factories and most of the businesses, and also dominated the professions.

In addition to general economic hardship, by the late 1800s, Estonians were also faced with the Czarist policy of Russification - a heightened attempt by the Russian regime to assimilate them. These policies were very unpopular in a country which was in the throes of a national awakening. Dissatisfied with their situation, a number of Estonians, like the Kingsep families, decided to emigrate and some were attracted to the free homestead lands of western Canada. Around the turn of the century, opposition to the Russian Czarist government took the form of both Estonian nationalism and socialism. Social and economic tensions made the country receptive to revolutionary ideology and Marxism spread rapidly among the intelligentsia, the landless peasants and the workers. Their demands for 'self-government and greater personal freedom became more and more outspoken. 1905 was a particularly explosive year, with the Japanese defeat of Russia and the Russian revolution spurring a revolt in Estonia against the Czarist regime and the German landlords. Suppression of this revolt and subsequent Czarist persecutions led to the exit of a wave of political refugees, many of whom made their way to the United States. Still others came to Canada, some joining their countrymen who had settled just a few years before in central Alberta. The combination of political and economic factors motivating their emigration meant that there was a wide cross-section of occupations among the migrants. They included sailors, industrial workers, tradesmen, several teachers, and a few peasants. But despite their varied backgrounds, they all settled on the land when they arrived in Alberta.

Henry Kingsep was born in the district of Võru, Estonia, in 1870 to a farm family of comfortable means. As a young man, he graduated from the University of Tartu and went on for post-graduate studies at the University of St. Petersburg in Russia, where he became fluent in several languages and trained to become a teacher. He also became involved with a group of radical students who were plotting to overthrow the Czar. Later when he was 24 and teaching school in the town of Nuustak, he married Emilie Saar, daughter of the village shoemaker. But Henry was dissatisfied with conditions in Estonia and he also feared reprisals for his political activities. He had read and heard about freedom and vast lands in North America and his brother, Christian had visited Montreal as a sailor and told him stories about Canada. Henry became convinced that the best future for himself and his young family lay in Canada and he began to learn English and make other preparations for the long voyage to North America.¹

In 1899 the Christian and Henry Kingsep families set sail for New York and continued their journey to Canada by train. The two brothers decided to settle in the Sylvan Lake area and took up adjoining land in the virgin bush and forest. Two factors were probably involved in their choosing this particular land. Like other Nordic people coming from wooded countries with access to water, the Kingseps were sensitive to the need for land which could provide both ample timber and water. Also in 1899, following the visit of a delegation of Finnish promoters, the Canadian government reserved for a period of three years a tract of land west of Red Deer for Finnish settlers. It was to this area that the Kingseps came. Though they were not Finns, the Estonian and Finnish peoples are closely related both linguistically and culturally.



When Henry and Emilie Kingsep and their baby daughters finally arrived at their remote destination, they were faced with the formidable task of making a living for themselves in a virtual wilderness. The only clearings in the densely wooded landscape were those that had been made by forest fires. Roads were non-existent. The family's first task was to build a temporary home for themselves, and they soon erected a small shack which, though crude, provided shelter from the elements.

The Kingsep families were not to remain alone for very long. They were soon joined by other Estonians, many of them friends and acquaintances from the Old Country and by 1903 they and the other settlers had partially cleared 16 farms and had named the area "Livonia" in remembrance of their homeland. Even the topography reminded them of their homeland. August Posti, one of the early settlers in the community, noted in his diary six days after his arrival in the area in the spring of 1903 that "what I see here is almost the same as in my home country."



Like all Alberta pioneers, the first Estonian settlers had to work hard to survive. Clearing the land was an enormous task; raising crops in the area's cool, wet climate was beset with difficulty and the isolation and loneliness were at times overpowering. In these difficult pioneering circumstances, it soon became clear that cooperation was essential to survival. This inescapable fact, combined with the left-wing sympathies of many of the early Estonian settlers, prompted

them to attempt co-operative farming. In the plan which they formulated, households and gardens were individually owned, but the land was used collectively. Besides growing vegetable gardens, the settlers raised flax and wheat and established dairy herds. They also raised pigs and chickens, but these often fell prey to coyotes and bears. Because of the uncertainties of the early years, hunting and fishing were essential to the group's survival. It was also necessary for the men to get winter jobs working for the CPR or for the coal mines in the distant Crow's Nest Pass to subsidize incomes.²

Gradually the little settlement near Sylvan Lake assumed an appearance of permanency. By 1903, it boasted 22 Estonian families, a new school and an English-speaking teacher, hired to make it easier for the children to feel at home in their new country. However "Livonia" was not to remain the major Estonian settlement in Alberta. The area was quickly being settled by people of various nationalities and quarter sections were becoming scarce.

It was soon obvious that "Livonia" could not expand to accommodate further Estonian settlement. Consequently, Henry Kingsep, who was a natural colonizer, began looking elsewhere for land that would be suitable for additional Estonian settlers. He chose land in the



Medicine River valley, near what was to become the town of Eckville, and in 1903 he and his family moved to this new site. The Kingseps were soon joined by other Estonian families from the Sylvan Lake area. Still others from the original "Livonia" settlement moved east to Stettler, founding what was to become another sizeable Estonian settlement.³

Medicine Valley, with its deep black soil and treed hilly landscape, also reminded them of their homeland and appealed to the Estonians. A daughter of one of the early settlers and community leaders, August Posti, described her father's choice of land as follows:

... it had the Medicine River running through it abounding in fish - pike and suckers. There were spruce trees growing on it, providing logs for his house and the pea vine grew three feet high in the river valley, providing rich nutritious hay for his stock.

The first settlers in the Medicine River area were joined in 1904 by 25 people directly from Estonia and between 1905 and 1914, 40 more came to the area to make their homes. The earliest Estonian settlers in the area besides the Kingsep family were the Kinna; Koot, Muru, Langer, Matteus (Matthews), Mottus, Pihuoja, Posti, Raabis and Sestrap families. Several families immigrated to Canada with their brothers' or sisters' families; when they arrived in Alberta, they settled together, developing large extended-family networks. Many of the new immigrants, like Kingsep, were politically radical and disillusioned with the Czarist regime. By 1920, there were 187 people of Estonian origin living in the Eckville area and approximately 40 farms had been established.⁴

As in the first settlement at "Livonia", the pioneering years near Eckville were difficult. The Estonians' first dwellings were log cabins with thatched roofs and clay floors, which were characteristic of their homeland. At first only cattle, chickens and vegetable gardens were raised and dairying was the main source of farm income. Wheat varieties had not yet been developed to withstand the area's cool, wet summers and limited number of frost-free days. Gradually, however, they began to grow barley, oats and rye. Prior to World War One the amount of cleared and cultivated land remained small because of the type of mixed agriculture which the Estonians practiced and the area's lack of transportation facilities.

While the Medicine Valley settlement made possible a larger and more homogeneous Estonian community than could have been established at Sylvan Lake, it also complicated transportation problems for the early settlers, since they were now many miles further from the major trading centre at Red Deer. Since there were no roads, a monthly trip to Red Deer took three to four days. When they finally arrived in Red Deer, the settlers sold eggs and dairy products or bartered them for flour, sugar, lard, fruit and salt to supplement their otherwise homegrown diet. Writing about the early years, Erna Doig, one of the daughters of Adam and Anna Matteus, emphasized her parents' self-sufficiency:

On part of the homestead there were spruce and tamaracks and they cut down enough of the bigger timbers to build themselves a one-room cabin before winter set in again. The cabin had a sod roof and earthen-floor and the logs were caulked with moss and clay. A stove was made of rocks, which were plastered with clay. This was used for cooking, heating and baking. A heavy table and a few benches were shaped from logs. Also the beds were shaped from logs and the pieces were held together with wooden dowels. The mattress bags were filled and stuffed plumped

with dried, fresh hay. To Adam and Anna this was luxury - a home of their own.⁵

Gradually, the isolation and pioneer conditions of the settlement were overcome and it became increasingly integrated into the economic life of central Alberta. After a long delay, two competing railways, the Alberta Central and the Canadian Northern, were constructed through the area and between 1910 and 1914 this provided temporary work and facilitated commercial development. For the first time, pig and cattle raising became commercially viable. The small hamlet of Gilby and the nearby town of Eckville developed sufficiently to become merchandising centres for the Estonians. Mike Sestrap, an Estonian settler who had been a tailor in the old country, opened a store and post office in Gilby in 1910. Like so many other such enterprises in rural Alberta, it also served as a social centre for the scattered farming community. By 1911 there was sufficient grain growing for John Kinna to build the area's first water driven flour mill.

However, grain growing did not become a major economic enterprise until World War One generated record grain prices.⁶

With the most difficult stage of pioneering behind them, the Estonian settlers turned their attention to the establishment of organizations to meet their social, economic and educational needs. Central to all of these endeavors' was the co-operative ethic which they had brought with them to Canada and which had enabled them to develop a cohesive community. Realizing the need for their children to learn English and to obtain an education, the Estonians, joined by a few Finnish and Scandinavian settlers in the area, united in 1909 to establish Estonian School District No. 1760, and with volunteer labour, they built a school. The school board was made up mostly of Estonians. The Estonians' strong interest in education is evidenced in the following comment by a second-generation Estonian from the Eckville area:

So intense was the interest in education that a pact was made that each family should try to educate one child as a teacher. Their efforts in this commitment were outstanding. Six of the founding families did produce a teaching member.⁷

The second major community project was the establishment of an Estonian society. Anna Tipman (nee Posti), daughter of one of the pioneer families, later described the origins of community activities which led to the formation of the society.

The first neighbourhood meetings had been held in the Posti's living room. Here agriculture problems were discussed, such as grain varieties, methods of tilling, marketing of crops and, of course, politics. Community singing was enjoyed. Physical training was provided by a "trapeze" hanging from ceiling beams.⁸

On April 24, 1910, the settlers founded The Medicine Valley Estonian Society, which was to play a key role in the community's social and cultural life for decades. The minutes of the first meeting, chaired by Henry Kingsep, reported that the pioneers debated the question of whether the objectives of the association were primarily social or economic. They concluded that both objectives were essential and the subsequent history of the organization shows that both were pursued. The group eventually built its own hall in 1918.⁹

The group's social activities included dramatic productions, a mixed choir and a string ensemble which performed at concerts and dances. Choirs and singing festivals were an important aspect

of life in Estonia and the settlers in Alberta continued this musical tradition. Several of the settlers could play various musical instruments, but the Kinna family was particularly talented. Arthur Kinna, who had come to Alberta at the age of 14, had studied violin in Estonia and he organized the Kinna orchestra, which played for many community events. Later, Arthur would play with the Calgary and the San Francisco symphony orchestras. Henry Kinsep also had experience in Estonia as a choir master, so it was he who organized and directed the choir.¹⁰

Adult education and political concerns were as important to many members of the group as entertainment. The society maintained a sizeable library of books on politics, economics, history, and literature. Using its own group as a source of talent and information, the community also heard lectures on education, literature, farming and politics. As with other aspects of community life, Henry Kingsep, being widely read and fluent in five languages (German, Russian, Estonian, Finnish and English) was very much involved in adult education, giving lectures on subjects as varied as education, the co-operative movement, the plight of native Indians in Canada, and "The Harmful Effects of Alcohol and Tobacco." But many other settlers were also actively involved in adult education and political activity. For example, according to the minutes of the Estonian society, in the winter of 1910-11, the following talks were given: Henry Kingsep - Farm Organizations and Farm Management; Henry Kinna - Alberta Politics; Peter Kost - Socialism; August Posti - Estonian Literature; Sam Kinna - the Russian Parliament, and K. Onton - Scientific Discoveries. The subjects reflected both their old and new world interests. By 1912, speakers were being warned to keep their speeches to one half hour, since meetings, which included programs and entertainment, were lasting until 3:00 a.m. Talks in the winter of 1912-13 included "Blacks and Socialist organizations in the U.S.," "German Landlords in Estonia," and "St. Augustine." After the outbreak of World War One, several members of the organization gave talks denouncing the war as resulting from the ruling class' desire for profits. Not all of the Estonian settlers in the community were left-wing politically, but the main community leaders were, and the activities of the Estonian society had a definite left-wing orientation.¹¹



The Estonians who settled in Medicine Valley had a noteworthy penchant for co-operative endeavours, as evidenced in the foundation of the Eckville and Gilby co-operative company (1912), a mutual fire insurance company, a cattle sale co-operative, a savings and loan co-operative bank, and strong support for the new Alberta farmers' organization, the United Farmers of Alberta. And like Estonians who settled in other parts of the province,

they were also a particularly innovative, pragmatic and self-reliant people. They were determined to improve themselves and their surroundings and had a strong sense of responsibility, not only to other Estonians but also to the larger rural community of which they became a part. They did not allow a lack of technology to hinder their progress; when they faced a technical problem, they simply built their own machines. Henry Kingsep attached his horse and oxen to a power shaft to create the power for sawing lumber and milling grain; he also built his own threshing machine and designed the community's first horse-drawn brush cutter, which enabled them to clear land much faster than could be done with an axe. With equal ingenuity, Martin Sestrap organized 20 families into a barbed-wire telephone system. A switch located in his house enabled him to transfer calls for neighbours, which he and his family

did as a public service, along with delivering urgent messages to neighbours who were without phone service. Thus, with its gardens and livestock, its wealth of practical skills and its inventiveness, the Medicine Valley community was remarkably self-sufficient.¹²

The women in the settlement were equally self-reliant and adaptable: they worked closely with their husbands in the pioneering venture and were well respected. During harvest season when the men were busy in the fields, the women would hitch up the family buggy and go to town to transact business. They used spinning wheels to spin wool for homemade woolen clothing and bedding; they made pillows and quilts from goose feathers and they devoted many hours to preparing and preserving food for their large families. During the early years, the women also assumed responsibility for handling medical problems, since the nearest doctor was at Lacombe, 30 miles distant. In case of illness, they relied on their own knowledge of herbal medicines and disinfectants. Saunas were a particularly effective remedy for rheumatism and arthritis. At childbirth, they depended on those among them who were experienced midwives, such as Emilie Kingsep, who delivered many of the community's children.¹³

One notable aspect of the Eckville settlement was the absence of both an Estonian church and an Estonian minister. Though other Estonian settlements in Alberta were smaller, they received regular visits from an Estonian Lutheran minister. At Eckville, however, the radical political backgrounds of many of the settlers did not dispose them toward the establishment of a church as the focal point of their group life. In June, 1916, for example, the Estonian society 'held a debate over whether or not the ruling classes used organized religion as a means of enslaving the masses, with Kingsep arguing the affirmative.

One account of an early visit by the Lutheran minister, John Sillak, to the settlement tells of the minister arriving on a Saturday night to a gathering of the Estonian society, and being angered that the settlers would dance the night before they were supposed to take communion. When his scolding only served to irritate the dancers, "who danced even more wildly," he collected his things, denounced the dancers and departed. For most of the settlers, strong family ties, self-sufficiency (where every effort could be seen in tangible results), community cooperation and a variety of cultural activities provided a rich and purposeful life.¹⁴



The second major settlement of Estonians in Alberta was located just south of Stettler and was composed primarily of people who had previously left Estonia for the Tver region in the Russian Empire. But the Estonian settlers had found the economic conditions difficult and the climate particularly harsh in this region of Russia, so when they learned about free homesteads and political freedom in Canada, they decided to emigrate. In 1901, three men - John Neithal, John Oro and Mike Rahu - left for Canada where they joined Estonian settlers at Sylvan Lake. Their numbers were soon bolstered by other Estonian immigrants from the Tver region and they began looking elsewhere for a place to settle. In 1903, some of the men located land ten miles south of what would later become the town of Stettler. Shortly thereafter, they were reinforced by other families from Sylvan Lake and two years later by refugees from the 1905 Russian revolution. By late 1905, there were 60 Estonian households in the area, divided into two groups, the largest being located just south of Stettler in an area which they named "Linda," the other at

"Kalev" which was further south near Big Valley. Both areas were named after legendary Estonian figures. Among the earliest settlers, besides the Neithals, Oros and Rahuus, were the Hennel, Kelu, Kerbes, Kets, Klaus, Kroon, Kutras, Olower, Reinglas, Saar and Tipman families.¹⁵



The early settlement, like the one at Eckville, was isolated. The town of Stettler did not come into being until 1905 with the arrival of the CPR; consequently, in the early years, settlers had to carry supplies on their backs from Red Deer, 80 miles distant. Like other pioneer Estonian settlers, they developed several technological innovations to meet the challenges they faced. For example, one

of the early Estonian settlers, Karl Kroon, built his own flour mill of fieldstone, which he chiseled into a revolving grindstone that was powered by a windmill. The gears of the mill were made from hardwood. The men also worked outside the community on railway construction, in logging camps and in coal mines to obtain cash and they worked co-operatively in establishing their farms.

Unlike their countrymen at Eckville, the Linda and Kalev settlers made religion an important part of their lives. Most of them were devout Lutherans and in 1906, they built a small, simple chapel furnished with their own hand-fashioned altar, pulpit and benches. They had no resident minister, but a traveling Estonian pastor, John Sillak, came from Medicine Hat to preside over their religious services (which were held in Estonian), baptizing children, confirming young people, consecrating the dead, and occasionally officiating at marriages.

Cultural and social activities were also important to the Stettler-area Estonians. In 1910 they organized an agricultural club and the following year they built Linda Hall in the centre of the settlement. They used the hall for social and farm meetings, dances, Estonian plays, concerts, weddings and various other community gatherings.

They also established their own brass band and developed a large library. Initially, activities were limited to Estonians, but as the first generation acquired greater fluency in English, members of the surrounding community began to participate in their Saturday night socials and card games. During special celebrations, such as the annual St. John the Baptist Day festivities, the Stettler community was joined by Estonians from the Eckville area. The Estonian pioneers were anxious to have their children learn the Estonian language and keep up their traditions, but use of Estonian was forbidden in the public schools which they attended. The second generation, anxious to overcome the stigma of being considered "foreigners," learned English quickly and used Estonian only with their parents.¹⁶

Unlike the Eckville settlement, the Stettler area community did not experience continued growth. Indeed, as early as 1913, 15 families left for the United States and Australia, hoping to find better economic conditions. Until World War Two, the Linda Hall retained its Estonian-Canadian identity, since many second and third generation descendants or the original pioneers remained; but with their increased assimilation (most of the second generation married outside or the Estonian community) Linda Hall gradually came to be used as a community centre by people or

many different ethnic backgrounds.

Despite the community's limited growth during the 1920s and 1930s, the Estonian people of the Linda Hall area made an important mark on the Stettler area both as a community and as individuals. They sent many of their children on for higher education, and they made an important contribution to the development of the wheat pool and co-operative movements in the Stettler area.

The third largest Estonian settlement in Alberta was located at Barons, in the heart of the province's southern wheat growing plains. The Estonian settlers who came to Barons had first settled in the Crimea, where they were engaged in mixed farming before migrating to South Dakota at the turn of the century and from there to Canada. Lisa Silverman, one of the daughters of Jacob Erdman, a Barons pioneer, described their coming to Alberta:



... if was 1901 in May, when we landed in New York. From there, by railroad, we went to Fort Pierre, South Dakota. We were met there by our old friends. In this group of ours were Jacob Erdman and family of eight persons; Anton Kulpas and a family of four persons; Peter Lensman and wife Mrs. Reinstein (a widow) and two daughters.

We stayed in South Dakota one and one half years. Then we decided to look for a better place to live. Four of the men went to look for better homesteads. They were J. Erdman, G. Erdman, A. Kulpas and P. Lensman. None of these men could speak any English, so they asked Mr. John Kewe to accompany them as an interpreter. They went by train to Oregon, but the land there was already settled. There they met a Finlander who knew that in Alberta, Canada there was still good land available for homesteads, so they travelled to Claresholm, where they were met by eager land agents who drove them out eastward.¹⁷

By 1908, 26 Estonian families, most of them from the Crimea, had settled in Barons. They were soon able to become large scale farmers, specializing in grain growing and cattle raising. The Estonians at Barons formed a tightly-knit community, with many of them being connected by family ties. Like the Estonians at Linda Hall, they organized church services to keep alive their Lutheran heritage, and like the Estonians at both Eckville and Linda Hall, they were noted for their musical abilities, their support of the co-operative movement, their emphasis on education, and their technological inventiveness.

There were two other Estonian settlements in southern Alberta, but due to unfavorable climatic conditions, they were short-lived. Like those who settled near Barons, the seven (mostly related) Estonian families who homesteaded in the Foremost area south-east of Lethbridge beginning in 1906, had originally come from the Crimea and had lived temporarily in South Dakota. But these families, including the Meers, Lindermans, Krasmans and Mursas, were not as fortunate as the

Barons settlers had been in their choice of land; the area they chose was dry and rocky and a homestead and preemption were much too small to support a farm in an arid area. Finally, during the 1920s there was a general exodus from the area. Twelve Estonian families also settled at Walsh, east of Medicine Hat, between 1904 and 1906, but the land there was too arid and the settlement was soon abandoned.¹⁸

This first of three waves of Estonian immigration to Alberta was the largest and had the greatest impact on the province: by 1906, there were approximately 500 Estonians in Alberta, living in several small, scattered rural settlements. During the inter-war years, a second and smaller wave of Estonian immigration arrived from a newly-independent Estonia and was, for the most part, absorbed into the existing settlements.

Forty-six immigrants came to the Eckville area during the 1920s and 1930s. Some of those who came at this time married children of the pioneers. Most, however, remained only temporarily before leaving to find work in the cities of Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario. Those who were not able to earn enough to establish their own farms, but remained in Alberta, fell into a pattern of working as farm labourers during the summer and autumn and then leaving for the cities, where, during the winters of the depression years, they subsisted on relief. The newcomers had arrived just before the outbreak of the Great Depression, and it was extremely difficult to purchase and establish farms of their own during the depression years. A few of the newcomers were able to establish their own farms with a combination of help from newly-acquired wives and fathers-in-law, and endless work. Most, however, left for other parts of Canada; by the early 1940s, 29 of the 46 who had arrived in the Eckville area in the inter-war years had left.¹⁹

The major demographic and social change among Estonians in Alberta during the 1920s and 1930s resulted not from the arrival of new immigrants, but from the dispersal, urbanization and assimilation of the second generation. To be sure, Estonian activities continued to flourish in the main rural settlements; indeed, the Estonian Young People's Society at Eckville reached its peak of activity during the Great Depression, when many young people had ample free time because of restricted economic opportunities. But those who left the settlements to further their education or pursue economic interests usually intermarried and lost touch with Estonian activities. Many of Eckville's young Estonian-Canadians left their parents' farms and moved to other parts of central Alberta where they opened small businesses, such as general stores, construction companies, or repair shops. Others became electricians, machinists, welders or tradesmen.²⁰

Radical political activity among Estonians in the Eckville area began to decline by the late 1920s for a variety of reasons. These included the improving economic conditions of late 1920s (many of the pioneers could now afford to hire farm labourers); the growing impact of the new immigrants (most of them were "white" or anti-Communist); and the passing of some of the early community leaders (Henry Kinsep died in 1929).

Radicalism also declined in the wake of disillusionment over the failure of the communal experiment of seven families who had returned to Russia from Eckville in the early 1920s. Fired by the utopian ideals of Russian communism and disillusioned by economic and political conditions in Canada, the group had returned to Russia in 1923 to establish a commune, taking

farm equipment with them. But within two years, all but two of the families were back in Eckville, impoverished and somewhat disillusioned. With the decline of radicalism, the Estonian society gradually lost its political orientation and became primarily a cultural organization.²¹

By the time of the Second World War, the organized Estonian community in Alberta was in decline. Many of the pioneer generation had passed away during the 1930s and 1940s. The Estonians' small numbers and scattered settlements, their emphasis on education and minimal prejudice against them led to their soon becoming a part of the mainstream of Alberta society. This process was given added impetus during World War Two when many young men from the Estonian settlements joined the armed forces. However, the arrival after the war of a new wave of Estonian immigrants injected new vigour into the Estonian activities in southern and central Alberta and led to the first significant concentrations of Estonians in Edmonton and Calgary.



In 1944, with the Soviet Army approaching, nearly 72,000 refugees (or nine percent of the total population) left Estonia, many escaping to Sweden in small boats, but the majority Crossing Latvia and Lithuania to Germany under very arduous conditions. The refugees then began their long wait in Sweden or in the refugee camps of Germany, hoping to obtain immigration visas to other countries. The Canadian government did not

take an active interest in their plight until the fall of 1948. In the meantime, as early as 1945, the Soviet government began pressing the western powers to extradite Estonian army officers, some of whom had been drafted into the German army as Soviet citizens during the wartime occupation of Estonia by Germany. Well aware of the fate which awaited them at the hands of the Soviets, they desperately tried to emigrate elsewhere.²²

When it appeared that the Swedish government, under pressure from the Soviet Union, might extradite Estonians and other Baltic refugees and with Canadian officials incapable of helping since they were enmeshed in their own red tape, some of the Estonians had little choice but to set out for North America in small 30 to 40 foot vessels. Thirty-five boats made this voyage between 1945 and 1951; nine of the boats and 987 Estonian refugees arrived in Canada. The Canadian government response to the arrival of Canada's first "boat people" was basically generous. All normal immigration procedures were waived and all but 12 were allowed to remain in Canada. Eventually the Canadian government unraveled the red tape and a total of 5,000 Estonians came to Canada from Sweden.²³

However, it was not easy for Estonians to come to Canada immediately after the war. During this period, the Canadian government preferred single, uneducated immigrants who would be suitable for the unskilled manual labour and farm jobs which were difficult to fill with Canadian workers. Under these circumstances, one of the few ways for Estonians to emigrate as families was to come under the sponsorship of Canadian Citizens. In response to this need, members of Alberta's existing Estonian community sponsored a number of families; consequently, many of the Estonians who came to Alberta at this time worked first on farm at Eckville, Barons or Stettler. Others found sponsors on sugar beet farms in the Lethbridge area or were sponsored by the CPR. Because of their hasty flight from Estonia, some arrived with little more than the

clothes they were wearing.

Thus, fleeing the political upheaval precipitated by World War Two, 13,521 Estonians immigrated to Canada between 1946 and 1955. Although the majority settled in Ontario, approximately 400 came to Alberta, helping to push the number of people of Estonian origin in the province from 819 in 1951 to 1,115 in 1961.²⁴

The social and professional composition of the Estonian refugees was diversified, but most were from middle-class backgrounds and many were professionals. Among those who came to Alberta were engineers, architects, veterinarians, medical doctors, dentists, clerks, tradesmen, army officers, lawyers and teachers, some of whom had been prominent personalities in Estonia. Although most were originally placed as farm hands, few had any direct farming experience. As with other post-war refugees, most abandoned Alberta farms after their one year contracts and looked for more suitable employment in the cities. For example, only two of the 13 Estonian families who came to the Eckville area after the war remained in the area. In Calgary and Edmonton, they found jobs relatively easily but mostly as blue-collar workers. Later, some tried to re-establish themselves in their professions.

Although most of the Estonian immigrants were bilingual in either German or Russian, most were not fluent in English and this was the main obstacle to their pursuing previous occupations. Nor did cities in Alberta, unlike those on the West coast or in the East, provide conditions conducive to the immigrants establishing independent businesses. Consequently, most who were ultimately able to realize their desires for upward mobility did so through the most readily available job markets - the bureaucracies of the civil service in Edmonton and the oil industry in Calgary.²⁵

The Estonians who settled in Alberta after the war felt the need to organize social and cultural activities. Although their primary reasons for establishing these organizations were social, political motives also were strong. Estonia's turbulent history bred an intense nationalism. These sentiments were heightened for many of the postwar immigrants, who had been deeply committed to their country's independence and then had been forced to flee by wartime events. Consequently, some maintained a "refugee mentality," marked by a persistent desire to hope and fight for an independent, non-Communist Estonia to which they can someday return.

Estonians in Calgary and Edmonton began organizations in 1949 and both groups were affiliated with national organizations. Membership in the new organizations included virtually all Estonians in each centre, as well as those in Barons and Eckville. The focus of organizational activity in the urban centres was the celebration of Estonian Independence Day, but the groups also initiated displays of ethnic arts and crafts, and held concerts featuring the performance of national dances and songs. Each summer during the 1950s, Estonians from across the province gathered in Eckville for a traditional mid-summer festival which included bonfires, dancing and singing. In Edmonton the society organized recreational and sports trips, which the refugees welcomed as opportunities to escape from their crowded apartments.



Several times a year, the organizations also invited travelling Lutheran ministers from eastern centres to provide religious services. Monetary support for the Toronto-based Estonian National Committee and the Estonian Relief Committee was strong in both cities. The community activities provided a place where Estonians could meet and discuss their common problems, including information on ways of obtaining better jobs or housing.

The post-war displaced persons and the second-generation Estonian Canadians from the rural communities had little in common and the latter generally did not participate in the activities of the newly-founded urban Estonian societies. However, the Medicine Valley Estonian Society provided a point of contact for the different waves of immigrants. The gulf between the leftwing refugees from the 1905 revolution and the strongly anti-Communist post-World War Two refugees was a potential source of strain. But by the late 1940s and early 1950s, most of the pioneer generation had passed away and the political views of the second generation were usually different from their parents. Nevertheless, differences in perspective between the Canadian-born and the newcomers created misunderstandings. The new arrivals suspected the existing Estonian community of having Communist sympathies, while the Canadian-born, who were committed to complete integration into Canadian society and did not want to be treated as "different," could not understand and at times resented the intense nationalism of the newly-arrived political refugees.²⁶

For a variety of reasons, Alberta's Estonians have now largely disappeared as a distinct part of the provincial mosaic. The second and third generation offspring of both the pioneer generation and the post-war refugees are now almost completely integrated into Alberta society. Estonian clubs in Edmonton and Calgary each have less than one hundred members and activities have declined to only a few meetings during the year. Also, after years of declining activity, the Medicine Valley Estonian Society disbanded in 1979.

While the Estonian presence and identity in Alberta is not readily apparent, it has not completely disappeared. Numbers and organizational activity may be limited, but there are still some Estonian immigrants and people of Estonian origin whose frames of reference and world views include an awareness of developments in Estonia and of the presence and concerns of Estonians around the world. Even among the Canadian-born who are completely removed from organized Estonian-Canadian life, there is often an awareness of an interest in their cultural roots which finds visible expressions in their homes in artifacts, handicrafts and cuisine. This interest is often both symbolized and strengthened by visits to Estonia, which inevitably heighten awareness of Estonian history and culture.

Like other groups from small countries of which Canadians have been only barely aware. Estonians have faced an uphill and largely unnoticed struggle for recognition. As with many other immigrant groups who helped to settle rural Alberta, their contribution is not highly visible: besides the Estonian family names the only tangible signs of their presence are roadside and community plaques and rural cemeteries near the sites of early settlements. In one such roadside cemetery near Linda Hall, beneath rows of wrought-iron crosses lie 69 Estonian settlers who were member of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran congregation, providing mute testimony to the early Estonian presence in the area. But the struggles and contributions of the pioneer Estonians are alive in the memories of their children and grandchildren and should become part of the awareness of all Albertans seeking to understand the many strands which

have come together to make today's Alberta.

NOTES

1. Eckville and District Historical Society, Eckville, 1979, Homesteads and Happiness, 558; Interview Nick Kingsep (son of Henry Kingsep), Calgary, March 1980; for general background on causes of emigration see V. Rand. Estonia: A Reference Book, New York, 1953, p.20-23.
2. A. Kurlents. Eestlased Kanadas, Toronto, 1975, 21-26; Homesteads and Happiness, 558; diary, August Posti, March 23, 1902, in possession of Medicine Valley Estonian Society.
3. Kurlents. Eestlased Kanadas: ibid: Homesteads and Happiness, 558.
4. Kurlents, ibid, 26-37; Homesteads and Happiness, 587.
5. Kurlents, ibid; Homesteads and Happiness, 574.
6. Homesteads and Happiness, 13, 21-26, 548-549; Interview, Nick Kingsep, ibid.
7. Homesteads and Happiness, 542-543 and quote from 575.
8. Ibid, 559, 903.
9. Minute book, Medicine Valley Estonian Society, April 24, 1910.
10. Homesteads and Happiness, 360, 560, A. Kurlents, ibid.
11. Selma Pallo, "Free Land Attracted Henry Kingsep to Sylvan Lake." Red Deer Advocate, June 28, 1967; Interview, Nick Kingsep, ibid; Minute Book, Medicine Valley Estonian Society, November 6, 1910; May 11, 1912; January 25, 1913; September 1915.
12. Homesteads and Happiness, 40, 559-560, 588-903; interview Nick Kingsep.
13. Homesteads and Happiness, passim; interview, Nick Kingsep.
14. New World Jubilee Album. 1909-1934, New York; New York World Printing, 1934, 61-63.
15. Kurlents. Eestlased Kanadas. Edit Clark, Trails of Tail Creek Country (n.p., n.d.) 130-131; Joseph Tipman "Estonians Came to Stettler," The Stettler Independent May 18, 1977.
16. Kurlents. Ibid: Clark. Ibid. Stettler Independent May 18, June 1, June 29, 1977; interviews, Phelix Leew, Calgary, March 14, 1980; Joe Tipman, Stettler, August 5, 1980.
17. Kurlents, Eestlased Kanadas; quote from Barons History Book Club, Heart of the West, Calgary 1972, 236.
18. Foremost Historical Society, Shortgrass Country, Foremost, 1975, 419, 371,329,331,324-325, Schuler History Committee, Saga of Schuler Stalwarts, n.p. 1973, 36,

135.

19. Kurlents, *ibid*; *Homesteads and Happiness*, 556.

20. *Homesteads and Happiness*, *passim*.

21. Kurlents, *Eestlased Kanadas*; interview with Kinna in *Red Deer Advocate*, December 19, 1924; *New World Jubilee Album*, 61-62.

22. Quote from Villibald Raud, *Estonia: A Reference Book*, New York, 1953, 31; Tone Parming and Elmar Jarvesoo eds., *A Case Study of a Soviet Republic; The Estonian SSR*, Boulder, Colorado, 1978, 25.

23. *Ibid*: Gerald Dirks, *Canada's Refugee Policy: Indifference or Opportunism?* Montreal, 1977, 164-166.

24. Gerald Dirks, *Canada's Refugee Policy* chapter 7; Kurlents, *Eestlased Kanadas*, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, "Ethnic Origin of Immigrants by province of Destination," mimeographed report, Ottawa, 1956; *Census of Canada*, 1951, 1961.

25. On the social origins of the post-war immigrants see Parming, *A Case Study*, 25; information on Alberta from interviews Lydia Pals, Edmonton, January, 1980; Andres Pilt, Edmonton, December, 1979, January, 1980; Mr. and Mrs. Rouk, Calgary, January 5, 1980; Mrs. Eva Weir, Edmonton, December, 1979; Mrs. Ludmilla Kowalski, Edmonton, December, 1979; *Homesteads and Happiness*, p. 303-304; interview, Rita Matissen, Eckville, October 8, 1980.

26. Interviews.

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ESTONIAN PIONEER WOMEN: A TRIBUTE BY LOREE KINGSEP

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to this screening of "Their Legacy, our heritage: Alberta Estonians"...The general theme of the Alberta presentations are tributes to those who preceded us. Here in Red Deer this afternoon, we would like to pay tribute to the Estonian pioneer women who emigrated with their families...let us imagine:

A dark and cold winter morning... time to start the day...the wind is blowing outside...she can hear it in the trees outside the cabin. The floor is icy cold...time to get the stove going so that the day can begin...there are no lights to turn on...light the lantern...the water pail has ice in it...to the older children who will be called out of their bed and given directions to help...dress the younger ones and keep watch until i get back...outside to get the cow some feed and water and take some of her warm milk for the children...when it is light they will all be bundled in outdoor clothes, not to go out and play but to help with chores...carry wood for the stove after she chops it ...check their snares and bring in the rabbits they have caught...haul water to the tiny cabin...feed and water the chickens and gather any eggs...by midday they are hungry again and they are all cold and wet...they will eat bread and jam...there is a little more milk.



All afternoon she spends baking the bread she started this morning ...making a stew of the rabbit and some carrots and potato from the bin. They will have a good dinner. She spends the hour after the children are sleeping with some knitting...they always need mittens and socks...she banks the stove for the night and crawls into bed hoping that tomorrow she can do it all again...it would be so much easier if her husband was there to help. She listens to the wind and waits for sleep.

These women had no modern conveniences...no time-saving appliances...no ready-made anything. They did have hardship, disease, probably fear at being left alone, surely loneliness. Neighbours were few and far-between. For the very early settlers who had fled Estonia, it had to be terrifying to have left a country with a long history of settlement to come to a new land where they were offered opportunity, and little else.

They didn't have the modern stress- causing situations: there were no regular trips to the dentist, or doctor's appointments. They didn't have to worry about catching a bus or running out of time on a parking meter. There were no credit card bills to worry about paying, and no need to fret about where they would be going for vacation.

For these women there was little respite and more work than anyone needed...they were brought from their homeland to the wilderness in a country where they had no common language except amongst themselves...they had only whatever culture they could preserve, while trying to sustain the children which most of them raised through the winters without their husbands...the men would go to work out in the mines in Canmore or later to Nordegg and

return in spring...A homestead had to show improvement and while the men were home, the women worked beside them in the forests and fields. Here at least there was equality... a hard life for all.

My great grandmother came to Canada when she was 37 years old. With her she had 5 children from the ages of 4 to 10 years. Shortly after settling east of what became Sylvan Lake, my great grandfather Kristjan left her...ostensibly to scout out land in South America...but that is another story. How in the world she survived those early years, I can not imagine. When my father spoke of his grandmother, who remained on the original homestead until her death, he said that she still spoke Estonian, not English. She spent nearly fifty years in a country she probably never knew much about, outside of her piece of land. She raised her five children as a single parent. She never remarried and I can only hope that raising her family was gratifying enough to make her appreciate her own worth. I have a chart which has only been updated to include the fourth generation down from that original family...she left 5 children...they had 16 grandchildren...they left 29 great grands...we have had 43 great great grands, and on to my grandchildrens generation.

As for my great grandmother, Christina (Tiina) Kingsep, I regret not having known her. However, everything that I am in some way measures a result of her tenacious spirit. I am sure that every woman who pioneered here in those days had a story of valor to match any soldiers'...they were not given medals or honours. Their contributions were expected and taken for granted ... I believe that they deserve recognition for their accomplishments, and to this end I would like to honour these women pioneers by dedicating this screening of "Their legacy, our heritage: Alberta Estonians" to them. Bless these women.

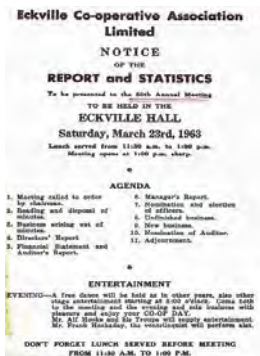
PEOPLE

This section tells the story of the people and families representing Alberta's Estonian communities. Discover the stories of Alberta's pioneer families and specific individuals who have contributed to the growth and development of the province.



PIONEERS

Alberta's Estonian history begins with its pioneers. During the last few years of the 19th century and the first two decades of the 20th century, Estonians homesteaded in Alberta in search of cheap, available land. Learn about pioneering life and how Estonian families shaped Alberta's development in the coming years.



WILLIAM (BUFFALO BILL) AND IDA EHRENWERTH

William Ehrenwerth came to Canada from Estonia about 1916 and after getting settled he asked Ida to come from Estonia to marry him. William and Ida moved to Peace River in 1926 and settled on a homestead in the Weberville community



The Ehrenwerths later moved into the fur-buying business, which they continued to pursue for about 30 years while also doing a bit of farming. The Ehrenwerths ran posts at Little Buffalo, Peerless, Loon, Big Buffalo (later Bison), Little Fish (later Haig), Big Fish (later Sawn) and Prairie (later Lubicon) lakes. Ida worked in the trading posts, which collected furs from the Aboriginal people who had extensive traplines in the region. Bill hauled freight over long distances with horses or dog teams. There were summer and winter trails; the trip could be made over frozen lakes and muskeg in winter but in summer the route went around these areas.

When working at his first post, Little Buffalo, William acquired the name "Buffalo Bill." This happened for three reasons: non-Estonians found his surname difficult to pronounce, his first name was William and his post was called Little Buffalo. The nickname became so common that William even received mail addressed to Buffalo Bill.

William and Ida obtained some farm land in Wesley Creek. They had four children: Hans, Eva, Otto and Edgar.

ERDMAN FAMILY

The members of the Erdman family have earned their rightful place in Alberta's history as one of the original settlers of Barons. The Erdmans' story begins with Juri Erdman, born in 1778 in Estonia. Before he died in 1850, Juri married a woman named Madli and together they had three children. One of Juri's grandsons was Jakob who settled on the open plains of southern Alberta in 1904.



Jakob Erdman was born in 1851 in Paide, Estonia. When he was only 10 years old he travelled with his family to Crimea in search of improved living conditions. The Erdman's travelled 2,400 kilometres by foot through the forests of Russia and the Ukraine. Unable to carry food with them, they relied on the generosity of Russian farmers who frequently donated bread and sour milk. Eventually, the Erdman's settled in the small village of Targhan.



Jakob's parents, Jaan and Mari died shortly after they arrived in Crimea. Jakob was then raised by his aunt Madli and uncle Otto Sesler. Jakob married Mari Tint on 1 May 1873; she had also made the trek from Estonia to Crimea 12 years earlier. Generally, Estonians enjoyed their time spent in Crimea, sharing civic and judicial responsibilities. In fact, Jakob was appointed mayor of Targhan twice. Here, in the more temperate climate of Crimea, Jakob and Mari raised eight children; one died as an infant. All of the Erdman children were able to attend school where they learned a variety of subjects taught in Russian.

However, issues of political and economic relevance would soon arise. Wanting to avoid Russian conscription and realizing there was not enough land for all of their children to farm, Jakob and Mari decided it would be best to leave Crimea. Stories of wide, open spaces in North America-spaces ideal for large families-circulated in the community and piqued Jakob's attention. It sounded like a promising opportunity. Together Jakob and Mari, along with seven of their eight children, left on yet another unpredictable journey, leaving their married daughter Emilia behind. They travelled by train back to Estonia and boarded a ship bound for England.

The Erdman family arrived in New York City on 4 July 1901 amid jovial Fourth of July celebrations. They quickly boarded a train to Fort Pierre, South Dakota and settled there for 18 months. Dissatisfied with poor crop conditions and severe weather, Jakob and his son Gustav, among other friends and relatives, travelled to Oregon in search of land similar to that in Crimea. Although the land in Oregon was deemed too expensive, not all was lost; rumours circulated about inexpensive and available land in Alberta, Canada.



In 1904, Jakob, Mari, Gustav, and Helena Kotkas settled in Barons, Alberta. Their children Liisa, Robert, Charlotte, and Natalie lived with them. However, Liisa and Charlotte soon moved to Lethbridge where they found employment as housemaids. Natalie, who later became a missionary in Iraq, graduated from the University of Alberta in 1917. She was one of the first Estonians in Alberta to do so. One year later, Jakob

donated two acres of land to a burial ground with free plots for any Estonians. Jakob's daughter Miina Kulpas became ill and moved to Oregon with her family, convinced the milder weather would be beneficial to her health. Jakob and Mari also went to Oregon and stayed there until Miina's death in 1928. Soon after, they returned to Barons and lived a quiet life on their farm. Jakob died in 1934 and is buried at the Barons Cemetery. Mari died five years later and is buried next to her husband.

THRICE PIONEERS

A Readers' Theatre about a Pioneer Family who settled in Barons, Alberta in 1903

Script written by Lillian Munz, Calgary

Jakob and Mari Erdman's Journeys

August, 2007 Version (07-08-04 fine edited)

From Estonia to Crimea To Dakota to Barons 1861-1933

This is a Readers' Theatre Script prepared for the July 31, 2004 Barons Centennial by Lillian Munz of Calgary, great-granddaughter of the pioneers, Jakob and Mari Erdman. An earlier script was prepared in 1990 for family reunions in Barons. This reading was also performed in Calgary and in Vancouver at the Estonian Society there, and in Crimea at the 140th anniversary of the 1861 trek from Estonia to Crimea. A copy of the earlier script is now in the E. Vilde Museum in Tallinn, Estonia.

Commentator: One hundred years ago settlement in North America was growing rapidly. People from all over Europe were leaving their communities and relatives behind and sailing across the Atlantic Ocean, then traveling by train or wagon across our vast continent. Why did they come to the wide open prairies?

The prairie in southern Canada was covered with wild grass and buffalo bones. Beneath the grass was rich earth. News spread over Europe that land was available in the West at \$10 for a quarter of a square mile of natural prairie grassland. The pioneers dreamed that they could make a good living there with a lot of hard work. Farm land was the attraction. For many immigrants, the political scene in Europe was quite dangerous. America was the land of the free - a wonderful dream for many people.

This story is about the Erdman family who arrived from near the Black Sea in southern Europe over one hundred years ago.

Our story begins in the year 1861 on a farm near Paide, Estonia. The Germans owned most of the land and the Estonians had to work for the rich landowners like slaves. The Russians were the political power. Therefore, many families, over 70 families in all, made plans to find other countries in which to raise their children and prosper. A certain man in their midst, Prophet Maltsvet, gave them hope.....

Let us listen to the conversation of two children, Jakob Erdman and Mari Tint at age 10 and 7. They are standing near the simple, one-room farm house in Estonia where their parents are visiting and planning a very long journey.

(Costume note: The "children" might wear a simple symbol of childhood - Mari with a ribbon in her hair; Jacob with a child's cap. Their voices might be slightly childlike but not falsetto.)

Scene One: Near Tallinn, Estonia - 1861

- Jacob:** Hello, Mari. I'm glad you came to visit our farm. Come. Come over here and see our new horse. He is black and very wild.
- Mari:** Oh, Jacob. I like the horse. He is wonderful. But....I want to ask you something. Why are your parents and my parents packing so many bags and boxes ?
- Jacob:** Come over here.... Come and see our wagon. See those wooden boxes and other things?
- Mari:** Yes, yes,but, Jacob, are you going somewhere?
- Jacob:** I have something special to tell you. I heard that we are going to take a long walk. About 70 families
- Mari:** A walk.....who? Where?...
- Jacob:** Your family, my family, our neighbours.... We will take our cows, and pigs and our wagons and we will walk south. Out of our homeland!
- Mari:** We will go away? Why? How far will we walk?
- Jacob:** Father said it was over 2000 kilometres. Through many countries. That will be a LONG walk. I wonder where we will sleep..... We will go to a warm country called Crimea near the Black Sea. My mother said it is so different from Estonia. We can have our own farm there!
- Mari:** Oh, Jacob. That is wonderful. You mean that Father can have a farm of his very own? He won't be a slave any more?
- Jacob:** Yuh, and there will be no Germans to boss us around and whip us if we don't work. We can be free, Mari. When I grow up, I can have a farm, too. My very own farm with horses and cows.
- Mari:** It is a dream..... Maybe we can have an orchard and have our own peaches and pears and apricots. Maybe we can have our own school.
- Jacob:** I think so. I think a teacher is coming with us. Father told me about it.
- Mari:** Oh, I want to go home now and pack some of my special things. I want to help Mother pack some things from our kitchen.
- Jacob:** Oh, I just thought of something. I'll take my hunting knife in case we see a bear or a wolf while we are walking. We might find some wild animals. We will walk through most of Eastern Europe.
- Mari:** Oh, Jacob. Don't scare me! Anyway, I will wear heavy boots. My feet will be sore. Oh, mother's calling.....I have to go now....I'm coming, Mother, I'm coming. Goodbye, Jacob..... I will see you soon!
- Jacob:** Goodbye...Mari....thanks for the visit.
- Mari:** Yes, Mother, I am coming.....
- Jacob:** We won't be seeing Estonia again, I think. We will say goodbye to our homeland. We will be sad, and happy, too.... I'll see you again when we start that journey. Goodbye, Mari. Goodbye.

Jacob and Mari stay where they are, but they turn and "change costume" to a babushka and a

farmer's cap. They then turn AFTER the following commentary, and face the audience again. Jacob may wear a moustache, as that was the fashion then. The pair has their back to the audience during the commentaries, to show the passage of time.....

Commentator: So the 70 brave Estonian families left their homeland almost 145 years ago. The German landowners did not let them leave easily. Many of them were whipped. It took over a month to heal their wounds. At last the boxes were packed and the animals gathered. The Paide folks said their final farewells.

The seventy families were on their way on a journey that took three months. All but the very young and the elderly, walked behind their wagons piled high with boxes.

Along the way kind farmers offered them bread and sausage and sometimes a barn to sleep in.

They had been inspired by the Prophet Maltsvet to believe that their destiny lay in the south. They believed that this was their life's path. Many got sick on the way. Some elderly people and children died. Jacob's parents did not survive the trip. As an orphan, he was raised by an aunt, Madli and her husband, Otto Sessler.

When they reached Crimea, they found stone houses in a village left empty by the loss of population due to the Crimean War. The Estonians got busy and cleaned out the buildings and soon they were developing their farming near the Black Sea.

Twelve years later, Jacob and Mari were married and Jacob's farm became prosperous. They had nine children. An Estonian teacher gathered the community for schooling. The Lutheran church added to the feeling of belonging.

Two of their daughters married Estonians from the village. One of them, Helena, lost her husband who was in the Tsar's army, so she moved in with her parents to help with the work on the busy farm.

Jacob became mayor of the village. Twice. But things were not very safe politically. The Tsar of Russia was calling for all young men to join the Russian Imperial army and be ready to fight. There were uprisings throughout the country.

Our story continues with Mari and Jacob now about 50 years old. They have been married for over 25 years. It is evening, after work in the fields and orchards. They are sitting on the porch looking out towards their orchard in Crimea. The year is 1901.

Scene Two: A Crimean farm and orchard - 1901

Jacob: Ah, it is good to sit here after our long working day.

Mari: Yuh, our orchards are good. We have lived here for 40 years now. We have made a good farm from the land left empty by the Crimean War.

Jacob: It was hard work, but we did it!

Mari: It is a good farm..... Just today, I have picked ten baskets of apricots and made jam. The children will be happy with that.

Jacob: Mari, our new homeland has been good to us. Our farm of over 400 acres has provided grain, livestock and even fruit trees. Look at those pear trees. The heavy branches are hanging over the horse trough.

Mari: Yah, I love this farm and this warm climate.

Jacob: Much has happened. Russia controls Crimea, but we are lucky that we have our language and our Estonian neighbours.

Mari: Two of our daughters married Estonian neighbours.

Jacob: Mari, I must tell you something. I was talking to Hans in the village. He told me some serious news.

Mari: What is it, Jacob? Why do you look so worried?

Jacob: There is danger ahead of us. Much trouble. The Tsar, the king of Russia, is calling for all young men to join his army. They must learn to carry guns and fight. We are just farmers. We want to live in peace.

Mari: Oh, no....that means our Gustav and Robert, too. Russian soldiers?..... Never! Look at our Helena, her husband has died in the army. She is now a widow, and she is only 24.

Jacob: We are not Russian. We are Estonian. We live here in a village where Estonian is spoken. We have our own Estonian Lutheran church. Yuh, the Russians control our country, but our village is a village of Estonian people.

Mari: I did not raise my boys to join the Russian army! What will we do? Gustav and Robert are Estonians. Why should they die on a battlefield fighting for Russia? What shall we do?

Jacob: It is a hard decision. I have to think about it. Oi, oi, oi.....

Mari: Jacob, we have no choice. What do you think? The Tsar will not make soldiers out of our boys! They can not stay here.

Jacob: God forbid!

Mari: Jacob, I think we must make a plan. We must pack up and leave this place. After 40 years, we must pack and leave our home here And soon.

Jacob: What are you saying?

Mari: I believe we will have to leave this wonderful farm and make another long, long journey to a new country. It is a journey to freedom. We will travel by cart, and by train and by ship.

Jacob: Let me think. Let me think about it. Where?....When?....

Mari: Jacob, we will go on another long journey - this time to America. Across the ocean. What do you think? It is the only way.

Jacob: After all of our work here....to leave our farm and our neighbours. Emilia is married to an army man. She will have to stay behind. Oh, this is a hard time for us.....it is a hard decision. Oi, oi, oi.

Mari: Come, come...we can start building a new farm again in America. We are strong. Our Estonian friends have settled in Dakota. Let's write to them now and make our plans.

Jacob: Yuh, I will write.....You have thought of the only way for us to be free.....Yuh, yuh....You are right.....I agree.....

Mari: Good. We will leave our beautiful farm here. We will go soon

Jacob: I hear that America is a golden land, Mari, where we can find a new farm and be free. We can do it, Mari. We are only fifty years old. We can start again!

Mari: Jacob, please start writing that letter to South Dakota. There is no time to waste.....

(Couple turns their backs to the audience to change "costume" This time Mari wears an apron and babushka. Jacob's moustache is white now. He wears a different type of farmer's hat and maybe suspenders. Improvise!)

They don't face the audience until the commentator finishes the following:

Commentator: Jacob and Mari have travelled by steamship down below on the cheap third class deck to New York. Many of them were sick. Daughter Lisa remembers eating salt porridge to settle her stomach.

It was the 4th of July, 1901, when the ship docked in New York, and daughter Natalie remembers that the Erdman family thought that the fireworks and parades were a welcoming party for the immigrants on the docks. However, they soon learned about the special holiday on the 4th of July. The families gathered their boxes and boarded a coal-burning train bound for St. Pierre, South Dakota. Some other Estonian families had settled there, previously and helped them find land.

The Erdmans remained in Dakota for two years, trying to work on a very rocky farm where the winters were bitterly cold. What a contrast to Crimea. The Erdmans were not happy.

Then-great news! Great news! Good land was available out West.....as far as Oregon on the Pacific coast.

This is Scene Three. The date is spring of 1903 in South Dakota on the Erdman farm. Let us listen in to their conversation.

Scene Three: South Dakota - 1903

Mari: Jacob, you look so tired. Our farm here in Dakota makes you work too hard. We have lived here for two years now..... The land is very rocky. So different from our farm near the Black Sea. I cried when we left that place... and the neighbours walked beside our wagon as we left our village, throwing flower petals on the road. Remember?...

Jacob: Yuh, Mari, I remember. When we sold the land, I put the gold coins in a special box... Daughter Helena kept that box very safe on our journey to Estonia by train and to London by boat.... She even slept with that precious box beside her. I was so afraid those many weeks - our life savings in that box of gold coins... What if it was stolen? Thank God it stayed safely with us.

Mari: Then in London, remember? Gustav was a smart boy.. He found how to change that gold into a bank draft... Smart boy, our Gustav...

Jacob: Yuh, a smart boy, our son... then I could rest easy - a piece of paper - a bank draft to take to America... no more gold coins to worry us every day. We came here and bought this farm with that bank draft..... but now.... I just don't know about this farm. What do you think, Mari?

Mari: I have been thinking about it Jacob. This farm land is too rocky. You and Gustav and Robert have to work so hard to clear the land and till the soil. The winters are long and cold. You know, I think we have made a big mistake in settling here. I miss the warm winters of Crimea. My bones are freezing here.

Jacob: It is so.... but some of our Estonian friends here have talked about a new plan. What do you think? They say that out West there is rich farm land available in Oregon. Anton Kulpas told me just this morning that he is organizing a scouting group to go out West. Many families are talking about it.

Mari: I like that plan. Yes, I like it. The winters are too cold here. Jacob, go with the scouting group. Find us somewhere where the climate is better and the land is rich. Go, Jacob!

Jacob: Yuh, Gustav and I will go. We will scout for new land. We will come back in a few months with good news, I hope. Meanwhile, prepare the children for another long journey in search of a good life.

Mari: This will be our last long journey, I hope. Let's find your travelling cases and start packing for your long train trip. Tule, Jacob.

Jacob: Yuh, Yuh, Oregon - out west.....Now, where did I put my map?

(Last change of "costume" - Mari can wear a dark lacy shawl around her shoulders and a long black skirt which can be worn in all scenes. Women did not wear slacks in the old days. If a white wig with a "bun" at the back can be improvised, that would help to transform her to be in her eighties. Jacob can wear a dark jacket and tie and be a bit stooped now. They speak more slowly, being elderly. They might even be seated in the scene.)

Face the audience after the commentary, again.

Commentator: Only one man in the scouting group could speak English. They had some disappointments along the way. The good land in Oregon was no longer available , but good homestead land in the Northwest Territories in Canada could be bought for \$10 for a quarter of a square mile. The scouting group went to Canada, staked their land, and returned to Dakota for their families.

Several Estonian families travelled with the Erdmans. They packed their goods, animals, and machinery onto the train and headed West from Dakota to what is now Alberta.

One boxcar on the train contained animals like cows and horses. The other boxcar was for the nine members of the family and their belongings. After unloading, they hitched up the horse and buggy, and bumped along the trail to their homesteads. Tents went up for shelter.

No trees were in sight, so the family next built a sod hut with a grass roof. The prairie land was worked by horses pulling plows. In a few years they bought more land and more horses. A wooden house was built. Children married and grandchildren were born.

Years passed. The Erdman farms west of Barons prospered.

Commentator (continued): In the last episode in this family drama, we see the couple in Barons, Alberta, in the year 1933. The great depression is affecting everyone, but still people have time to celebrate. Here are Mari and Jacob Erdman, the pioneers who settled west of Barons in 1903. Thirty years of farming in Barons have quickly passed by. It is the 60th wedding

anniversary of Jacob and Mari.

They are white haired and in their eighties, sitting outside their farm house near the village of Barons. They are dressed in the best clothes for the anniversary party where dozens of local Estonians are celebrating. The couple are sitting apart from their guests, talking of their remarkable life together. Let us hear what Jacob and Mari are saying now.

Scene Four: Barons, Alberta - 1933

Jacob: It has been a big day, Mari. Our sixtieth wedding anniversary. Sixty years - and what a life together we have had! Remember our wedding in Crimea? Three happy days of music and dancing and eating pirukad and sauerkraut? - sixty years ago....

Mari: Yuh, Jacob. And raising our eight children..... The time has gone by so quickly. We have many of our family living near our farm here. Look over there....our grandchildren, 15 of them, today - young adults, all born here in Canada..... they will have a good life.

Jacob: Crimea days seem so long ago. We were wise to leave when we did. Life is not good over there now. Not good.

Mari: Oi, oi, that ocean journey and the cold Dakota farm... Oh, I am glad we did not stay there. I am so happy that we packed up and came to Barons and became pioneers for the third time.

Jacob: Yuh, Mari, we have lived through some very bad times.....

Mari: Bad times and good times.... Oi, oi, oi.... Barons has changed so much

Jacob: Telephones! Electricity! Trains every day! Our own trucks and combines, no more teams of horses and hand plows..... What changes.....

Mari: Many changes, Jacob. Look at the sunset - shining gold on the grain elevators.

Jacob: They look like..... gold towers. Full of wheat from our fields..... the golden land we dreamed of long ago, long ago.

Mari: Now, Jacob, we go to the others....Tule , let us have some more of that cake. Our friends are waiting.....Happy Anniversary, Jacob.

Jacob: Happy Anniversary, Mari. Yuh, yuh, we are coming Is there some kringel left for us? Tule, Mari. Tule.

(This time, the couple stands up, and stays facing the audience, his hand on her waist. In readers' theatre the "acting" is minimal. It is a dramatic reading,, not a stage play.

Commentator: Freedom and family, the Erdman story is just one of the many remarkable stories of the pioneer farmers who settled in southern and central Alberta.

Jacob and Mari have had over 150 descendants by now. Most of them live in western Canada and USA. Some are doctors, lawyers, teachers, scientists, engineers, farmers, artists, musicians.....

The ethic of hard work and the spirit of hope and optimism seen in these Estonian families have carried on through five and six generations in the freedom of the New World that was so precious to them.

Thank you to those brave and hardy Pioneers. We honour them!



**Script was written in 1991 by Lillian Munz,
great granddaughter of Jacob and Mari Erdman.**

MAGDA'S STORY

**Magda's Journey, From Simferopol, The Crimea, Russia to Barons, Alberta, Canada
July 22, 1908 to August 23, 1908**

Translated from Estonian to English by Livia Kivisild, September 2004

This is the story of Magda Lik's travels to meet her future husband, Gustav Erdman. This diary was given to my mother, Ellen (Erdman) Johnson, Magda's daughter, upon Magda's death. Many years later my mother gave it to me. It has been my plan to have it translated into English, but I didn't know anyone to do the work. With impetus from Uncle Oscar Erdman, Mother's brother, the translation was completed. This story was edited by Barbara Gullickson.



Barbara (Johnson) Gullickson

... 2004 Barbara (Johnson) Gullickson

Magda's Journey



This is my first, my longest, my most beautiful and my favourite journey. I set out from The Crimea, the city of Simferopol, crossed the Atlantic Ocean, to North America into Canada, to the settlement of Estonians in Barons in the vicinity of the town of Lethbridge. In 1908, on July 9 th, according to the old style calendar, or July 22 nd according to the new, on a Wednesday evening at 10:15 I left the Simferopol Railway Station with my mother and step-brother. Nearly 30 people came to see us off at the station.

On the last day I had many errands; I went to the cemetery to visit my father's grave for the last time and to say good-bye to him, I visited a few families of friends and went to say good-bye to the old lady where I had been in service for four years. I was sad to leave there, as if it had been my own home, the lady and I both cried. I tried to stay calm and tried not to think that this was my last day in the country where I was born, my last day in company of my parents, my siblings and my friends and that it might be the last time in my life to see them.

I tried to appear happy and I promised to return soon for a visit, which I did not believe myself. At the station, I waited for the train to arrive so I could begin my journey and I thought more about the happy reunion with my Gustav than about this sad parting. It was also easier to leave because Mother was coming with me. Still I had to think that Mother would soon leave as well.

Wednesday, July 22. We found reasonably nice seats in the 3rd class compartment. We had six pieces of luggage; the basket with my clothes, the bundles of bedding, the food basket,

another little basket and my purse. We had quite a bit of money with us, so we had to be careful. One of us stayed awake while the other two slept. My friends who had come to see me off were dear memory. They had all wished me happiness and I began to believe that with so many good wishes, happiness must rally lie ahead. The first night passed peacefully. Before dawn, we passed through the station of Ryko. The train stopped only for four or five minutes.

Thursday, July 23. In the morning, we passed lush greenery, till the train stopped in Aleksandrovska. In this train, along the railroad in the hills were chestnuts, fields of corn and millet, nice fields of oats and barley. We could barely find seats. In addition to us, there were 5 Caucasians who smoked incessantly and the smoke was inside. The next compartment was empty, but we were not allowed to go there since it was reserved for the machinists. Mother could not stand the smoke, and I felt sick as well and became dizzy. We kept walking up and down and looking for places with less smoke. In the evening we saw the Muslims pray.

At 10 o'clock, we arrived at the main station in Volta. It was a large station and there were lots of people, especially labourers waiting for the train. The train was so full, we almost missed it, and we had to pay extra for the ticket, and managed to continue our trip. At 11:30 the train began to move. We had no space to sleep, so a guard let us use his compartment. It was apart from the rest and had a door that could be closed. We were there almost alone and slept peacefully as if at home while the guard dozed on a bench behind the door.

Friday July 24. When we awoke before dawn, the weather was clear and cool. I sat at the table by the window and looked out while eating a cup of raspberries. Then it became hot and dusty. The houses looked poor, low and with roofs of sod. There are many windmills, farther away are gray pointed roofs as of bee hives, on a few higher hills there are clusters of those gray roofs. At 9 o'clock in the morning, we arrived in Kiev. Before entering the city, we crossed the River Dnieper over a large bridge, there were ferries on the river, and the water was murky. Before Kiev, the land was less fertile, there was a lot of sand, the crops looked poor and there were little children outside, a few fields of barley and flax.

Kiev is a large and opulent city, surrounded by woods. Houses are 4-5 stories high, built of brick with tin roofs. The train stopped there for three hours, and we wanted to see at least some of this beautiful city. Since we could not all go, Mother stayed at the station to watch the luggage while my stepbrother, Anton, and I took the electric streetcar and rode half an hour along a handsome wide street across town. We came to a large Russian church with the saints underground. We went in and pure gold shone in our eyes. The cupolas outside are also gilt and sparkle in the sunshine. We bought a candle in the church and a priest came with us to guide us through the passages underground. It was quite dark there, so we lit the candle and followed the priest who pointed out to us which saint was where. We kept descending and the air was foul and humid and made me nauseous, but at the same time it made laugh to think that the Russians would believe their saints were in those boxes; who knows what junk may be in there, because those boxes are covered. Next to some sits a monk, yellow in the face and painfully thin, it is sad to see. This was the Russians' holy place, that I now saw, but it seems to me, that the priests are cheating ignorant people to make money. We were offered a drink of water: it was supposed to be water from a holy source with healing powers. There seemed to be something dishonest here, since the water tasted like ordinary water, no better at all. We walked underground for perhaps 10 minutes before we came up into fresh air, reached the church yard

and took the streetcar back to the station.

At 12:15 the train left. Real beauty began as we left Kiev. Immense woods, lovely clusters of birches, tall pines and straight ashes, on the ground, flowers of many colours. We stopped for 3-8 minutes in a small stations and 20 minutes in towns. In one station we ate blueberries and were careful not to make our mouths blue. Red berries on mountain ashes are visible from afar. We passed two airplanes on the ground and then a juniper wood. On a sandy plain was a fortress. Soldiers were driving past it. We stopped in Ivangorod, bought a liter of berries, small and sour. Towards evening there were and more Poles, military everywhere.

Saturday, July 25. We slept almost as if at home. The train swings so comfortably that we did not notice as we passed the city of Kovel. When we arrived in Warsaw at 3 o'clock, it was very hot. We had to change stations. It was a few kilometers to the station where the trains left for abroad. We hired a wonderful coach, the seats were all covered with velvet, and drove to the other station. The one horse coachmen all have seats for two passengers, the two horse coachmen had enclosed coaches, there are also one horse hackneys and streetcars. The streets are clean, watered and the houses are large 3-4-5-6 stories high, also large churches and factories. All this we observed while driving from one station to the other.

We left the basket at the station and went looking for a room. We found a room on the ground floor of a five story house, rented out by a Jew. The room itself was nice and cool, but the air was damp. Mother did not even want to go in there at first, but since there was nothing cheaper available so close to the station, we had to accept it. We negotiated for the room for one day. There was shopping to do and we wanted to enquire about the continuation of the journey. I was grateful that God protected us and helped us so far. There was a shower at 6 o'clock, when our window was open and hail the size of a bird's egg fell on the floor. We had planned to stay for the night, but we became suspicious of the Jew in spite of his friendly way of speaking. He insisted on keeping our passports and on our paying in advance. We tried to argue but he insisted, so we became scared and unsure of his intentions toward us. We packed up our belongings and left for the station, having paid him in full. The station is huge and we had to wait a long time.

Sunday, July 26. I awoke at 5 o'clock, after little sleep. A beautiful morning. At 8 o'clock we arrived in the frontier town of Alesandrovo. Guided by porter, we bought tickets to Berlin, exchanged our money for German currency, and settled in a car. They brought our luggage into our fourth class compartment. We had had to hand in our passports at the station and they were returned to us on the train. At 9:15 the train left Aleksandrovo for Germany.

We began to eat and were just in the middle of it when the train stopped in a small German station, Ottlotshin. Here all the officials spoke German. A policeman entered the car, looked at our basket and other belongings and left. We did understand when he asked where we were going, so we replied, 'America'. Then we continued our meal and waited for the train to go on. But we were called off the train. A man explained in poor Russian that he would take us to a place where the doctor could examine our eyes and that we would leave on the next train.

In front of the station, we tied our bundles together and followed our leader. The big basket was left next to the train tracks. They promised to bring it along later. We carried the smaller parcels. The men led us away from the station. In the distance appeared a large building like a barn,

surrounded by a board fence topped with barbed wire. The doors were locked. We were scared seeing it from afar, but even more so when we entered. The first thing we saw was general dirt, a lot of people were already in there. Two big rooms were for the people, one little room for the officials. In addition, there were washrooms, a kitchen and the guard's room.

We thought we had fallen into a trap, but after talking with the others, we calmed down. Most of the people were Jewish and Polish, some of whom understood Russian and they explained everything to us. This was a house for travelers who were on their way to America or England through an agency. We had not used an agency and had bought our own tickets, so we should not have been there at all. However, we did not know German and thus could not explain it to the officials. They thought they had us and we thought we would soon be let go. It being Sunday, there were no officials and no one inspected our eyes. We were told to wait until the next day. Some people have already been there for a week, they had run out of money and had to wait for money from home. We were worried about our basket left on the roadside. It could not be done in Russia, but apparently here no one would touch anything that did not belong to them. It was true. The basket was delivered to us later on. I was afraid and Mother cried and kept asking where we would be taken and what would become of us. I tried to appear brave, but I did not know what would become of us. A bad day indeed.

Last Sunday, I was still at home, took a walk in the woods, and could not have imagined what a hovel I would find myself in today. I still hoped everything would turn out all right; I just have to patient and wait. It is very hot here and the air is stale, but the old guard will not allow us outside, he keeps the doors locked. The men climb the fence whenever they can. The guard goes to the station to meet every train, he serves as an interpreter. We call him 'soul catcher'. He has a big dog as a helper. Whenever there is a knock at the door or someone tries to climb the fence, the dog goes to find his master, sniffs around and scratches behind the door.

Right here in these rooms is where the doctor checks our eyes. There is as much water here as you wish, you can wash yourself, do laundry and cook. There is always a fire in the kitchen; water and firewood are both free of charge. We have to provide our own food, but there is no store. Bread and a few other necessities are sold in the station, but it very expensive although the bread is good and white. Milk is brought in by a woman. We still have enough food left so we bought only bread. Bedding is also free, but old and dirty. Lumpy mattresses are spread on the floor for the night.

There are many Jewish and Polish women with small children. Their husbands are in America and they are on their way to join them. There are also single people, young men who have crossed the border on foot to escape the draft and move to America. We call this building a 'prison' in a big wood. This is how I spend my first Sunday in Germany. What a sad and complicated day it was.

Monday, July 27. I slept as long as I wished, close to mother and Anton is further away. We are half dressed: two rooms are full of people, all asleep on the floor. In the morning, each person drags their own mattress onto the big table in the next room. The caretaker sweeps and washes the floor. The man went out in the morning and left the gate wide open, but the dog is guarding the gate to make sure no one leaves. I do hope we escape today; otherwise our ticket money goes to waste. We washed ourselves in the washroom. It was good. It is easy to get water. Just

turn the tap and it keeps running however long. Children let a lot of water run on the floor and then the guard scolds them.

At about noon the doctor arrived with several officials. A woman acts as an interpreter, she speaks Russian, but all the officials speak German. The woman looks like a crook and is extremely unpleasant. The doctor inspected our eyes and found them healthy. An agent started persuading us that it is impossible to travel the way we had planned. Our plan was namely to traverse Germany and France and cross by boat from the French port of Havre to the English city of Southampton, where Gustav was already waiting. Last Monday he had sent a telegram to the Crimea to say that he had arrived, and we left right away. The others were supposed to accompany me as far as England and then return home. But the official keeps explaining that whoever wants to travel to England has to post a deposit of 50 rubles, or if we have a relative who knows us and has lived there for a long time, we would be allowed to go there. We do not have such relatives, and the official kept telling other stories. We said we would see the consul, but the official said the consul was not here. I would travel alone to join Gustav and immediately board the ship and we would travel on together. There was no other alternative according to the official. But it was impossible for me to travel alone, particularly since I did not speak the languages. Mother would not hear of it and we stayed and waited. As we heard later, the official also lied to us saying Southampton is such a small city that the ship does not stop there, when in reality it is a large port and most ships do stop there. We requested a refund for the tickets we had purchased and were promised payment. I wrote Gustav a letter explaining all our mishaps. And also sent a telegram to suggest he request the letter from the post office. I also mentioned the telegram in the letter, hoping that he would receive at least one of the messages. Paper and other writing material is available in the office here, it is also possible to post letters and send telegrams.

Anton went to the station and obtained the refund for the tickets. Now we are told we can leave tomorrow and are glad. We decide they finally understood we are not as stupid as they think. In the evening we are allowed to go to the station. We hear there is a consul in the nearby town of Thorn and we decide to complain to him if we are not allowed to leave.

Tuesday, July 28. Officials were here again. They check papers, issue tickets to those leaving and settle financial questions. When we were still not allowed to leave, we threatened to complain to the consul and they replied this place is run on orders of the German Kaiser Wilhelm and agents arrange passage.

We saw after a while that it was a good hiding place for refugees. Those without passports or with false passports were dispatched quickly; those with legal papers were detained longer. The agent suggested Gustav come here, since there was nothing to fear. He assumed Gustav was a political refugee and I told him Gustav was not. But I was nervous about him coming, still I wrote and reassured him there was nothing to fear. I translated the telegram for the official word for word into Russian and he promised to send it himself. Now we are again waiting, not sure whether we will be allowed to leave.

Wednesday, July 29. We are still here. The telegram was returned with a notice 'recipient not there'. But we know Gustav is there, waiting. We think the agent never sent the telegram. We bother the officials every time they come because we want to leave, but they say the police

gave orders to bring us here and detain us. They will not say why. We spoke to the police; he said we are being detained by the railroad manager. We asked him and he said it was the police. We asked the police again, and he was silent. So we got nowhere. Our food is running out. We try and eat very little because everything is expensive here.

Thursday, July 30. Went and checked on the telegram. Today we were told we could leave and we were excited and happy. Mother wants to return home; I said if things do not improve, I will travel to Tallinn and go into service there until the problem is solved. We went to the woods several times and ate lingonberries, and blueberries, the woods are big. Gunshots can be heard from the direction of the Russian border. No one dares to go deep into the woods alone.

Friday, July 31. Nice warm morning. How will this day end? Food is the worst problem. For a week we have had nothing warm to eat. We do drink hot tea. And we sleep fully dressed and not very well because the bedbugs give us no peace. Finally I got a telegram from Gustav; his address had not been correct. Now he had received my letter and knew to ask for the telegrams, and did then get them. He promises to come here, at last everything is beginning to clear up!

Saturday, August 1. We got two more telegrams. Gustav cannot come here. We were told to return since we were not allowed to proceed. We were not even allowed to go to the nearest town. In the evening yet another telegram: Gustav is coming after all, now we just have to wait.

Sunday, August 2. Already Sunday and we are still here. How many days we have lost sitting here, let it be a lesson not to fall into a trap another time. I read the Bible.

Monday, August 3. Went to the woods with Mother and picked little yellow mushrooms, cooked them and ate them for dinner. Did not sleep well because of the bedbugs.

Tuesday, August 4. Bedbugs still would not let me sleep last night. Gustav did come on the morning or evening train. In the evening at about eleven, people were already asleep but a small ceiling light was still burning. I heard someone enter and turned my eyes to the door. A young man in a white straw hat (boater?) holding a leather traveling bag was looking around in surprise. The guard turned up the light, threw down a mattress next to the door and left. Everything was quiet, but my heart was beating so hard I could barely breathe. I thought I knew who the man was.

Then I saw the man go to his mattress and lie down. I was hoping to myself Mother would fall asleep; then I could go and see whether this was Gustav. Oh, how I did want to see him. We had not seen each other for five years and now we had to meet in such a horrible place. Then Anton talked with the man by the door and he got up and came over. He had taken off his jacket. He kissed me shyly and quickly and I did so wish we could have kissed for a long time. I looked at him in astonishment. Could that be the shy boy I remembered from school? No, this was a grown man and very sensible. So this was the Gustav I was traveling to meet. I was so happy to finally see him, although in a different place than had been planned.

Gustav retrieved his bag and moved into our corner. We had no thought of sleep. We spent the whole night talking. When the official arrived, Gustav spoke to them immediately about tickets. No one forbade us any longer to travel. We were allowed to go wherever we wished Gustav is a wonderful boy, as seen on the first day. How can I ever be worthy of him? In the night we sleep

again next to each other in between the others. We shyly stay apart and just gaze into each others' eyes.

Wednesday, August 5. In the morning, Gustav bought tickets for second class on the train and second class on the ship and we received tags for our destination. It was a square blue sign with 'Bremen' written on it. We waited for the moment of saying goodbye to Mother for the last time. The doctor examined us cursorily and gave us certificates that we were in good health. We took our luggage to the train. It was to leave at 5 o'clock. Anton had gone to Thorn. Mother came with us to the station. I was really happy to be with Gustav. It eased the sorrow of my parting from Mother. She herself must have suffered terribly at that moment. She stood with one foot on the step into the train and stared wordlessly into my eyes. I can still see that last look in my mind's eye and when I think of it, as I write, tears stream down my face although it is now over a year ago. Gustav put his arm around me, Mother kissed us goodbye. Her look told me what she could not put into words. In her eyes I saw all her motherly love for me. It told me it was the last time, as if we were being parted by death. Whenever I recall this last parting from Mother, I become very sad. Mother must have suffered so much, she tried to compose herself with all the strength she had. We looked back from the train as long as we could see her standing there alone. She had no one to console her at this difficult time.

The two of us traveled on to start our new life and soon forgot the sadness. Soon we reached Thorn where we saw Anton and said goodbye to him.

Thursday, August 6. At six in the morning we arrived in Berlin. The train stopped for half an hour, but no one was allowed to leave the train. How big is this city and how splendid! In the train, a man's money had been stolen, the police came to investigate but did not find anything. We carefully kept an eye on our things lest they be stolen too. We read a book, *Grains of Gold*, that I happened to have with me.

The train left at 2 o'clock. It was a fast train, now there were many people in the compartment. Gustav sang English songs as we stood by the window and looked out. Beautiful fields and houses and gardens flew past or we flew past them. In the evening, children fell asleep on the floor wherever there was space. We dozed in our seats.

At midnight, the train arrived in Bremen. Our luggage was taken away in a closed cart and a man directed us to our lodgings. The city is very quiet and looks clean and big. Displays are in the store windows. We walked quite a distance before we got there. We were a large group of people. Finally we came to a building. Single men were sent across the street, women and families were kept in the building. They wanted to send Gustav away too, but he argued and was allowed to stay. Jews had been separated from Christians already at the station so this building was for Christians only. There were doors on both sides of the great hall. We were sent into a bedroom with people asleep in it. A light was on. There were double beds on two levels

Friday, August 7. At 8 o'clock we were called for breakfast and then we could see the building better. It has high ceilings and everything is clean and well built. The washroom was particularly nice, there are sinks on two sides, water can be had by turning the tap, and above the sink is a mirror to comb hair. When we had washed and tidied up, we went into a big dining room. Breakfast was coffee and sandwiches. Everything is free here. There is no charge for accommodation or food.

About 10 o'clock, the doctor came. The doctor stuck a thermometer under each person's arm, looked in each person's mouth. Then he collected the thermometers and another man wrote down the number it was. Afterwards we went downtown, bought tickets for the ship and were asked how much money we had. Then they measured our height and wrote down the colour of our eyes and hair. At 2 o'clock, we returned and had dinner. For the first time in three weeks, I had warm soup, it was potato and barley soup and it tasted so good, and then there was herring, fresh and plump.

After dinner, we went into town again. I bought a belt, two pairs of stockings, half a dozen handkerchiefs and postcards. In addition, we bought several kinds of berries and liquor to take on the ship. We went to the doctor one more time to have our eyes When Gustav took out his English passport, we were free to go immediately without having our eyes looked at. We were pleased everything went so smoothly.

At 7 o'clock tea was served with bread and butter, we ate and after having taken our luggage to the station, went for another walk. The city looked festive in the evening. It was decorated with greenery and multicoloured electric lights. Displays were in the store windows. In front of the houses facing the street were pretty gardens with blooming flowers of all colours. I had battled a head cold for two day and I was losing my voice. We were back in our room by 9:30 and went to sleep.

Saturday, August 8. We were called at 8:30. We dressed hurriedly, had tea and left for the station. At the station, we were given free train tickets to the harbour. The train ride to the ship took an hour. We were in a very clean second class compartment with velvet seats.

The ship began to move at 9 o'clock. It was the first time in my life to be on board a ship. The sea was gray, a sad colour. A big crowd had gathered to say farewell to their relatives and wave their handkerchiefs. We had nobody to see us off. I prayed for a good and safe trip for us. The ship's band played when the ship began to move.

We went downstairs to find our cabins. My cabin was for four people, everything was in good shape, linen rack, mirror, water tap, bunk beds. Gustav's cabin was on the other side of the ship and it was for six people. The air was stale in the cabins and I became nauseous. The ship was swaying, it was difficult to walk and I became dizzy. I went into my cabin and threw up. I did not feel like eating and stayed in bed all day. Seating numbers were handed out in the afternoon and we were assigned the second sitting. I tried to eat, but felt too sick. I ate a little later on. I was the only passenger in my cabin, so Gustav spent the evening with me.

Sunday, August 9. In the morning the band played a hymn. Bells summoned us for breakfast. I had slept well. It is clear and still, the sea totally smooth and calm and all the people in a good mood. We had a good breakfast, on a card were the names of several dishes and each person could choose what they liked to have. Then we went on deck and listed to other people sing, talked and looked at the water. The sea was beautiful. I thought to myself, it is pleasant to travel like that. Before dinner, refreshments were brought out on deck. We had clear bullion with cheese bread. At 2 o'clock dinner was served. There were several courses, berries and ice cream. Plates were changes several times. Afterwards we were again on deck. At 7:30 we stopped in a French port. Mail was brought on board from a small boat, several bags of letters. We had supper at 8 o'clock, several choices again. In the evening the band and violins played in

the dining room.

Monday, August 10 to Monday, August 17. I generally slept well and got up late. We had meals three times a day, and at times we played games on the deck, read aloud to each other, and listened to the band in the evenings. Bed linens and towels are changed twice a week. Every morning the beds are made and the cabin tidied.

One day, Sunday, the wind blew Gustav's straw hat into the water. Fortunately he had another one. Sunday, at 10 o'clock a Catholic Mass started on deck. We went and listened. The luxury of first class! Everything is nice in second class, but first class is more beautiful. A mail choir sang during the service.

Tuesday, August 18. Preparations are going on for landing. Passengers are standing everywhere with binoculars. There are a lot of ships and boats around. Before dinner, land came in sight. A lovely picture; green shores on either side. The sea becomes gradually narrower and there is a high pillar standing in the water. At around 2:00 o'clock we arrived in New York harbour. Windows are full of people watching. We left the ship and went into a big hall where the customs officer looked through our smaller parcels. The basket and bedding remained in custody of the official. We sent a telegram home and drove to the station along a very dirty street. A huge station and beautifully dressed ladies. Every five minutes a man shouts in a loud voice to announce which train is leaving. Ate a banana and did not like it.

Wednesday, August 19. Did not sleep much sitting up. A clear sunny morning. On either side of the car there are velvet seats for two. It is a fast train. On either side there are fields of vegetables. At 7:30 the train stopped. We were on the Canadian border. Went for breakfast on the train and were served by negroes. Now we saw apple orchards and vineyards. It is low land, lush green with much water. We drove past the Niagara River. On the shore of a lake the train stopped. We could see the blue river between high green banks. Coloured wooden houses were visible between the trees. It was a beautiful view. At around 1 o'clock we drove through a tunnel. In one station, as the trains stopped, we saw four cars racing. There was a circular road especially built for this.

Thursday, August 20 to Saturday, August 22. We passed through much land, some wild, rough places, some flat land with many fields. On Saturday we went through land which was empty; from time to time we pass a house. I saw two wolves and some gophers. Arrived in Medicine Hat at one in the afternoon. Had dinner at a dining room owned by a relative, bought myself a coat, walked around the town. It was very hot. The town is in a low place surrounded by a river, trees and hills, lovely and green. Ordered rings, got dressed and went to the outskirts of town to see Pastor Sillak. The Pastor was at home and received us in old work clothes. There were other Estonians living in the neighbourhood, but they were all Estonians we did not know. The Pastor's wife played the piano, a man played the violin. The train left at 10 o'clock. Our luggage had stood at the station all that time and no one had touched it.

Sunday, August 23. We arrived in Lethbridge at 2 in the morning. We were told at the station that Estonians were in town. We were at a guesthouse, when someone knocked at the door. These were I. Kivi and A. Kulpas. We talked for a while and then started driving to the village.

August 30, 1909. Now I have lived here in Barons for a year. People in our family are all hardworking and sensible. My Gus and I live in the best of trust and are very happy. We are still on our honeymoon. I tell Gus all my thoughts and sometimes we are like little children, playing with each other and telling stories. Life here is very quiet and free, and I really like it and my dear little home. Sometimes I long for Mother and my sister and brothers; oh, if they could be here! Then my joy and happiness would be too complete. I cannot even wish for such happiness. I am content with what I have and try to be worthy of my luck!



This completes the tale of my journey. It is the biggest event in my life and the dearest recollection. I will remember it until the day I die.

SIIM ERDMAN

After his mother's death, Siim walked as a ten year old child to Crimea and was raised by his Aunt Madly (Erdmann) Sesler who also raised Jacob Erdman after his parents died. It seems that Otto was a harsh taskmaster and made the Erdman boys work for seven years to pay back for the costs of their upbringing. Siim returned to Estonia where he married Pauline Roos, who was about 20, when he was probably in his early 30's.

Siim Erdman 1851-1936

First Cousin of Jacob Erdman of Barons.

Married: **Pauline Natalia Roos** (1863-1934) in Estonia.

Parents: Hans Erdmann and wife Madli (Estonia)

Arrived in Barons from Estonia in 1910.



Children:

- **Gustav Johannes** (1887-1963) (G.J or "Big Gus", m. Linda Jurman, 1924)
- **Helene** (1890-1910 - died of typhoid at age 20)
- **Alide** (1895 - 1982) (m. Gus Kulpas - double wedding with G.J, 1924)

When Siim was 59, his cousin Jacob Erdman wrote to him from Barons, Alberta, and described the wonderful farming opportunities in Alberta, so Siim and his family sailed for the "New World" in 1910. A few months after their arrival their 20 year old daughter Helene died of typhoid. His son Gus (Big Gus) Erdman was 23 by this time. Since his second cousin (son of Jacob Erdman) was also named Gus, was only 5' 7" while G.J. was 6' 4" they became known locally as Little Gus and Big Gus.

At this time there were about 26 Estonian/Crimean families totaling about 77 people living in Barons. Ten families came from Crimea via Dakota, 9 families came directly from Crimea and 7 came directly from Estonia.



At first the Siim Erdman family stayed with the Jacob Erdmans until they purchased the SE quarter of 6-12 23 where they lived in a homesteader shack until they purchased the NE quarter of 31-12-23 and built a house there. The house was followed by the construction of a large horse barn the same year. In 1924 Gustav married Linda Jurman and Alide married Gus Kulpas in a double wedding ceremony. Shortly after this Gus and Linda moved to her uncle Martin Silberman's farm and sold the original quarter to Gus

and Alide Kulpas.



In 1931 Gustav J and Linda purchased their own land the SW quarter of 5-12 23, just diagonally across the corner from Alide and Gus Kulpas Siim lived with Gustav and his family until his death until 1936 while Pauline stayed with Alide and Gus Kulpas until her death in 1934.

Gus Kulpas (1886-1977 age 91)

Born: 1886 in Crimea

Arrived in Barons from Crimea via South Dakota in 1905 with his father and older brother John.

His cousin Anton Kulpas also lived in Barons with his wife Miina (Erdman) and family.

Homesteaded east of Barons, but sold that land.

Married: **Alide Erdman**, (1895-1982) daughter of Siim, in 1924, sister of G.J.

Settled on land near G.J. Erdman South West of Barons

One daughter: **Dorothy** (1925-1964)

Gus, his father and brother, all homesteaded in the Barons area. John Kulpas sold his land to Mr. Kotkas and moved with his wife Julie Reinstein to Montana in 1910. Gus's father died that same winter in Barons.

Gus stayed around Barons. About that time, he and his cousin, Anton Kulpas, bought a gasoline engine threshing machine and later a steam engine machine and which they operated for ten years. When Anton Kulpas moved to Oregon with his wife Miina and family, they sold the thresher. Gus then took a short course at the Calgary Technical School, in the early 1920's when he was 34. When he was 38 he married Alide Erdman, in 1924. The Kulpas house had been built in 1918. Gus farmed there until he and Alide retired to Lethbridge in 1970. Their daughter Dorothy married Dick



Haddlington and lived in Lethbridge where she died in 1964 at the age of 39 from asthma.

Gustav Johannes (G.J., Gus, or Big Gus) Erdman

Born: Estonia in 1887

Died in Barons 1963 at age 76.

Married in Barons in 1924, to **Linda Jurman** who was born in Poltsamaa, Estonia in 1894.

She died in Calgary in 1979 (age 85).

Her parents were Hans and Malle (Silberman) Jurman of Estonia.

Gus's Parents: Siim and Pauline (Roos) Erdman of Estonia.

Three Children: all born in Barons on the Silberman farm.

- **Karl Lembit**, 1926
- **Ilmar Ernst**, 1927
- **Aino Evelyn**, 1930



Fourteen years after he arrived in the Barons area with his parents, brother and sisters, Gus married Linda Jurman. Linda was accompanied by her uncle Martin Silberman in 1921 on the trip from Estonia when she was 27. She worked for her uncle for two years on the farm and then married GJ.

G.J. and Linda farmed the Silberman farm south of Barons while the Silbermans were in Estonia until 1931. Their three children were born on that farm. Linda's love of flowers was evident there, and later at their own farm about 3 miles west which they purchased from Mr. Alexander. (This was the original Cochrane homestead.)

Linda's flowers became famous in the district. Thousands of blooms decorated the farmyard in every corner. Water from the irrigation canal was hauled in a "water wagon" on Sunday's by Gus, who often made the trip four or five times each Sunday first with the horses pulling the wagon and later by tractor. The huge vegetable garden fed the family all winter.

In the early 1920's though, the very dry climate was a hardship, and Linda had to take the horse and buggy into the village to buy a few groceries for the family.

A cook house was essential for the threshing crew. Cooks were hired to feed the men, sometimes numbering 20 or more. These houses were pulled out into the field like chuck wagons. They were moved from field to field as the work progressed.



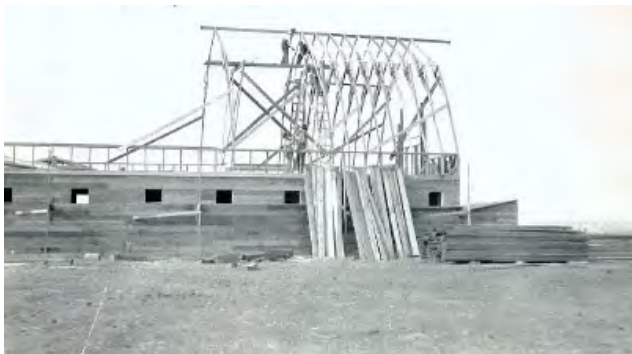
When farming became mechanized, the harvest crews were reduced to only one or two hired men, so the cook houses were left on the farmyard and recycled as chicken coops, or living quarters for the hired man.

The construction of the farm buildings was a huge job. There was a "lumber yard" in the village where farmers could purchase materials. Neighbours would help to build the barn. This is G.J.'s barn being built in 1918. The horses and cows would be fed and sheltered here, especially in winter.

This complicated piece of farm machinery was called a separator. Bundles of wheat were fed into it. The grain was funnelled into wagons for delivery to the elevators in the village. The straw was blown into a large straw stack which was used for feeding and bedding the livestock in the winter time. In the 1930's these separators were replaced by combines, which were first pulled by tractors, Later "self-propelled" combines were invented. Often farmers did work for their neighbours who did not invest in a "separator".

The straw was used on the floor for warmth and when it became filled with manure it was pitched outside onto the manure pile, which was valuable as fertilizer for the gardens after it had "cured" for about three years.

Vegetables and flowers were grown in abundance on most of the farms in the area. Fruit trees were rare, with crabapples and some small plums surviving the dry climate and cold winters which reached minus 35 C with heavy drifting snow, before the climate change made six foot tall snowbanks a thing of the past.



The farmers bought sugar, tea, coffee, salt, apples in season, but meat and vegetables were

usually home grown and butter and milk were provided by the herd of cattle. Chickens were grown on every farm, so eggs were abundant and Sunday roast chicken was common. When cattle or pigs were slaughtered many farmers made "head cheese" (jellied meat), sausage and bacon. Fish was available at Keho Lake and some farmers had smoke houses to smoke the fish.

Linda and Gus were very active in the Estonian community in Barons. Birthdays were celebrated at various farms throughout the area. Food was brought by all guests. After the meal the men would gather for "refreshments" and conversation while the women drank their tea and got caught up on the local news in the other room or another part of the garden. A group photo was usually taken on these occasions.

Christmas was a "12 day celebration". From the day after Christmas to a few days after New Years, Estonians would circle from home to home throughout the season. Some of the older Estonians learned very little English as their social life was exclusively centered on the Estonian community in Barons and Lethbridge.

Linda was a devoted gardener in summer and in the winter she did needlework and other handiwork. Many of her fancy table cloths and bedspreads are owned by her children and grandchildren.

After WWII, Linda and G.J. "sponsored" the families of three members of Linda's sister Ida's family. They left Estonia during the war, often walking from farm to farm. They had lived in refugee camps in Europe until the paper work could allow them to emigrate. They lived on G.J.'s farm for one or more years until they found work in other places in Lethbridge, Calgary and Toronto. The farm house was a busy place at that time.

Gus was an active member of the United Grain Growers and of the local school board.

He passed away in Barons in 1963 at the age of 75. Linda survived him by 16 years. When she left the farm, Linda lived with Evelyn in Calgary.

Gus's children all graduated from the University of Alberta, Karl in physics, Ilmar in Agriculture, and Evelyn in Home Economics. (Just a note about U of A. A certain chemistry professor was known to remember Barons students. If someone from Barons showed up in his class, he would inform his new class that for decades, students from place called Barons would pop up in his class and soon be getting top marks...so watch out...He referred to Oscar, Ralph, G.J.'s three children and many more Barons students at U of A as the years went by).

Karl took postgraduate work at UBC and received his PhD in physics there. He became well-known in nuclear physics, at UBC and internationally. He married Dorothy Helgerson and they have three daughters: Linda, Ann and Barbara.

Ilmar received his Masters in bacteriology and worked for the Food and Drug Directorate at the federal government in Ottawa. He and his wife Lorna (Dixon) have four sons: John, Eric, Neil and Mark.

Evelyn worked for Canadian Western Natural Gas in the "Blue Flame Kitchen" in Calgary for 34 years. She wrote food articles for the Calgary Herald ,often appeared on "Wild Rose Forum" on

CBC radio, as well as on local TV cooking shows.

Evelyn and her mother made a trip back to Estonia to visit their relatives in 1966. In 1975 Linda went again to Estonia by herself, 54 years after the young Linda Jurman sailed to America with her uncle, Martin Silberman.

In 1996, Evelyn married David Rimmer, who had also worked with Canadian Western Natural Gas for many decades. They had 10 happy years together. He passed away in his mid '80's in 2006. Evelyn has lived in her house in southwest Calgary since 1963.

The G.J. Erdman family farm near Barons is still in the family after nearly 90 years. John Erdman, Ilmar's son, (married and living in Red Water,) manages the farming business for his grandparents' family.



1929 - G.J. , Linda and their sons Ilmar and Karl at the Silberman farm 3 miles south of Barons. A butter churn is behind them. They lived here for about 7 years during the 1920's and early 1930's

The horse harness shed is in the background behind the grain wagon. Household water was hauled from the irrigation lake one mile away. Cattle drank the alkaline water from the well, pumped by a windmill north of the house.

Linda started her interest in gardening at this farm which was about 3 miles from where they eventually lived for over 30 years. Linda retired to Calgary after her husband passed away. She died in 1979, age 85.

Steam provided the power for the engine that separated the grain from the straw which was blown into 8 metre tall stacks used during the winter for livestock food and barn floor covering to absorb manure.

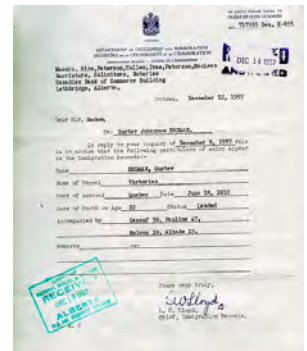




Horses brought the bundles from the fields to the separator. The bundles were piled into a "hayrick". Pitching bundles was not for those with a weak back. Harvest crews sometimes numbered 25 men plus hired

cooks. The cook cars were pulled into the fields for the convenience of feeding the men at the work site.

A document regarding G.J.'s arrival in 1910. He sailed on the "Victorian" to Quebec at the age of 22 and took the train to Lethbridge from there. He was inquiring about his landed immigrant records when applying for the "old age security", in 1957.



This is a typical Estonian gathering, in this case for Ellen Erdman Johnson's birthday in 1939 held at her brother Victor's home (the original Jacob Erdman house.)



In the picture are the Andreksons, (George, Sally and their four children) Oscar Erdman, Gus Erdman and his wife Magda, Jaan and Helena Kotkas August and Alma Hebenik, Alex Hebenik and his wife, Julia Kananen, Lisa Silberman, the Pertels, the Gus Kulpases, Linda and G.J. Erdman and their children, (Evelyn, Karl and Ilmar), Ellen and Roy Johnson and family: (Barbara, Gerald, Lawrence).

The school has four rooms on the main floor and four rooms upstairs. In the basement some exercise sessions substituted for phys ed classes in winter. Basketball games were part of the program. Students walked to the Community Hall three blocks away until the gym was built in years later. Baseball was popular too. Later curling and skating rinks were built by the Hall.

In 2006 the school is being rented out to a drama society. It is not used as a school because of the lack of school age students in the community.

This is the Barons Consolidated School which was built in 1930 and closed its doors to students about 70 years later. Over several generations, many students of Estonian heritage took 12 years of schooling here and many went on to University and other forms of higher education. School buses, first pulled by horses, and later motorized yellow buses drove in all four



directions, sometimes over an hour one-way, to collect the children from the farms. When roads were snowed in students had a holiday. Tom Peacocke at the telephone office notified the farmers if the buses were going out or staying at the garage in the village due to bad weather. The school population reached 160 during its peak. Sports teams often won Southern Alberta competitions in basketball and baseball. Spring drama productions, Christmas concerts, Sports Day in May and graduation dances in June were some of the highlights of the school year.

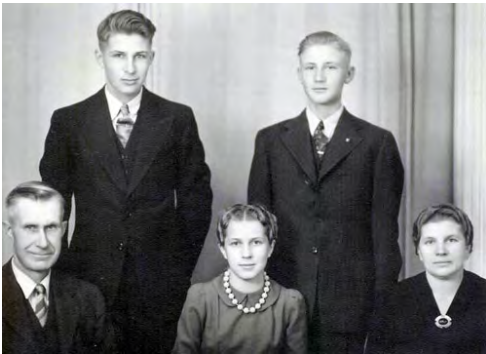
Once a month the school sponsored a dance such as the Sadie Hawkins Dance (a hillbilly costume dance) at the community hall. The whole community attended. There was a lunch break half way through the dance. Sometimes live music by local groups provided the music. The churches, the school and the sports organizations provided a lively social life for the village.

During the cold months the mothers in the village cooked hot soup for all of the students who stayed in the school over the lunch hour. Home Economics and Shop were taught for many years. Typewriting, drama, art, singing, and French were part of the curriculum. Every spring the high school presented a three-act play in the community hall. Most of the community came to enjoy the event.

Some of the teachers remained on staff for over 40 years, teaching several generations over the years. They were usually strict and efficient, and students were encouraged to be resourceful and hard working. All of Linda and GJ's children went to the University of Alberta after passing the government grade 12 exams at this school with excellent marks.

The transition from grade 8 to grade 9 was marked by a dress-up day of pranks and snake dances through the town, even through the pool hall! This was called "initiation". These were the days when students made their own fun, before TV and video games.

About 1,000 former students and teachers attended the 75th anniversary of the Consolidated School District in 1991 to celebrate the occasion of bringing in the students from the one-room schools that dotted the district to the two room brick school which stood where the community hall stands now. The "big school" with 8 rooms and two storeys was 61 years old at the time of the 1991 reunion. That weekend was one to remember when many generations of former students gathered in the village.



Siim passed away in 1936, age 85 and Pauline died in 1934, age 74. They are buried together with daughter Helena in the Barons Cemetery which was originally owned by Estonian pioneers and later given to the village of Barons. It was recently tidied up before the Centennial Celebrations, 2004.

ELLEN ERDMAN

Ellen's story in her own words, August 1988

My first remembrance is of Grandma (Mari) knitting grey socks for the First World War soldiers. She received an award from the government for knitting 100 pairs. When I was older, I learned that we lived with our Grandparents in their 5-room house until 1914, when we moved to our own farm. There we lived in a small 2-room house with a wood/coal burning stove, coal lamp, a sewing machine and wash tubs with scrub boards.



We heated the wash water in a big boiler on the stove and rinsed the clothes in cold water, with bluing for white things. I remember helping to make soap in the yard during the summer. We saved all the grease from cooking and from butchering and put it in a great, heavy kettle. It was set on rocks and a fire was built under it. After it had cooked for some time, lye was added, then it was poured into pans. After it cooled, we cut the soap into pieces and discarded the junk at the bottom. We used this soap only for washing clothes, and bought soap for us to wash with - Crown, Ivory, Life Boy. My mother used flat irons for ironing, which were heated on the stove top.

Our outdoor toilet was beside the wood pile and we were required to bring in wood whenever we went out there. For toilet paper, we used the Eaton's catalogue pages and orange papers.



In 1914, the hay stack burnt down. I have memories of Victor and me with a box of matches, striking them by the hay stack. I guess it caught on fire. We ran and hid under Mother and Dad's bed. (And I blamed Ralph, 1 year old!) Neighbours came to help put it out, using wet gunny sacks, pitch forks, and water buckets. I don't remember our punishment, but the matches were put out of our reach thereafter. We couldn't reach them even when we stood on a wooden Japanese orange box on top of a chair!

Mother was concerned when the Indians came down the road, on the way to or from the Lethbridge Stampede, and she would make us hide under the bed. In the summer, we kids would go barefoot, and got really tough soles. When we were older, we chased the milk cows home from the pasture and had to watch where we stepped. There were cactuses, bird nests, the usual pasture encumbrances, and even dead gophers with burying beetles at work.

Dad had horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, ducks, turkeys, chickens and geese. Feathers were saved for pillows, sheep fleeces were washed, cleaned and carded. Mother used some of the wool to make quilts and some she spun into yarn. She could knit and read at the same time.



Dad raised Belgian work horses, but he also kept an extra horse for us children to ride. For some people this was a treat. However, I didn't enjoy horse back riding very much. One time when I was riding, the horse went under the fence instead of over it. I got a big gash on my left arm. After that, I was even less interested in riding.



In 1918, as the family grew bigger with 6 of us now - Victor, me, Ralph, Oscar, Alfred and Mary - Dad built a large 2-story house, with many modern conveniences; Delco power plant for light, hot and cold running water with an electric pump, in-door bathroom, a steam furnace to heat all the rooms, and a dumb-waiter. The dumb-waiter was moved by pulleys and carried food from the kitchen to the basement to keep it cool.

There was a fire place in the living room and a pool room upstairs - the pool table hauled up over the veranda into the pool room. Dad got it to keep the boys at home, so they wouldn't have to go to town. However, mostly the men played pool and my brothers didn't have a chance.

I remember the lumber for the house being hauled in with wagons. The man who installed the lath for the plaster was a marvel. He put the shingle nails in the mouth, for quick access, and was very fast in nailing up boards. We were amazed!

The furniture was ordered from Eaton's Catalogue. The arrival of the Eaton's Catalogue was an exciting event and we ordered many items from it. The pages with the toys were pretty worn out by Christmas. I remember Dad ordering a sewing machine for Mother while we were still at the little house. It was a Raymond and it cost \$25! Mother sewed all our clothes, even the boys' pants. Dad also bought a gramophone with some records. We kids enjoyed it very much and played it very often.

The food we ate was mostly home-grown; vegetables, chicken, duck, goose, pork lamb, turkey, beef, and even rabbit. Dad would order small barrels of herring and frozen fish in the winter. During hard times, Dad took our wheat to Claresholm to be ground into flour. From the milk, we

made butter and cottage cheese. Of course, we always had delicious home-made bread. Mother usually made 8 to 10 loaves at a time. We had lots of boxes of apples in the basement in the fall - sometimes oranges. We made big crocks (10 or 20 gallons) of sauerkraut, corned beef and salt pork. Mother always canned a lot of fruit and made lots of pickles.

A salesman would come in the fall, and Dad would order raisins, dried apples, prunes, icing sugar, coconut, etc. We would eat so much of one thing and not want any more for months. Dad bought peanuts for us when he went to town, but never candy. One of our hired men bought peppermints, the kind with the very hot middle, and gave them to us. I did not like peppermint for many years after that. Sometimes on a Sunday drive, checking the crops, Dad would buy us ice cream cones. That was a treat!

We usually had porridge for breakfast; rolled oats, cream of wheat, rolled wheat or ground wheat with brown sugar and milk. Occasionally we had eggs, pancakes or French toast with jam. We drank milk, once in a while cocoa, but not tea or coffee. I didn't learn to drink coffee till I was about 17, when I belonged to a girls' club. At harvest time, we also had pies, puddings, and cakes when we had several hired men, but very seldom at other times.

The water in our well was fine for the farm animals, but it was not good to drink, so we hauled water from our neighbour, Korby. We put it in the cistern beneath the cellar. When the water wagon was dry, we kids would hide in it. I don't know if Mother and Dad ever knew. We also had a rain barrel for washing hair and watering the plants.

Dad hunted rabbits and coyotes for their pelts, which were sold to fur buyers who came around occasionally.

In the fall of 1918, Victor (7 years old), Ralph (5), and I (6) started school together, none of us speaking English as we always spoke Estonian at home. There were many children of other nationalities who could not speak English either. Learning English was a little difficult for me, since I already could read Estonian, and some of the letters had different sounds. (I am glad I learned to read, write and speak Estonian, as it made our trip to Estonia in 1978 much more interesting, and conversing with our relatives over there was much easier.)

Grade 1 was divided into A, B, and C. We were in C, but not for long, as we learned English very quickly. I enjoyed writing, spelling, and arithmetic. In the lower grades, Ralph, Cornelia DeValois and I would take turns being first, second and third in class. We used syrup or jam pails for carrying our lunch to school. The girls played hop-scotch; the boys, marbles and pom-pom-pull-away. Later on softball (baseball for the boys) and basketball were our favourite sports.

I made all my own clothes since I was 12 years old. That year, I won first prize for sewing at the school fair, surpassing a 16 year old competitor.

There was a Christmas Concert every year and it was a busy and exciting time for all of us. As the end of the school year, we had a picnic at the Oldman River bottom. The food was supplied by the parents, and we had **ice cream!** We played ball, and ran races and explored the trees. It was a great time.

Another exciting event was when the Chautauqua came to town. It was a 'magic time'. It was held in the big hall above what is now the Firehall in Barons. There were stage shows, a fortune teller, music, a potter, magic, a hypnotist, etc. and it went on for 2 or 3 days. Dad was instrumental in helping to get the show to come to such a small place as Barons.

We had chores to do as did all farm children. We milked the cows before school and in the evenings, cleaned the barn, hoed the garden (even when we were very young), gathered the eggs, poisoned the grasshoppers. The boys looked after the pigs and later helped with the farming. Our hired men were mostly Estonian or Russian.

One time a man came looking for work, riding in a taxi. It was wet weather and the other workers were cleaning out the barn. The prospective employee went right back.

Dad took us to fairs, stampedes, and to visit other Estonians, mostly relatives. We went on picnics, sometimes just our family, and other times with others. Everyone would dress up in suits, hats, and look very nice. When Dad bought some land at the Carmangay River bottom, we would go there to pick saskatoons, chokecherries, and gooseberries. The saskatoons were good to eat just as they were, canned and they made delicious pies, the chokecherries were usually made into syrup for pancakes, and the gooseberries were made into pies and jam.

The Estonians did a lot of visiting; to Linda and Big Gus Erdman's at Easter time, when we would have special ethnic pastries and breads; to Pertel's at chokecherry picking time. We would eat so many that our mouths were dark and puckered. At all of these gatherings, the Estonians would discuss farming, families, politics, etc. and sing all the old Estonian songs.

At our place, the men would throw horse shoes, play pool and squaw wrestle. We bigger children would play anti-I-over the house. Sometimes, in the summer the Estonian Minister Silak would come to hold sermons, marry people, baptize babies, etc. He had an organ that would fold into a suitcase and that provided the music.

In the early days, for Christmas presents we were given spin-the-button, checkers, dominoes, snakes and ladders. Mother would knit mitts and socks, make fancy handkerchiefs and rag dolls from the pattern on the back of the flour sacks for us girls. An uncle always gave us books.

One Christmas, I got an Eaton's 'Beauty' doll from my Godfather - what a beautiful present! It was kept in the bottom drawer of a chiffonier and I could only have it at special times. It got lost, and much later I found it under the caragana hedge, dirty, with its face peeling. It was a sad time for me.

In the winter of 1918 (the time of the flu epidemic) I had double pneumonia; my fever was so high I had blisters on my eyes, mouth and ears. My parents were very worried: the doctor had given me up. They had Grandma come. She put cottage cheese on my back to bring the temperature down - they say that saved me. When I was a little better, they asked me what I wanted to eat. I said 'sardines'. Unfortunately, they did not stay down. At this time, one of my teachers sent me a red lace valentine. It was the prettiest valentine I ever received!

In 1920 or 1921, my grandparents (Jacob and Mari), Aunt Mina and her husband, Anton Kulpas, and their children moved to Oregon. They were seeking milder weather for the benefit of Mina,

who had a delicate constitution. Their land in Oregon had cherry and walnut trees. Dad took us out of school (2 or 3 times) the last week of June to go down to pick cherries. We certainly did; picked them and ate them! Getting out of school early made us the envy of our friends.

When Mina died in 1929, Dad, Aunt Charlotte, Ralph, Oscar and I moved Grandmother and Grandfather back to Barons in our car. They lived at their homestead for a while, then moved in with Mother and Dad.

Grandmother learned to write at 50 (although she could read a long time before) taught by her daughter Helene Kotkas. Her writing was poor, but her spelling was correct. My Grandfather died in 1934, and Grandmother wanted to live in her own place. Victor and Hilda were married about that time and they lived with her. She died in 1939.

While we were in high school, Louise Kotkas and I would sometimes visit over-night. Once I went to a dance at the Finn Hall with them (my parents didn't ever let me go) and I didn't tell my Mother and Dad, but I think they knew. I also visited Lillian Laine.



Ralph and I finished grade 11 in Barons in 1929. Because there was no grade 12 at that time, we went to Claresholm and took Agriculture and Home Economics. In 1931, when the new school opened and grade 12 was taught, Ralph and I took that class and graduated in 1932.



In 1933-34, I attended the University of Alberta, taking the first year of the Home Economics course. I took part in some sports - ball throws, discus, javelin - and participated in competitions in Edmonton and Saskatoon, where I won a prize or two.

The first year I stayed in residence. The following year Ralph, Oscar, Mother and I had an apartment in a home, with Mother doing the cooking. The first year it cost Ralph and me just under \$1,000 for all expenses, including room and board. (\$30 a month for me and \$29 for Ralph.) Ralph and I helped out at home between University terms.





Roy Johnson, a neighbour, I were going together. We were married November 1, 1935 - a very special occasion. The day was cold, snowy and -25 degrees Fahrenheit. Dad took us to Lethbridge to get our registration and my bouquet of red roses. It was very bad weather and we were 2 hours late. The wedding was at my parents' home and I wore a navy suit that I had made, with a white hat and gloves, and I carried the roses. My sister, Mary, was my bridesmaid and my brother, Oscar, was best man.

The local minister, Reverend Brett, performed the ceremony and his daughter, Mary, played the Wedding March on the piano. Mrs. Andrekson helped make the wedding cake and I decorated it. Mother and Dad gave us some furniture (my granddaughter, Jaye Gullickson Howes has the rocking chair) 2 cows, chickens and turkeys.

We had our first home in Roy's Mother's yard, the renter's house with 2 rooms and a porch. Roy worked for my Father, farming. We were very excited when our first child, Barbara Kay, was born in September 1936 at the Carmangay Hospital, Dr. Dimock of Barons in attendance.

Coyotes got most of our turkeys that night. When Roy took us home, he started calling Barbara 'Jo' and she has been 'Little Jo' or 'Joey' ever since.

Next year we had a chance to go to Edmonton where Roy attended Normal School (a school to teach people how to teach). We couldn't take Barbara with us, so my folks had her for that winter. I cooked for Oscar, Ralph, and Clarence Johnson, and Roy until April 1938, when I came home for the birth of our first son, Gerald. He was born April 10th at the Galt Hospital in Lethbridge, a joyous addition to our family.

That September Roy started teaching at Black Spring Valley, grades 1 - 9 inclusive. Barbara would go to school to see Daddy every so often. His salary was very low: \$880 for the year, which included an extra \$100 since he was married.

Our second son, Lawrence, was born August 20, 1939, at the Carmangay Hospital, joining our very lively family. That winter we stayed at my grandparents' home as Roy was unable to get another school. In the spring (1940) Roy had a chance to buy some land, section 4-13-23-W4, on time. We moved 2 buildings $\frac{1}{4}$ mile west of the railway tracks, made a room between them and that was our home. We farmed the first year with borrowed or time-purchase machinery. Roy's mother was living with us then.

We had 2 cows, some turkeys, chickens and pigs. Our Stove was coal-burning and we had a coal-oil lamp. To help supplement our income, we shipped cream and sold eggs and turkeys, and later on, pigs. One time when we returned from town, there was a pig in the house. Somehow it had got into the porch and got shut in. It climbed in and out of the bath-tub, spilled milk and broke eggs. What a mess to clean up! Another time, there were turkeys in the house.

One Saturday evening, all of us went to Barons to get the mail and groceries and to see a show but a dust storm blew in. The storm was so bad Roy couldn't see the road, so we stayed with friends until it died down. When we got home, the house was full of dust.

We always had a big garden and everyone helped.

When the children were small, I helped out in the fields at harvest time. I hired a school girl to help in the house for \$1 a day for 10 days. Her mother thought I was paying her too much. For many years, I had a hired girl to help with the children, milking cows, separating milk, making butter and plucking chickens.

One of the first things Roy built on the farm was a barn, and ever since, he has built something nearly every year; granaries, shop, chicken house, pig pen, self-feeder, machinery, house, etc. He can fix, build, and re-build anything! He dug a well so we didn't have to haul water by barrel and stone-boat from his brother Lloyd's place, a mile away.

In 1943, July 11, our youngest son, Dennis, was born in Camangay. Our potatoes froze while I was in the hospital. In 1946, January 2, Marilyn was born in Lethbridge, and she completes our family. We were very fortunate to have healthy children, who were able to help us and enjoy our life together - the hard time and the good times.

In 1947, Roy dug a cellar for a new house. The spring run-off was phenomenal: there was so much rain and snow it filled 'Erdman Lake' - and the new basement.

The lake was around for several years and we made the most of our front-door recreational facility. We canoed, boated, swam and skated.

We moved the house, barn and shop (brick by brick) to higher ground, our present location, where we started a new house in 1949, of concrete and cinder brick.

I designed the house, but forgot to make any allowance for the thickness of the walls, so Roy had to adjust the plans as the house was being built. As a grand gesture, I laid the corner brick. Unfortunately, it was so crooked that it had to be re-done. We built the house with some hired help, and in 1950 we moved in.

Our first car was a model T, 2 door coupe. While Roy was teaching, we had an old Plymouth. When we started farming, we got in International Panel Van that Roy converted into a truck, with a space behind the driver's seat for the children to stand: the first extended-cab pickup.



Most of our machinery was older and always needed repairing. When we got our first NEW self-propelled combine, it was really a treat!

I attended art classes in Banff, the first in 1962, and then again twice in later years. From this institution, I received a 'Senior Certificate in Painting'. Painting is one of my favourite pastimes and I have taken courses in Lethbridge and district.

In addition, I enjoy knitting, crocheting, quilt making, pottery, baking, stone polishing, and won

several awards and prizes at all of these activities. I also enjoy bird watching and photography. I have belonged to Art Clubs and taken and taught art classes.

I take particular delight in keeping touch with our many relatives, including 11 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren.

Roy enjoys fishing, hunting, and throwing horse shoes. As an active member of the community, Roy was on the Barons School Board for many years and a member of the Carmangay Hospital Board. His hobby is simplifying his farm machinery - 'Johnsonizing' - and inventing other useful farm equipment. His grandchildren have been getting him to teach them how to do puzzles, among them Rubic's Cube and Rubic's Revenge.

Roy and I started traveling in the winter, mainly to visit relatives in Vancouver, Victoria, Oregon, and California. In 1955, Dad, Charlotte and I went to Hawaii; Roy and I went to Montreal Expo '67, visiting Leroy and Barbara in Toronto at the same time; and various trips to Hawaii, Gerry and family were there; and one to Mexico.

In 1978, Glenda (Erdman) Cunningham and I arranged a trip with stops at Stockholm, Sweden; Helsinki, Finland; Tallinn, Estonia; Leningrad, Kiev and Yalta in the USSR; and Warsaw, Poland. Our group was made up of Hilda (Saffel) Wollen, Walter Saffel, Albert Munz, Lawrence Kotkas, Barbara (Johnson) Gullickson, Glenda (Erdman), John Cunningham, and myself.



We are related to our people in Estonia through my Mother, Madga (Lik) Erdman. We thoroughly enjoyed visiting with them and seeing the sights. They were pleased I could speak Estonian. This trip will be something I will always remember.

The next overseas trip was in 1984, when Barbara, Roy and I went to Scandinavia, visiting Helsinki, Finland, where Roy's mother was born, and Hammerfest, Norway, the birthplace of his father. Barbara's oldest son, Derek, and his wife were living in Stavanger, and they traveled with us part of the way. It was all over too soon.

Roy and I have lived in the Barons area since 1940, acquiring 2 ½ sections of land. At the present time, 2 sections are rented out, but we still farm ½ section, enough so that we still worry about the weather.

On November 1, 1985, Roy and I celebrated our 50th Wedding Anniversary. Barbara arranged an intimate afternoon and evening with relatives and closest friends. Approximately 250 people arrived with good wishes. Among them were Roy's and my surviving brothers, our 5 children, all but one of our 11 grandchildren and all but the youngest of our great grandchildren (20 days old).



Our daughter, Marilyn, was married the same day to Don Eamer in Vancouver, and they flew out here in time for our party.

All of our children went to the Barons Consolidated School, finishing grade 12, taking part in sports and music. I spent many hours at our pool (which Roy built in 1952) watching the children and their friends frolic in the water. One of their favourite school party treats was chocolate angel food cake which I still make for family occasions.

Each one of our children have worked for and received university degrees, ranging, from Bachelors to Doctorates.



We have had a wonderful life together. Our family get-togethers for birthdays, and other occasions keep us from getting old too fast. We are very fortunate to have 2 children living near us. Barbara and Denny are considerate and thoughtful. We are very proud of all our children, our grandchildren and our great grandchildren. All of them give us great pride, fulfillment and happiness.

Ellen Catherine Erdman

Born at Barons, July 17, 1912

Mari Erdman (Grandmother) and Helene (Erdman) Kotkas midwives

Died March 4, 1989 at Lethbridge

Ashes spread on the Barons Cemetery

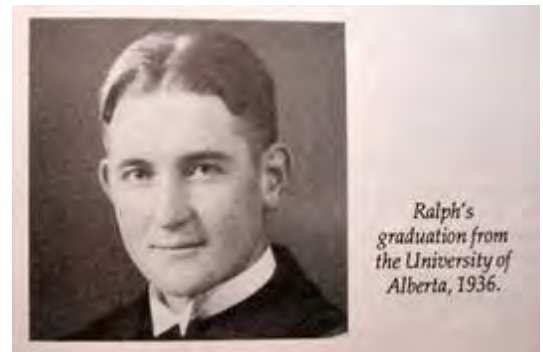
Roy Johnson

Born at Barons, March 22, 1912

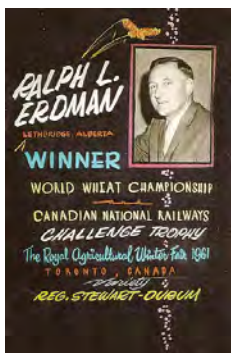
He added the initial 'R' to his name because
There was another 'Roy Johnson' in the area.
Died August 6, 2002
Ashes spread on the Barons Cemetery

RALPH ERDMAN

Ralph Erdman (1913-2006) was the son of Gustav and Magda Erdman. Gustav was born in Targhan, Crimea during a period of economic hardship and political instability. Ralph was the grandson of Jakob and Mari Erdman, one of the first pioneer families to settle in Barons, Alberta.



Ralph was born in a quaint house on the Erdman farm near Barons, Alberta. In 1917 Gustav built a splendid Victorian-style house complemented by a large veranda, balconies and a pool table on the second floor. The large spacious home was able to accommodate the large family and host a variety of Estonian gatherings. When Ralph was younger he travelled to school by horse and carriage, eager to learn the English language. After he completed high school, Ralph wanted to continue his education. He graduated from the University of Alberta in 1933 with a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture. Five years later he completed a Master's degree.



In 1947, Ralph accepted a two-year position as a soils specialist at the Lethbridge Research Station. He also worked as the municipal assessor for the Municipal District of Willow Creek until 1971. On 11 January 1950 he married Karen Suitso, also of Estonian descent. In fact, Ralph was the only one of his siblings to marry someone of Estonian heritage. He and Karen moved to Lethbridge in the late 1940s. In 1961 when Ralph submitted a spectacular Stewart durum, a macaroni flour type of spring wheat, he was crowned the World Wheat champion at the Royal Agriculture Winter Fair in

Toronto.

Because Ralph had been an avid member of the North American Bluebird Society, the Kiwanis Club and the Lethbridge Historical Society, he remained active in Lethbridge during his retirement. He continued to preserve his close ties with his Estonian heritage and with the community of Barons, often returning for family reunions. He passed away in Lethbridge on 27 November, 2006.

EVELYN ERDMAN

Evelyn Erdman was born in Barons, Alberta, daughter of Gustav and Linda Erdman. Both her parents emigrated from Estonian to Canada years earlier. The youngest of three children, Evelyn received much of her education at Barons Consolidated School but enrolled at a school in Calgary to complete her senior year. The valedictorian of her class, Evelyn received her Bachelor of Sciences from the University of Alberta and became a Registered Dietician (RD) after completing a one-year practicum at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal.



Evelyn's first position was with the Medicine Hat General Hospital where she helped plan meals for both patients and staff. After just one year she returned to the University of Alberta as a lecturer in the Home Economics department. Her time teaching at the University of Alberta was a rewarding experience.

Canadian Western Natural Gas hired Evelyn initially as a home economist and later as the Director of Home Services, a position she held for 33 years until her retirement in 1990. Much of her responsibilities focused on the promotion of domestic gas appliances in southern Alberta. Handling media relations, Evelyn was a guest on several radio programs providing listeners with useful gas appliance advice and tips. Over time she developed a food column with the Calgary Herald based on a number of cook books and pamphlets that had been previously produced in the department of Home Services.

Upon retirement, Evelyn concentrated much of her time on hobbies. During the winter she completes needlework, knitting, and quilting projects. During the summer months she spends time outdoors in her garden. Along with her mother, she traveled to Estonia in 1967 to visit relatives, a trip she found to be most enjoyable and educational.

CAROLE ERDMAN GRANT

Carole Erdman Grant is the daughter of Victor and Hilda Erdman. Carole's siblings include Alvin, Glenda and David. She was raised on her parents' farm near Barons.

Carole married Barrie Grant and the two of them have spent the last 17 years sailing throughout the world. Travelling along the Pacific Coast the Erdmans spent considerable time in San Francisco and San Diego, California. Barrie worked as an electronics installer for yachts applying his experience as a marine engineer. Two years later they ventured south until they arrived in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. They dropped anchor and enjoyed the tropical scenery before they headed further south towards Panama. Their goal was to travel through the Panama Canal and make their way towards Europe.

In Puerto Vallarta Barrie participated in numerous yacht races while Carole tended to the ship making the necessary canvas and sail repairs. The Erdmans ended up staying in Puerto Vallarta for eight months while Carole reupholstered other boats and Barrie repaired engines. Carole and Barrie remained in Mexico for ten years before a vacation landed them in England in the summer of 2005.

Barrie aspired to become a production manager for a car manufacturer; however, when the deal fell through the Erdmans needed to find other work promptly. They became professional house sitters across England taking care of homes and pets while the owners were away.

Carole and Barrie have two children, Kelly and Cameron. Kelly completed her degree in International Business and works in Calgary, Alberta. She is married and has two children. Cameron completed a Master of Business Administration from Queen's University. He lives in Edmonton with his wife and three children.

ANTHONY AND MINNIE FRIDULIN

Anthony (Tony) Fridulin emigrated to Canada with his two brothers, Alexander and John, just before the Japanese-Russian War and settled in Walsh, Alberta.

Tony and Alex set up a blacksmith shop in Walsh. Two years later they moved south to work in railroad towns, in mines near Canmore, and in the CPR tunnels in British Columbia.

In 1906, Tony's brothers returned to Estonia and he took out a homestead ten miles south of Stettler on Lone Pine Lake. He farmed in the summer and worked on the railroad and in construction during the winter. After about two years, he decided to stay on the farm permanently to be part of the thriving Estonian community around Linda Hall. His community involvement included leading an Estonian brass band.

In 1910, Tony married Minnie Tipman, who was also from Estonia. They had seven children: Howard, Frank, Ernest, Alma, Linda, Edna, and Kenneth.

In 1931, Tony and Minnie moved to another farm in the area. Some of their children went out to work but their son Ernie stayed home to work the farm. In 1933, Tony and Minnie moved to Byemoor, where Tony opened a blacksmith and wheelwright shop. At the same time, Ernie moved the farm equipment to a farm just north of Byemoor.

In 1936, Ernie sold the farm equipment and bought the butcher shop in Byemoor. In 1944, he married Ellen Clark of Tessler, Saskatchewan. He continued his butcher business in Byemoor for several years and then bought a farm in the Rumsey area.

Tony continued to work as a blacksmith in Byemoor until he was 84 years old.

Minnie died in 1968 and Tony in the following year.

The Fridulin General Blacksmith Shop and its contents were moved to the Stettler Museum in 1981.

ALEX AND AUGUST HEBENIK

Alex Hebenik, a sailor in Estonia, initially immigrated to Ontario in 1914 before eventually settling in Barons two years later. He worked for Gus Erdman for several years before renting his own property. In 1927, Alex purchased some land formerly homesteaded by Bill Moore, three miles east of Barons.



In 1922, Alex married Lydia Bakkila of Barons. They had two children named Carl and Anna. Carl married Hilda Schumacher of Vauxhall and, together, they had four children: George, Willie, Hazel and Lydia. Carl's sister Anna married Robert Marshall of Calgary and they produced a family of three boys and two girls: Robert, Beverly, Albert, Carol and Charlie.

Alex was an active member of the Elks community and had a passion for fishing in Alberta's lakes and streams. In 1956, he purchased a home in Barons. He passed away in 1964.

In 1926, the Estonian August Hebenik arrived in Barons. His brother Alex had convinced him to immigrate to southern Alberta and become a prosperous farmer. During his first few years here he worked on a variety of different farms, including Alex's, offering a helping hand at any given opportunity. August also worked for Gus Erdman, a well established farmer and Estonian pioneer settler.

In 1928, August married Alma Selge, whom had migrated from Estonia the previous year and had been working in the area. August began renting farmland from Peter Lentsman in 1939. August and Alma lived there until 1948, at which time they bought a quarter section of land, complete with a house, north of Barons. When Alma and August retired they continued to live at their farmhouse but rented out the farm land to anyone interested.

HENNEL FAMILY

Kristjan Hennel's father was born into serfdom. Because of his condition of servitude he was not granted a last name. The name Hennel has Germanic roots, and it is widely accepted that the name was derived from the Hennels' German landlord when serfdom was abolished.



Kristjan Hennel was born in 1851 and years later married Maria in Tallinn, Estonia. Together they had five children. Joseph and Maria were twins born in 1875; William was born in 1879; and Elizabeth and Pauline, also twins, were born 1881. When the children were all still very young, the Hennel's, along with 144 other Estonian families, migrated east to Novgorod, Russia. During his time in Estonia and Russia, Kristjan became a game warden and shoemaker. Living conditions in Russia were less than ideal for the large Hennel family. As news spread of affordable land available in western Canada, Kristjan deemed this a fortuitous opportunity and soon travelled across the Atlantic.



In 1903 Kristjan and Maria, along with their son Joseph, arrived in an area south of Stettler, Alberta. By 1908 Kristjan had successfully cultivated fifteen acres of land, accumulating 22 cows and four pigs. The following year Kristjan's son William and his wife Ida arrived at the Hennel homestead with their seven children.

William's youngest son Rudolph was born in 1916. William died when Rudolph was only nine months old, leaving Ida to manage the farm and look after the family. Rudolph married Doris Mulbach in November 1945. Doris and Rudolph supported Alberta's rural co-operative movement and Doris presided as secretary of the Co-operative Association for many years. Preserving their Estonian heritage had been fundamental to the Hennels and particularly to Rudolph, who spoke the language fluently and maintained an Estonian songbook belonging to his mother as a keepsake. Of interest, Rudolph's great-grandson is named after Estonia's capital city, Tallinn. Six generations of Hennels have lived on the homestead originally established by Kristjan Hennel. In August 2004, the Hennel family was deemed a "Century Farm", in other words, a farming operation that has stayed in the same family for one hundred years. Members of the Hennel family are proud of their agricultural and Estonian heritage. This is demonstrated through their commitment to farming and through active involvement in the Alberta Estonian



Heritage Society. Maintaining a connection with their Estonian heritage is important for the younger generations of Hennels. Rudolph's sons, Ron and Allan, along with his grandson David, participated in laying the groundwork for the Jaanipaev celebration at Linda Hall in 2005. The Hennels serve as a fine example of a family preserving its agricultural and cultural roots.

HERMAN FAMILY

Peter and Marie (née Wall) Herman moved from New London, Connecticut to a homestead three miles east of Sylvan Lake in 1901. A year later, both Marie's parents, George and Lena Wall, and Peter's parents, John and Anna Herman, took out homesteads on neighbouring quarter sections.



The farm life did not appeal to George Wall; at some point he moved into Sylvan Lake, where he was a woodworker. After he died, his wife Lena, who loved the farm, moved back to be with her son Gus. John Herman was a blacksmith.

Peter and Marie had eleven children, all of whom attended Norma School: Selma, Lembit, Leida, Ella Madge, Hilda, Naima, Hertha (Reta), Magda (Madge), Paul, Lloyd, and Carl.

Selma married and had three children. She died in 1953.

Lembit, who remained a bachelor, helped on the family farm and later became a train engineer in Calgary. He died in 1977.

Leida went to Portland in 1924 to visit family and liked it so much she stayed. She met her husband there and they had one child. She died in 1964.

Ella Madge moved to Calgary in 1923. She married and had two children.

Hilda became a teacher. She married, had a son, and was widowed in the 1940s. In 1949, she moved to Portland.

Naima died of spinal meningitis in 1923.

Reta remained single, and cared for her parents when they were elderly. She died in 1963.

Madge moved to Burnaby, B.C. She married and is now widowed.

Paul became a boiler maker. He lived in Burnaby until his death in 1977.

Lloyd took over the family farm and looked after all three quarter sections. He died in a car accident in 1973.

Carl lives in Castlegar, B.C. He has two children.

Peter died in 1950 and Marie in 1960.

HANS AND LENA JOHANSON

Hans and Lena Johanson left Estonia in 1905 with their six daughters - Alide, Lena, Linda, Rosy, Salme and Lizzie - and took out a homestead southwest of Stettler.

In 1910, Hans died of lung disease. Friends Hans Asberg and Carl Yurkin, who had emigrated at the same time at the Johansons, helped Lena and her daughters on the farm. In 1915, the three families went by wagon north to Rich Lake, near Lac La Biche, where they homesteaded for about 15 years.

Lena eventually moved to Vancouver to live with Linda and her husband. She died there in 1961.

KASK FAMILY

John Michael Kask and his wife Minnie Piht emigrated from Maasi Vald, Saaremaa in Estonia to Staten Island, New York in the late 1890s. Juhan operated a modest shipbuilding business in New York City but the promising lure of free land in western Canada took the family to Sylvan Lake in 1900. The Kasks were the second Estonian pioneer family to settle at Sylvan Lake. During the next few years, John and Minnie's siblings left Estonia to join pioneer homesteaders. Vassily, Michael Piht, and Anton and Aleksei (Alex) Kask, and Elizabeth Kask Wortnow and her husband Michael all arrived in Red Deer in 1901 and walked miles to their designated homestead.



Working collectively was paramount for the Kasks; doing so allowed them to adapt to the challenging life of homesteading. The Kasks frequently participated in numerous community initiatives and established co-operatives for their mutual benefit. Maintaining a convivial relationship with the local Estonian community was crucial to overcoming the language barrier present in the public sphere. Members of immigrant families would accept jobs in construction and mining to provide for their families. The Kask's, for instance, worked in Red Deer's brickyard and in various lumber camps scattered throughout the area. Many Estonian families including the Kask's, helped build the western branch lines of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Incidentally, the Pihts soon changed their surname to Walters after Vassily was mistakenly called "Pete" by co-workers who thought Piht was his first name. Juhan was instrumental in organizing a school district. He donated two acres of land for the Norma Public School, thereby facilitating its opening in 1903.

In 1908 the Kask's moved to Port Essington, British Columbia where John was eager to begin work on the railways. Five years later Juhan, Minnie, and the four children, eager to reunite with friends and family they had left behind years earlier, returned to Estonia. Estonia's political instability and the impending war forced the Kask's to migrate to Canada. They settled in Tofield, Alberta and built a grist mill with friends and family. Aptly named the Kask & Walters Grist Mill and Carpentry Shop, the flour and wood-making shop was a successful enterprise.

Restless and ambitious, John moved his family back to Prince Rupert in 1919. Seeking new opportunities, he left Canada for Siberia in 1923 to establish a mining and agricultural co-operative. Meanwhile, the family moved to Vancouver. After only a short time in Siberia, John Kask died of pneumonia. He was 52. His wife Minnie died years later at the age of 83. The first generation of Kask children married and settled in various parts of western Canada.



Receiving a proper education was of utmost importance to the Kask's. In fact, Marie Kask was the first woman to graduate with a Master of Arts from the University of Alberta. Her brother John Laurence (Jack) went on to pursue a career in marine biology and oceanography.

Of the original homesteaders, only Vassily Piht (his wife Alma and their two daughters) and Alex Kask's family (his wife Anna and their two children) stayed in the Sylvan Lake area.

ALEX KASK

Alex Kask emigrated from Estonia in 1900 followed by two of his brothers, John and Anton in 1901, and several friends and relatives. They travelled as far as Red Deer by train and then went by foot to homesteads near Sylvan Lake.



Along with other new settlers, Alex spent the fall, winter, and spring months working in the Red Deer brick yard, in lumber camps, and in coal mines near Blairmore. He returned to his homestead in the summer to clear land and build a home. His first house, made of logs, had a sod roof and dirt floor. In 1905, after building an addition complete with a shingle roof and floorboards, Alex sent for his childhood sweetheart, Anna Opp. The very courageous Anna travelled to Alberta on her own and, on her arrival in Red Deer in 1906, was married to Alex. She gave birth to Victor in 1907 and Elizabeth in 1908.

Two years later, several of the Estonian friends who had come to Alberta with Alex decided to move to Montana to take out homesteads there, in large part because it was on the prairie and so did not have to be cleared. After years of struggling to clear his land near Sylvan Lake and not making much headway, Alex saw this as a great opportunity and moved the family south. However, they found Montana to be a difficult place to live: there were no trees for firewood and there was no water. They stayed through the winter, saw the birth of their son John, and then returned to their Alberta homestead.

Over time, the family cleared and broke more land, acquired cattle, horses, sheep, hogs, chickens, turkeys, ducks, and geese. They grew oats, barley, and some rye, which they took to the Eckville mill. Anna spun wool and knit socks and sweaters; Alex built her a loom, which she used to weave cloth and rugs. The Kask homestead was mid-way between Eckville and Red Deer and so became a stop-over place for other Estonian pioneers.

In 1913, Sophie was born. Three years later, she was badly burned on the woodstove, and died in the Red Deer hospital. To help Anna overcome her grief, Alex bought her a player piano, which brought some comfort.

The arrival of the railway brought both labour and a market for the family's produce, thereby helping the family's financial situation. In 1918, the family bought a used 1914 Model T. It did not run well, so a year later the family bought a new 1919 Model T.

In 1920, during the flu epidemic, all of the Kasks were sick for several weeks. Both Anna and Victor died.

Alex continued to expand the farm, with the help of the children. By age 12, Elizabeth had taken over the household chores, and John did various farm chores. Alex was involved in the

community, both as an active member of the school board, for which he served as chair for many years, and in helping to form the Sylvan Lake Co-op Store. He helped rebuild Norma School, where both his children attended until Grade 9.

Elizabeth went on to become a teacher and John worked for the Imperial Bank.

Alex died in 1931 and is buried in the Red Deer Cemetery.

JOHN KASK

John (Jack) Laurence Kask was born in a log cabin near Sylvan Lake on 21 March 1906. His parents were Juhan and Minnie Kask, Estonian immigrants who settled in the Sylvan Lake area. Jack spent much of his early life following his restless and ambitious father, who was constantly on the move looking for new challenges and opportunities. Jack spent time in Port Essington, British Columbia, returned to Estonia for a year, then moved to Tofield, and later to Prince Rupert, British Columbia. In 1923 Jack's family moved to Vancouver while his father travelled to Siberia hoping to start a mining co-operative. To help provide for his mother and sisters and to pay for university, Jack worked on crab fishing boats near the Queen Charlotte Islands as a teenager.



Upon his graduation from the University of British Columbia in 1928, Jack dedicated much of his life to academia—specifically marine biology and oceanography. He was among the first graduates in the newly established field of oceanography. He received a PhD from the University of Washington in 1936 and investigated the biology of the Pacific halibut for the International Fisheries Commission from 1929 to 1939. He was associate scientist and assistant director of the International Salmon Commission from 1939 to 1943 and curator of aquatic biology at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco from 1943 to 1948. In the years between 1945 and 1946, he spent 15 months in Japan where he worked for the US government's Fisheries Division. He also travelled extensively. He ventured to New Zealand, Australia, Europe and Asia. From 1963 to 1963, Jack served as chairman and CEO of the Fisheries Research Board of Canada. He later joined the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, California as a research associate. He retired in 1981. John possessed scholarly knowledge of opera and literature and was fluent in several languages, including Estonian.

In 1935 Jack married Doris Hunter of Seattle. They had two daughters, Janet of Montréal and Melanie of Ukiah, California. After Doris died in 1972, Jack married Viola Waltz of San Diego. He died in San Diego in 1998, at the age of 92.

JOHN AND ANNA KELDRAUK

John and Anna Keldrauk left Estonia in the early 1900s. They lived near Barons, Alberta for a short time before taking out a homestead in Montana, where they lived until John died in 1945. Anna now lives in California.

KERBES FAMILY

The Kerbes family's genealogical heritage can be traced to Peter Ristininna (1742-1806), the first documented ancestor of the Kerbes family. The name Ristininna can be analyzed in two parts. *Risti* refers to the local Estonian Lutheran parish while *Ninna* refers to the local area where Peter worked.



At various times during the 19th century, peasants were granted last names as a result of the abolition of serfdom. On 1 April 1835, the German landlord Eduard Zur Muhlen assigned the surname *Kärbes* to Mikhel, son of Peter Ristininna. On 26 April 1835, Mikhel's wife Madli was given the Karbes name by the Russians so that they could keep a more accurate record of the people. Lord Zur Muhlen fell in love with the Kerbes' daughter, Madli. They two soon had two children, Mikhel (b. 1834) and Thomas (b. 1846). Madli's oldest son Mikhel married a woman named Lissu Walli and together they had eight children, several of whom immigrated to Canada in the years to follow. Of interest, the Estonian name *Kärbes* was anglicized and changed to *Kerbes* as the umlaut.

In 1884, Mikhel, Lissu and their children moved to undeveloped land near Tver, Russia. Once the land had been cleared, planting and harvesting began. Wild animals were a perennial threat to livestock. This was a serious issue for farmers as their livestock inventory was rather sparse. On one occasion, a bear killed the family cow, much to the family's great chagrin. Peter, the oldest son, responded to the emergency by tracking down the bear. Unsuccessful in killing it however, Peter, emulating the courage of the Estonian mythological character Kalevipoeg, forced his hand down the bear's throat and waited for a neighbour to arrive and kill the beast.



At the close of the 19th century, Russian conscription was a contentious issue that worried the Kerbes family. The Kerbes youngest son Johannes desperately wanted to avoid being conscripted into the Russian Army and immigrated to Canada in 1903. Having set up a farm near Stettler, he eventually married Sophie Wartnow. She died tragically in 1918 and Johannes married his sister, Minnie.

Johannes' sister Mari married Joseph Hennel and they settled in the Stettler area in 1903. Six years later, Jaan, accompanied by his wife, their three children and Jaan's mother, travelled across the Atlantic and farmed in the vicinity of his siblings. The Kerbes family often wrote to Peter and Julia asking them to move to Alberta. In 1911, Peter Kerbes accepted the offer and arrived with his family.

JOHANNES KERBES



Johannes (John) Kerbes was the fourth son born to Lissu and Mikhel Kerbes on 7 November 1880 in Tver, Russia. Once Johannes was old enough, he assisted the family in maintaining the farm. To clear the land for crops, he would remove stumps, collect rocks and fallen trees. In 1903 when he was 23 years old, Johannes decided to immigrate to Canada to avoid being conscripted into the Russian army.

He travelled by ship from Liverpool, England and weeks later arrived in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Upon Kerbes' arrival in Canada, the suitcase carrying all of his possessions was stolen, leaving him with only the clothes on his back. Johannes managed to make his way to Red Deer, Alberta and eventually he settled near Stettler. In 1904, he filed for a homestead at the modest price of \$10. This entitled him to 160 acres of land. Johannes would often walk to Red Deer to purchase supplies.

In 1909, Johannes married Sophia Wartnow, daughter of Michael Wartnow and Elizabeth Kask. They raised four children. The following year Johannes donated one acre of land to the construction of Linda Hall, a shared Estonian community centre. Within the next 12 months, the remainder of Johannes' family arrived, including his mother, Lissu. Initially everyone resided at Johannes' homestead. Johannes remarried in 1920 after Sophia succumbed to cancer. He and his new wife Minnie (Sophia's sister) had five children. These five children and the four he had with Sophia meant that Johannes raised a family of nine children.

The family home was frequently filled with music, songs and Estonian traditions. Many of the Kerbes children became talented musicians. Johannes continually encouraged them and enjoyed the sounds of guitar, violin and piano resonating throughout his home.

MIKE AND ALMA KERBES

In 1884, Mihkel and Lissu (née Walli) Kerbes left Estonia for Russia. They had eight children: Ann (1860), Peter (1864), Thomas (1867), Liisu (1870), Mari (1872), Jaan (1875), Jurri (1877, died 1879) and Johannes (1880).



The first of the family to come to Canada were Johannes and Mari (along with her husband). They arrived in Halifax in 1903. Johannes made his way to Sylvan Lake. The following spring he took out a homestead in the Linda Hall area. In 1909, he married Sophie Wartnow. Their children are Julia (married Dick Hennel), Alexander (Hazel), Archie (Rosella), and Hilda (Chummy Dancocks). In 1911, when Linda Hall was built, Johannes donated a portion of his land for the hall.

Sophie died in 1918. Two years later, Johannes married her sister Minnie. Together, they had five children: Helen (Pat Mulligan), Ernie (Irene), Marjorie (Bill Olive), Geneva (Don Parker), and Jim (Helen).

Mari and her husband, Joseph Hennel, who had come to Canada with Johannes, also took out a homestead in the Linda Hall area. Their children are Elizabeth, Kristoff, Martin, Alexander, William, and Rosetta.

In 1910, Lissu Kerbes, who was now a widow, emigrated from Russia with Jaan, his wife Annette (née Hansman), and their three children. The six of them lived for the first year with Johannes and Sophie.

Jaan found work at a lumber mill in Red Deer and on the Stettler water tower; he was also hard at work building his log home northwest of Big Valley. He and his wife had six children: John, Elizabeth, Rosanta, Elvine, Albert, and Elmer.

Thomas Kerbes and his wife Marl (née Hennel) remained in Russia, but their daughter Alide, her husband, Martin Koppelmick, and their daughter Marl, came to Alberta. They operated the Stettler hospital laundry for many years. Marl died in 1965 and Alide in 1997.

In 1911, Peter Kerbes, his wife Julia, and their children arrived. Like his brother Jaan and their mother, they lived with Johannes and Sophie in their small home until the next year, when Peter took out a homestead west of Big Valley. Peter moved the family into a tent while he built their log home. Peter and Julia had ten children (all but the last born in Estonia): Lisa (Nick Laas), Ida (Mike Yurman), Juhan (died in Russia), Mihkel (Alma), Marie (Walt Story), August (Lilly), Martha (Jim Robb), Johanna (Dick Howe), Eduart (Gladys), and Carl (Ruth). Peter died in 1930 and Julia in 1950.

Peter's eldest son Mihkel (Mike), age 13 when the family immigrated, went to work in lumber camps and mines in Idaho and Montana to help support the family. In 1926, he married Alma Clark, a local school teacher. They lived in his parents' house and soon began to have children, starting with Kenneth (later married to Hazel), Constance, and Melvin, all born at home with Julia's help. When the house became too crowded, Mike's parents and two youngest brothers moved to a house on another parcel of land. Alma had several more children: Deane (Irene), June (Bob Ekelund), Ronald, Kathleen (Ed Jackson), Leila (Bob Stanich), Donna (Ron Sommerfeld), Margaret (John Pelto), and Eldon (Donna) and Beverly. Constance, Melvin, and Ronald died when they were very young.

To supplement the family income, Mike drove a cream truck for the Alix Creamery, and worked on road construction and as a trapper. Despite difficult economic times, the Kerbes home opened its doors to community and family events, including church services and parties at which guests took part in Estonian singing and dancing.

Mike constructed a stock-watering pond (with permission from the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation assistance program and the Alberta Fish and Wildlife Association); in 1961, the pond, stocked with rainbow trout, was named the Kerbes Pond.

The family ate what they produced and harvested - poultry, eggs, beef, pork, vegetables, wild game, fish from the river, and wild berries - and Mike shared his love of such Estonian treats as barley sausage, herring, sauerkraut, sourdough rye bread, cabbage rolls, and headcheese.

Mike died in 1968. Alma, along with Deane and his wife Irene, continued to operate the farm until 1973. Alma died in 2003, at the age of 101.

MR. AND MRS. JOHN KEWE (KIVI)

Mr. and Mrs. John Kewe (Kivi) emigrated from Crimea in 1905 and lived for a short time in South Dakota before homesteading near Barons, Alberta. They had seven children: Gus, Mary, Natalie, Edward, Martha, Lena, and Solme.

Natalie and her husband John Malberg lived in the Barons area until Natalie died. Martha married Nick Musten and Lena married Charles Musten.

John sold his land in 1906 and in 1912 the family moved to Montana, where they all took out homesteads.

John and his son Gus later went to Spokane, Washington.

ALEX KEWE (KIVI)

Alex Kewe (Kivi) emigrated in 1905 and homesteaded in the Barons area. He and his wife Maria Usvel farmed in the area until 1918, when they moved to Grande Prairie.

KINGSEP FAMILY

The Kingsep's were the first documented Estonian family to settle in Alberta. In March 1899, Henry Kingsep and his wife Emilie moved to Canada with their two young daughters, Linda, three years old and Selma, 11 months old. Like other Estonians who would soon follow, Henry was interested in developing a homestead in western Canada. The family travelled by train to Red Deer. Henry promptly found a settlement two miles east of Sylvan Lake. His brother, Kristjan, arrived shortly thereafter with his family and settled adjacent to Henry's property. Kristjan, a sailor, had visited Canada previously and was impressed with its seemingly boundless landscape.



In 1902 the Kingsep family moved 20 miles west and settled on the banks of the Medicine River. Their arrival here marked the beginning of the Medicine Valley Estonian community. The area adjacent to the Medicine River provided ideal space and an abundance of fish to newly arrived Estonian immigrants. Life on the farm was challenging and rewarding at the same time. The Kingsep's grew oats, barley, winter wheat and managed a herd of cattle. Henry would travel three days to Red Deer for family

provisions.

As there were no paved roads at the time, the journey was physically demanding and mentally straining. When the Eckville General Store opened, Henry's daughters Selma and Linda would carry butter and eggs over four miles in exchange for other groceries. The two sisters would also walk over four miles to attend school. However, this was a journey they thoroughly enjoyed as school presented a chance to socialize and interact with other young pupils.



In total Henry and Emilie raised eight children. Linda, the oldest, was one of the first students to attend the Estonian School when it was built in 1910. Years later she married Gust Mottus and they farmed north of Eckville.

Eventually they moved to Eckville where Linda assumed the role of cook at the hospital. Emulating her father's industrious work ethic, she never missed a day of work. They raised one son, Rudy, and two twin daughters, Emma and Elsie. Linda passed away in 1967 at the age of 71 years.



Selma finished high school in Red Deer and enrolled in a business course in Edmonton where she later worked as a stenographer. In 1922 Selma married Henry Pallo of Red Deer. They have two children. Selma passed away in 1976 at the age of 78 years.

Agnes Stabel (Kingsep) was a schoolteacher in southern Alberta. Now retired, Agnes and her husband reside in Red Deer. They have five children.

Her brother Henry Jr. remained a bachelor his entire life and farmed near his parents' farm north of Eckville. Aside from farming, Henry Jr. enrolled in agricultural mechanics for a brief period in Calgary. He was an adroit trapper and often caught muskrat and beaver. He passed away in 1969.

Emma Lapp (Kingsep) graduated from high school in Red Deer and worked in Calgary and Vancouver before marrying Herman Lapp, a farmer from just north of Eckville. Here, they raised registered seed grain and purebred cattle. Emma participated in numerous Estonian cultural activities while she resided in the Eckville. They raised two daughters and one son. In 1971, they retired to the warmer climate of Penticton, British Columbia.



Otto gained professional experience as a journeyman electrician, machinist and welder. Eventually, through his experience and education, he became a shop director and department head. For several years he worked in underdeveloped countries, helping to establish technical schools. Otto and his wife Vina are now retired and live in Penticton.

Nick grew up on the farm near Eckville and was actively involved in Estonian cultural affairs. He worked as an electrician in Calgary and later opened a small restaurant in Ponoka. He returned to Calgary where he eventually owned and operated his own manufacturing plant. He and his wife Rita have one son.

Robert married Lila Wester and managed the family farm. He designed and built water well drilling rigs, supplying water for oil drilling companies. He passed away in 1971. They have a son and a daughter.

50TH ANNIVERSARY REFLECTIONS

Life & weddings of the first Estonian pioneers here in Eckville at 1901

(written in July, 1967, by Mom (Linda Kingsep) Mottus)

In May 1899 Henry Kingsep family with 2 small daughters Linda 3 yrs and Salme 11 months, landed here on Canadian soil.

The place was 2 miles east of Sylvan Lake, at the time called Snake Lake.

Soon after some more Estonians moved in. There came Henry Kingsep's brother Kristjan Kingsep family - Peter Herman family - 3 Kask brother's families - Neithal family - & Wall family with 2 grown sons, Gust and Madis.

Three years later, in 1902, Henry Kingsep family moved out from Sylvan Lake to a place about 20 miles west - to Eckville. At this time the place was called Medicine, after the Medicine River.

There was no Eckville then - not even Alberta, this country around here was then called North West Territories.

The country was nicer here along the Medicine River, open water for the cattle and lots of fish for the people. But it was a brush country with lots of willow brush and poplar trees, that had to be cleared off the land by hand to make a living. Not long after, a lot of other Estonians were coming into this country - and they were moving in fast. They all took homesteads - 160 acres of land along the Medicine River.

In a few years time, about the time Alberta was named, there moved in about 40 families of those early Estonian settlers.

Of course Henry Kingsep family was always the first one to move into a new country, and started living here in Eckville in 1902.

Then came John Kinna family with 4 grown up children - Fritz - Olga - Minnie - Arthur - and Ernest - yet a baby. John Kinna had 2 brothers - Henry and Sam Kinna - and a sister, Tina Kinna with 2 teenage daughters - Emma and Anna.

All the rest of them that came, were all young married couples like Henry Kingsep at that time with small children.

There came August Posti - John Wernick - Adam Matteus - Ed. Viro - John Teener - Oscar Ossul - John Wares - Peter Perler - John Toomingas Maissep - Daniel Saag - John Ahtman - 3 Sestrap brothers - Mart - Mike - and Gustav, 2 Huul brothers - August and Karl.

Then there was that big Mottus family of 7 brothers out west - Oscar - Hugo - Alex - Ludwig - Johannes - Arthur - and Wally - all single at that time except Oscar the oldest who was married. 4 Moro brothers - Carl - John - Henry - and Jaan - 2 Raabis brothers - Karl and John. 2 Koot brothers - Peter and Paul - 2 Langer brothers - Carl and Paul - 3 Pihooja brothers - August -

Carl - and John - 2 other Matteus brothers but no relation - Gust and Jacob.

And all those mentioned early Estonian pioneers of more than 40 families - were all at that time on the same level. They all had the same ambition to get ahead in life, to clear their homesteads of trees and brush and to get bigger grain fields - and bigger income and to get richer than the other fellow. But this getting richer was such a slow going, to clear land by hand acre by acre. Early pioneer people were ambitious, had strong willpower, and were happy of the fact that they could do it.

They all took part in that hard work of clearing land. Men - women - children and all, and the grain fields got bigger and bigger - acre by acre - day by day.

And they were so happy to have their wishes come true, - though it was through hard work and sweat.

They were proud of the fact that they had accomplished something big, had built beautiful homes for themselves and their families, had built up the country - making roads, building bridges and cities and beautiful parks. They are proud that through their efforts, Alberta is of what you see it to-day, after almost 70 long years, that through their efforts beautiful Alberta was born.

Later - there were changes taking place. Alberta was named in 1905, and Eckville "Killick" Store and Gilby stores were built.

Around this time the first Estonian wedding took place of Olga Kinna and Karl Raabis.

A few years later, second wedding took place of Anna Kinna and Carl Langer. Then came the third wedding of Emma Kinna and John Toomingas, then the fourth in 1912 of Lydia Perler and Paul Langer.

And 5 years later in 1917 there came the fifth wedding of Linda Kingsep and Gust Mattus, their wedding has lasted for 50 long years, and this is their golden wedding of Linda & Gust of what we are celebrating now.

Henry Kingsep's oldest child and the oldest daughter Linda was going to get married.

At this time weddings were performed in their own homes, because there were no halls, and going to Red Deer was out of question to go on that long 3 day trip with horse team on bad roads. As many guests as there was room were invited.

Here is the wedding of Linda and Gust. It happened to be a nice bright sunny day, on this 29th of July 1917. But at night came such a heavy frost that froze all grain in and around Eckville.

The guests came at 4 o'clock, and the wedding ceremony was performed at 5 by the priest Andrew Harju. There were 3 brides maids, Salme Kingsep - Amanda Moro - and Anna Posti and there were 3 best men, Jakob Mottus - Hugo Mottus - and Carl Pihooja.

Now there came that big wedding supper at 6 o'clock, all good Estonian home-made food, such as very -vorst (blood sausage), veri-kook (blood patties), sült (jelly meat) and there were all

kinds of other meats, and that good fresh smoked fish from the Medicine River, even the drink was home-made what they called 'Kali', a whole barrel of it to what everybody helped themselves from the top. The dessert and cakes were brought from outside by the guests.

In those times going on a honeymoon was unknown as with no income they could not afford it. The wedding lasted till late the next morning, the sun was up already when the guests left. Now the young couple Linda and Gust had to go too, to start their new life together of their own. The horse team was ready waiting outside. Gust's brother Jakob was driving, and the bride's sister Salme sat beside him. The young couple were sitting behind on a democrat.

Now the four of them were starting out West to Risula way where the newly weds were going to make their home with Jakob at the start.

The house was nicely decorated with young green trees along the walls, there were close neighbours to meet them, singing all kinds of wedding songs, and making jokes. Sweet aroma filled the air as the chicken and the trimmings were cooking on the stove for the next meal.

It was a happy life in those times when people were so friendly as one family. They were all on the same level, all poor settlers.

Work came first in those days, and the young married couple had to start working right away. Gust and his brother Jakob took axes on their backs and went to clear more land the next morning, while Linda had to do the chore and the house-hold duties around the home.

The people had their youth - their health - their high dreams for the better future. They did not mind the hard work, whenever possible they visited one another and had social gatherings much more than now-days. They started building halls, they made Gilby Hall and Estonian Hall. Life was progressing fast. They had all kinds of social doings in the hall, where Henry Kingsep took the lead. He was the soul of the community, a born social leader, and a starter of this early life here in Eckville.

Even before the halls were built, Henry Kingsep formed a social group what he called, "Medicine Oru Eesti Selts" (Medicine Valley Estonian Society). Henry and Sam Kinna had the biggest house at the time, and they welcomed the people to go there for their social gatherings. The meetings there were once in 2 weeks. And how happy they all were, mainly to be together, which was so satisfying for their lonely souls. They had choir and dialogue practice for the program they had at Christmas and Easter. And here again Henry Kingsep took the lead, played his violin to teach songs, and he said the most wonderful speeches.

There were recitations, and debates close of the meeting which was so much fun. At the end of the program they had that delicious Estonian home-made lunch what each had brought along, and that happy chatter filled the room during lunch period.

Those were the happy days of the old Estonian Pioneers at the beginning of 1900. So many of them are gone, but those that are left, still remember those good old times, and some of them might even remember the wedding of Linda and Gust.

This wedding has lasted for 50 long years and has matured into Golden Wedding, and into

centennial year to make it important. And this is the Golden Wedding we are celebrating to-night of Linda and Gust.

Note: This valuable article was written by sister Linda to be read at the big celebration of her and Gust's Golden Wedding Anniversary on July 29, 1967, the Centennial year. Brother Otto was to read it, as he was appointed the master of ceremony for that important event.

But instead of that happy get-together, our Joy turned into sorrow as the big family were grieved and saddened by our dear sister's illness and passing on Oct. 28th. This article will be a sweet remembrance of her.

In loving memory,
Salme

KRISTJAN AND TIINA KINGSEP FAMILY

Kenneth Kingsep (born in 1896) came to Canada in 1899 with his parents, Kristjan (Christian) and Tiina (Christine), and his two brothers and two sisters. Like other immigrants, they went as far as Montreal by boat, then travelled by train to Red Deer. From there they went by oxen to their homestead near Sylvan Lake. Their farm was adjacent to Norma School and also on the same section of land as Henry Kingsep's family. Tiina and the five children ran the farm.



Kenneth and his siblings attended Norma School. At the start of the First World War, he joined the American Army. In 1933, he married Ivy Popham, who had emigrated from England as an infant, and they took out their own homestead in the Sylvan Lake area. They had five children: Robert (born in 1934), James (1937), Ronald (1938), Carol (1939), and Gail (1942).

Kenneth spent his summers clearing most of his land by hand and worked in the Alix mines during the winter.

Ivy died in 1957. Kenneth continued to farm until 1969, when he sold the farm and moved to B.C. He died in Calgary in 1973.

Robert married Mavis Wester in 1953. Kenneth has worked near Sylvan Lake and Red Deer as a carpenter. They have four grown children.

James and his wife Helen Fitzgerald lived in Calgary. James died in 1970.

Ronald works in the oil rigs. Carol works as a cook in northern camps. Gail and her husband Gerald Smith live near Leslieville with their two children.

KINNA FAMILY

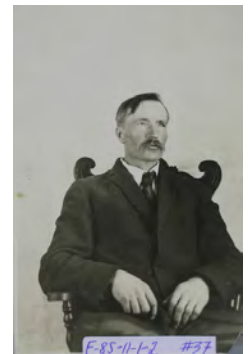
The Kinna's are another fine example of a pioneer family contributing to the development of the Eckville area in the early 20th century. John Kinna was born in 1854 in Waimela, Estonia. In 1903 John, along with his wife Marie and their five children, immigrated to Canada and settled on a homestead north of Eckville, adjacent to the Medicine River. John and his sons soon built a five-room, two-storey house from surrounding trees. John and Marie lived here until 1942 when they retired from homesteading to take up a quiet life in the town of Eckville.



John's background as a labourer in Estonia facilitated the cultivation of land in Alberta's rugged wilderness. John was well trained in leather work and often repaired shoes, mittens, and harnesses. The topography around Eckville also provided ideal fishing locations. John's first significant purchase was in livestock when he bought four cows and numerous chickens. When Killick's General Store opened its doors, the Kinna family delivered butter and eggs in exchange for other groceries. To earn additional revenue, the Kinnas contracted a modest mail route and made

three trips a week to neighboring towns and villages. A horse-drawn sleigh equipped with a tent, food and bedding was used to deliver the mail. The family's earnings typically went toward the purchase of farm tools and livestock.

The Kinna's often butchered pigs at home and produced a variety of pork products. Sausages, lard, smoked hams and blood sausages were mixed with barley to create traditional Estonian cuisine. Since canning had not yet been widely developed, root vegetables stored in the cellar were frequently used. Rye and oats were the first crops grown. Marie would use the oats to create "kiisla", another popular Estonian meal.



In 1909 John's son Fritz began establishing plans for building and operating a water-powered mill adjacent to the Medicine River. A dam and a 50-yard canal were also to be built. The project was successfully completed in 1912, and farmers soon arrived from miles around to pay the Kinnas to grind grain.

John and Marie died in 1950. They had six children, all born in Estonia.



Fritz was born 30 September 1881 in Waimela, Estonia. He was an active member of the Eckville community participating in school board functions and serving as a director for the Eckville Co-operative Association.

Olga was born 29 March 1883. She married Charlie Raabis and they farmed north of Eckville until Charlie's death in 1942. She later moved to Eckville, spending much of her leisure time oil painting.

Minnie was born 9 October 1886. She was a school teacher until she married Varley Buchanan. As a result of the union, they collectively became proprietors of the Benalto Hotel.

Arthur was born 31 May 1889 and quickly developed an aptitude for playing the violin; this later gave him the opportunity to travel to San Francisco. He homesteaded north of Eckville for a short period. Later, he operated the Benalto general store and post office.

Ernest was born 3 March 1901. He married Ena Woima and lived on their farm in the Kuusamo district of Estonia.

JAAK KINNA FAMILY

Jaak Kinna's son Henry was the first of the family to immigrate to Canada. He arrived in 1902 and took out a homestead north of Eckville. For just three dollars, he wrote to his brother John, one could purchase 160 acres of land. John decided to join Henry, as did their brother Sam and their sisters, Tiina and Eva. Jaak's wife Helen and four of their daughters had died. Not wanting to stay behind without the family, Jaack came to Canada as well.

Jaak took out a homestead west of Gilby and served as acting minister. He died in 1917 and is buried in the Gilby (Kalmu) Cemetery, which was located on his own homestead.

Henry went back to Russia for two years and then returned to his homestead in Alberta. He moved to Eckville when he retired from farming. He did not marry. He died in 1948 and is buried in the Gilby (Kalmu) Cemetery.

Sam, who had taken a buttermaker's course in Finland and had managed a creamery in Estonia, took out a homestead but worked at a creamery in Calgary. A few years later, when he was working on railroad construction in Calgary, he fell from a scaffold and lost the use of both legs. He died, single, in 1954, and is buried in the Gilby (Kalmu) Cemetery.

The eldest son, John, took out a homestead with his wife and five children.

Tiina took out a homestead in the Eckville area and later moved to Wyoming, where she lived for the rest of her life. She had a daughter, Emma Tomingas.

Eva married John Teener and they adopted a daughter, Anna, who married Carl Langer. Eva and Carl are both buried in the Gilby (Kalmu) Cemetery.

OTTO AND OLGA KLAUS

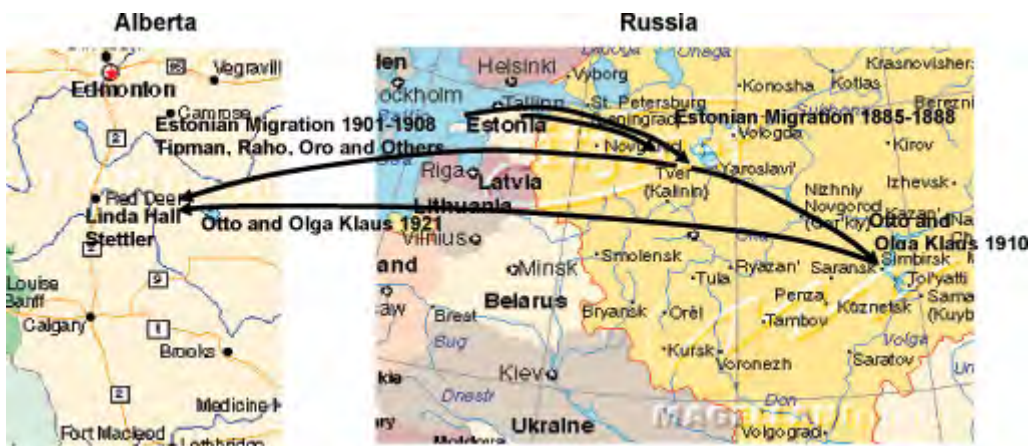
Otto Klaus was born in 1881 in Vaike Maaria, a small town in central Estonia. He moved to Pranti Mets, a small village located between St. Petersburg and Moscow. It was here where he met his future wife, Olga Soop. In 1908 they wed in Moscow. A year later their first child, Aletha, was born. Continually searching for a better life, the family moved to Simbirsk, Russia.



During the Russian Revolution of 1917, Russian officials evicted the Klaus family from their home. Most of their possessions were confiscated and subsequently recycled off to a Russian family. Disgruntled, Otto wrote his brother about the current political conditions in Russia. In turn, his brother invited Otto's family to settle in Canada. Otto and Olga returned to Estonia to await departure. Meanwhile, their son Alfred was born in 1920.

In 1922 they left for Riga, Latvia and waited two days before a small boat was to take them to Liverpool, England. They arrived in Quebec City nine days later. A train then transported them to Stettler, Alberta. Otto and his family stayed with his brother during the difficult first winter. The following year Otto and his family moved to a small shack adjacent to the Red Deer River. By 1938, Olga and Otto purchased a larger farm and incorporated more livestock. Olga and Otto participated in numerous events at Linda Hall and whole-heartedly promoted Estonian cultural development in their community.

KLAUS - TIPMAN JOURNEY



For many of the families living in the Linda Hall area, including the Tipman and Klaus families, the journey to western Canada began with a migration eastward into Russia. Originally living as peasant farmers and fishermen in Nurmekunde and other parts of Estonia, a number of these Estonian families moved to homesteads near Tver in west central Russia between 1885 and 1888. The Tipman and Klaus families were among those immigrants which included families with names familiar to those from the Settler area: Hennel, Oro, Kerbes, Saar, Neithal, Nicklom and Raho. They settled into the typical homesteads of the time - large walled farmyards, recognisable by their central courtyard around which the house, barns, granaries, and hay storage sheds were organised. By the late 1800's there were about 300 families living near Tver in a locality called Branti Mets. The families developed the land and settled into their new community; however, all was not well in Russia. There had been protests against the tsarist regime and rumours of general political unrest began to surface. Young men were to be conscripted into the army, with their families forced to bear the cost of providing their clothing and some supplies. Religious freedoms were being challenged and restricted by the government. This was not the promised land these families had left Estonia for; it was now time to find a new home.

In the late 1800's, the Canadian Pacific Railway began advertising offers of homesteads to prospective settlers in eastern Europe. The Canadian prairies were depicted as a desirable area with a climate and geography similar to the Ukraine steppes. A 160-acre parcel of land could be purchased for \$10. Word of the opportunity spread quickly through Russia and the Estonians living near Tver (Branti Mets) also made the decision to leave their now uncertain homeland.

A scouting party, consisting of Mike Raho, John Neithal and John Oro came to Canada in 1901. They met with the Estonians already living in the Medicine River area, near Red Deer, Alberta which consisted of 13 families. The first of these immigrants were brothers Hendrik and Kristjan Kingsep, arriving in 1899. They arranged for the immigration of other families. Raho, Neithal and Oro took out homesteads in the Sylvan Lake/Medicine River area and obtained passage for their families to come to this new land as soon as possible.

When Magnus Tipman and Mike Kudras arrived in 1902, they discovered there were no longer enough homesteads in the Sylvan Lake/Medicine River area to accommodate all the Estonians that wished to immigrate to Canada. They journeyed to Medicine Hat, Alberta to searching for

land which would be suitable for homesteads, but found the country too arid for farming. They then discovered a large block of unsettled land near Stettler and in 1904 took out homesteads. They also sent word to the Estonian community that land was available, and provided for passage to their families still living near Tver.

Driven by the same vision of opportunity that had led them to Russia, a large number of the Estonians now decided to migrate to Canada. They sold or left their farms with neighbours and joined the wave of immigrants to Canada. Contact with the relatives who decided to remain in Russia was lost for as much as 80 years and has only recently been re-established.

The remaining members of the Tipman family (consisting of Magnus' two brothers, Johan and Josep and sister Leena) were among the first group to immigrate. They founded their homesteads within a few miles of each other in the Linda Hall area. Names of some of the families that moved to Linda Hall about this time were Alex and Ado Saar, Vilhiem Klaus, two Reinglas brothers, Mikel Kudras, Josep Hennel, Negalts and M. Oliver. A few years later came A. Liiv, Kusick, Johanson, Hans Asberg, Korge, Anthony Kask, Anthony Fridulin, K. Kelu, M. Wagenstein, Jan Kerbes, Gustaf Nicklom, Jaan Saar. Also during this period, the remaining Klaus brothers, Johan, Juri, Alex and Eduard arrived. Eduard married Pauline Neithal shortly after his arrival in Canada.

During 1907 and 1908, a number of the Estonian families that lived in the Red Dee/Sylvan Lake area moved to the Linda Hall area. These were John Oro, John Neithal, Mike Rahu, J. Walt, Wartnow, K. Hennel, and Anton.

Magnus Tipman, with his wife Sophia and eight children, lived at a homestead three miles east and one mile south of Linda Hall. This farm still remains in the Tipman family.

In 1914, Anton Kroon, A. Saar, G. Tipman, Oscar Tipman, Kelu and K. Hennel left their homesteads and moved to Australia. They settled near the village of Gympie, in the Queensland Territory.

Otto Klaus and his family took a longer route on their way to Canada. While Otto's parents and all five of his brothers left Tver for Canada between 1905 and 1907, Otto and his family moved to the city of Simbirsk where they cared for his wife Olga's elderly stepparents. They lived and worked on their stepparent's farm near the Volga River and, for a brief few years filled with hard work, prospered. However the First World War, the famine in Russia, and the communist government all became hardships that threatened his life and the well being of his family - it was time to move yet again. With the help of his brothers already in Canada, he was able to immigrate.

The Otto Klaus family settled near Big Valley in 1922, close to his brothers and their families. He obtained the last homestead available in the area and began the long and difficult task of building a farm by breaking new land. Through a combination of hard work and frugality, Otto and his fellow immigrants eventually achieved the freedom and security they were seeking.

KOOTS FAMILY

Paul and Peter Koots immigrated to Canada from Estonia in 1903. While Peter was single Paul had a family consisting of a wife and three young boys - having very little money he was forced to leave them behind. They arrived at Halifax and traveled to Red Deer, Alberta via train. As there were several Estonian families living in the area Peter and Paul were able to obtain their own homesteads.

Together, they built a modest two-bedroom house on Peter's property. They soon found work laying railroad ties and pouring concrete. The language barrier was the greatest obstacle Paul and Peter faced working in Alberta as they knew very little English. Often, both men yearned to return to their homeland.

Paul's wife, Alice, and their three sons - Ferdinand, Carl and Woldemar - arrived in Red Deer in the spring of 1905. They were able to afford the trip due in large part to a generous financial contribution from another Estonian family (Teener) who were also making the trip at the same time. Paul soon built a large house to accommodate the arrival of his family. Not long after, twin boys named John and Ludwig were born. Adele would later become the only daughter in the Koots family.

A few acres of land were cleared each year by hand until Peter and Paul could afford to purchase a horse. A barn and granary were soon built demonstrating how the Koots farm was able to expand based solely on hard work and cooperation.

Paul and Alice's son, Ferdinand, found work at the Red Deer Sawmill while Carl worked at the co-op store in Eckville. The Koots family was musically inclined; Carl and Paul played the violin, Ludwig embraced the flute while Woldemar mastered the cello. The Koots family graciously entertained locals at Christmas celebrations and other social events.

In 1919, the family purchased their first car - a 1917 Maxwell. That same year they purchased a steam engine and a separator for threshing. When Ferdinand died of pneumonia in 1921 Carl and Woldemar enrolled in a steam engineer course so that they could help the family.



KOTKAS FAMILY



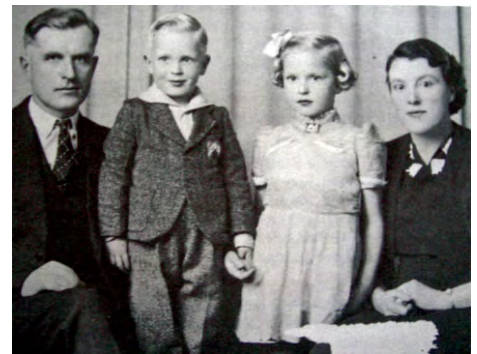
The Kotkas family emigrated from Crimea in 1905. During the trip, Jaan and his wife Emilia accompanied their two small children Marie and John. Upon their arrival to Lethbridge, their relative Gus Erdman greeted them with a horse and buggy to transport them to their designated homestead near Barons. They lived in small tents until their sod house was complete. Tragically, Emilia died soon after settling in southern Alberta.

In 1907 Jaan married Helena Erdman and together they had three children: Rudolph (Rudy), Louise and Theresa. Helena and Jaan were excellent singers and often sang with the Erdman's. In fact, sing-a-alongs were an integral part of any Estonian social gathering. Helena was kind, good natured and loved food.

The sod house, consisting of a kitchen, a living room and two bedrooms, was plastered together with a mixture of clay, manure and lime. Helena and Jaan lived here for the remainder of their lives and participated in numerous Estonian community events. Rudy and Louise were born in the house.

In the first two decades of the 20th century, it was estimated that there were 77 Estonians residing in the area surrounding Barons. The Kotkas children attended nearby Wheatland Centre School where they and other newly arriving immigrants learned English. School also provided the Kotkas children an opportunity to participate in recreational activities such as baseball and basketball.

Jaan successfully cultivated the land and expanded his property in 1912. Three years later, he had two square miles of farmland. With wheat prices still competitive, Jaan was able to purchase a threshing machine, water tanks, a wagon and a Model T Ford.



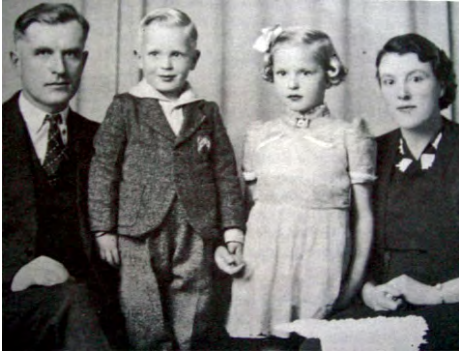
In 1929 Rudy married Jean Cross from Calgary. They farmed near Barons and raised three children: Eleanor, Kenneth, and Perry. With farming technology improving rapidly, Jaan and Rudy purchased tractors, a considerable time- and labour-saving device.

Jaan died in 1941 in Barons at the age of 70. Helena died the following year at the age of 65. Rudy spent his later years in Vulcan, Alberta where he worked as the county's new assessor and the town's mayor. During their last years together, Rudy and Jean moved to Lethbridge in order to be closer to their cottage at Waterton Lakes. Embodiments of the Estonian tradition of song and dance, Rudy and Jean had a passion for singing and were sure to pass the tradition

along to their children.

Rudy and his siblings all went different directions in their lives. His oldest brother, Jack, moved to Raymond, Alberta to work in the sugar beet industry. Marie married John Sepp, and they moved to Washington State. Louise married Eric Row in 1936 and remained in Barons most of her life. Theresa, a nurse, was married and later moved to California.

KOTKAS FAMILY STORIES



Born in February 21, 1908 in Barons, Rudy was the son of Helena (Erdman, Watman,) Kotkas and Jaan Kotkas, both Estonians who emigrated from Crimea. Jaan had arrived in Barons in 1905 from Crimea with his wife Emilia (Shelbaugh) and two children: Marie and John. *(Marie later married John Sepp and moved to USA. John Kotkas married Margaret Kurtz and remained in Alberta.)*

Rudy's cousin Gus Erdman (Jacob's son) brought the Kotkas family to their farm from Lethbridge by horse and buggy, but encountered a prairie fire on the way. There was some speculation that the fire had been set by ranchers who resented the homesteaders fencing off the land. The Kotkases moved to their own land and lived in tents until the sod house was built.

Emilia Kotkas died shortly after they settled on the homestead, leaving Jaan with two young children. In 1907, Jaan married Helena Erdman Watman, whose husband had died of pneumonia while in the army in Crimea. Helena's family, (the Jacob and Mari Erdmans) had settled in Barons in 1904. She had homesteaded with her family. To make a homestead claim, she "borrowed" a Krikental girl to act as her daughter so that she could be classed as "family".

Estonian Lutheran minister, the Reverend Sillak of Medicine Hat refused to officiate at the Kotkas wedding because Jaan always argued with him, so the Kotkases were married in Lethbridge in 1907. In 1908, Rudy and in 1911, daughter Louise (Mrs. Eric Row) were born in the sod house, with Helena's sister, Lisa (Erdman) Silberman as midwife. Theresa (1913) was born in the clapboard house which was added to their farm which was located north west of the irrigation lake, Keho Lake.

The sod house was plastered with clay, manure and quick lime, which made a good stucco. The house was 24' x 40'. It had a kitchen, a hall, two bedrooms and a living room. Inside the house was lined with v-joint planks. Helena and Jaan lived on that farm all of their lives and took part in community activities especially among the Estonians. At the time of their marriage, there were 77 people (26 families) in the village who were Estonian, either from Crimea or directly from Estonia. Helena was a midwife to a number of births including Ellen Erdman Johnson's.

Rudy and his sisters went first to Wheatland Centre School, about three miles west of the farm. (SE quarter 5-12-23) They spoke only Estonian at that time so the Kotkases had to learn English at school. The community was home to immigrants from Finland, Estonia, Germany and other European countries, so English was a "second language" to many students. Soon the big consolidated school was built in Barons and the Kotkases travelled to school in horse drawn school buses. Baseball and basketball were popular and the school had very strong teams. The Kotkases are in most of the team photos.

Their hired man, Mike Palkman (1872-1955), was also an Estonian. He was the son of Juri Palkman, Jaan's uncle, in Crimea. Mike did not stay in the Barons area. He went to work in the

coal mine in Lethbridge about 30 miles away to the south and eventually to the USA. He married an Estonian, Lena Musten, and had 7 children. The Mustens were listed in the early group of Estonians in Barons.

The homestead act required that farmers had to break (cultivate) ten acres each year for the first three years. With walking plows and horse-drawn plows and about five horses, Rudy's father cultivated a number of acres. He bought adjoining land from Bert Leeper. In 1912 the crops were very good but snow came early so the men shook the snow off the bundles and continued threshing in the steam driven threshing machine.

From 1903 to 1907 prairie fires were common. Dried buffalo chips often caught fire and rolled along the prairie grass. The passing coal-burning trains dropped cinders along the tracks and this often started the fires. Farmers had to plow several furrows around each house and burn the patches between the furrows. The fire, hopefully, would be stopped by this action. Luckily no one was seriously injured by these fires.

Wild range cattle were a hazard in those days. Jaan had one close call. He had stopped to shoot a coyote with a double-barreled ten-gauge shotgun. His horse bolted, leaving him on foot. The wild cattle rushed up to him and started crowding him. Just then, his cousin, Robert Erdman, returning from Lethbridge by wagon, saw the situation and raced up at full speed to rescue him.

By 1915, during WWI, Jaan had accumulated two sections (two square miles) of farmland. Wheat was yielding 50 bushels per acre, and oats 130. Jaan bought his own threshing machine, cook car, bunk car, water tanks, and wagons. Threshing time was wonderful with about 20 men gladly working on the threshing outfits. A cook was hired to feed the men. Prices were good, so Jaan bought a Model T Ford car at that time.

In the 1929, Rudy married Jean Cross, from Calgary, who was of English heritage. They raised three children on the farm and in the village of Barons. Loreen, Ken and Perry Kotkas attended school in Barons.

In 1930, Rudy bought a tractor, so he didn't have to harness 16 horses each day when he went out to work. Farming was becoming mechanized and the need for hired help was greatly reduced. Many farmers borrowed money to buy machinery in those days.

The Barbwire Telephone was a novel way of talking to neighbouring farms. By connecting ear phones to the wire fences, sound could travel up to 3 miles.

Then the 'Dirty Thirties' hit; grain prices went down and droughts occurred. Dust storms and droughts discouraged many farmers who then moved away from the Barons area. By then Rudy had about 150 head of cattle. One winter he had to buy hay two times a week, just to keep the cattle fed. It was a difficult time for all; Jaan and Rudy had to sell their new farm near Legend and focussed on farming at Barons.

By the time WWII came around, farmers were considered "essential" to the war effort because they provided food to be sent overseas. Rudy bought a self-propelled combine in 1940 and rejoiced at its speed and efficiency. Jean and Rudy could do all of the harvesting that required 24 men in previous years.

Jaan Kotkas died in 1941 in Barons at the age of 70. His wife, Helena, was nursed by her niece, Helmy Munz, for a year at home in Barons when she became bedridden, after a bad fall. She died in 1942 in Barons at the age of 65.

Carrying on the Estonian tradition, Rudy (well, and Jean too actually) loved to sing; that ability and love for singing has been passed on to their descendants.

Rudy's family was always sports minded and participated fully in a wide variety of local teams wherever they lived. They also have a great love and respect for the outdoors including hunting and fishing, likely passed on from Jaan.

To summarize the lives of the five children of Jaan Kotkas:

Children of his first marriage to Emilia Shelbaugh who died in 1905:

- **John (Jack) Kotkas** (1902 -?) left the farm near Barons and went to work in the sugar factory in Raymond, Alberta. He married Margaret Kurtz in 1927 and raised three children: Frances, Peggy and Lawrence, a retired doctor, who lives in Lethbridge.
- **Mary (Maria) Kotkas** married John Sepp, and moved to Washington. They had one daughter Edna (1919-?) (m. Lewis Harres) The Harres family has eleven children.

Children of his second marriage to Helena Erdman:

- **Louise Kotkas** (1911-1998) married Eric Row in 1936 and had three children: Norma Kay (1942-2006) (Married Howard Myson. They had four children). Norma died of a stroke in 2006; Della, (1946-) (Married Glen Larson and has four children) and Wayne (1949). Wayne lives in Barons. Louise lived most of her life in Barons.
- **Theresa Kotkas** (1913-1984) married Mason Steel (1940) divorced and married Pete Lewellen (1946). She had one child, George (1941), who lives in California with his wife Wendy. They have a daughter, Kimberly (1973)
- **Rudy Kotkas** married Jean Cross in 1929. They had three children. Always very active in the Barons community, Rudy and Jean later moved to Vulcan where Rudy was an assessor for the County of Vulcan. Upon his retirement he became mayor of Vulcan. Later they moved to Lethbridge to be near their son Ken's family and their cottage in Waterton Lakes.
 - Their daughter **Loreen** (born 1931) became dean of women at the University of Nevada - Las Vegas. She and Arlen Harris (from Barons) had three children: Warren, Reta and Susan. In 1981 she married Donald McCulloch, a supervisor for Fisheries and Oceans, in Port Alberni, B.C. where she was a career counsellor. Warren lives in California, Reta is a doctor in Reno, Nevada and Susan a homecare nurse in Vernon. British Columbia.
 - **Ken Kotkas** (born 1934) married Joyce Larson of Kimberly, British Columbia. They lived in Lethbridge and now live in Waterton Lakes National Park. They have four sons: Kerwin, Christopher, Ken, and Jim. Kerwin lives in Utah and is very ill with M.S. Chris is a gunsmith, currently working as an armourer for the R.C.M.P in Regina, and Ken Jr. is a petroleum geologist in Calgary. Jim is a teacher and baseball coach at a new 'baseball academy' in Vauxhall, Alberta, after a very successful amateur career as a baseball player for Team Canada.



Perry Kotkas, a late arrival of Jean and Rudy, was born in 1950, married Karen Soderberg whom he met at university. A geophysicist by profession, Perry eventually was president of his own company. They have two children: **Steven** (1980), now a Phys. Ed. Teacher in Calgary, and **Jillian** (1982), studying to be a nurse. Jillian was married to Andy Mark, a C.A. in 2006, at Waterton Lakes; they live in Calgary.

Perry was the managing director of the Barons Area Homesteading and Heritage Centennial held in Barons, Alberta in 2004, which celebrated many Estonian cultural events. Over 500 people attended the variety of events during the weekend. Several other Estonian descendants very successfully participated on that organizing committee, including Martha Munz-Gue (co-chair), a descendent of the Erdman family.

Rudy Kotkas' varied and active community life is typical of the lives of his many relatives in the Barons area. His family, all born Canadians, are also proud of their Estonian heritage.

General notes about Estonians in the Barons area.



In the first decade of the 20th century, about thirty Estonian families (77 people) settled in the Barons area. One list of people (dated 1906) who contributed to the Christmas Tree for the Estonian families in Barons were J. Reinstein, P. Lentsman, J. Kulpas, G. Krikental, Jacob and his son Gus Erdman, H. Minnek, A. and J. Kewe, Peter and J. Musten, Jaan Kotkas, Helena Watman, P. Meer, J. Malberg who were of the Crimean-Estonians. Some others such as Linda

Jurima, who married G.J. Erdman, and Sally and George Andrekson (1924) came directly from Estonia. The Krasmans, Saffels, Hans Pertels were also Crimean-Estonian pioneers.

Even up to the 1940's, it seems that those of Estonian heritage would often get together at one of the farms for an afternoon party. The "new" houses were built with large living rooms where many people could gather. Visiting was the prime entertainment before radio, TV, and car travel became available. The adults would visit amongst themselves, and the children, especially later in the 1940's would speak English only, and would amuse themselves elsewhere on the farm.

We have found little reference to heritage celebrations in Barons in the very early days. Later the next generation had more of the feeling of "let's try to blend into the community". The younger generations after 1930 rarely learned the Estonian language from their parents or grandparents. A few recipes of our grandmothers for perigees (pirukad) and cabbage rolls are

remembered. It is only in recent years that some of the relatives have been digging into the diaries and documents that reveal the stories of the past.

One reference for the Erdman Family, titled "**Juri's Children**", compiled and edited by **Barbara Gullickson of Barons** in 1989 has been a wonderful source of information about the 140 or so descendants of the Jacob and Mari Erdman family who came from Crimea via South Dakota in 1904 as pioneers to southern Alberta. Rudy and his family are among those descendants. Much of the information in this account of Rudy was borrowed from "**Juri's Children**" and from the Barons history book "**Wheatheart of the West**".

KRASMAN FAMILY

Michael and Helena Krasman, Estonian by birth, came to Canada in 1909 from the Crimea. Accompanying them were their three children: Robert (1902), Lena (1903) and Leona (1905). They arrived in Lethbridge, Alberta and were greeted by an Estonian family living in the area.



In October of 1909, Michael purchased a homestead 40 miles (64 kilometres) north of Warner, Alberta. At the time southern Alberta was an isolated enclave with the Krasmans' closest neighbour living 30 miles (48 kilometres) away. In the coming years the Krasman family would increase by four more children: Linda (1910), Rudolph (1914), Albert (1917) and John (1920).

In an era before irrigation soil in southern Alberta was extremely dry and not particularly ideal for crop farming. Michael and Helena would spend weeks removing rocks from the soil. In 1914, for example, the Krasmans produced a meager crop due in large part to a drought that had plagued southern Alberta. With minimal rain and poor crops, the Krasmans had no choice but to leave their homestead.

In the fall of 1924 Michael had found a farm that the family could rent near Barons. Near Barons the quality of the soil was slightly improved in comparison to the area near Warner. Moreover, there were numerous Estonian families living in and near Barons, and many were eager to lend a helping hand or supply farm equipment to the Krasmans. In 1935, the family moved again; this time near Champion, Alberta. In 1938, Rudolph passed away and was buried at the Champion cemetery.

In 1939, Michael and Helena, along with their sons Albert and John, moved to Innisfail, Alberta. Helena passed away in 1944 while Michael passed away in 1952. Both are buried at the cemetery in Innisfail.

GUSTAV KRIKENTAL



Gustav Krikental left the Crimea in 1903 with his wife Julie (Paarmann) and their five children: Pauline (Lena), Julia, Mary, August and Mihkel. The family traveled on the SS Lake Erie from Liverpool to Quebec and then took a train to the South Dakota Estonian settlement at Fort Pierre.

The Krikentals were in search of new beginnings: Gustav's grandfather had been a serf on the Kulli farm in Estonia, and Gustav's father had immigrated (on foot) to Crimea from Estonia in 1861-63 because of political and economic troubles.

In the spring of 1904 the Krikentals and several other Estonian immigrants from Fort Pierre took the settlers' train to Lethbridge. From there they traveled to their homesteads at Barons on horseback. The homesteaders brought livestock, farm equipment and supplies with them on the train. They had only the short summer to build a home and shelters for their animals, and to grow a garden to provide some food for winter.

Julie Krikental died in 1906 after giving birth to a sixth child, Margaret. Jacob Erdman, one of the more prosperous settlers in the area, donated part of his land for Julie's burial and a community cemetery. Hence, Julie is the first person to be buried in the Barons cemetery.

Gustav's second wife, Liisa Reiner, came to Barons from Estonia in 1909 with the intention of marrying Gustav. The couple had conducted a courtship by mail.

In 1910 the Krikentals and several other Barons families moved back to the United States - to Chester, Montana, 130 miles south. Drought conditions prevailed in this area for a number of years after the Barons settlers arrived. They had to cope with repeated crop failures and great financial hardship.

By 1918 Gustav was defeated. His second wife (Liisa) had died, and his debts were piling up. Gustav was forced to place his younger children (which now included two children by his second wife, Charlie and Edward) in the Twin Bridges Orphans' Home. By that time his son August was working at the Anaconda copper mining company in Great Falls and several of the older daughters were married with families of their own.



Gustav lost touch with his children after that. Letters mailed from the orphanage were returned, marked "Undeliverable." Gustav's disappearance almost certainly had to do with his need to avoid the debt collectors. Recent genealogical research reveals that he went to Chicago in the

1920s and worked in a sugar refinery and cigar factory. The records also show that he died in Blue Island, Illinois, in 1938.

RIINA AND ALEXANDER KRISBY



Riina (Katrina) Peet, born in Estonia in 1891, moved to Russia with her family in 1894 because the feudal property they were farming had been sold to new owners. Riina's father died in Russia and her mother, Anna, later married an Estonian cabinet maker, Anders Negols. The Negols party - Riina, her mother and stepfather and siblings, along with three friends - traveled to Red Deer via Halifax in 1905. The family homesteaded near Linda Hall (the Stettler area).

Riina and Alexander Krisby were married in the Stettler area in 1911.

Alexander, an Estonian born in Russia in 1885, witnessed the shooting of his whole family while still a small child. He was cared for by neighbours and spent some part of his early life in Finland. He immigrated to Colorado in about 1907, later worked on the docks in Galveston, Texas, and then made his way to Alberta, where he met and married Riina.

Riina and Alexander had three children: Anna, born in 1912; John, born in 1914; and Lily, born in 1916. The couple had a hard life, with frequent moves and only limited success at earning a living. When they were first married, they worked on Riina's parents' farm while Alex built a sod house on a homestead near Hanna. But by 1917 or 1918 they were back in Galveston. They did not prosper there (and had two children who died in infancy during that time), so returned to Stettler after about three years. Alex found work laying sewer lines and later worked in coal mines near Big Valley (near Stettler), while Riina did domestic work. In the mid-1920s they bought some land near the Wooded Hills School (also near Stettler), where they lived off the land and worked very hard. They lived there until 1935, when they sold the farm and moved to Creston, BC, with their son John.



After Alex died suddenly in 1937, Riina worked as a housekeeper and in domestic service in Calgary and Vancouver, where she lived with her son John. She died in 1971.

The Krisby family faced a major challenge, both financially and emotionally, when a milk wagon ran over their young daughter Lily's hip. After spending approximately three years in and out of Calgary hospitals, Lily came back home to stay at age 11, and by age 14 she was able to walk without crutches. She married August Kerbes in 1933, a farmer near Big Valley.

Anna became a nurse, training at the Royal Alex Hospital and graduating in 1932. She married Ben Taylor in 1936. John, who was a realtor and machinist, married Ellen Chahley in 1948.

ANTON KULPAS

In the spring of 1904, the families of Anton Kulpas and Jacob Erdman moved from Pierre, South Dakota to southern Alberta. Their first stop in Alberta was Lethbridge. The families had filled two cattle cars with livestock, farm machinery, and furniture. The Kulpas family registered at the Lethbridge Hotel, a two-storey wooden building. Anton Kulpas promptly began searching for an adequate homestead while his family remained in Lethbridge and frequented Galt Gardens. After a few weeks, Anton purchased a homestead southwest of Barons, Alberta. Anton quickly built a sod house for his family and when he was finished the rest of his family joined him on the new homestead.



In the fall of 2004 a massive fire swept through the farm land near Barons. Having lived in South Dakota Anton had experience dealing with brush fires. He kept the grass very short around the house and maintained an adequate supply of water. Flames leapt 20 feet in the air but the Kulpas managed to avoid any serious damage to their property. One week later, lush green grass returned to the property. Much of the summer and fall was spent collecting enough buffalo chips for the harsh winter that lay ahead. The sod house was heated using a pot-bellied stove and the Kulpas family recalled being quite comfortable during their first winter in southern Alberta. Anton fueled his stove with buffalo chips that burned much slower than wood.

Anton maintained a good supply of flour, coffee, and sugar. They butchered a quarter steer and kept it in the sod ice house. In addition to the beef, Anton hunted prairie chickens, ducks, and an occasional jack rabbit. In the spring, Anton planted wheat in his field. Come harvest time, the Kulpas' were able to thresh 70 bushels of wheat, most of which was sold in Granum, Alberta.

In 1907, Anton purchased a half section east of the current homestead and built a spacious framed house. It was the family home until Anton decided to relocate to Salem, Oregon in 1919. Anton and his wife had six children: Jack, Elizabeth, Lillian, Robert, Walter, and Paul. Jack was the oldest while Elizabeth, Lillian, Robert, and Walter were all born at the farmhouse near Barons. The youngest son, Paul, was born in Salem. Anton's wife died in 1926; he remarried two years later and moved to San Diego. Anton Kulpas passed away in 1959.

ANECDOTES BY JACK KULPAS

The son of Mina and Anton Kulpas and Grandson of Jacob Erdman.

Jack Kulpas, in 1970, gave an account of Lutheran Reverend Sillak from Medicine Hat. Apparently the reverend could speak a number of languages. He often came to the Erdman's farm in Barons to give a sermon to the Estonians in the area. On one occasion he gave the Estonian sermon at 11 a.m. and the German sermon immediately afterward. An English neighbour sat through both sermons and upon being asked why she did so when she knew neither language, she said she liked to hear the Estonians sing hymns.



The gift of music seems to be part of the Estonian heritage. The neighbour didn't miss much in the sermon, because the reverend preached according to his habit, repeating one verse from the Bible, over and over again, each time louder than the time before, until he was thumping the pulpit and shouting the message.

After church, the men met and talked outside while the women sat inside and drank tea. The children were sent out to play. Rev. Sillak seems to have featured prominently in the lives of the pioneer Estonians of southern Alberta, being called for marriages, and funerals, and giving advice to new comers.

Miina (Erdman) Kulpas's son, Jack Kulpas was born in 1901 in Pierre, South Dakota. Jack Kulpas has written many amusing pioneer anecdotes beginning on page 312 in "Juri's Children" compiled by Barbara Gullickson of Barons.



Jack mentions the Krikentals who lived just west of the Kulpas farm. The boy August was a playmate of Jack's. There were two sisters in that family. The Lensmans lived nearby. There were three girls in that family. If the children got into trouble, grandma Mari Erdman, would sit them down in a row, leave them silently in thought while she fetched her Bible. Then she would sit in front of them and thumb through the Bible, whilst the children became more and more fearful. Finally she would quote passages from the Bible, threatening "brimstone and fire". This was

followed by two words from the children - "I'm sorry." Afterward, she fed them cakes and doughnuts and forgot about the whole incident.

Robert Erdman taught Jack how to make snares to catch gophers. However, one day August Krikental and Jack chased a skunk, got sprayed, and had to sleep in the haystack for a week until the smell went away.

At first Jack and some of the neighbours' children were schooled in Estonian at home by Jack's mother and father. The Bible was the only book they had. Some English and arithmetic was

added. After two years, the Wheatland Center school was opened up and the children walked there, knowing very little English.

Jack remembers how things gradually "modernized". Kerosene lamps replaced home-made candles. Stoves burned wood and coal, rather than buffalo "chips" and straw. The new washboard had a little ledge on it where his mother could place the bar of soap!

One weekend, ten men from neighbouring farms came to the Kulpas farm to fence in about 10 acres and build a hen house. The women cooked up a big supper and with some beer to help out, and a good time was had by all.

Jack's father Anton (born 1877 in Crimea, died 1960 in San Diego); he was a community "water witcher". He used a forked willow stick. He would walk around and when the end of the stick dipped towards the earth, the men would start digging, for perhaps three days. He was usually successful in finding the location, and even estimating the depth and sometimes the volume of the flow.



Anton explained to Jack how a sod house was built when they first arrived. The sod was plowed up with a walking plow, which left the sod in sheets about 10 inches wide and three inches thick. It was cut into 18 inch lengths which were piled up, much like brick-laying. The only wood that was used was put around the doors and windows. The roof was built from branches of trees brought by wagon from the Old Man River valley near Monarch. The roof was covered by "prairie wool" as the grass was called. This roof never leaked. At first the window was covered with gunny sack as there was no money to buy glass.

The cattle roamed freely on the prairie, but the horses were kept hobbled so they wouldn't stray. Jack was sent out on the prairie each day for a month in the autumn, gathering buffalo and cow "chips" because it was the only fuel for the pot bellied stove during the winter.

Like many farmers, Jack's dad built a sod "ice house". Blocks of ice covered with straw were piled in the shack. Meat could be kept frozen there all winter. If a neighbour butchered an animal, he often shared the meat which provided meals for months to come.

With no electricity and no refrigerators, the pioneers improvised ways of keeping food from spoiling. "Root cellars" kept vegetables cool in the moist earthen cave.

To give one the idea of prices in the pioneer days, a hotel room could be obtained for 50 cents, a meal for 25 cents, 100 pounds of wheat could be ground in flour for baking for 75 cents.

Jack's mother, Miina (Erdman) Kulpas was born (1879) and raised in a semi-tropical country near the Black Sea. She was married in Crimea and had her first child there. What an adjustment she had to travel to "Northwest Territories", and to survive the life of a pioneer housewife. She and her family moved to Salem, Ore. where the weather was better for her health, but she died only 7 years later in 1926 at the age of 47. She had five sons and two

daughters. Her daughter, Lillian Sofer, age 92, (in 2006) lives in California.

For more information about the colorful life of Jack Kulpas whose family moved from Barons to Oregon in 1919, one can refer to "**Juri's Children**", the history of the Erdman family, compiled by one of Jacob Erdman's great-grand daughters, **Barbara Gullickson of Barons**.

GUS KULPAS

Gus Kulpas arrived in Canada in May of 1905 with his older brother, John, and their father. Each Kulpas filed for a homestead east of the present town of Barons, Alberta. Upon looking over his land, Gus was upset with the rather large coulee cutting through much of his land. He returned to the office and filed for another quarter section of land further east. Gus and John's father passed away in the winter of 1911 and is buried at the Barons cemetery.

John Kulpas married Julie Reinstein and they worked diligently trying to improve their homestead. By 1910, John Kulpas sold his land and moved to Chester, Montana. He died there in 1963. He is survived by one son, Edward, who lives in Lothair, Montana.

Gus Kulpas stayed on his homestead in an effort to maximize his farming productivity. Along with his cousin, Anton, Gus purchased a threshing outfit and a steam engine. The modern technology greatly improved efficiency at the farm. Anton and Gus sold the equipment in the early 1920s when Anton moved to Oregon. Around the same time Gus enrolled in a few courses at the Calgary Technical School.

In 1924, Gus married Alide Erdman, whom had arrived in Barons in 1910 with her parents. Together, they had one daughter named Dorothy. Dorothy moved to Lethbridge upon completion of her education. She passed away in 1964.

Gus was one of the directors of the Barons Co-op when it was first opened. He was also member of the Alberta Wheat Pool. From 1926 onwards, Gus and Alide Kulpas continued to live on their farm southwest of Barons.

CARL LANGER

Carl Langer moved to Canada with his brother Paul in 1902. They each purchased homesteads north of Eckville, Alberta. Carl married Anna Teener in 1908. She too emigrated from Estonia in the 1900s. To help develop his financial stability, Carl worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway. Clearing the land for farming was an arduous and grueling process requiring remarkable physical endurance.



Around 1908, the Langer brothers purchased a steam engine and threshing machine by taking out mortgages on their respective homesteads and any other property deemed valuable. Because it was the only steam-powered threshing machine in the vicinity, the Langer's offered their threshing services to other nearby farmers. Threshing, which separates grain kernels from straw, was extremely important. The straw provided bedding for animals and insulation for houses. The grain provided food. In the winter, if the snow was too deep, the men would anchor six horses to the steam engine to provide mobility through the uncooperative terrain. Threshing costs were typically set at \$1 per day. The Langer brothers however, received most payments in the form of grain or manual labour. Paul was recognized as an official steam engineer when he obtained a government-issued boiler engineer's certificate. Despite the usefulness and productivity of the steam engine and thresher, Carl and Paul both recognized how important a reliable and healthy horse was for travel and work.

Carl, with the help of Fritz Kinna and Charlie Raabis, built a brush cutter powered by six horses. This apparatus was used to clear land and construct roadways. Every piece of equipment was hand-built by the three Estonian settlers. Continuing his interest in technology, Carl purchased an Everett Touring car complete with a folding roof, removable curtains, and running boards. Carl was an integral part of Medicine Valley's Estonian community and donated some of his land to the construction of the Estonian school. Moreover, he served as the director of the Eckville and Gilby Co-operative Company. Carl and his wife Anna had a family of six sons and one daughter.

ALEX LEEW

Alex Leew came from Estonia in 1904 and began farming in the Linda Hall area. He also worked on railroad construction and in the coal mine in the Camrose area. With the extra income, he purchased more land.

He married Martha Cusick, and they had five children: Arnold, Felix, Alex, Alma, and Robert.

Alex served as a trustee on the local school board and was on the recreation committee at Linda Hall.

He bought a Dutch windmill and used it to grind wheat and rye for himself and others. The windmill was torn down and used for firewood after Alex left the farm - but the millstones were salvaged and are in the museum at Leduc.

When he faced financial difficulties on the farm due to low grain prices and drought, Alex, who had been an upholstery apprentice in Estonia, moved the family to Calgary and started an upholstery business. After he died, Martha and his youngest sons Alex and Robert continued the business.

LENTSMAN FAMILY

Peter Lentsman and his family, accompanied by members of the Erdman and Kulpas family, settled in the area near Barons, Alberta in 1904. They had arrived from South Dakota frustrated that they were unable to successfully farm the land near Pierre. Peter's son, John, was born in August, 1903 and made the trip north as an infant.



The Lentsmans' first home was made of sod, not unlike other homesteads at this time. The walls were two feet thick making it warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Helen Lentsman was born in March 1905 while her sister, Lucy, followed 18 months later. Helen and Lucy walked three and a half miles, back and forth, to attend school at the Wheatland Centre School. Later, they were fortunate enough to travel to their new school, Barons Consolidated School, using horses.

Peter farmed until 1919 when his wife's health was rapidly declining. The entire family moved to Vancouver hoping the milder weather would alleviate some of her symptoms. She eventually passed away in 1933 at the age of 57 years. The remainder of the family returned to Barons where they had been renting out their property. Lucy soon found work in Calgary while Helen enrolled at a teacher's college in Nelson, British Columbia.

Helen died in a car accident in November 1939; she was 34 years old. Peter's health was gradually deteriorating at this time and he passed away in December 1944; he was 71 years old. John married in 1933 and has one daughter named Joan. Lucy married into the Baustad family and has two sons named Warren and Sigurd.

MARTIN AND ROBERT LINDERMAN

Martin Linderman, like so many other immigrants, landed in Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1911. Martin engaged in farming and ranching with his brother Robert near Foremost, Alberta before moving to Montana in 1923. Martin married Lucy Cassidy of Shelby, Montana and they settled on a farm near Scobey, Montana, a small town just south of the Canadian border. Martin passed away in 1954.



Robert Linderman, as mentioned previously, farmed near Foremost upon arriving in Alberta. He worked for his grandfather Otto Meer (Maar) before filing for his own homestead. For numerous years he drove cattle on the open range as far west as Stirling, Alberta.

Robert married fellow Estonian Rosalie Peetof on January 6, 1925. On his farm he owned a number of horses which he used for racing in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Montana. In 1915, Robert began threshing his crops using a Minneapolis four-cylinder tractor. There was an exceptionally large crop that year and the tractor alleviated much of the workload. With terrible droughts afflicting the crop the following years Robert would transport hay from the Stettler areas as feed for his cattle.

Robert and Rosalie purchased the farm of his uncle, Martin Meer, in 1928 and they lived here until they moved to Lethbridge in 1959. They continued to maintain a home in Foremost and maintained close ties to the community. Robert graciously volunteered his efforts and skills into building the Foremost Community Hall. He also was a member of the local Elks Club while Rosalie belonged to the Foremost Community Club.

When Robert and Rosalie passed away their daughter and son-in-law, Lea and Al Sepp, began managing the farm. Robert and Rosalie's other daughter, Anita, lives in Calgary with her husband Wally Madill and their two children.

GEORGE AND MIINA LUSTWERK



George (Juri) and Miina Lustwerk and daughters Anna and Martha left Estonia a year before World War I broke out. There was room for only three passengers on the ship that took the family to Brazil, so Anna went to Barons, Alberta, via New York and Lethbridge, where she worked on the Erdman farm.

Later Anna found employment with a family in Calgary as a nanny, travelling with them to places like Catalina island in 1917. She worked at the Chateau Lake Louise as a pastry chef and soon opened her own hat shop in Lacombe. Anna graduated from the Canadian Junior College in Lacombe in 1922.

In Estonia, George had operated a fur trading company across the Baltic countries and Siberia, where the company had hunting and trading lodges. The furs were sent to Germany by boat and traded for cloth, pots and other things Lustwerk's customers wanted or needed.

The Lustwerk family was reunited in the 1920s when George and Miina moved to Barons, having decided the climate in Brazil was not to their liking. They rented some land there and established a farm.

When the Lustwerks learned that homesteads were available in the Peace River area, George and Anna each acquired quarter sections of land at Bonanza, a small community west of the Town of Peace River. They built a house, barn, chicken coop, ice house and even a sauna/workshop. They grew a garden and worked very hard hauling water, chopping wood, preserving food, making thick wool comforters from wool sheared from the sheep, and coping with all the other back-breaking and endless tasks that Alberta pioneers faced.



She married Stan Tompkins, another homesteader in the Bonanza area, and the couple had two daughters, Loretta and Evelyn. Stan and Anna are buried together in Bonanza.

In 1949 the Lustwerk family sponsored a family from Estonia, Herman and Sigrid Tiislar and their son Enn. The Tiislars helped George and Miina on the farm for a year and then moved to Toronto.

ADAM MATTHEWS (MATTEUS)

Adam Matthews (Matteus) was born in Voru, Estonia and spent much of his early years working the fields for his baronial master. When he was 21 he married Anna Sonnotar of Estonia. They had three children: August, Elmer and Herbert.



With political and economic uncertainty in Estonia, Adam's family boarded a cattle liner for Canada. Accommodations were dreadful, and food was barely subsistent; however, the Matteus family remained optimistic. They crossed Canada's expanse by train and arrived in Red Deer. From there they made their way in an ox cart to Henry Kingsep's homestead where they spent the winter. In the spring Adam purchased a homestead in the Medicine River district. Together the family built a cabin, dug a root cellar and planted a garden. Adam made three trips on foot to Red Deer-40 miles each way-each time bringing back flour, prunes and mail from Estonia.

As time passed, the family expanded and so did the farm. Adam purchased a quarter section of land; the Medicine River carved its way through the property. The family built a three-room house on the banks of the Medicine River. Adam passed away in Eckville at the age of 77.

MAAR (MEER) FAMILY

Otto and May Maar (Meer), along with their children, emigrated to South Dakota from Crimea during the early 20th century. They eventually settled in Southern Alberta in 1909. They shipped their possessions to Canada by train and traveled to Warner, Alberta via a wagon, herding their animals and sleeping in tents. The Meers applied for homesteads and purchased a half section of land in 1910.



Otto and May had four boys and four girls: John, Hans, Martin, Jacob, Anna (Anna stayed behind in Estonia), Eliza, Minnie and Helen. The family engaged in mixed farming consisting of animals and a variety of crops.

May passed away March 29, 1911 at the age of 71. The funeral service was located at the Meer family farm presided by Reverend John Sillak. Otto immediately applied to the provincial government for funding to build a cemetery in the area; three months later a cemetery was built. May's coffin was transferred to the new site, approximately two miles west of their farm. Otto passed away in May of 1915 and was buried next to his wife.

John Meer (1865-1952) arrived in Southern Alberta with his parents and siblings. The Meer family lived in a tent until they could build a home from lumber hauled in from Warner, the nearest town at that time. John and his wife Anna purchased a homestead two miles east of his parents' place; they lived here until 1945 when they eventually moved to Foremost. They had three children: Anna, Carl and Al.

Martin (1877-1968) and Katie (1882-1946) Meer had three children: Lenore, Edward and Ida. The children were all born in Ft. Pierre, South Dakota and made the arduous journey to southern Alberta as young children. Martin and Katie Meer left their homestead in 1926 and relocated to the Pacific Northwest where Martin soon developed into an avid fisherman.

Hans and Pauline Meer also traveled from South Dakota to southern Alberta in 1909. Hans and Pauline left the Foremost area and traveled to Oregon before eventually settling in Simms, Montana. They had three children: Walter, Julia and Bill.

Jacob Meer was born in Crimea, migrated to South Dakota with his parents, Otto and May, and later filed for a homestead near Foremost. Jacob remained a bachelor and engaged in farming until his death in 1944.

MORO FAMILY

In the early 20th century, Barons, Medicine Valley, and Stettler were the principal Estonian settlements in Alberta. However, other small locations throughout Alberta attracted Estonian settlers. One such location was Peace River, a tract of land in northern Alberta largely uninhabited by settlers.

Brothers Karl and John Moro emigrated from Estonia to Canada in 1904. In his native Estonia, Karl had once belonged to the Tsar's household infantry unit. Accompanying the two brothers were Karl's wife, Mary, and their three sons, August, George and Oscar. Initially Karl and John acquired homesteads three miles north of Eckville. Tragically Mary suffered a stroke in 1921 and passed away three years later.



Karl built a flour mill in 1923. A short two years later, his sons Oscar and August formed a partnership and purchased the flour mill from their father. In 1928 Karl and his son George moved to the Peace River area where Karl opened a modest market garden while his son found employment at a local sawmill. Oscar sold his portion of the flour mill business and followed his family north. Here he opened a new flour mill and later a farm machine shop. Karl continued operating his market garden until he passed away in 1959.



Oscar married Sophie Tipman of Eckville. Oscar and Sophie eventually retired to Saltspring Island, British Columbia. Meanwhile, August continued to operate his flour mill in Eckville until 1947, when he sold the business to the Eckville Co-operative Association. In addition to grinding grain into flour, the mill provided electricity for the town of Eckville. Anyone with home electrical problems would seek August's help.

August built a new home in Eckville and pursued opportunities in the sawmill industry. He married Lilly Waisanen of Calgary in 1927. Their honeymoon was a modest yet romantic automobile excursion from Calgary to Eckville. They had three children: Clarence, Norman and Alice. Clarence worked in construction in Edmonton and raised a family of three along with his wife Martha. Norman worked for P.J. Toole and Cote Real Estate in Calgary. He married Lorraine Dancer of Winnipeg and together they raised two girls. Alice was born in Eckville and later moved to Calgary. She married Calvin Kenzle and they raised two daughters.



GEORGE MORO



George Moro was born in Somerpol, Estonian on January 13, 1900. At the young age of four he moved to Canada with his father Karl and mother Marie, along with his two brothers Oscar and August. Their lengthy journey took them all the way to Eckville where they eventually filed for a homestead near the Medicine River.

In 1927, George and his two brothers ventured north in a Model T to the Peace River area. George obtained some land near an area known as Three Creeks; however, the land was covered in dense brush and was deemed too difficult to clear. He settled in the town of Peace River and immediately began work on opening a local sawmill. In 1931, George met Sylvia Ferguson and they eventually had three children: Anne, LaVerne and George Jr.



Eight years later George separated from his wife and moved to an area known as Flatbush and opened another sawmill. It was here that he met and soon married a local woman named Mildred, only to lose her shortly thereafter to cancer.

During the winter of 1944, he bought a three ton truck to haul freight for American soldiers building the Alaska Highway. He worked as a trucker for two years. In 1946, George established West Lawn Lumber with two other partners. Here, he met Anne Milligan and acquired three stepchildren: David, Doug and Helen. In 1958, George diversified his business and transformed his building into a repair shop that specialized in rebuilding sawmill equipment. Two years later he sold the business and went homesteading instead.

Aside from working at sawmills, George had a passion for hunting and fishing in Alberta's vast wilderness and thoroughly enjoyed guiding American hunters during the fall hunting season.

At the age of 74, George retired and moved to Summerland, British Columbia. The Okanagan Valley allowed George to discover the joys of gardening. He grew cherries, apples, grapes and strawberries. He was known by those who visited for his generosity, particularly in sharing his harvest.

At the age of 96, George returned to Alberta to be closer to his family. He resided at the Mayerthorpe Extendicare Facility until he passed away January 21, 2000. George was remembered by friends and family as an enthusiastic and vibrant man with a wonderful sense of humour.

GUST MOTTUS

Gust Mottus was 21 when he arrived in New York City on an overcrowded, dilapidated boat. Originally from Somerpalu, Estonia, he passed the time during the two-week journey catching rats and throwing them overboard. He spent a few months working in the state of New York prior to landing in Canada and working on an Estonian farm west of Gilby. Missing the required train stop in Lacombe, the train pushed north to Edmonton. Gust had no choice but to scoff at his mishap and walk back south, a distance of approximately 75 miles (120 kilometres).



Gust worked for the City of Red Deer digging ditches. Accustomed to covering great distances by foot, he would often saunter into Eckville and visit with fellow Estonian immigrants. In 1917, he married Linda Kingsep, daughter of Hendrik Kingsep. Soon after, he purchased land from the Canadian Pacific Railway and built a tidy log house. Here, Linda and Gust raised three children.

Gust purchased horses and raised wheat. Linda milked the cows and sold the heavy cream to nearby customers. Gust was an inventive labourer. Often, he would build various farm tools, many of which were ingenious additions to any pioneer farm settlement.

In the 1950s Gust and Linda decided to leave the farm and settle in the town of Eckville where they would be closer to local amenities. Their son Rudy remained on the farm and managed the property. Gust and Linda also had twin daughters: Elsie (Brewer) and Emma (Huhtala). When Linda passed away in 1967, Gust moved to a senior citizens' residence in Rocky Mountain House and was later transferred to Red Deer. He passed away in 1977.

JOHAN AND LENA MOTTUS

Johan Mottus was born in Voru, Estonia in 1861. His future wife, Lena, was born nearby four years later. Together they raised eight children. Three of their sons, Hugo, Alexander and Oscar, travelled with them to Canada in the 1900s. After an exhausting journey, they eventually settled on a farm north of Eckville.

The story of their immigration to Canada however, is particularly unique in that they did not choose the route typically taken by Estonian families settling in Alberta. The Mottus family left for Canada in 1916 to escape the imminent danger and peril of World War I. However, they did not cross the Atlantic Ocean, the route routinely taken by Estonian immigrants at that time. With German U-boats navigating the waters, this route was deemed far too dangerous. Instead the members of the Mottus family ventured in the opposite direction, through the vastness of Russia and Siberia and across the Pacific Ocean.

Arriving in Yokohama, Japan, they waited five days for a freighter to transport them across the ocean. They arrived in Seattle, Washington only to be interned for two days by US immigration officials. They travelled by boat to Vancouver where every member of the Mottus family contracted lice. A train carried them from Vancouver to Red Deer. This is where the two-month long journey finally ended. The Mottus' first request was for a traditional Estonian sauna. Johan purchased a quarter-section of land on the south shore of Wood Lake, Alberta. He died two years later. Lena passed away in 1930. They are buried in the Gilby Cemetery.

OSCAR MOTTUS

Oscar Mottus and his wife Juuli came to Canada from Estonia with their two daughters, Meta and Ella, in 1914. They joined Oscar's brother Hugo on his homestead at Gilby, Alberta (near Lacombe). Two days after they arrived, their third daughter, Adele, was born. In 1916 the Oscar Mottus family acquired their own homestead at Gilby. The family continued to grow; between 1916 and 1925, five more children were born: Albert, Hilda, Elmer, Louise and Robert.



Oscar and two of his brothers, Hugo and Alexander, jointly purchased a threshing outfit and traveled around the country to offer their services at harvest time. Oscar and his brother Arthur built the Wolfe School in 1922.

Juuli died in childbirth in 1925 but the baby survived. The oldest daughter, Meta, only 15 years old, took on the responsibility of running the household and caring for the large family that included a newborn.

Oscar married Annie Dahl in 1935, and they moved to Eckville. After Annie's death in 1965, Oscar lived in a lodge in Rocky Mountain House and then a nursing home in Rimbey. He died in 1976 at age 89.

GEORGE AND MINNIE MURSA

George and Minnie Mursa left Estonia in the early 1900s with their three children, Martin, Johnny, and Linda. After a short time in South Dakota, they settled in southern Alberta. They lived in tents until they finished building their large two-storey home with lumber shipped from British Columbia by train and wagon. The farmstead included a stone house with a sauna bath.



In 1925, the Mursa family moved to Snohomish, Washington.

KARL AND JULIA MUSTEN

Karl and Julia Musten and their five children - four sons and a daughter, Lena - immigrated from Estonia in 1904 and took out a homestead at Barons. Karl also worked in the coal mines near Barons. The family moved to Montana in 1910 and farmed there until 1921. Two of their sons, Nick and Charley, also had homesteads in Montana. Their oldest son, George, died in the 1918 flu epidemic. Because farming conditions were poor in both Barons and Montana, Karl and Julia finally settled in Rockford, Washington, with their son Joe. The Mustens lived there until Karl's death in December 20, 1934.



"Musten, Karl - Age 73 His home was in Fairfield, Washington, where he had resided for the past thirteen years. Survived by his wife Julia A. Musten and three sons Nick of Fairfield, Joe of Fairfield and Charles of Belton, Montana, one daughter Lena Palkman of Los Angeles, California. Funeral services will be held Sunday, December 23 at 2:00 pm from the JAEGER FUNDERAL HOME at Fairfield. Burial at Fairview cemetery in Rockford, Washington."

Spokane Daily Chronicle,
Spokane, Washington,
Saturday, December 22, 1934,
page 10, Funerals.

JOHN AND MINNIE NEITHAL

John and Minnie Neithal, along with their three children (Pauline, Martin, and Mary), left Estonia in about 1902 and settled outside Sylvan Lake. After a short time they moved to the Estonian community south of Stettler. They homesteaded here for many years and had four more children: Thelma, Charlie, Alma, and Jessie.



Pauline married Ed Klaus and moved to the Fenn area where they had five children: Amanda, Charles, Ralph, Edna, and Virginia.

Mary and Thelma left Alberta for California. Charlie stayed on and farmed for several years before moving to Washington, where he eventually married.

Alma and Jessie became school teachers. Alma married a Mr. Martin and had two sons; Jessie married and did not have children.

Martin left home when he was young and held various jobs before returning home. He acquired more land and farmed for many years. He never married, and he sold the farm in 1947.

NICKLOM FAMILY

Gustav Nicklom, together with his wife Maria and their four sons, August, John, Joe and Jaan, came to Canada from Estonia in 1908. He purchased a homestead near Stettler, Alberta. For the first few years, Gus and his sons August and John worked on the railroads and in logging camps. Joe and Jaan stayed behind to plow the prairie soil and prepare for crops the following year. Working the land was completed using a walking plough with one person leading the horse and the other guiding the plough. Since Gustav served as a Rector at his church in Estonia, it was only natural for people to ask him to officiate at Christmas and funeral services. Gustav was also an experienced blacksmith.



Gustav's oldest son, August, later homesteaded in the Wooded Hills country. He married and raised a family of seven sons and four daughters. John homesteaded near his brother's residence. He later took care of the farm and worked on the railroad section crew. In March 1939 he married Cecil Glen Pooley. Together they had two boys and one daughter: Norman of Drumheller, Willard of Leduc and Barbara of Red Deer.



John passed away in 1980 and Cecil Glen followed six years later. Joe Nicklom homesteaded by Ewing Lake. Joe sold his farm when World War II broke out and soon enlisted in the army. After the war, he found employment as a grader operator for the County of Stettler. Jaan the youngest son, attended school for a short while and worked for local area farmers. Later he found work on the railroads as a "call boy" and "engine wiper." He was promoted to engineer and worked as one until his retirement. He married Martha Wagenstein and they had one daughter named Dorothy. Gustav and his wife Maria are buried in the Estonian Cemetery. Gustav was 84 and Maria was 71 years old when they passed away.

Otto and Gladys Nicklom lived and farmed for 46 years on their farm located eight miles west of Big Valley. Otto was born 28 May 1920 to Gustav and Pauline Nicklom, the third oldest in a family of eleven children (three daughters died in infancy). During his younger years he attended school and worked on his grandfather's farm. Gladys was born 30 October 1927 to Alexander and Elvine Soop. She graduated from Stettler High School in 1946 and worked at the Royal Bank in Stettler. Otto and Gladys were married in 1949 and began a life of farming.

Otto and Gladys have two daughters, Dianne and Melodie. Dianne and her family reside in Spruce Grove, Alberta. Melodie and her family reside in Red Deer. Otto and Gladys retired from farming in 1995.

Rudolph Nicklom married Sharon Annable on 23 October 1959. They lived on the August Nicklom homestead along with Rudolph's parents. Rudolph's mother, Pauline, passed away in

1960 and her husband, Gustav, followed one year later. Rudolph and Sharon have two children named Lori Rose and Rudolph Richard, known to everyone as Rick. Aside from farming, Rudolph drove the school bus for the County of Stettler. Lori married Albert Reule of Lethbridge in 1984. Ten years later she obtained a law degree and moved back to the Nicklom farm with her family. Lori's brother Rick stayed in the area farming and working on oilrigs.

JACK AND PHILIP NUGIS

Cousins Jack and Philip Nugis left Crimea with the Flink family around 1909. Philip was still a teenager and Jack was a young man and a veteran of the Russo-Japanese War.

Philip lost his ticket during the train ride from Montreal to Calgary and spent most of the long journey hiding in an upper bunk.

They settled in the Barons area, where Jack worked as a farmhand. When he was no longer able to do farm work, he moved into homesteader Grant Abbott's house and kept a few chickens and rabbits. He later moved to Barons, where he lived until his death around 1960.

Philip, who lived in the Barons Hotel and worked near it, died several years earlier.

MARTIN AND MARIA OLIVER



Martin and Maria (Peet) Oliver left Estonia in 1902 as a young newly married couple with a dream. Their dream was to own land, which would have been impossible in their home country.

Martin (1882-1965) and Maria (1884-1952) emigrated with about 40 other Estonians, arriving first at Montreal and then proceeding to Red Deer by train. In 1904 Martin and Maria were able to travel a further 100 miles by wagon to their farm in the Stettler area. They spent the rest of their lives there, working hard to support their large family (13 children) and prevailing despite numerous disasters such as hailstorms, fires and drought.

All of the Oliver children were born at home and raised without outside help. Two of the children, Julia and William, died in infancy. The others were Martha, a teacher; Salmea, a nurse; Jaan, a grain buyer; Edward, a rancher in the Peace River area; Maria, a bookkeeper; Oscar, a mechanic; Alma, a teacher; Elvera, a bookkeeper and accountant; and Eileen, a secretary.



Martin was an active member of the community - a leader and innovator. He was one of the first farmers in the area to own a threshing machine, and sometimes went as far as Hobbema to harvest grain. Martin was president of the Linda Estonian Agricultural Society in the 1910s and 1920s. He served on the school board, the community hall board and municipal councils. He played in the Stettler band, and both Martin and Maria were actively involved in the direction and production of plays that were performed in several nearby communities.

ORO FAMILY



Juhan Oro (John Oro) was one of many Estonians who came to Canada in the 1900s. He was born in Saaremaa, Estonia and later married Lisa Rahu. While John was growing up he moved from Saaremaa to Prondi Mets near Tver, Russia. The Russian government had promised land and prosperity to Estonian farmers willing to relocate here. John tilled the land and raised a young family. His sons Alex, Martin and Mike were born in Russia.

Stories of cheap available land in western Canada spread throughout the community of Prondi Mets. Known as "Paradise on Earth" to some, the Oros sold their land and much of their possessions, purchased a passage to Canada and anxiously awaited their arrival. Upon arrival there was a large group of Estonians settled near Sylvan Lake, Alberta. Unfortunately, much of the land had already been occupied.

Magnus Tipman and Mihkel Kutras (Kudras) searched on foot for suitable farmland elsewhere. They soon found good land south of Stettler, Alberta. The Oros along with other Estonian families, began their life of homesteading. The Oro family homesteaded on the west shore of Lone Pine Lake. During the 1990s Alex Oro was still homesteading on the same plot of land and living in the original log cabin. The log cabin has been updated through the years, with add-ons to the kitchen, the front sun porch, the back pantry and the bedroom. The house now has such modern amenities as hot and cold running water, electricity, gas heating and telephone. Another descendant, Astrid Oro, is a granddaughter of Juhan and resides in Edmonton.



MIKHEL AND JULIA PALKMAN

Mikhel Palkman emigrated from Crimea in 1903 and lived in both North and South Dakota before moving to Alberta, where he took out a homestead in the Barons area. His wife, Julia Musten, came from Estonia in 1904 with her family. Mikhel and Julia were married in 1905 in a sod house. Three of their children were born in Alberta: Emily, Albert, and Walter.



In 1910, Mikhel and Julia sold their homestead and moved to Montana, where they homesteaded on 320 acres. There, they had four more children: Alida, Ida, Linda, and Claudine.

Mikhel suffered from leukemia and died in 1955. Emily died in 1970. Albert lives in Spokane, and the remaining children live in California. Julia now lives with her daughter Linda.

PETER AND ELIZABETH PERLER

Peter and Elizabeth Perler and their daughter Lydia left Estonia in 1903 and took out a homestead north of Eckville.

After Peter built a shack for his family, he left them to work on the railroad construction in Kananaskis. He had no money to return to Estonia, and very little on which to live. Their food consisted of a few staples such as flour and any wild birds and rabbits they caught. Frequently Indians came to the door asking for food.

When a school was built, Lydia walked the four miles through the woods to attend. She eventually married Paul Langer. Peter and Elizabeth sold their land to the Moos family and went to live with Lydia and Paul. Elizabeth, who was very unhappy in the bush, died in 1916, and Peter in 1945.



Paul and Lydia were involved in the growing Estonian community. They had four children: Erna, Alfina, Hazel, and Felix.

Paul died in 1928. Lydia sold the farm and home quarter and moved into Eckville, where she died in 1975.

HANS AND JULIANNE(MATTHIESEN) PERTEL



Hans Pertel left the Crimea in 1909 to join his brother-in-law at Barons, Alberta. Hans first claimed a homestead at



Foremost, Alberta but in 1913 moved back to Barons and farmed some land there. In 1924 he married Julianne Matthiesen, an emigrant from Tallinn, Estonia. The Pertels had three daughters: Erna, Esta and Wilma. Hans died in 1969 at age 88.



Hans married Julianne E. Matthiesen, who emigrated from Estonia in 1924. They had three children: Erna, Esta, and Wilma.

Hans and Julianne sold their land in 1962 and moved to Calgary, where Hans died in November, 1969.

JOHN PIHOOJA



Juhan (John) Pihooja was born in 1892 to Peeter and Liiso Pihooja, both of Voru, Estonia. John was the youngest son in a family of six boys and two girls. Upon their 21st birthday, the Pihooja boys were obligated to serve time in the Russian army. In 1905 John's older brother, August, emigrated to Canada with his wife and infant daughter to join their friend Henry Kingsep, who owned a homestead west of Red Deer.

In 1912, 19-year-old John and his older brother Karl arrived in the Gilby-Medicine River area of Alberta where their brother August was farming. John soon found work at a nearby sawmill and continually exchanged postcards with his family back in Estonia. John briefly resided in the Gastown district of Vancouver working in the logging industry. By 1916, John and Karl left for Anaconda, Montana to begin work in a copper smelter. Enjoying their bachelor lifestyle, John and Karl worked hard and maintained a lively social life filled with dancing and fraternizing with the locals. After returning to Red Deer for a short stint, John met Karl in Seattle to embark on a world tour. Some of the places they visited include Finland, Siberia, Hong Kong and Shanghai. John and Karl returned to Estonia in 1922.

AUGUST POSTI



August Posti followed in the footsteps of many of his fellow Estonians by immigrating to Canada in the first few years of the 20th century. Accompanying August was his wife, Miili (Emillie), and their two small children, Hugo and Anna. August desperately wanted to escape the unjust economic conditions present in Estonia. The open prairies of Canada seemed like a favourable opportunity. The Posti family travelled to Riga, Latvia then to Liverpool and eventually arrived in Halifax, Nova Scotia. They travelled by train to Red Deer where they were greeted by members of the Kingsep, Kask and

Walters family.

August soon found an agreeable piece of land adjacent to the Medicine River. The surrounding spruce trees were used to build a sturdy log house. A small garden of turnips, carrots, potatoes, beets and cabbage was planted. August worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway during the winter months while Emillie tended to the livestock. She also spun wool to knit mittens and stockings. Money from the sale of churned butter was used to purchase salt, flour and dried fruit. August cleared additional land when possible, increasing space for the planting of rye, barley, oats and flax fields.



The Posti family increased to four boys and two girls: Hugo, Anna, Olga, Karl, Henry, and Rudolph. All of the children were responsible for learning household chores and farming tasks. They were careful observers of the natural environment around them, often sharing stories about the life cycles of organisms living in their pond. August was a firm believer in community endeavors. He believed that any enterprise completed cooperatively garnered a minimal

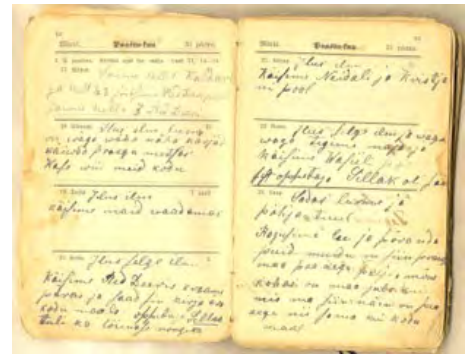
output from each individual while yielding the greatest good to the greatest number of people. This was exemplified by the completion of the Estonian school. A community project, the school was constructed by a number of different people and established an educational facility for all children living in the vicinity.

August Posti enjoyed entertaining guests at his home. Deliberations were often held in the Posti living room and attempted to resolve various agricultural issues. August passed away in 1943 and Emillie in 1945. They are buried in the Gilby Cemetery.



EXCERPT FROM AUGUST POSTI'S DAYBOOK (DIARY) JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, 1903.

Jan 22: Hindrik (Kingsep) hauled 5 loads of hay for me. Krisjaan (Kingsep) brought Kinna (neighbour) some rocks and 30 rocks for me.



Jan 23: Clear and cold still. Started to build Kinna a smoke flue.

Jan 24: Clear afternoon, warm wind, 2° r. (degrees reaumur). Completed the flue and it's entrance.

Jan 26: Clear warm day, 3° r. Went to town (Red Deer) with Hindrik.

Jan 28: Snow fell and twirled. While in town, I paid my \$10.00 for land. Bought some potatoes for myself and Krisjaan. Sold my horse. Stayed at Krisjaan's home, -31 r. Killed Krisjaan's cow and skinned it.

Feb 1: Very cold, -31° r. Hauled timber.

Feb 2: Warm day, cut logs for Kinna's barn.

Feb 3: Sunday night rained, otherwise melting. Building the barn for Kinna, 10° r.

Feb 4: Clear and warm; finished building the barn.

RAABIS FAMILY

Charlie Raabis came to Canada from Estonia in the early 1900s. He emigrated with his wife, Leena, their infant daughter, Helen and Leena's mother, Maie Poder. They settled on a homestead near the Medicine River. A few years later, tragedy struck the family when a bolt of lightning killed Leena during a torrential thunderstorm. In 1906 Charlie married Olga Kinna, a native of Estonia who had recently immigrated to Canada.



Charlie worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway. When he was able to purchase a team of oxen, he surrendered his position with the CPR and started clearing potential farmland. Soon a modest field of oats and barley was in place. It was accompanied by a vegetable garden. Charlie contributed to the enhancement of the Estonian community and applied his carpentry skills to assist in the construction of the Estonian School and the Estonian Hall. He also helped build the community's first flour mill and donated a small piece of land to be used as a local cemetery. Charlie made use of his musical talents and sang in the Estonian community choir. He served as the secretary-treasurer on the school board and as a member of the Board of Directors for the Eckville Co-operative Association.



When Charlie passed away in 1944, Olga subsequently moved to Eckville, where she took up oil painting.

Together Charlie and Olga had eight children: Helen, Salme, Hilja, Carl, Mary, Arthur, Waldo and Clara.

Tragically, Helen passed away at the age of ten.

Salme went to the Estonian school and then trekked seven miles to reach Eckville High School. She became a teacher north of Bentley, Alberta and married Art Mottus.

Hilja quit school and was immediately assigned cow milking duties. Typical of many Estonian families settling in Alberta, the parents often re-enforced the value of a strong education and would certainly not tolerate idleness. Hilja married Nick Kalev, a music prodigy. Together, they had two children.



Carl worked at the Moro brothers' flour mill in Eckville. He married Ethel Peterson and farmed north of Bentley. Together, they had five children.

Mary attended the Estonian School and later married local cowboy Fred Bardenhagen in 1933.

Arthur worked as a clerk at the Co-op store in Eckville. He was remembered as a talented musician, particularly proficient at playing the piano and the violin.

Waldo married Myrtle Greenman and raised a musically-oriented family of four. They sold their farm, moved to Fairview, Alberta and purchased the Pinky Coin Wash business.

Clara left for Vancouver as a teenager and pursued a career in hairstyling. She worked as a hairdresser and beautician on a luxury ship. There she met and married the chief steward, Vic Bremner.

MAI AND OTTO REINGLAS



Mary (Mai) Kungas and Otto Reinglas were married in Finland in 1884 and moved to Russia in 1894. In 1903 they and their three children, William, Mick and Mai, immigrated to Red Deer via Liverpool and Montreal. They traveled in a covered wagon on the last leg of their journey to a homestead south of Stettler.

Mai and Otto could not afford to buy livestock when they first arrived, so Mai contributed to the family's income by growing cabbages and selling them to the butcher in Stettler, who made sauerkraut. The cabbage business earned her about \$100 a year. She also had a loom that she used to make all the family's clothing. The men in the family often went away to work. Otto tried his hand at harness-making, but reportedly with not much success.

Otto's two brothers, Jakob and Anton Reinglas, immigrated with Mai and Otto and their children, and took out homesteads next to Mai and Otto's farm. Jakob died in 1910 and is buried in the Linda Hall cemetery near Stettler. Anton lived in mental institutions in Alberta for about fifty years, until his death in Edmonton in 1963.

In 1912 Mai and Otto's daughter Mary (Mai) married Andrew Hill, a Finn. The couple were married in Stettler but immigrated to Australia immediately afterwards. They took up a land grant at Sandy Creek in Queensland. The subtropical climate was a dramatic change from the freezing cold winters in Alberta, where frostbite was not uncommon.



Otto and Mai followed their daughter and son-in-law to Australia a year later, bringing with them Mai's brothers, William and Mick. Otto and William took out land grants near Mai and Andrew's farm but Otto died only nine months after arriving in Australia. His wife continued to operate the farm for a number of years. When she decided to retire, she sold the farm and moved in with her son William, who had never married. William and Mai both died in Australia in 1939.

Mick worked for a photographer in Gympie, a nearby town. He married Iris Cathcart. In 1922 Mary and Andrew moved to another nearby piece of land at Mother Mountain.

Farming in Australia was as hard as in Alberta - the days were filled with tasks such as building

your own house, clearing forest off the land, washing by hand, milking cows and other endless chores.

Among Mai and Otto's descendants are many lawyers, doctors, nurses, teachers, artists, mechanics, engineers and farmers.



MRS. J. REINSTEIN

Mrs. J. Reinstein and her daughters, Anna, Julia, and Mary, emigrated from Crimea and lived first in South Dakota. In 1904 they took up a homestead outside Barons.



Anna married Peter Lentsman and had three children. Julia married John Kulpas and they moved to Montana. Mary married John Klem and moved to Vancouver; they had two daughters.

AUDA SAAR

Auda Saar moved to Canada with his brothers Alex and John in 1904 or 1905 and took out a homestead around 1908.

With Martin Oliver, Auda bought a tractor and threshing machine and did custom threshing. After a few years, Auda sold his share and continued custom threshing on his own.

He decided to start his own flour mill using his steam tractor and millstones he chiselled himself; the largest of the millstones was four feet in diameter. His interest in this project did not last long, though, and he sold his assets, dragged the huge millstone into the bushes, and sailed to Australia, where he found work looking after locomotives in a roundhouse. He remained in Australia until he died.

More than thirty years later, Auda's nephew, Oscar Saar, found the massive millstone and hauled it into the yard. Oscar requested that his ashes placed under the millstone, as a tribute to his family's heritage.

JOHN AND LISA SAFFEL

John and Lisa Saffel and their son Leonard came to Barons in 1914 from Crimea via Fort Pierre, South Dakota and Medicine Hat, Alberta. In Alberta, Lisa gave birth to five children: Hilda, Walter, Elizabeth, Martha, and Arnold.



John farmed until he died in 1948. Lisa died in 1958.

During World War II, Leonard worked as a welder in Seattle. He now farms near Barons.

Hilda worked at Hotel Vancouver and is a prize-winning knitter. She married George Wollan in 1968.

Walter left farming in 1939 and held various jobs before eventually receiving a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from the University of Washington in 1949. Since 1956 he has worked for Texaco as an accountant.

Elizabeth died in 1938.

Martha, who worked as a telephone operator for many years, died in 1971.

Arnold became a teacher and taught in the Lethbridge School Division. During WWII, he joined the RCAF, and later he earned his Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Alberta and earned an MBA at Western Ontario University. Following an appointment at the University of Alberta that included teaching at The Banff Centre, he founded his own chartered accounting firm in Calgary. He continues to teach both at The Banff Centre and Mount Royal College. He has been married since 1959 to Vivien Roland and has three children.

SESTRAP FAMILY

Mike Sestrap along with his two brothers, Mart and Gust, emigrated from Estonia in 1905. Mike started a homestead northwest of Gilby, Alberta. He was sure to transport his sewing machine and iron with him as he was a talented tailor in Estonia. In 1907 Mike and Gust began constructing the Gilby store. Using a team of oxen, Mike would deliver goods to the property from Lacombe, Alberta. The trip typically lasted two or three days.



Mike married Fanny Krintila in 1912. Together they had four children: Elvie, Arvo, George and Ray. Six years later, Mike sold the Gilby store to the Shorrocks family and moved to Eckville. Shortly thereafter Fanny died. In 1922 a young, single Estonian woman arrived in Red Deer, Alberta. It had been arranged that the woman was to marry a friend of Mike's. Wasting no time, Mike travelled to Red Deer, unbeknownst to his friend. In a short time he had charmed

Alma, the young lady. They were married that same year.

During this time the Sestrap family contributed to the development of Eckville. Mike helped finance and build Eckville's Memorial Hall. However, tragedy soon struck the Sestrap family when a devastating fire ravaged their General store. Dodging flames and crashing timbers, Mike was able to salvage the cash register. His efforts in contributing to the development of Eckville did not go unnoticed. J.T. Marshall wrote a poem about three integral pioneers of Eckville. Never completed, the poem is as follows:

There is a place called Eckville;
Which is a great town
Because of three gentlemen,
Of established renown.
They were Mike, Mac and Macintosh,
A trio hard to beat.
And these three gentlemen are noted
For holding down the street.
Now if you chance to Eckville come
You'll surely meet this clan,
With a smile upon their countenance
That would jar a healthy man.
They would gladly take you by the hand.
And waltz you all around,
And tell you all the secrets
About our little town.

And if at night you chance to wake
To noise upon the street,
You'll know it's these famous gentlemen
That's holding down the street.

Alma passed away in 1956, and Mike followed her two years later. Mike's first wife, Fanny, had a son named Uno from a previous marriage. Uno stayed in central Alberta, operating a variety of general stores in the area. Elvie completed a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Alberta. She married Cliff Vertine and moved to Victoria. In 1939, Arvo married a woman by the name of Marjorie. He owned a charter operation outside of Kitimat, British Columbia. George married Lydia Kraft in 1941. He worked in the oil field sector for numerous years prior to opening Sestrap's Café with Lydia in 1962. In time, they sold the business and retired to Penhold, Alberta. Ray helped his brothers manage various general stores. He married Myrel Lewis, and, together, they had two children. They retired to Clearbrook, British Columbia.



SILBERMAN FAMILY



The family of Martin and Lisa Silberman provides another worthwhile glimpse into the life of Alberta's early pioneers. Lisa was the daughter of Jakob and Mari Erdman, Barons' foremost settlers. Born in Crimea, Mari settled in Alberta in 1904 at the age of 23. Martin Silberman was born in 1877 on the Ottasaare farm in Poltsamaa district north of Tartu, Estonia. He grew up and farmed there for 27 years. Alone, he immigrated to Alberta in 1905. Two years later, he married Lisa Erdman. They had met at an Estonian youth conference organized by Reverend John Sillak of Medicine Hat, Alberta. Historical accounts report that the wedding festivities continued for three days.

Martin and Lisa's first home was a sod hut three miles south of Barons. Their daughter, Helmi, was born on the farm in 1908. Martin and Lisa also had twins named Ernest and Walter. They arrived the following year. Obtaining clean drinking water was a considerable challenge. Drinkable water was soon hauled by wagons from nearby Keho Lake, one mile from the farm.



The coal stove and furnace in the basement required coal transported from the mines in Lethbridge. Coal oil lamps provided light during the long winter evenings. The terrain on which Barons was located was very flat with very few trees and no river closer than ten miles. Prairie fires were thus common.



In 1910 a larger, wood-frame house was built. A conglomeration of deciduous and coniferous trees were planted as a means of providing shelter from southern Alberta's blustery winds. For nine years, the Silberman's successfully farmed their land. When Estonia claimed independence in 1918, Martin Silberman wanted to return to his birthplace and provide his children with a sound Estonian education. When payments could not be made, the Silberman's returned to Canada, reclaiming their farm in Barons.



Walter Silberman and his wife Lea farmed in Barons until they moved west, settling in Victoria, British Columbia. Walter's twin Ernest practiced law in Vancouver and served as a clerk in the famous Nuremburg Trials that tried war criminals from World War II. During his later years, he moved to southern California.



Helmi (Silberman) Munz completed a Bachelor of Arts in Seattle, Washington and a Master of Arts from Columbia University in New York City. She later resided in Calgary and Edmonton.

Living in Canada after World War II, Martin Silberman was committed to develop and promote his new Canadian heritage. He spoke only English and said very little with regards to his Estonian heritage. Martin and Lisa lived a quiet life in Barons. Martin died in Lethbridge in 1956. Lisa died in Calgary at the age of 93. As of 2006, Martin and Lisa had eight grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren, and 10 great-great grandchildren.

SILBERMANS OF BARONS

The following is written by their grand daughter, Lillian Munz, in November 2006. Much of the material is from two books: 'Juri's Children', 1989, by Barbara Gullickson, and the Barons History Book, titled "Wheatheart of the West", 1972.

Barons Pioneers, Martin and Lisa Silberman, lived a long and adventurous life. Lisa's parents Jacob and Mari Erdman were 8 and 10 years old when they walked from Estonia to Crimea, a distance of 1,500 miles in 1861. About 70 Estonian families settled in villages vacated by the Crimean War. When they grew up, Jacob and Mari Tint married in Crimea and raised their nine children in Targhan, Crimea, but 40 years after arriving in Crimea, they emigrated to America (Dakota) in 1901. Three of their daughters were married by this time.

The Tsar was conscripting young men for the army and the young Estonians wanted a freer life. Lisa was 20 years old in 1901 when she left her homeland and sailed 3rd class with her family to New York. The Erdmans bought land in South Dakota, where several Estonian families had settled ten years earlier, but life there was too harsh so the Erdmans and many other families headed west after only one and a half years in America. Grandma could sing The Star Spangled Banner when she was 90.

Lisa's family travelled by train with farm animals and equipment in other box cars to Lethbridge and then by horseback to the Barons area where land had been procured by a scouting party consisting of John Kewe, Jacob Erdman, Gus Erdman, Anton Kulpas and P Lentsman who trekked out west the year before to prepare for the immigration of their families and friends.



In 1904, Jacob and Mari Erdman tilled the prairie sod and built a house west of what was later called Barons. After working as a housemaid from 1903 to 1907 in Lethbridge and Medicine Hat, 24 year old Lisa met Martin Silberman in Medicine Hat. Martin was born west of Tartu, Estonia, in 1878, in the area of Kalani, and was raised on a farm with five sisters and two brothers Hans Silberman who became a well known doctor in Estonia, and Jaan who continued to farm the family land.



Martin became involved with those who were working for Estonian Independence, and when things got rather dangerous, he decided to leave his homeland and sail for the "New World". He took a train to Medicine Hat where an Estonian Lutheran minister, Rev. Sillak, organized a young adults group Estonians in the Medicine Hat area, among whom was Lisa Erdman.

Rev. Sillak had placed an ad in the Estonian papers to the effect that anyone wanting to emigrate to Canada, should get on a boat that landed in Halifax. Then they should board a train for Medicine Hat. From there they searched out homesteads and CPR land.

Martin went further west to work in Exshaw at the cement plant as a blacksmith for a year to earn money to get married and start farming in the Barons area. In 1907 Lisa and Martin were married in Barons in a Lutheran ceremony. The wedding festivities lasted for three days.

Martin and Lisa's first home was a sod hut three miles south of the village. Daughter, Helmi, was born on the farm in 1908. Twins, Ernest and Walter, arrived in 1909 with the help of Mari, Lisa's mother. Three children within two years! Good water was one problem. At first it was obtained from Allen's well, several miles away. Later, water for household needs was hauled by wagon from the irrigation lake named Keho Lake, one mile from the farm. The well water pumped by a windmill on the farm yard was too alkaline.



The coal stove and furnace in the basement required coal being hauled from the mine in Lethbridge. Coal oil lamps provided light in the long winter evenings. The land around Barons was very flat with no native trees and no river closer than ten miles. Prairie fires were common. A wide plowed strip around the shack kept the flames from the prairie grass roof.

The next year a two room wood house was built across the road. Wood was hauled from Claresholm. Hundreds of caragana, maple and poplar trees were planted around the large farm site as a wind break because in southern Alberta there is always a wind. A group of fir trees grew tall at the SE corner of the farm yard. About eight years later a big two storey house was ordered from the Eatons catalogue and all of the pieces, even the fireplace for the dining room, was shipped out by CPR and assembled on the farm. A grand four bedroom house now stood facing the irrigation lake to the east.

Several square miles of rich earth was cleared of stones and buffalo bones, and then farmed by Martin and his hired men. A long barn was built to house the many work horses. A special shed was built to hold the harnesses and other equipment used in plowing and harvesting the grain. A steam engine was used to separate the grain from the straw which formed a huge straw pile that was essential for the cattle in the winter time.

The train tracks were laid through Barons with the help of Chinese labour in the early 1909 and the row of grain elevators soon became a landmark - all nine of them. Horse drawn wagons brought the wheat, rye and barley to the elevators for the train to transport to Calgary or Lethbridge to the flour mills. For twelve years of married life, the Silbermans developed their large farm operation, covering several square miles.

Then, when Estonia did become independent after WW1, the family packed up and left Canada. From 1919 to 1932, the Silbermans lived in Tartu, Estonia. Estonia had gained liberation from the Russian domination that had ruled for hundreds of years. Martin wanted his children to receive high school and university education there, where his relatives lived and where schools were more firmly established. Their Barons farm was turned over on a 'lease to own'

arrangement to Martin's niece Linda (Jurman) and her husband Gus J. Erdman, parents of Karl, Ilmar and Evelyn. While in Europe, in the early 1930's Walter married Lea Weiler in Estonia (1933) and Helmi married Emmerich Munz in Austria in November, 1933.

During the dirty thirties, black dust storms and low grain prices made farming a miserable experience, but farmers grew their own food, paid farm help only one dollar a day and somehow survived. When the dirty thirties made land payments impossible, the Silbermans returned from Europe and reclaimed their farm.

The two young couples came to Canada almost immediately because the European political scene was not too peaceful, a few years before WW II. The twins changed their surname to Silverton in 1936.

Walter and Lea built a house in the village in 1943 and lived in Barons until the early 1960's when they moved to Victoria. Helmi left the farm and bought a house in the village in 1948 . She then went on to university, receiving her BA in Seattle, and her MA in art at Columbia University, N.Y., when she was in her late 40's. She later lived in Edmonton and Calgary. Her children, Lillian, Albert and Martha, finished school in Barons and went on to university in Edmonton. Lisa was proud that all of her children and 8 grandchildren had university degrees. She herself had reached grade four in Crimea.

Lisa enjoyed handiwork. She hand knotted a Persian style carpet 10 x 12 for the living room while in Estonia. She was always busy with crochet hooks or making dolls from old stockings. In her 80's she took up oil painting for 10 years. She was proud to be Canadian and won a huge Canadian flag for writing a poem for a contest in Calgary about her feelings about Canada.

Walter did the farming for his parents until the farm was sold to the Konynenbelts of Nobleford . Lisa and Martin continued to live on their farm until 1948 when they moved into the village of Barons. By then mechanized farming was in full swing. Combines worked until after dark. Trucks hauled wheat to the elevators. One hundred head of cattle were grazed near the lake and brought to Lethbridge for sale. One year, one hundred chickens were raised by Helmi, and brought to restaurants in Lethbridge ready for the kitchens. Sold for \$1 each, the money went for piano lessons for the children.

Martin Silberman did not socialize with the local Estonians, nor did he celebrate the customs or traditions of his homeland. There was a strong feeling in the war years and afterwards that immigrants should try to be "Canadian" and that English should be spoken to the younger generations. Stories of the "Old Days" were not commonly told in the Silberman household. The grandchildren spoke no Estonian, though their grandparents spoke Estonian among themselves all the time.

On one occasion in the late 1940's, Walter's family and Helmi's family drove to Eckville to the St. John's Day celebrations. It was a long drive over gravel roads. The younger generation didn't know the Estonian language, so the bonfire was the only strong memory of the event.

Ernest Silverton practised law in Vancouver, served with the Canadian Intelligence Corps in England from 1941 to 1946. He was a clerk in the Neuremburg Trials in Germany. After his return to Vancouver he married Julie the daughter of an Estonian immigrant Michael Walters

originally from Saarama. The two Estonian bachelors, Michael and Martin had worked together in Exshaw in 1906 but didn't keep in touch. When their children, Ernest and Julie, met in 1941, in Ocean Falls, B.C. and married in 1948, it was a wonderful co-incidence. Julie was director of nurses at the Vancouver General Hospital at the time of their marriage. Ernest later moved with his wife and two daughters, Giuliana (now a gynocologist in Los Angeles) and Shelley to California where he practised law. He passed away in 1991 in Pasedena.

In 1948, Martin sponsored a nephew, son of his brother Hans, to come to Canada after the war. Olaf Silberman studied medicine in Edmonton and became a bone specialist in Eston and Etonia, Saskatchewan. He died of a heart attack while in his early 40's. Olaf's sister Agda from Tallinn and her family visited Alberta in 2004. As guests of Martha Munz-Gue, their cousin, they toured Agda's uncle Martin Silberman's old farm and tried to envision how the Canadian pioneers lived one hundred years ago while their own country was still under the rule of the Tsars.

Martin lived a quiet life in Barons for eight years and died in Lethbridge in 1956 at the age of 79. Almost 20 years later, Lisa died in Calgary in 1975 at the age of 93. They leave 8 grandchildren, and sixteen great-grandchildren and ten great-great grandchildren - that's 34 progeny living in western Canada and USA (as of 2006).

With this family, the "Estonian Heritage" was not evident in everyday life, except that the pioneer generation spoke Estonian at home among themselves and with their own children. In the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's for birthdays and Christmas all of the Estonians in the Barons area gathered for a Sunday afternoon party at one of the farms.

In more recent years, the "Erdman Reunions" have become an annual event in Barons or Lethbridge. Sometimes over 40 people would gather for a picnic, entertainment and church. It is the third and fourth generations now that attend these gatherings, and Estonian is not spoken. It is more of a "family gathering" than and ethnic reminder.



The Silvertons and Munzes grew up and finished high school in Barons. All of the grandchildren went on to University, as did their parents. The Estonians were very keen about higher education.

There were nine grain elevators in the pioneer days of Barons. One by one they were demolished in the last decade of the 20th century. The wood was buried in nearby fields.

These icons of the prairies were familiar landmarks for 80 years.

On a trip to Banff in the 1950's Ernest (Silberman) Silvertown suggested that the two "pioneers" have their photo taken so the Chief very kindly permitted us to stand with him for this photo.



Like many of the pioneer Estonians, all of the Silberman children, and all of the grandchildren and most of the great grandchildren have at least one university degree.

There are teachers, a lawyer, business people, engineers, scientists, a doctor, a nurse, artists, musicians, environmentalists among the Silberman descendants. None of the descendants have remained in the Barons area.

There has been very little interaction between the Barons Estonians and the settlements of Estonians in Stettler and Eckville.

The effort to become "Canadian" seemed to be important. The younger generations did not maintain the language or ethnic customs of their grandparents, generally speaking.



Lisa enjoyed writing poetry:

Counting my Blessings (1960)

Although the years are smothering me
My heart feels young and peppy
And living with my family
I am content and happy.

I thought I'm youthful for my age
But this of course was error
And it was quickly straightened out
By one glance in the mirror.

I raised my babes in a one room house
With strictly rationed water.
I gathered cow chips for our fuel
And had no money either.

But now I live in a modern house
All drudgery avoided
And fuel and water all piped in
'Which nature has provided.

I feel quite proud and justly so
Of my posterity
There are nine young Canadians
With Varsity degrees.

Walter Silverton b. 1909 in Barons d. 1982 in Victoria

Lea Weiler (Oct 31, 1912-) Silverton married in Tallinn, Dec. 30, 1933

Mae Silverton 1935 - (m. Boie Myhre)

Ernest Silverton 1941 - (m Lorene Park)

Silvia Silverton 1939 - m. **Malcolm Marshall** of New Zealand.

Walter farmed his own land and his father and sister's land in Barons until 1964 (about 25 years) and then moved to Victoria where he built a house in Cadboro Bay.

Lea lives in Port Alberni. (2006 - age 94)





The Silberman farm house is located three miles south of Barons, a mile west of Keho Lake, an irrigation lake. The Barons area was not irrigated until very recently. The water flowed east to the Picture Butte area.

This house was ordered through the catalogue and constructed in 1917-18.

The Silbermans left to live in Estonia in 1919 and didn't return until the "dirty thirties", 1932.

Martin's niece, Linda (Jurman) Erdman, and her family, G.J. Erdman and three children Karl, Ilmar and Evelyn lived here for over ten years.

The annual Erdman reunions have been held in early July in conjunction with the parade and "sports day." Here are several generations of the Erdman descendants, 1998. Victor, Ralph, and Oscar Erdman are here - all nephews of Lisa Silberman. Lea Silverton and Elsie Erdman are here too.



In 1998, three cousins wore Estonian costumes in the Barons parade to celebrate 95 years of Erdmans farming in the district.



In costume are:

- Kelly Marshall (great-grand daughter of Lisa Silberman)
- Marilyn Johnson (grand daughter of Gus Erdman)
- Anita Gue (great-grand daughter of Lisa Silberman)

All three are descendants of pioneer Barons farmers.



Martin Silberman farmed with teams of horses from 1906 until the mid 1930's. A large horse barn was built on the farm to shelter the animals. Hired men would help to do the work. Some of the hired men were Estonian bachelors who came out to the Canadian farms to earn money

to buy their own farms.

Huge steam "separators" were used to sift the grain from the bails. The straw was blown into large straw stacks for livestock to feed on in the winter time.

The Barons area was known as a "dry land farming area" with grain and livestock predominating as a source of income.

Later some limited success in oil revenues added to the economic base. Some of the descendants of original settlers still have "mineral rights" on their ancestor's land.

Barons school photo, in 1916 or 1917 At that time there must have been at least a dozen Estonian children in this group. The Silberman children are shown: Helmi, second row to the left. Ernest: third from the right in the second row. The three Kotkas children and the Kulpas children would be there somewhere. This brick school was located where the community hall is now.





This is a small portion of a hand-knotted wool carpet that Lisa Silberman made while in Estonia during the 1920's. She brought it to Canada and it has moved from the Silberman farm, to Edmonton, to Medicine Hat and to Calgary over the last 80 years. Her daughter Helmi designed the carpet on graph paper, and a loom was constructed in one of the rooms. It took over a year to knot this in the Persian style. The size is about 3.5 metres

square. It seems that the pioneer Estonian women, though they worked hard in the house and yard, had a flair for handiwork which included cutwork table cloths, hooked rugs, crocheted bedspreads and handmade dresses and other clothing.

Lisa Silberman's Pioneer Memories

(in her own words)

After we arrived in America, we still hadn't found a place to settle permanently. South Dakota was not to be our permanent home. J. Erdman, G. Erdman, A. Kulpas and P Lentsman, with John Kewe as interpreter, went by train from Dakota to Oregon to look for land. 1903

There they met a Finlander who knew that in Alberta, there was still good land available for homesteads, so the Estonian group travelled to Claresholm where they were met by eager land agents who drove them out eastward. Mr. Lentsman took the first available homestead, next to Ernie Allen's farm. Next was A. Kulpas, then Helena Watman, then Jacob and Gus Erdman, moving eastward. The men returned to South Dakota to sell what they had bought a year earlier.

They packed up our belongings and loaded them into railroad cars, in 1904. Horses and cattle went into box cars. We reached Lethbridge, unloaded, used wagons and horses and headed north to the Blaney area., later called Barons.

There were no trees or bushes for fuel so the children gathered buffalo chips. Grown ups cut the hay from prairie grass as there was a market for it in Lethbridge. There was a lumber mill in Claresholm. A big barn was built on the farm. We lived in that after the sod house, until a wood house was built.

After I was married, we had no drinking water on the farm site. The first well was an hour's walk from the house. Often I had to leave the three children with a severe warning, "God will see what you are doing." Walter asked, "Doesn't his neck get sore, looking down all the time?"

To cure diphtheria, I coated the children's throats with coal oil applied with a chicken feather. It seemed to work.

These are just a few of my memories from days long gone. **(Lisa Silberman)**

Registration of marriage: 1907

Martin was born in "Russia" as Estonia was called then.



His parents were Hans and Tiio Silbermann.

Tiio was born a Jacobson.

Lisa was 25. Her parents were Jacob and Mari Erdmannn who were born in Estonia, but lived for 40 years in Crimea where their children were born.

Reverend Sillak, of Medicine Hat, signed this document as the officiating Lurthieran minister.

The date of the marriage was April 7, 1907.

Elinor was the old name for Barons.

Grandma Lisa's Recipes And other writings

(researched by Lil Munz, December 2006)

This is all about cooking - my memories of crimean/Estonian recipes. (by Lisa Silberman of Barons)

Stuffed Loaf

Here is one way to make stuffed buns. In one cup of flour put small teaspoon of baking powder, a teaspoon of butter, salt and mix. Then moisten with milk, mix it into a ball.

Filling: grind left over cooked meat. Chop a small onion and add that and pepper, salt and one or two raw eggs.

Roll out the dough into the shape of a bread pan. Grease the pan well. Place the filling in the middle and squeeze the edges together making a long shape. With a long spatula, lift the meat filled pastry into the pan, squeezed side down and bake.

Small stuffed buns are made the same way, except you shape the pastry into 4 inch circles and fill them with meat.

Cottage Cheese

We made cottage cheese ourselves from milk from our cows. It was different from cottage cheese that you buy in the stores. We could mix many eggs in it without it getting too liquid.

CHEESE POCKETS: half cup water, two eggs and enough flour to make a stiff dough. A little butter mixed in makes rolling out easier.

Roll the dough very thin. Cut it into squares. Fill each square with cheese and close edges. Boil in rapidly boiling water 6 to 10 minutes. Then drain water off. Add plenty of butter and roll around.

Filling of cottage cheese: 2 cups of cottage cheese, 2 eggs, salt. Mix well.

Serve Cheese Pockets with sour cream (and a bit of sugar, if you want it.)

Sult (Meat Jelly)

When an animal was butchered, then we made a kettleful of sult.

Meaty pieces of head, tongue (well cleaned) kidneys, knuckles, top part of tail and some tripe. This was boiled until the bones were loose and taken out. Add pickling spice, salt and pepper and boil up once more. Pour into bowls to cool and jell.

Meat Jelly was often eaten with a sour sauce made of vinegar, chopped onions, salt and pepper and sometimes a dash of sugar.

If the animal was a pig, then the intestines were taken out and cleaned for sausage. But the method defies description!!

Chicken was mostly boiled and the broth used for cooking rice.

Fish was always fried on a big frying pan, except for herrings.

Small sardines in Crimea were salted in laurel leaves and later eaten with boiled potatoes.

Macaroni Pudding

1 cup macaroni boiled soft and drained

Put a layer of macaroni and a layer of raisins alternately until the dish is full.

Beat two eggs and add half cup sugar and one cup milk and some flavouring like vanilla.

Pour over the macaroni and bake at 350 until firm.

Fruit Stew

Dried prunes, raisins, apricots, pears in equal amounts.

Soak over night. Boil with soaking water until soft.

Add sugar and boil up once more.

Add some cinnamon. Add a bit of cornstarch to thicken.

Biringi or Pirakad

1 pkt yeast,

1 tsp. sugar

1 cup warm water

Mix and after 10 minutes add some flour to it and let it rise for one hour.

Add one cup warm milk, 2 tablespoons of shortening, some salt and enough warmed flour to make a soft dough. Let it stand for one hour.

Filling: Ground meat - It could be left overs. If it is too dry add a raw egg. Add a chopped onion and salt. If using raw hamburger, fry it first.

Roll out dough and make small buns by filling dough with meat mixture. Bake at 400F for 30 minutes.

A larger meat filled sausage roll can be made the same way.

Sauerkraut Casserole

1 quart sauerkraut (add fresh cabbage if too sour)

1 small onion

half cup barley

one cup salted pork chops spread over top

Cover with water. Put on lid and cook in the oven for two hours.

Potato Stew

2 lbs beef boiled soft. Juice goes into the stew.

Two large potatoes, one large carrot, one large onion

Cut vegetables and add one cup of tomato juice or fresh chopped tomatoes. Use beef juice to boil vegetables with a bit of salt and pepper.

To thicken the juice, mix one tablespoon of flour with water and pour mixture over the vegetables and let it boil up.

When they are soft, add vegetables to the boiled beef.

Cabbage Rolls

One pound hamburger

2/3 cup cold water

½ cup rice flavoured with salt and pepper

small onion chopped well

Mix meat mixture by hand.

Wilt cabbage in boiling water

Fill leaf with meat mixture and fold edges into a package or roll. Put a cabbage leaf at the bottom of a greased baking dish to avoid scorching the rolls. Fill the pot with cabbage rolls. Pour enough tomato juice over to cover the rolls. Put a lid on the baking dish. Bake in the oven until fully cooked.

Salted Ham Baked In Pastry

15 pounds of ham

Set in roaster and cover with brown paper.

Paste: "chop" (cattle feed flour) mixed with water

Make a thick dough and cover the ham with this dough about one inch thick.

Bake the ham in a moderate oven for two hours or more.

Remove the pastry and feed it to the chickens. The ham will be moist and juicy.

Borscht

1 quart beef juice

1 cup tomato juice

1 small beet peeled and chopped

1 small onion

1 small potato

Enough chopped cabbage to get the right thickness.

Boil this mixture on the stove until vegetables are soft. Add a tablespoon of lemon juice or vinegar, as it should taste sour.

Add salt and pepper to taste. Eat with sour cream on top.

Large Pancakes (crepes)

Half cup flour

Half cup milk beaten in slowly

Add more milk until the mixture is like thick cream.

Add three eggs, a little at a time, beating until smooth.

Add more milk, if needed to keep the consistency.

Grease very hot frying pan. To test, put a spoonful of mixture on the pan. If the sides curl up it needs more milk.

Tip the pan to spread the mixture thinly over the entire surface of the pan. Cook until "dry". Flip the pancake and cook the other side.

Serve hot, stacked. Offer personal choice of fillings. Can be eaten with jam or fruit and rolled like a scroll. Whipped cream can be spooned on top.

Poem - Goodbye To Summer by L. Silberman age 79

Oh dear lovely summer, you are going too fast.
We love you and wish your kind visit would last.
You surely did miracles with our brown hills.
They 're green and snow water the riverbed fills.
I do have to hurry as summer's half gone.
What I started in spring should be finished and done.
The crops from the fields to granaries are hauled.
The cattle are fattened and the surplus is sold.
The vegetables washed and stored in the hold
So winter will be cozy and not very cold.
Then goodbye dear friends, I shall not go very far.
And I'll be with you as ever, the following year.

Calgary Herald Contest for Seniors - 1973

People over 65 years of age were invited to write about our Canadian flag. At age 91, Lisa Silberman who was living at the Bowview Lodge in Calgary, won first prize, a flag about five feet across.

We all should be glad to think that our ships sail the world waterways with Canadian cargoes of coal, lumber and wheat and our own Canadian flag fluttering from the masts. Before the new flag was issued, we had a borrowed flag. Our flag is beautiful in both colour and design.

It is a flag of peace as it has not been splattered with the blood of our young men.

So let's keep it clean!

Poem - Birthdays by Lisa Silberman age 91 - 1973

As birthdays are milestones
That mark our life's way.

I am stepping on a new one.
"Too many," I say.

I thank you dear youngsters
For wishing me well.
Your wishes are granted.
I still look quite swell.

To look back at my past years
I shall not now do.
Or look to the future
Oh, Grandma, it's not for you.

Just wait 'til the dear Father
Welcomes your hand
And upward you fly
To join great angel bands.
How to make home make cloth
(by Lisa Silberman)

When people started to domesticate wild animals they found that sheep were very useful. They could use the skin for clothing. It was very comfortable in the winter, but they needed something lighter for summer. Then they noticed that the wool loosened up in the spring and hung from their sides until it dropped. So they picked it up and twisted it into yarn, first by hand and then with spinning wheels.

Then they got the idea of weaving the yarn into cloth. In warm climates cotton was used to make cloth. Nowadays the scientists make chemical fibres from which many of our clothes are made.

To prepare the wool for weaving is a very complicated business. You have to card the spin it which takes months of work. Then you have to have equipment to take it off the spool of the spinning wheel when it is full. Then you dye the yarn, wash it and dry it.

Then you wind it into balls with a special tool. Then all of the small balls are connected together by using another "contraption" that hangs from the ceiling and is attached to the floor. Now you take this big roll of yarn to the loom.

There you must thread the linen warp through metal pieces. This takes about two days. After that you can start weaving. In a long day you can weave about three yards (less than 3 metres) of cloth.

Was it worth the trouble?
That was how we did it. Maybe the modern way is better.

Note: You needed a lot of wool for the woof to make a yard of cloth.

The spinning wheels were made by local carpenters.

Note: In Barons, Lisa had a spinning wheel which is now kept by her grand daughter, Martha MunzGue of Medicine Hat. (2007)

Martin and Lisa Silberman's great-great-grand daughter Hazel Gue, daughter of Kevin and Christine Gue who live in Edmonton. She is the latest member of the Martin Silberman/:Lisa Erdman family tree. Christmas, 2006



MEMORIES OF LIISA SILBERMANN

Family Heritage

Grandma was born in Crimea in an Estonian speaking village and home. She had eight sisters and brothers. Her parents were about 10 years old when they made the trek from Estonia to Crimea with about 70 other families. They had been serfs working under German landlords in a country that was overcome and governed alternately by Russia, Germany, and Sweden over the centuries. The Czar had declared that serfs could achieve freedom. One of their members read in the papers an ad for homesteaders in Crimea after the Crimean war had vacated the farms. A whole village with its horses, shoemaker, and other skilled persons moved. The Crimean years were happy years. The family took pride in farming their own land without landlords and grew all sorts of things that did not grow in the north: apricots, and watermelons to name two. As Grandma's sisters and brothers approached maturity it became clear that there would not be enough land to divide into eight so that each could have a farm of their own as their parents were now enjoying. Also there was compulsory conscription for boys of a certain age. Grandma's mother (Marie Erdman) said none of her boys would be serving in the Russian army. And plans began to be made to emigrate to North America. They sold the rich and beautiful farm in Crimea and came by ship (third class) to New York and by train to North Dakota where they farmed for almost two years. The oldest of the family stayed behind in Crimea as she had already married. Grandpa's father searched for a homestead and found one in Barons, went back to Dakota to get the rest of the family, and so life began in Barons, Alberta, Canada. Grandma by this time was close to twenty years old and went to Lethbridge to work in people's homes. She heard that pay was better in Medicine Hat and there was a group of Estonian young people there so she found work in Medicine Hat.

In the mean time Martin Silbermann had come from Estonia and the two met at the Estonian young people's group in Medicine Hat. They were married on the Jacob and Marie Erdman homestead in Barons. The Lutheran minister came from Medicine Hat to perform the marriage. (He was also from Estonia and served Estonian families in Southern Alberta by performing baptisms, weddings and funerals for them).

Grandma and Grandpa purchased a homestead in the Barons area and Grandma says "Then the work began". They harvested prairie wool for their first cash crop which they sold in Lethbridge. The homestead house was where Mom was born in 1908. The next year a bigger house was built from wood brought from the mountains. This is where the twin boys were born in 1909.

Memorable Events and Occasions

Grandma read every essay and poem I wrote. I felt she knew me and how I thought better than anyone else did. She always had a project on the go whether it was cooking -(cabbage rolls, soup, pie, crepes, meat pockets, rosa mana etc) or gardening (vegetables, flowers, trees, lawns)

reading (English and Estonian books and papers), handicraft (knitting, crocheting, rug hooking, mending) writing stories and poems, or painting pictures. She prepared my 13th birthday party, and attended all my special events as I grew up (graduations, Gold Cord Ceremonies, confirmation, concerts, and community events I was involved in).

Grandma took over raising three kids when she was over 60 years old. She was always organized and capable of the challenge. She enjoyed Martha's wedding and celebrating her 90th birthday. She was thrilled to see her namesake Liisa in the spring of 1975 when Liisa Gue was 3 months old and Liisa Silberman was 93 years old.

Faith and Beliefs

Attended Lutheran Young peoples group in Medicine Hat (1905). Married by Lutheran Minister(1907). Joined the United Church in Barons. Her children were confirmed in the Lutheran church in Estonia. She viewed the different denominations as watching the same play from different parts of the theatre. God was the same; what people saw and their interpretations were different. She had a personal faith and she had no patience for evangelistic missionaries.

Work

On the farm she had "pinks", iris, tulips, delphiniums ,current and chokecherry bushes and wild plums. Hedges were clipped and the patch of prairie grass was cut. Camomile grew everywhere and us kids would pick the daisy-like flowers for a cup of warm sweet "tea flower tea" which still today is a core symbol of comfort and caring. There always was a huge garden on the farm until they left the farm in 1948. Then for the next ten years she planted one in the town of Barons which she looked after with the help of Lillian, Albert and Martha. Even in California when she lived in Sacramento with Ernie and his family, Grandma's green thumb got to work.

She worked at all levels of the food process: production, processing, preserving, storage, preparation and service. She was mother, farmer, housekeeper, cook, gardener, grandmother, creator of beautiful and utilitarian things (living room rug, mittens, scarves, table cloths, clothes). She was always neat, faithful and uncomplaining. She always rested in the afternoon (after rising at 6 am) and went to bed at 8 pm. She was very regular in her habits.

Interests and Hobbies

Reading, knitting, crocheting, painting, poetry, writing stories (in Estonian and English) keeping in touch with family, gardening.

Lillian gave her a paint set when she was 80 and she worked for ten years with oils quite happily. Then she said the pile was getting too high and she quit.

Lillian was getting large print novels from the Calgary library until the week before she died at the age of 93. She preferred fiction with a bit of history to it.

In the 1940's we would each get a pair of hand knit mittens with fancy snowflake patterns. She hand knotted a 12 ft. by 12 ft. carpet in dark green with floral pattern. It took a year to make.

Accomplishments

Many accomplishments are listed under work and interests. Raising two families, fluent in three languages, staying healthy, staying cheerful and steady all her life, and remaining faithful to her family are accomplishments we most valued. She attended school three years in Crimea. The language of instruction was Russian. She said she was a graduate of the University of Hard Knocks. Though she didn't use Russian after she left Crimea the poetry she memorised as a school girl came back to her in her 90's.

Character and Traits

Strong willed, sensitive, enjoyed a party, enjoyed family, responsible, prayerful, independent pioneer spirit, rather refined, forthright, no nonsense, a bit too quick with opinion if she didn't approve, neat about clothing but not extravagant, proud of her offspring, compatible with her husband (able to tone him down when he got argumentative). She had no really close women friends with whom she could share daily experiences. She viewed people as either strangers or relatives. She viewed food, soil, family as sacred yet did not verbalize that. Just lived it.

Social Contributions

Grandma supported the Barons United Church, Naramata Center, Girl Guides (10 years on the parent's committee). She supported her children and grandchildren in their accomplishments and enjoyed being with them. As a parent substitute for Lillian, Albert and Martha she had the gift of keeping the household in perfect control without saying a thing. We did everything we could to help with chores. Piano practice, homework, etc. were our own responsibility. There were no reminders. We were quite a team!

She took her responsibilities to her immediate family and her extended family seriously and as a profession of faith and vocation.

Martha Munz Gue

Thoughts on Death

Why do we grieve a man's death?

He is part of our picture

His presence missed as though an errant

splash of paint blotted his face from among the others.

It no longer seems the same for us without him?

Something is missing in the calm order of our world?

Or do we weep for Sorrow's sake,
Reveling in the exploit of finer sense. Sorrow, our master, our idol,
We bow our heavy hearts upon thy altar.

Or do we grieve because he will no more feel the sun rise over
whispering wheat fields tremble at the subtle whiteness of a hail cloud
looming in the July sky, thrill as harvest hums around him stoop with
steaming pails of milk in the twilight chores, and feel the warm comfort
of winter's lingering days, only to long for the throb of spring which
ushers in another cycle - wheat to earth and back to wheat again.



Or do we grieve?

God, who welcomes as we bid farewell,
Cleanse the hearts of weeping hypocrites.

Lillian Munz

REV. JOHN SILLAK

Reverend John Sillak graduated from Seminary College in 1888 with a wealth of worldly knowledge and a sound understanding of philosophical discourse. He was a renowned linguist capable of speaking and writing in over 10 languages including Estonian, Latvian, German, English, Latin, Hebrew, Greek and Arabic, among others.



Reverend Sillak was born in 1864 in Dorpat (Tallinn), Estonia. He married Anna Loorberg when he was 25 years old. In 1891, he received an invitation from the Iowa Synod, a Lutheran Church, to serve as a Pastor and Missionary guiding American Estonians, Latvians and Russians. Before he began this assignment, he attended post-graduate studies at the Springfield Seminary of the Missouri Lutheran Church Synod. In the spring of 1901, he accepted an invitation to serve the needs of Lutherans in western Canada. This position required extensive travelling throughout Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta and the northern United States. Reverend Sillak frequently translated religious texts and wrote thousands of pages of philosophical discourse. He was very dedicated to his profession and made numerous solitary voyages to scattered Estonian settlements to perform religious ceremonies. He would provide sermons in Estonian, immediately followed by a German oration. He passed away in 1953 in Medicine Hat where a street had been named in his honour.

By all accounts, Reverend Sillak performed his missionary work humbly and professionally. He was patient, dignified and always willing to help. His dedication to his work as a religious preacher is reinforced by the sheer magnitude of his constituency. It stretched from as far north as Edmonton and as far south as Oregon. His fluency in many languages enabled him to translate the Lutheran Confessions into Estonian and Latvian. In recognition of his efforts, he received an honorary Doctor of Philosophy degree from the Canadian Lutheran College. He was elected Life Member to the Canadian Lutheran College on 1 June 1946.

TIHKANE FAMILY

John and Anna (Narustrang) Tihkane were born in Narva, Estonia. Married in Cardiff, Wales in 1900, they arrived in Irvine, Alberta in 1904. John started a homestead nine miles south of Walsh, Alberta. It was a quarter section of semi-arid farmland with no running water. His attempts at drilling for a well failed numerous times. John disliked the prospect of grain farming, so he started a dairy operation, milking cows and shipping cream to Medicine Hat. John temporarily resided in Vermont in an effort to start a profitable farming enterprise. Unsuccessful, he worked in Montréal, trying to save up enough money to return to Alberta.



John and Anna had four children: Lena, Art, Martha and Emilia. As a teenager, Lena worked as a housemaid. At 16 years of age Lena contracted typhoid fever and soon passed away. By 1919, the Tihkanes returned to their original homestead near Medicine Hat, Alberta. Winters in the southeast corner of Alberta were difficult without financial assistance from the provincial Government. Art snared the occasional rabbit, thereby providing his family with some much needed nourishment; however Art's contributions were not enough to satisfy his hard working family. Conditions on the farm became unbearable with no accessible water. Drought soon forced the cows to succumb to starvation.

John and Anna moved to Medicine Hat. Living on the outskirts of town, John kept a cow and several chickens. Their youngest daughter, Emilia, lived with them. John passed away in 1945 while Anna passed away on March 26, 1966 following a short illness. Emilia Tihkana passed away in Medicine Hat on March 2, 1996 at the age of 87. She was predeceased by her other siblings.

OBITUARY- TIHKANE- for Medicine Hat News Monday, March 26, 1966- Patricia

Mrs. Anna Tihkane, resident of 1201 Ross St., passed away in the Medicine Hat General Hospital early Saturday morning March 26, 1966, following a short illness.

Born in Narva, Estonia on September 28, 1892 Mrs. Tihkane was raised and educated there. She moved to England and worked there until 1900. She married John Tihkane in Cardiff, Wales in 1900. They resided there for a short while, moving then to Estonia, and in 1905 coming to Canada where they settled on a homestead south of Walsh, where they farmed until moving to Vermont, U.S.A. in 1914. They later resided in Montreal and returned to Alberta to the homestead in 1919 where they again farmed until retirement in 1945 when they moved to Medicine Hat.

Mrs. Tihkane was an ardent and active member of the Pentecostal Evangelical Centre.

She was predeceased by her husband, John in 1945, and a daughter Lena in 1917.

Surviving her passing are two daughters- MISS MILLIE TIHKANE of Medicine Hat and MISS MARTHA ELVEY of Edmonton, and a son ARTHUR of Vancouver, B.C. She is also survived by two grandchildren.

Rev. J.P. Lave conducted a funeral service in the PENTECOSTAL EVANGELICAL CENTRE this afternoon at 1 o'clock. Interment followed in the Hillside Cemetery under the direction of the Pentecost Funeral Home.

A.E.B. NARUSTRANG

TIPMAN FAMILY

The Tipman family's journey to western Canada began with a migration eastward to Tver in west central Russia.

Along with hundreds of other families, the Tipmans founded homesteads. Due to political instability and unfavourable conditions, the Tipmans, like many other families, became dissatisfied with the status quo.

Advertisements published by the Canadian Pacific Railway company highlighted the benefits of homesteading in western Canada. A 160-acre piece of

land could be purchased for \$10. An opportunity such as this appealed to the Tipmans, and they soon set sail across the Atlantic Ocean. Following a two-week journey by sea in 1903, the Tipmans were transported by train to Red Deer.



When Magnus Tipman and his family arrived, he soon discovered that there was no longer any suitable space in the Medicine Valley on which to farm. The Tipmans ventured to Medicine Hat in search of suitable homesteads but, instead, they found the terrain too arid for farming. In 1904, the Tipmans discovered unsettled land near Stettler. Magnus built a large but modest one-room house with dirt flooring. Soon after, Magnus' brothers Juhan and Joseph and his sister Leena arrived, exhausted yet excited at the new opportunity.

Each of the Tipmans started his own homestead within a few miles of the others. This allowed family members to maintain a congenial social network. Joseph Tipman was actively involved in the community, serving on various agricultural and labour associations (e.g., Director of Stettler Co-operative Association).

Joseph had a short stint working in the coal mines of British Columbia until he was forced to return to Stettler due to a severe knee injury. In 1928, he bought a section of land and, like his brother Magnus had done years before, he began farming.

In the spring, Magnus, with the aid of oxen, cultivated five acres of land and seeded it with a mixture of barley, oats, and rye. A small plot was used as a vegetable garden. Like many other pioneer families, the Tipmans had to travel days by sleigh or wagon to purchase groceries in the closest town.



In 1912, Magnus died in a tragic threshing accident. Eight years later, his wife, Sophia, passed away after a lengthy illness. They had five sons and three daughters: Johan (John), Mike, Ado, Ferdie, Edward, Mary, Sophie, and Louise. The farm

remains in the Tipman family. However, a lifestyle based solely on



agriculture was not feasible for the entire Tipman family. Several of the Tipman children became successful school teachers. In 1940, Ado Tipman married Aletha Klaus and he settled into a dual career of teaching and farming. They had three children: Bob, Allan, and Marlene. Bob served as the first president of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society.

GUS WALL

Gus was a bachelor and lived on the family homestead near Sylvan Lake with his widowed mother, Lena Wall. His father, George, did not like the farm but both Lena and Gus loved it. Together they grew vegetables, raised chickens, and looked after the oxen and cows. In addition to farming, Gus loved to skate, play the harp, and tinker in his shop.



After his mother died, Gus moved into Sylvan Lake, where he repaired watches and machinery. He died in the Rocky Mountain House Nursing Home.

PETER WALTERS (PIHT) FAMILY

William Peter Walters (family name Piht was changed to Walters in Canada) was born in Saarema, Estonia, in 1871. After teaching in the Oreku Russian Orthodox Church Parish for seven years, he went to St. Petersburg and from there to North America, after hearing of "free" land. He knew of other Estonians in Alberta, among them his brother-in-law John Kask who was homesteading in the Norma District near Sylvan Lake. In 1900, Peter joined Alex Kask and travelled to Alberta.



In order to support himself, Peter worked first for the CP railway, where he earned a dollar a day, half of which covered his room and board. In 1903, he wrote to Alma Kuningas, whom he had met in St. Petersburg, and asked her to come to Canada and be his wife. The next year, he was awarded land to homestead. In addition to clearing the land by hand, he continued to work away from home, in the coal mines in Blairmore, Canmore, and Exshaw.

Their daughters Eugenie and Alide, along with their cousin Elizabeth Kask, went to Norma School (and found the homemade desks very uncomfortable!) and later attended high school in Red Deer. Eugenie, with the help of a government loan, took Normal School Training in Camrose. Alide went to the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton to train as a nurse. She became ill and, after a year in the sanatorium near Bowness, she returned home, where she died in 1932.

Peter had died the year before, of a heart attack. Alma tried to look after the farm with help from relatives but it proved to be too much. She sold the equipment, rented the farm, and moved to Port Kells, British Columbia with Eugenie. Eugenie stayed with her a few months and then returned to Alberta to teach. Alma died in 1942, and soon after, Eugenie moved to British Columbia, where some of her extended family lived. She taught in the Surrey Municipality in British Columbia and elsewhere. She retired in 1965.

JOHN WARES

John Wares and his wife Anna (Sonnatar) , sister of Anna (Sonnatar) Matteus (Matthews) emigrated from Estonia to Eckville, Alberta in 1911. Their three children Rudy, Eglä and Erta were born in Alberta. John Wares made a successful application for a homestead patent in May, 1920.



The family moved to British Columbia in 1933. Mrs. Wares passed away in 1934 and her husband John on July 27th, 1967.

MICHAEL AND ELIZABET (KASK) WARTNOW

Michael and Elizabet (Lisa) (Kask) Wartnou arrived in Sylvan Lake in 1901 with four children. While staying with Alex Kask they built a two-story home near Burnt (Cygnet) Lake. The house was destroyed by a grass and forest fire. Lisa ran with her children and their cow into a creek for safety. She later observed that the wild animals, big and small came and stood with them, unafraid, in the water. The family moved to Big Valley in 1907.



One of the Wartnow children, Alexander, born in 1904 married Hilda Pauline (Klaus) Wartnow, born in 1905. A son, Floyd Wartnow was born in 1927 at Yahk, British Columbia.



JOHN AND EMMA (JASMIN) WERNICK

John and Emma Wernick* were married in Estonia in the fall of 1904 and immigrated to Canada the following spring. John was a carpenter but wanted to become a farmer - a dream that was impossible to fulfill in Estonia.



While establishing a homestead at Gilby, Alberta, John used his carpentry skills to supplement the family's income. He worked on the construction of a CPR bridge over the Bow River and built the turbine wheel and housing for Mäesepp's grist mill at Gilby, Alberta. He also made the many coffins that the community unfortunately required in those early years.

In 1916 the Wernicks traded their farm for an orchard in Summerland, British Columbia - the deal was made through an ad in the *Winnipeg Free Press*. Then in 1920 they decided to return to Estonia.

The Wernicks had five children. The three oldest - Henry, Anna and Eddie - returned to Canada from Estonia in the mid- to late 1920s. Henry was a mechanic at Edmonton Motors, Anna a mother and homemaker, and Eddie a farmer and carpenter in British Columbia.

John died in 1948, age 84, and Emma in 1962, age 80.

* As happened with many immigrants, John's original name (not known) had been changed to "Wernick" on the deed to his homestead. John chose to keep the name.

IMMIGRANTS (1918-1941)

Between the two wars, a number of Estonian families left their homeland and relocated in Alberta. Many of them worked on neighbouring farms and established strong ties with Alberta's Estonian pioneers providing them with an easier transition. As the evidence suggests, it was common for many interwar immigrants to marry into other Estonian families expanding and strengthening Alberta's Estonian community.



GEORGE ANDREKSON FAMILY

George and Sally Andrekson came from Estonia in 1924 with their two young children, Lydia and Alex. They lived in Fort St. James, B.C., until 1929, when they moved to the Barons area, where George farmed until 1952. In Barons, the Andreksens had two more children, Mary Lou and George.



Lydia became a nurse, married, and moved to Burnaby, B.C. Alex studied law and had five children; he lives in Edmonton. Mary Lou is a teacher and lives with her husband and three children near Milk River. George, his wife Joan Milner, and their three children farm near Barons.

George Senior died in 1954. Sally lives in Vancouver.

AUGUST WILLIAM HOLTSWELL

August Holtswell was born on July 25, 1897 in the Crimea. At the onset of the Russian Revolution August left the Crimea and walked through Romania, Bulgaria and Poland before eventually settling in Estonia, which had just recently gained its independence from Russia. In Estonia he met his future wife Helmi.



In 1923 August left Europe and immigrated to Calgary, Alberta. After trying several jobs he eventually became manager of an office furniture manufacturing company called KP Nielson. August remained with KP Nielson until his retirement. At KP Nielson, August worked with fellow Estonian immigrant Walter Silberman.

Helmi arrived in Calgary in 1928 and soon married August. They found a quaint apartment downtown and settled here until, in 1953, a fellow Estonian, Enzo Magi, convinced the Holtswells to build a new house near the Elbow River to be closer to other Estonian families. During the 1950s, a total of three Estonian families lived in proximity of each other. The Holtswells enjoyed socializing with their neighbours and maintained many Estonian traditions and customs.

August died on June 13, 1967 in Calgary at the age of 70. Helmi later married Peter Kalev from Eckville, Alberta. She outlived August by 30 years before passing away in 1999 at the age of 90.

KALEV FAMILY

Nikolai (Nick) Kalev was born on October 19, 1905 and emigrated to Canada in 1929 as a 24 year-old. Nikolai's older brother, Peter, arrived in Canada in 1948. Their young sister, Martha, never did make the trip dying from pneumonia while trying to escape from Estonia to Sweden.



Upon arriving in Alberta Nick worked in Barons briefly before moving to the Medicine Valley to assist Martin Sestrap on his farm. Nikolai was well known around the community for his excellent penmanship, often being called upon to draft and write publicly displayed names. Aside from calligraphy, Nick played a variety of musical instruments. It was at a local dance hall where Nick met his future wife.

Hilja Raabis, daughter of Charlie and Olga Raabis, married Nick Kalev in 1933. Shortly after their marriage, they bought a quarter section of land. They had two children: Walter, born in 1935, and Edna, born in 1937. During the winters, Nick worked at McTighe's Lumber Camps to earn additional funds. Nick died in 1951 while Hilja continued to work on the farm with the support of her two children.

Hilja spent many weekend singing and entertaining guests with her sister Mary. A talented duo, they were often invited to perform at local weddings, anniversaries and special events. She complimented her singing voice by writing songs and poetry. Hilja continued to live on the family farm until she was 91 years old. She passed away in August 2000.

Walter continued to farm the land after his parents passed away. Edna graduated from the University of Alberta with a degree in Education. She married Boyd Osborne and, together, they had two children named Daryl (1964) and Janice (1969). In 1964, Walter married Tiiu Koppel in Red Deer. They had three children: Brian (1968), Lori (1970) and Myrna (1973).

LORI (KALEV) SPARROW

Lori Sparrow is a fifth generation Estonian descendant. Her great great grandfather, John Kinna, was one of the original pioneer families that settled in the Medicine Valley near Eckville, Alberta. Lori maintains fond memories of growing up in this area and retaining her Estonian heritage.



Lori's mother, Tiiu (Koppel) Kalev was born in Estonia. Her father, Walter, was the son of Nick Kalev, who emigrated to Alberta in 1905. Walter and Tiiu's three children, Brian, Lori and Myrna all grew up in an environment whereby steam baths, rye bread, blood sausage, kringel, head cheese and Estonian songs were the norm. It is evident to see that maintaining their Estonian heritage was paramount to the Kalev family. Estonian was the lingua franca among Estonian-Canadians living in Medicine Valley.

Lori recognizes the importance of maintaining one's historic roots and ethnic heritage. She believes it is important to document family history so that stories and traditions can be shared with younger generations. This way, her children and others alike can too appreciate the accomplishments of Alberta's Estonian pioneers.

Lori is a registered nurse for the David Thompson Health region and resides on a farm north of Eckville with her husband Rick Sparrow and their three young children, Lexi, Evan and Reed.

AUGUST AND ALMA (SESTRAP) LIIVAM

When Alma Sestrap's father, Mart, died in 1927, she was only 17 years old. Alma's older sister was attending the University of Alberta and her younger sister and brother were still in school, so it was left to Alma to manage the family farm at Medicine Valley. Fortunately, this was a job that she was well prepared to do. All through her early years she had helped her parents farm the 800 acres and take care of a large herd of 80 cattle.



Alma drove a team of eight horses to plow fields, clear and break new land, and even build roads. She sowed and harvested, and hauled grain to the elevators, again with horses. She had minimal hired help, and when she did hire someone the workers were usually inexperienced.

In 1932 Alma married August Liivam, an immigrant from Estonia who had lived in a city all his life. August had minimal English language skills at that time. Before meeting and marrying Alma, August had worked on farms in the Stettler area and lumber camps in BC. He had also had a homestead at Dawson Creek.

The couple raised seven children: John, August, Helen, George, Harold, Larry and Kenneth. August Sr. was an active member of the Medicine Valley community, where he and Alma lived until 1977. August served for many years on the boards of the Medicine Valley school, the Mutual Telephone Company and the Eckville Co-op Store. He was a longtime Alberta Wheat Pool and Unifarm delegate. By 1956 August and Alma had built up their farm to such an extent that they won two awards - one award in a Save the Soil competition and another in the National Barley contest.



In 1969 August purchased Eckville Motors.

ALFRED MATIISEN

Alfred Matiisen was born in Estonia in 1906 and emigrated to Canada in June 1929. He worked for three years on various farms in southern and central Alberta before arriving to Eckville in 1932. He worked on the farm of John and Anna Moro, a pioneer family who arrived in Canada in 1904 from Voru, Estonia with their four children. In 1933, Alfred married Amanda Moro and a year later they bought their first farmland.



Alfred was a successful lifetime farmer in the Medicine Valley. He was also active in social and business activities of the Medicine Valley Estonian Society. The Estonian Hall was nearby and was a centre for Estonians in the community. His brother Arnold and wife Salme farmed across the road. Together these families were the social hub for Estonians from near and far. Alfred generously sponsored many Estonian immigrants to Alberta after the war, including his brother Voldemar and family.

He retired from farming in 1970 and moved to Summerland, B.C. The winters were spent in Hawaii. Alfred and Salme are both buried in the Gilby Kalmu Cemetery.

ARNOLD MATIISEN

Arnold Matiisen was an outstanding athlete in Estonia and played on four national teams, including soccer and volleyball. He was an enthusiastic member of the Medicine Valley Estonian Society and played a leadership role in many activities.

LEONARD AND ERNA SOERD

Leonard (Leo) Soerd emigrated from Estonia in early 1927 and made his way to the Eckville area. His wife Erna was born in Medicine Valley. In 1939 they purchased land west of the Blue Bell district, near Medicine Valley.



Leo and Erna had four children: Doreen, born in 1935, Leona (1941), John (1942; died in 1947), and Debra (1954).

Doreen earned a secretarial diploma. She lives in Calgary with her husband, George Heath, and their two children. Jean earned a B.Sc. She and her husband, William A. Brown, live in the Benalto district. Debra received a Bachelor of Social Work and lives in Calgary with her husband, James Murray.



Leo and Erna continue to farm.

SOOP FAMILY

Alex Soop was born in Tver, Russia on 17 May 1901. When he was only three, he moved to Tallinn, Estonia. Later he worked as a tailor, police officer and a telegraph operator. In 1925 Alex came to Canada and settled in the Big Valley area where he worked on several farms. In June 1927 he married Elvine Klaus, daughter of William and Elizabeth Klaus. The newlyweds started a farm eight miles west of Big Valley. They had three daughters: Gladys, Florence and Margery, all of whom attended nearby Vimy Hill School.



Farming was grueling and laborious work. Horses were used to clear the land while grains, cattle and chickens provided core income. Alex frequently worked long hours, stoking in the evening and well into the night. As farming technology began to improve in the late 1930's, Alex became the first owner of the first rubber-tired tractor in the community. Alex and Elvine's eldest daughter, Gladys, married Otto Nicklom 27 April 1949. In 1967 Otto and Gladys purchased a farm while Alex and Elvine moved to Stettler to retire. Alex and Elvine had been farming for forty years. Florence, the middle child, married Chris Jensen. Margery the youngest daughter, married Ernie Hankins and they resided in Stettler until their divorce. Margery moved to Edmonton and lived there until she passed away in 2001. Alex Soop passed away in May 1985 while Elvine passed away in June 1995. Their daughter Florence passed away one year later. Several grandchildren and great-grandchildren still reside in Alberta. They carry with them memories and stories about Alex and Elvine Soop.

ELIZABETH (BRUCKEL) TIPPIE



Elizabeth Bruckel was born to Estonian parents on January 1, 1920 in the village of Krasnoufinsk. It is situated on the western slopes of the Ural Mountains in Russia. Her parents, Friedrich and Maria Bruckel, were both Estonians.

Elizabeth left the Soviet Union in April 1929. Elizabeth and her family traveled by boat to Halifax, Nova Scotia and later by train to Stettler, Alberta. Two Estonian families already living in the area - the Soop and Klaus families - greeted the Bruckels upon arrival. Elizabeth grew up near Stettler and later graduated from Stettler High School.

Friedrich found a job working for the Canadian National Rail Company as a railway maintenance worker. Learning English was a struggle for Elizabeth's parents, particularly Friedrich, but they never gave up and comprehended basic levels of communication.

In 1939 Elizabeth married Lawrence Tippie. They farmed north of Stettler for the next 25 years with the exception of a brief stint in Portland, Oregon during the Second World War. Elizabeth obtained a nursing degree specializing in mental deficiency; she worked at the Michener Centre in Red Deer, Alberta. She retired in 1984 after a hard working and fulfilling career.

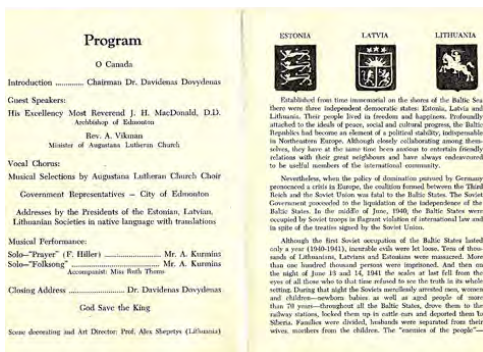
Lawrence and Elizabeth had a passion for travel. They often made numerous trips throughout North America, including Mexico. Elizabeth maintained a keen interest in her Estonian heritage. This is exemplified through a culturally enriching trip to Estonia in the 1980s. An avid learner, Elizabeth enjoyed discussing global politics with friends and family. She was also musically gifted having played the classical piano for many years. Elizabeth and Lawrence had four daughters. They were Marne, Sharon, Carol, Kathy. They also had one son named Fred. Elizabeth passed away on January 25, 2007.



POST WWII IMMIGRANTS

During and after the Second World War, Europe was characterized by political instability and Estonia was no exception. Tens of thousands of Estonians left their homeland before the end of World War II to escape the forceful occupation of the country by the Soviet Union. The majority of these refugees crossed the Baltic Sea to Sweden or travelled overland to Germany. By the late 1940's and early 1950's, thousands of these refugees emigrated to USA, Canada, Australia and South America.

Of the thousands who settled in Canada during this period, an estimated 400 Estonians arrived in Alberta and settled primarily in the province's two major urban centres, Calgary and Edmonton. They banded together by forming societies to celebrate cultural traditions such as Jaanipäev (Midsummer Eve), Christmas and Estonia's Independence Day. The ranks of first-generation immigrants were reduced by the end of the 20th century, resulting in the formation in 2004 of a province-wide heritage organization, the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society. Membership is comprised of multi-generational descendants of Alberta's Estonian pioneers and post-WWII immigrants.



DAVE KIIL



Ain Dave Kiil was born in 1936 on the island of Saaremaa, Estonia - the largest island in the Baltic Sea. As a young child he often enjoyed exploring the countryside surrounding the family farm or dipping his feet in the shallow waters of nearby Pilguse Bay. In 1944 when Soviet forces overtook Estonia, marking the beginning of a 50-year unwelcome occupation, Dave's family made the difficult decision to flee their country.

The boat leaving for Gotland, Sweden was overcrowded and filled with families desperate to escape Stalin's regime. Upon arriving in Sweden, Dave and his mother stayed at a refugee camp while other members of the Kiil family were housed elsewhere. In Sweden, Dave's mother taught him simple arithmetic and how to read. In the summer of 1945, reunited with his family, Dave settled in the town of Björknäs, a short distance from Stockholm. Here, he attended school until the family left for Canada in December 1950. The refugee ship *General Ballou* arrived in Halifax several weeks later.

Dave attended high school and university in Toronto. He was able to graduate from the University of Toronto in 1960 with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry degree. His career in forestry took him to Calgary, Alberta where he initiated a forest fire research program. In 1965-66 Dave spent one year at the University of Montana in Missoula. Here he earned a Master of Science in Forestry degree. Following graduation, Dave resumed his forestry career at the Northern Forestry Centre in Edmonton. He contributed to forestry in Canada's Northwest Region, Canadian Forest Service as Director-General, Program Director and project leader. Dave retired in the fall of 1994.



Dave married his wife Betty Ann in 1962. They are the proud parents of four children. They are Glenn, Monica, Lisa and Diana. He and his wife are also the proud grandparents of three grandchildren, Ranek, Kalev and Sam. Since his retirement Dave has concentrated his efforts on woodwork and on visiting Estonia. Following several trips to the land of his ancestors, Dave's interests shifted to family history research and involvement in the Edmonton Estonian Society. In 2004 he contributed to the formation of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society, a province-wide organization dedicated to preserving Estonian heritage.

Dave was President of the EES from 1999-2005. During his tenure, the Society sponsored the usual events like Jaanipäev, Christmas gatherings, Independence Day Celebrations and Saurkraut bees. He hosted Estonian athletes participating in the World Athletics Championships in 2001, the World Masters Games in 2002 and the World University Wrestling Championships in 2002. Members of the Society travelled to Linda Hall in Stettler to welcome Estonian President Lennart Meri in 2000.

Dave coordinated the formation of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society in 2004-2005. He guided the production of a 30-minute documentary DVD "Alberta's Estonians, and the development of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society's "Alberta Estonian Heritage" digital archive website. Dave and Eda McClung compiled an illustrated book "Freedom, Land, and Legacy: Alberta's Estonians, 1899-2009". Dave has assembled a collection of hundreds of articles, documents and related literature as well as several thousand photographic images during the AEHS heritage project. Planning is underway to donate the printed and digitized materials for preservation and convenient access in a memory institution(s) in Alberta. Dave is a co-editor of the AEHS magazine AjaKaja. In 2011, he received the Medal of Merit from the Estonian Central Council for his contributions on behalf of Alberta's Estonians.

AUGUST KIVI



August Kivi was born in Tartumaa, Estonia in 1891. At 19 years of age he graduated from the Tartu Veterinarian Institute. He worked within his profession in Russia until he was mobilized into the army in 1914. Although he was wounded in a fierce battle in 1916, August's efforts in the First World War were recognized with several military service medals.

In 1918 August returned to Estonia and was assigned to the Kalev Battalion where he was appointed lieutenant. August was very passionate about fighting for Estonia's freedom. In time, he was promoted to captain, major and then lieutenant-colonel. By the late 1930s August was elevated to the position of Commander of several military units in Pärnu, and later served as a regimental commander of a home-defence unit.

August left the military in 1940. He fled to Germany in the autumn of 1944, thereby escaping some of the fiercest battles of the Second World War. He lived in a Displaced Person Camp, but eventually immigrated to Canada in 1951.

Always eager to promote and encourage Estonian independence regardless of where he was living, August founded the Estonian Liberation Association (Eesti Vabadusvõitlejate Ühing) in Edmonton and served as its president. The Association sponsored several Estonian Independence celebrations in the late 1950s. August was the keynote speaker at the 40th anniversary of Estonian independence in 1958.

August Kivi passed away in 1974. He is survived by his wife Ludmilla. August has been remembered as a man with a steadfast commitment to preserving his Estonian heritage, particularly during his time as an Edmontonian.

DR. HANS KIVISILD

An innovative engineer who spearheaded numerous projects throughout the world, Hans Robert Kivisild designed the George Massey Tunnel. It was the first earthquake-proof public structure in Vancouver. He also designed numerous terminals and structures in Canada's Arctic.



Hans Robert Kivisild was born in 1922 in Tartu, Estonia. He grew up in Estonia's capital city of Tallinn. Hans excelled at school, particularly in mathematics and physics. During World War II he fled to Finland on a fishing boat. Having moved to Sweden, he graduated from the Royal University of Technology in Stockholm in 1946 and married Livia Martna, also an Estonian emigrant. The family moved to Canada in 1951 after the birth of their first daughter. Kivisild worked in Montréal, Quebec for a short period before returning to Sweden to complete a PhD. Applying mathematical concepts with an intuitive grasp of physics, Hans was able to think beyond conventional engineering methods. Work allowed Dr. Kivisild to travel to many parts of the world including the Netherlands, Taiwan and Sierra Leone. Hans created a new field of study based on quantifying structural properties of ice. He developed criteria for ice accumulations, ice floods, storm surges and ice forces.

In 1973 Hans moved to Calgary to become the vice-president of Fenco, a large engineering firm. During his retirement, Dr. Kivisild returned to Estonia as a volunteer with the Canadian Executive Services Organization. He advised the Estonian government on the reconstruction of a port in Paldiski. He returned to Calgary and died 6 May 2001. He is survived by his wife Livia and four daughters, Maria Ogrydziak, Ann Smith, Julia Bailey and Emma Kivisild.



KOPPEL FAMILY



Maria Kuuse was born September 8, 1894. Herman Koppel was born November 13, 1918. Maria and Herman were married in March of 1941. After attending naval school, Herman joined the Estonian army when the Second World War broke out. Herman fought valiantly during the war and even escaped from a Prisoner of War camp.

The Koppel family along with their daughter Tiiu (1942), fled to Sweden where they lived in Goteborg from 1945 to 1949. Having saved up enough money, the Koppel's immigrated to Dome Creek, British Columbia. Onboard the ship that was to take them to Canada, the Koppel's met another Estonian family who were moving to Eckville, Alberta. Employment was soon made available for the Koppel's and they left British Columbia and headed to the parkland of central Alberta. Herman and Maria worked on numerous farms in the area before they purchased their own piece of land. In 1973, they sold the farm and relocated to the town of Eckville where they could be closer to healthcare facilities. Herman passed away September 22, 1983 while Maria passed away November 23, 1994.

Tiiu graduated from Eckville High School in 1961. Tiiu's classmates had voted her to be the Queen of Hearts at their graduation ceremony. She graduated from the Registered Nursing Aide School (Calgary) in 1963. The following year she married local farmer Walter Kalev.

LAINA METZ KRIIK

Laine Metz, one of Gus Erdman's nieces, arrived in Barons, Alberta via Sweden in 1948. In Europe she was trained as a professional ballet instructor; however, upon her arrival in Canada she worked as a farm hand. Not wanting to give up on her passion for ballet, she started a 'Ladies Keep Fit' during the long winter. Later, she travelled to Lethbridge to work at the YMCA and by doing so improved her English tremendously. She later moved to Edmonton to open her own ballet studio.

Laine Metz married Edward Kriik, an electrician, and they continued to live in Edmonton.

LETHBRIDGE ESTONIANS FAMILIES

Little is known of Estonians in the Lethbridge area prior to the Second World War. Following the war and until the 1980s, however, some 40 Estonian families, both second generation Estonian-Canadians and post-war immigrants, moved into the area.

The second generation Estonians were largely from the Barons, Alberta area. They included Ralph and Karin Erdman, Dr. Lawrence Kotkas, and Victor Erdman.

A greater number of Estonians arrived following WWI as political refugees. They were for the most part professionals or business people and included Dr. Leo Niilo and his wife Herta, Harry and Linda Randma, Kaljo and Lilian Põhjakas, Arne and Vilma Nirk, Helmuth and Kärt Nirk, Karl and Aime Lilleniit, Eugene and Laine Seeman, Aleksander Wiler, Endel Ups, Uno Vann, and Kaljo Vann. With the married couples came roughly 20 children; only two, Lea Swizer and Lisa Vann, are still in Lethbridge.

The families did not set up any heritage or cultural organizations, though they held frequent family gatherings. Very few of the families remained in the area.

Canadians of Estonian descent who have lived in Lethbridge:

- Ralph and Katrin Erdman and their daughter Kathrin (from Barons in 1951)
- Viktor and Hilda Erdman (from Barons in 1950)
- Lawrence Kotkas (from Barons in the 1950s)
- Karl and Aime Lilleniit (arrived in 1950)
- Helmuth and Kärt Nirk (arrived in 1950)
- Arne and Vilma Nirk and their daughters Lisa, Karin, and Eta (arrived in 1955)
- Martin and Lucy Linderman (from Foremost in 1960)
- Valfriede Luts (from Vancouver in 1980)
- Leo and Herta Niilo (arrived 1951)
- Kaljo and Lilian Põhjakas and their daughters Lea and Tiina (arrived 1971)
- Arnold Pukk (arrived in the 1950s)
- Harry and Linda Randma (arrived in the 1950s)
- Eugene and Laine Seeman and their daughter Idamalle (arrived in 1948)
- Endel Ups (arrived in the 1950s)
- Uno Vann (arrived in the 1950s)
- Kaljo Vann (arrived in the 1950s)
- Aleksander and Steele Weiler (arrived in 1948)

All those who did not come from Barons or Foremost were war refugees and arrived via Germany.

MATIISEN FAMILY

Members of the Matiisen family arrived in Canada at varying points in their lives. They all serve as fine examples of inter-war and post-World War II Estonian immigrants arriving in Alberta. Alfred Matiisen arrived in Canada in June 1929. He worked on various farms in central and southern Alberta for 3 years. In 1932 he arrived in Eckville where he worked on the farm of John Moro. The following year he married Amanda Moro and, together, they purchased their first farm. They farmed in Eckville until 1970 when they retired to the moderate climate of Summerland, British Columbia. Winters were spent in Hawaii in ambitious efforts to seek solace in its unrelenting sunshine and avoid Canada's inevitable snow storms.

Arnold and Salme Matiisen immigrated to Canada in 1937. After a brief stay in Mundare, Alberta they arrived in the Eckville district circa 1940. Their children, Tina and Rein, grew up on the farm and later attended the University of Alberta. Tina received a Bachelor of Arts in history followed by a Master's degree in library science from McGill University. Rein completed a Bachelor of Science and a Master's degree in civil engineering.



Voldemar Matiisen, sponsored by his two brothers, Arnold and Alfred, arrived in Canada with his wife Rita and their three children, Hendo, Arne and Eda. To avoid the perils of World War II, they had lived in Sweden for four years prior to immigrating to Canada. In spite of their professional backgrounds in dentistry and forestry, they farmed outside of nearby Eckville, joining others in the community. Aside from farming, Voldemar also worked in the oil sector and Rita became a teacher. All of their children attended the University of Alberta.

Once retired from farming, the Matiisen's continued to live on their farm. During retirement, Voldemar researched and compiled the history of Estonians in the Medicine Valley, recognizing their significance as pioneers in the area.



Rita retired in Red Deer following the death of her husband in 1980. She became an active supporter of the Red Deer and District Museum where she served as a member of the Board. Her continued work on behalf of the community earned her an Alberta Achievement Award in 1984. Rita and Voldemar are buried at the Gilby Kalmu Cemetery.

VOLDEMAR AND RITA MATIISEN

Rita Matiisen was born in 1909 in Jogeva, Estonia at her father's private hospital. She graduated from the University of Tartu in Medicine in 1934 and completed her specialization in Dentistry in Vienna in 1937. In Tallinn, she first practiced medicine and then dentistry. In 1944 Rita along with her husband Voldemar and their three young children fled to Sweden to avoid the Soviet occupation. This was common among many other Estonian families.



The family emigrated to Canada in 1948 and settled on a farm in the Eckville area of central Alberta. Volli's younger twin brothers Alfred and Arnold had left Estonia in the 1920s and 1930s and were farming in the Medicine Valley where several hundred Estonians had also settled. For many years, the Medicine Valley and the Estonian Hall were the site of large social gatherings where Estonians could renew friendships, language and traditions. Rita and Volli were active community members and cherished this connection in hopes that their children would retain their Estonian language and appreciate their cultural roots.

The adaptation from professional careers to farm labour was difficult. They were fortunate to have helpful family and welcoming neighbours. The hardship of farming did not diminish their drive to participate in intellectual pursuits. The first school book purchased was a dictionary. Rita thus began to learn English, the fifth language that she had mastered. Rita assumed community leadership roles with respect to education and cultural activities. She held executive positions with and contributed significantly to the Alberta Home and School Association, Parkland Regional Library, Medicine Valley Estonian Society and the Red Deer International Folk Festival. In 1966, having seen her three children attend the University of Alberta, Rita herself attended the Faculty of Education and obtained a Teaching Certificate. Rita taught at Eckville High School and worked as the school librarian for 15 years.



Following her retirement and the death of her husband in 1980, Rita moved to Red Deer from where she continued her farm business and remained active in the community. She became an active supporter of the Red Deer and District Museum. She even served on the board for many years. During this time, the Museum mounted a permanent display recognizing Alberta's Estonian pioneers. The display reflected years of research by Volli Matiisen who recorded and documented local Estonian history. A generous contribution

from the proceeds of the sale of Medicine Valley Estonian Society helped to support this historically significant project. In 1984 Rita received the Alberta Achievement Award for community service.

Her retirement years in Red Deer were active and happy. She became a local weaver and even became a founding member of the Parkland Weavers Guild. In Estonia weaving had a primarily

functional rather than artistic purpose. Rita became a skilled and prodigious weaver of hand-woven, award-winning creations.

In 1989 Rita returned to Estonia to celebrate her 80th birthday. She was accompanied by Eda, her daughter, by her son, Arne, and Carolyn, Arne's wife. Estonia was still under Soviet rule and the family had not been back since leaving in 1944. The reunion with family and friends was immensely moving. The visit rekindled deep emotions. Rita and family were forced to face the difficult life of those who stayed behind, but also were also hopeful of the possibility of a free Estonia. Rita cherished her Estonian heritage but was proud to be Canadian.

Rita passed away in Red Deer in 1998 and is buried with her husband and son at the Gilby Kalmu Cemetery.

ARNE MATIISEN

Arne Matiisen was born in Tallinn to Voldemar (Volli) and Rita Matiisen. In 1944 the family fled Estonia to Sweden to escape the Soviet invasion. Both parents re-established themselves professionally; Volli as a forestry expert and Rita as a dentist.



In 1948 the family immigrated to Canada. Volli's brothers, Arnold and Alfred, were established farmers in the Eckville area, which was the site of the Medicine Valley Estonian Society and featured a large population of Estonians. Arne's family bought a farm in this area and started a whole new way of life.

Arne attended the Estonian School. On the first day, Rita drove the boys there in the family's 1939 Ford pickup and managed to crash the truck into the corner of the teacher's residence. Hendo and Arne, both dressed in their Swedish school uniforms (shirt and tie, jackets, short pants and knee socks) were an oddity to the denim over-alls and gingham dress-clad schoolmates.

Arne completed Grade 12 in 1957 and attended the University of Alberta on a Wheat Pool Scholarship. Upon graduation he started a 40-year career in the oil industry, working in both Canada and abroad. Arne met his future wife Carolyn Ray Wilfley at University of Alberta. They married in 1962 and have two daughters, Janet Ray and Melanie Gail and a granddaughter named Arabelle Ray.

In 1989 Arne, Carolyn and his sister Eda, accompanied his mother Rita to celebrate her 80th birthday in Estonia. It was an emotional return to Tallinn after 45 years of absence. When Estonia regained its independence in 1991, Arne was able to travel to Estonia several times to assist with Rita's claims to the family's pre-war property. They toured Estonia, visiting the family's "root" sites in Joegeva, Harjanurmme and Viljandi. They also met relatives in Tartu, Parnu and Tallinn.

In retirement Arne and Carolyn split the summer season between their home in Calgary and their cabin at Hidden Valley. Winters are enjoyed in their RV touring the southern United States.

EDA (MATIISEN) MCCLUNG



Eda Matiisen McClung was born in 1943 in Tallinn, Estonia. She is the daughter of Voldemar (Volli) and Rita Matiisen. In 1944 her parents along with their sons Hendo and Arne, fled to Sweden to escape Soviet occupation. Eventually both parents were able to re-establish themselves professionally; her father as a forester with a specialty in reforestation and her mother as a dentist in the state-run health system.

Continuing political uncertainty in Europe convinced the family to emigrate to the Eckville/Gilby area of central Alberta in 1948. Volli's two brothers, Alfred and Arnold, had been farming there since the 1930s and sponsored the family. Rita and Volli bought a small farm nearby and began learning new skills and a new language. The older son Hendo soon left home to attend high school in Red Deer. Arne started in grade four at the Estonian School and Eda began grade one at the local Andrew School.

Eda completed school in 1962 in Eckville. Like her brothers before her, she attended the University of Alberta. She graduated with a Masters degree in Counselling Psychology. This accomplishment led to a career in Adult Psychiatry at the University Hospital. In 1973 she married John Wesley McClung and they made their home in Edmonton. He was appointed a judge in 1976 while Eda continued her career as a psychologist. They led busy professional lives and enjoyed extensive travel. Careful documentation of local Estonian history by her father, renewed Eda's interest in the community where she grew up. Her father passed away in 1980 before his contribution could be fully appreciated.

In 1989 Eda accompanied her mother Rita and brother Arne, along with his wife Carolyn, to Estonia to celebrate their mother's 80th birthday. Her first trip to Estonia meant meeting relatives and visiting places of family lore. The possibility of independence was on the horizon and Estonians living abroad took action. As a result, the Edmonton Estonian Society showed renewed energy and Eda became its president in 1988. During her presidency, EES began publishing a small newsletter AjaKaja with Mare Maxwell as editor while Eda McClung and Viivi Rita Piil served as assistants.

Eda McClung, Bob Tipman and Toomas Paasuke were key organizers in the Stettler Centennial celebration in 1999. The event generated much enthusiasm for one's roots and interest in Estonian pioneer history. As a result, subsequent centennials were held in Gilby and Barons. In 2004, the Estonian Central Committee awarded Eda the Medal of Merit for notable long-term work on behalf of Estonia and Estonians in Canada.

In 2005, the province-wide Alberta Estonian Heritage Society was formed. Eda serves on its Board and is active in several projects including the 2007 production of the DVD "Alberta's Estonians." She has also largely contributed to a website project completed by the Heritage Community Foundation; the website is entitled "Alberta's Estonian Heritage." Eda remains active in publishing AjaKaja, the official newsletter of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society.

It is currently printing its 28th edition. She takes immense pride and joy in her two nieces Janet and Melanie who have traveled to Estonia with her and who have come to treasure their Estonian heritage.



ANDREAS PILT



Andreas Pilt was born on March 12, 1915 in Jarvamaa, Estonia. He had one brother, Ilmar, and two sisters, Leida and Karin. They have all since passed away.

Andreas served in the Estonian Army during the Second World War. During the course of the war he escaped to Sweden but had to leave his first wife behind. He met his second wife, Salme, in Sweden. Together they applied to come to Canada and, upon acceptance, they arrived March 12, 1949.

They traveled to Alberta with only 100 dollars collectively. They immediately began working on a farm and eventually saved up enough money allowing them to relocate to Edmonton. Once in Edmonton, Andreas opened a shoe repair shop and also worked as a carpenter.

Andreas became the office manager of Barrigan Woodworks; he worked there for 23 years. Salme passed away in 1966. In 1974 Andreas married Shirley Murphy and became the proud step-father of her two young girls. Andreas started his own company with partner Ernie Hebert. Known as Hebert and Pilt Construction, Andreas managed the outfit until his retirement in 1986.

In 1987 Andreas and Shirley moved to Summerland, British Columbia. They returned ten years later when Andreas' health began to deteriorate. He passed away February 27, 2006. He was 90 years old. While living in Edmonton, Andreas was a member of the Edmonton Estonian Society.

KALJO PÕHJAKAS



Kaljo Põhjakas was born in Tallinn, Estonia in 1923. He lived on his family's farm near Raasiku and attended school in Tallinn until he graduated from the Gustav Adolf Gymnasium in 1942. During the Second World War, to avoid conscription, he escaped to Finland. He joined the Finnish Army in 1944, the year an Estonian regiment was formed. He was wounded in a battle at Pupastvere and was transferred to Germany for proper medical attention.

At the end of the Second World War Kaljo lived in a displaced persons camp near Flensburg, Germany. In 1946 he was accepted to the Baltic University where he studied agriculture. The following year he immigrated to Canada working for Longlac Pulp and Paper Company as part of a ten month contract. Upon termination of his contract he moved to Vancouver. He returned to his agricultural studies at the University of British Columbia where he graduated with a degree in 1951.



He returned to the University of British Columbia in 1957 where he gained a Masters degree a short two years later. During his time in Vancouver, Kaljo became an active member of its Estonian community and played a fundamental role in establishing the post-war Vancouver Estonian Society.



Kaljo joined the Department of Agricultural Research in Swift Current, Saskatchewan. He was a research scientist specializing in soil and water management. In 1967 he was offered a position with the Food and Agriculture Organization, a division of the United Nations. Along with his family he lived in Iran training local personnel. Upon the termination of his four-year contract he returned to Canada and found work at the Lethbridge Research Centre. In 1988

Kaljo was offered a two-year position in Egypt improving the soil in the Nile delta.

While living in Lethbridge the Põhjakas family associated with some of the other Estonian families living there, including Ralph Erdman, an important Estonian pioneer. Kaljo retired in 1988. He is married to Lilian and they have two daughters, Lea and Tiina.

IVAR AND ALLAN RUUS



Harry Ruus, born December 15, 1900 in Tartu, Estonia, graduated with a law degree from Tartu University and had a successful practice in Tallinn, Estonia. In 1926, he married Irma Mamers. Their son Allan was born in 1928, followed by Ivar in 1931. The family led a content life filled with social activities. Happy summers were spent on Estonia's pine clad sandy beaches at Klooga. Winter Sundays were spent cross-country skiing at Rahumäe with their two sons.

All of this came to an end in 1940 when the Soviet Army occupied Estonia. In early 1941 the government in Moscow ordered the deportation or execution of prominent, leading and well-educated Estonians. Harry Ruus escaped by hiding in the boggy woods of Estonia. In September 1944 the Ruus family escaped to Germany to avoid Russian forces. While in Germany, Allan briefly attended Bonn University. Ivar continued his education at a temporary Estonian language high school in what was then the British zone of northern Germany.

The Ruus family arrived in Quebec, Canada on June 7, 1949 as immigrants and immediately headed by train to Barons, Alberta where their distant relative Walter Silverton had guaranteed them work on his farm.

At that time, Walter Silverton was finishing the construction of his large two-story house in Barons for his family and parent-in-laws. Allan and Ivar Ruus mostly slept in the bunkhouse in the field but joined the large clan for meals and family fun. All summer and fall, Allan and Ivar worked long, dusty days in the fields. During the winter they moved to the nearby town of Taber working for the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) as assistant surveyors, often working outside in -30° C and -40° C weather. They continued this job until September 1950 when they both enrolled at the University of Alberta majoring in engineering.

Meanwhile, Harry and Irma Ruus worked for various farmers in the Barons area with Irma working mostly as a cook. When Harry tragically passed away in 1951 Irma decided to move to Edmonton to be with her two sons. There she held a job as clothing alterations specialist for a dry cleaning company and participated in the social life of the local Estonian community. In 1957, Irma Ruus followed her son to Calgary. After a year of intense training at three different hospitals, Irma was awarded a nursing aid diploma and worked at the Colonel Belcher Veterans Hospital until her retirement.

The two sons supported themselves through university by their summer job earnings, surviving on tight budgets. Time permitting, they participated in local Estonian activities, including Estonian folkdance.

Allan Ruus, who had attained a degree in civil engineering, started his career with Gulf Oil. He worked at the Stettler production office, also spending a year at the Calgary office. In Stettler, Allan met the love of his life, Rosemarie, whom he married in 1962. Their daughter Kirsten was born in 1963 (she graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of

Calgary in 1985). In 1967, Allan was posted to Turner Valley with the firm Western Decalta which transferred the family to Calgary in 1974. Allan and Rosemarie were active participants in the Calgary Estonian parties where they especially loved to dance.

Ivar's career with Texaco Exploration took him to remote locations, including the Dawson Creek - Ft. St. John area. Working in such remote locations was dangerous work. He frequently encountered wildlife, fires, and treacherous driving conditions. Ivar eventually found related work in Calgary. In 1956, he drove to Toronto to marry his longtime girlfriend, Lea Ernesaks. The two had met years earlier in Germany.

Oil was discovered in the Pembina-Drayton Valley area in 1953. By 1957, Ivar was transferred to the Texaco field office in the village of Cynthia, which consisted of ten houses, a trailer court, a service station with a Chinese restaurant and office space.

In 1960, Ivar started working for Skelly Oil Company and the family moved to Edmonton. A small but active group of Estonians met frequently and celebrated special anniversaries. Every Christmas *veri vorstid* (blood sausage) and rye bread arrived from Estonian shops in Toronto. Estonian clergy came from other provinces to conduct church service. That same year, Irma's mother, Alberta Mamers, joined the Ruus family from Estonia.

Declining a move to the United States, Ivar accepted employment with the National Energy Board in Ottawa in 1967. The family quickly became part of the Estonian club in Ottawa. They met the Prime Minister of Canada, John Diefenbaker, at the Estonian Independence Day commemoration event.

By 1968, Ivar decided to return to private industry, accepting the position of Chief Engineer with Great Plains Development Company, later absorbed into Norcen Energy Resources in 1975. Ivar's last appointment was manager of heavy oil operations at Norcen Energy. Ivar also obtained a Management Diploma from the University of Calgary and is a member of APEGGA (Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists, and Geophysicists of Alberta).

Members of the Calgary Estonian community frequently gathered for special occasions. Ivar particularly loved the Estonian cuisine: *rosolje* (beet salad), herring, jellied meat (*sült*) and other cold cuts and fish were always present. An annual community fund-raiser sold *vastla kukleid* (sweet puffy buns filled with whipped cream) baked by Irma Ruus, a popular cranberry drink (years before this juice became available in Canadian grocery stores) and many other food items provided by Estonian members.

In 1986, Ivar Ruus took early retirement following a heart attack. He continued to do some consulting for a few more years. Around this time, Ivar and Lea's oldest son Allan, born 1958, began working on his MBA degree. Mark, born 1960 was a chartered accountant and the youngest son, Alexander who was born 1964, was an engineer working for Chevron. Alexander obtained his MBA in 1992 and works in investment.

PAULINE SINBERG-SNIECKUS

Pauline Sinberg was born aboard a ship sailing in the Crimean waters in 1897. She grew up in an Estonian settlement near the Black Sea. Pauline emigrated from Crimea to Estonia in 1926 where she studied at Tartu University in the hopes of becoming a veterinarian. The following year she was developing a program that would eradicate tuberculosis in cattle.



In 1928, Pauline married Dr. Victoras Snieckus, a Lithuanian veterinarian. She moved to Lithuania and became the director of the Lithuanian Veterinary Bacteriological Institute and later served as an assistant professor at the Lithuania Veterinary College. Pauline and Victoras had one son named Victor.

During the Second World War, the Snieckus family escaped to Germany along with thousands of other Baltic refugees. In 1948, after receiving an invitation from the Linderman family who were living in Foremost, Alberta, the Snieckus family immigrated to Canada. Pauline knew Rosalie Linderman from their time growing up in the Crimea. Upon arrival the Snieckus family worked at the Linderman farm.

The Snieckus family moved to Calgary to find permanent work. Pauline worked as a cleaning lady while Victoras obtained a job as a meat inspector. Pauline enrolled in evening classes and completed a Nurses' Aid diploma in 1950. However, she yearned to once again practice veterinary medicine. The following year she gained employment at the 9 th Avenue Animal Clinic; however, her education at Tartu University, one of Europe's most distinguished universities, was not formally recognized. At the age of 60 she wrote an exam at the University of Alberta that would allow her to continue her career in veterinary medicine. For ten years Pauline specialized in animal disease diagnosis.

Pauline and Victoras' son Victor studied at Queens University in Kingston, Ontario and became an internationally-known organic chemist. In 2009, Dr. Victor Snieckus received an honorary degree from the Tallinn University of technology in recognition of his accomplishments in organic chemistry research.

While living in Calgary, the Snieckus family were proud members of Calgary's Estonian community. Pauline held an executive position with the Calgary Estonian Society and directed many of its activities. She was also an Estonian representative on Calgary Citizenship Council. Her dear Rosalie Linderman made the occasional trip from Foremost to participate in Estonian activities.



Upon retirement Pauline relocated to southern Ontario where she actively participated in a number of Estonian festivals. She passed away at the age of 102 in Elora, Ontario leaving behind one son, grandchildren, and several highly regarded scientific journals. Throughout her career, Pauline constantly faced obstacles trying to pursue a career that, at the time, was designated for men only. Women were strongly discouraged from becoming involved with veterinary medicine. For her efforts, she was acknowledged by the Canadian Pioneer Women's Veterinary project in 1994

VIKTOR VIRAK FAMILY

Viktor Virak was born in Narva, Estonia in 1932. His family escaped the approaching Soviets to Sweden in a small 20-foot motorboat over the stormy Baltic Sea. The humane reception by the Swedish people allowed Viktor to build a new life in Sweden, including his marriage to Aino Ohi in 1946. He and his family left Sweden for Toronto, Ontario, Canada in 1951.



He graduated from McGill University's School of Architecture in 1957 with a Bachelor of Architecture degree, followed by a Master of Architecture degree in 1963. His initial work experience was obtained in Central and Eastern Canada.

In 1963, Viktor was appointed to the position of Branch Architect-Planner at the Edmonton Branch of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. His responsibilities encompassed Alberta and Northwest Territories. The assignment lasted until 1974 when he was transferred to the Victoria Branch.



Viktor's experience in Alberta left him with many memories: Impressions of dynamic growth, honesty and a strong work ethic, spatial vastness of grain fields, and good working relationships with local officials. He also treasures the cultural and personal contacts with Estonians in Edmonton, Calgary, Eckville and Barons, and the historical landmarks of earlier generations.

In his own words "There is no doubt that the time spent in Alberta was the richest period of my life, both professionally and personally. I have only good memories of human friendships, now part of the rich history of Alberta's Estonians."

ALEKSANDER WEILER

Aleksander Weiler played an instrumental role in the War of Independence (1918 - 1920) and the subsequent creation of the Estonian Republic. Between the two world wars Weiler created Estonia's largest newspaper syndicate. During the Second World War, he and his family alluded Communists by escaping to Sweden. He had no choice but to terminate his successful newspaper publication. He re-established his career in journalism in Sweden and continued his passion newspapers when he immigrated to Canada by founding the Estonian weekly *Meie Elu* in Toronto in 1950. His untimely death at the age of sixty-three put an end to the resumed career as well as to the many services he rendered to the Estonian displaced persons community in Canada.



Weiler was born in 1887, the son of a gardener on an estate in Estonia. Leaving school at 15, he worked as a machinist and electrician. His career in journalism began at the age of twenty when he became the editor of a periodical. He was one of the founders of a daily in Tallinn whose editor happened to be Konstantin Päts, the first president of the Republic of Estonia. From 1914 to 1917, Weiler worked as the news editor and war correspondent.



Weiler was active in the underground Estonian provisional government formed by the end of the First World War. In November of 1918 he began recruiting volunteers united against Russia. As one of the founders of the left of centre Labour Party, which was a leading political force in the early days of the Estonian Republic, he helped to found the publishing company *Waba Maa* (*Free Country*) and the newspaper of the same name which served as the party's voice. Later, he was a member of

State Assembly (or parliament) until 1929, when he withdrew from active party politics. During the 1920s and 30s, he developed *Waba Maa* newspaper and its associated publications into Estonia's biggest newspaper publication.

During the German occupation of Estonia from 1941 to 1944, only papers approved by the Germans were allowed to be published and *Waba Maa* was not one of them. In September, 1944, as the Soviets were entering Estonia, he and some of his family escaped by boat across the Gulf of Finland. Weiler continued his journalism trade at a newspaper in Sweden. Through an invitation from his daughter, Aleksander and his wife Stella came to Canada in 1948. His daughter Lea had married Walter Silverton of Barons, Alberta and, together, they had immigrated to Canada before the Second World War.

A tremendous organizer, Weiler began coordinating the unification of numerous Estonian clubs and organizations already in existence in southern Alberta. After moving to Toronto, he co-founded the Estonian Federation of Canada (*Eesti Liit Kanadas*) in 1949. As the organization's first president, he coordinated the immigration of post-war Estonian refugees to Canada by working closely with the Canadian government.

He continued his passion for newspaper publishing by co-creating the Estonian Publishing Company of Canada (*Eesti Kirjastus Kanadas*) and became the publisher of the weekly *Meie Elu* (*Our Life*) in the spring of 1950.

Aleksander was followed to Barons in May, 1948, by his son, Rein, his wife Marga and their three children: Roland, Hendrik and Merike. Aleksander's daughter, Asta, also immigrated to Canada with Aleksander's assistance. Asta was accompanied by her husband and their three children: Indrek, Reet and Helga. The older children attended school in Barons. Asta and her family later moved to British Columbia. After Aleksander's death, his son and family moved to Toronto to continue the work at *Meie Elu*.

CONTEMPORARY (AFTER 1990)

This section focuses on the descendants of Alberta's Estonian pioneers and immigrants. Many of the individuals discussed here play a significant role in maintaining and promoting Alberta's Estonian heritage. They have organized large Centennial celebrations and have served as key members with the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society. In addition, this section will introduce gifted musicians who have contributed to Alberta's music scene in a number of different ways.

When Estonia regained her Independence in 1991, the Calgary and Edmonton Estonian Societies were actively involved in preserving and promoting their cultural heritage and informing their members of happenings in their ethnic motherland. During the ensuing decade, major celebrations were organized to mark a century since the arrival of Estonian pioneers in the three largest pioneer settlements-Stettler/Big Valley, Medicine Valley and Barons. Estonian President Lennart Meri visited Alberta in 2000 and provided further encouragement to discover and record the history of Alberta's Estonians.

These celebrations were highly successful because they attracted participation by both multi-generational descendants of pioneers and the post-World War II immigrants. In 2005, the Calgary and Edmonton Estonian Societies morphed into a province-wide organization, the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society.

Concluding sentence: Other key members of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society include Helgi Leesment, Eda McClung and Dave Kiil.



BARBARA GULLICKSON

Barbara Gullickson grew up on a farm north of Barons, Alberta. She graduated from high school in Barons. Following a secretarial program at Mount Royal College in Calgary she married Leroy (Roy) Gullickson. They moved to Norman, Oklahoma for two years so that Roy could complete his engineering degree from the University of Oklahoma. Meanwhile, Barbara worked in the accounting office at the university.



Roy and Barbara moved to Toronto where they both had been employed by a number of different companies. Barbara attended the University of Western Ontario and eventually completed her degree in Alberta at the University of Lethbridge.

Roy and Barbara returned to Roy's family farm near Barons. Barbara taught kindergarten. She was also a member of the local School Board, the United Church Council and the Northminster Pastoral Charge Board. She also held the title of Marketing Manager of Keho Alta Industries.

Currently, Barbara is a member of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society and the Barons & District Historical Society. She is the Chairperson of the Barons 2010 Group, an organization planning Barons' centennial celebration.

Barbara has a passion for collecting and compiling history related to the Erdman family, for which she is indebted to her mother, Ellen (Erdman) Johnson. Roy and Barbara have five children.

ROBERT L. KINGSEP



Robert (Bob) is a grandson of Henry and Emilie Kingsep, the first Estonian pioneers to homestead in Alberta. After Emily's death in 1946, the various descendants of Henry and Emilie met annually for the next 50 years. However, with the dispersion of families across Canada's vast landscape and, combined with the subsequent ethnic integration of different families, the Kingsep reunions gradually became less and less frequent.

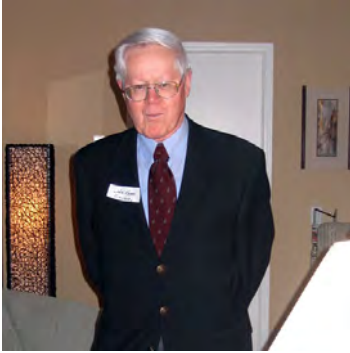
Bob and his sister Lyann were among the last to attend the Estonian School in Eckville before the school permanently closed its doors in the 1950s. Bob attended high school in Eckville and continued his education in Edmonton, establishing a career as a computer systems analyst.

In 1966 Bob married Annette McKenzie, a musician from Bentley, Alberta whom he met while playing in the Eckville High School band. Bob was active in numerous community clubs, both as a participant and organizer. He and Annette along with their daughter Tobi spent many seasons skiing, kayaking, hiking and travelling through Canada and the United States. In 1988 the Kingsep's relocated west of Calgary.

As a descendant of Alberta's first Estonian pioneers, Bob was invited to co-host the 1999 Alberta Estonian Centennial celebrations in Stettler. Inspired by the events in Stettler Bob became an active member of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society and in 2007 became president of the newly formed organization.



JÜRI KRAAV



Jüri Kraav and his wife Helle arrived in Calgary in the summer of 1996 and became interested in Alberta's Estonian pioneers during the 1999 Estonian Canadian Centennial celebrations at Linda Hall. He has been a member of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society from its inception. Juri was born in Estonia and left in September, 1944. He arrived in Canada in 1951 and met and married Helle in Toronto. They moved to Montreal in 1970 and Jüri work there as an engineer for 40 years. The Kraavs are now enjoying retirement in Calgary.

PETER LEESMENT

Peter Leesment has played a pivotal role in the development of Calgary's Estonian community. He has been a participant, guest speaker and organizer at numerous events across Alberta and Canada.

Peter was born in Estonia. During the second World War, he escaped to Germany with his parents. Peter and his mother lived in a German town inhabited by thousands of Estonian refugees. He enrolled in school learning both German and Estonian. In 1949 the Leesment family immigrated to Canada, living for a short while in Quebec before settling in Victoria, British Columbia. Victoria had a small but vibrant Estonian community; members often celebrated birthdays, Independence Day and Jaanipäev. Peter worked for his father's construction company, earning 25 cents an hour.

Peter graduated from the University of British Columbia in 1961. At school, Peter was a member of Vancouver's Estonian community. He participated in folk dances, social gatherings. While attending the University of British Columbia, he met his future wife Helgi. They married in 1964 and moved to Niagara Falls, Ontario where Peter found work as a chemical engineer. Being so close to Toronto, with its large Estonian population, presented the Leesments with various opportunities to maintain their proud Estonian heritage.

In the 1970s Peter and Helgi moved to Calgary. Peter was appointed president of the Calgary Estonian Society in 1978. In all, Peter managed three tenures as the president of the society (1979-1981, 1985-1987, and 1990-1991). While the organization was dormant, Peter organized Estonian Independence Day celebrations during the 1980s .



His position at the Calgary Estonian Society gifted Peter with some fond memories. These include, among others, the first major province-wide Jaanipäev festival held in Stettler (1979), Estonia's independence (1991) and a visit by Estonian President Lennart Meri in 2000. Since 1972 Peter has visited Estonia ten times.

TOOMAS PÄÄSUKE



Toomas Pääsuke was born in Estonia and emigrated to Canada in 1948. Several visits to relatives in Estonia in the 1980's resulted in an interest in ecological and cultural movements there. As a result he renewed ties with the Estonian immigrant community in Canada. While working in the Montreal area he joined the executive of the Montreal branch of the Estonian Heritage Society. The society, part of the independence movement in Estonia, was recovering the history and the traditional culture of Estonia which was revised and repressed during the Soviet occupation. Arriving in St. Albert in 1991, he joined the Edmonton Estonian Society, serving on the executive. He was the co-ordinator for the Estonian Centennial at Stettler in 1999. He has been on the board of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society since its inception. Toomas now lives in Canmore where he enjoys summer and winter mountain activities and sings with the Bow Valley Chorus.

EVELYN (KLAUS) SHURSEN



I was born at Stettler Alberta in 1939, the eldest child of Paul and Agnes Klaus (nee Skarra). My fraternal grandfather, Juri Klaus came to Canada from Estonia in 1902. Grandfather wore out a pair of leather shoes searching for the right homestead. Upon finding that place, 10 miles south of Stettler, my Grandmother, Maria, came from Estonia to join him. My Dad was born here. My mother, the daughter of Jack and Mary Skarra was born in Saskatchewan. My parents married and lived in the same yard as my fraternal grandparents. During my childhood years my grandparents told my siblings, sister, Letty, two brothers, Roy and George many stories about their lives in Estonia and their reasons for leaving the home land. My early education was in one-room schools; I attended Junior High and High School in Stettler. It was during my school years that I determined that being a teacher was what I would do as my career and following graduation from Stettler High School I completed my education at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. It was also during my school years my parents provided me the opportunity of piano and singing lessons, which I continue to utilize today. My first teaching position was in Red Deer, Alberta but after one year I moved back to the Stettler area and taught at Stettler Junior High School for 35 years, retiring in 1994.

I married Elmer Shursen in July 1962. We lived in the Linda Hall area south of Stettler running a mixed farm. Following Elmer's sudden death in 1995 I decided to try my hand at raising sheep, at one time having a flock of 700 animals. In 2007 I realized that getting up every few hours during lambing, etc., was not something I enjoyed any longer and made the decision to sell my flock.

Community Affairs has long been an avid interest of mine and I continue to be an active participant. I have, over the years, been actively involved in various School Councils; Social Studies, Language Arts, and Choral to name a few. My music and singing continue to play an important role in my life; I am, and have been for many years, the Choir Director for Stettler United Church. I have had the pleasure of participating in many local community productions and leading a number of local choirs, young and old alike. In 1983 I, along with a long-time friend, was named Stettlers' Citizen of the Year and in 1995 I was the recognized by the County of Stettler for my involvement in Cultural Arts. I am an avid gardener; enjoying working with the soil and sharing the beauty of my flowers and fruits of my labor with family and friends. My one-time passion of growing orchids is no longer viable but my love for the plant has never diminished.

My relationship with my grandparents, while a youngster, sparked my interest in Estonia, and living in an Estonian community provides me the opportunity to celebrate the Estonian culture. The museum in Stettler provides its visitors with a very real insight into the Estonian culture as well, a culture and community I am ever so proud to be a part of.

BOB TIPMAN



Bob Tipman is a descendant of the Tipman's. The Tipman's were an Estonian family who migrated to Canada in 1902 from Nurmekunde, a village near Tver, Russia. Bob grew up on a farm near Stettler, Alberta. He attended university and obtained a PhD in Mineral Engineering. For the next eight years he worked for INCO, a large nickel producing company and worked in Toronto and Thompson, Manitoba. He later worked for Syncrude where he held a number of research and managerial positions for over 20 years.

Upon retirement, he shared his valuable skills and knowledge in the field as a consultant for Shell Canada. His primary concern was the design of a new oil sands plant. He had been involved in the design, engineering and construction of the state-of-the-art facility over a ten year period. In 2003 he received the Alberta Science and Technology Award for Innovation in Oil Sands.

Bob represented Alberta's Estonian community from 1979-1988 as he was as a member of the Alberta Cultural Heritage Council and the Alberta Cultural Heritage Foundation. From 2005 to 2006, he served as the first ever president of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society.

Bob is married to Cathy and they have two children who reside in Calgary and Saskatoon. He remains semi-retired and lives in Calgary, but spends his winter months in Mexico.

COMMUNITIES

This section elaborates on the communities, towns, and cities directly affected by Estonian settlement. Uncover the history of the Medicine Valley, Stettler-Big Valley, Barons, Peace River, Foremost, Walsh and Sylvan Lake. As well, learn how urbanization influenced the development of Alberta's Estonian population in the second half of the 20th century.



ALBERTA ESTONIAN SETTLEMENTS

The first Estonian settlers arrived on the southeastern shore of Sylvan Lake (then known as Snake Lake) in spring of 1899. By 1903 a total of 62 Estonian settlers had arrived here. At the same time, increased competition from homesteaders from Finland, Sweden and French-Canada prevented Estonian settlers from acquiring contiguous quarter-sections of land. Thus newly-arrived settlers journeyed westward and eastward in search of suitable land for settlements.

A group of settlers from the Võru area in southeastern part of Estonia (Livonia) found suitable land in the Medicine Valley area some 20 km west and north of Sylvan Lake and settled there starting in fall of 1902. Another group reconnoitered east and south of Sylvan Lake and eventually decided to settle in the Stettler/Big Valley area over 100 km to the east in 1904. In the same year, Estonian settlers from Crimea via South Dakota arrived in the Barons area in southern Alberta. Smaller Estonian settlements were established in Foremost, Walsh and Peace River.



Medicine Valley:

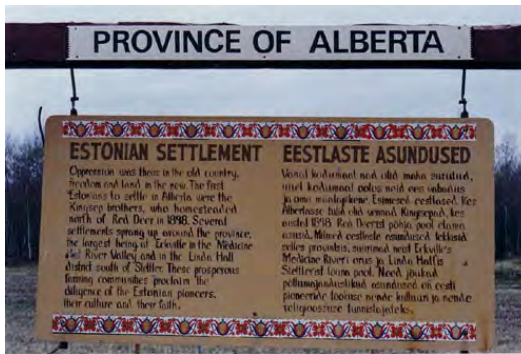
- 1899: First Estonian settlers arrive at Sylvan Lake
- 1902: Estonians settle at Medicine Valley
- 1916: 160 Estonian settlers farm 10,000 acres of land
- 1920s and 30s: 46 new Estonian settlers arrive in Medicine Valley
- 1948-1954: 58 Estonian immigrants arrive
- 1965: 74 Estonians living in Medicine Valley area
- 1990s: Approximately 10 Estonian families living in Medicine Valley

Other Estonian settlements in Alberta:

- 1899 - Sylvan Lake: 61 Estonians settled by 1903

1904 - Stettler: 171 Estonians settled by 1910
1904 - Big Valley: 15 Estonian families living here in 1905
1904 - Barons: 77 Estonians settled by 1908
1904 - Walsh: 12 Estonian families living here in 1907
1907 - Foremost: 9 Estonian homesteads started by 1912
1924 - Peace River: 30 Estonians living here by the 1920s

RURAL COMMUNITIES



As journalist John Hawkes stated in 1901, "The North-West Territories was a land of many peoples and many tongues." Indeed, ambitious immigrants from all across Europe, including Estonia, arrived here in response to the Government of Canada's advertisements of inexpensive, available land. The land out west was sparsely populated, and the federal government wanted to change this rapidly. The *Dominion Lands Act* entitled males over the age of 21 to

one quarter-section of land for a minimal fee. Government officials advertised homesteads for the modest price of \$10 CDN. The ads claimed to be seeking experienced "stalwart peasants born on the soil, whose forefathers had been farmers for generations." The Estonians who immigrated to Canada largely fit this description, having toiled as farmers or labourers under serfdom's oppressive system.

The railway, along with topographical factors, determined the location of Alberta's communities. Settlers arrived by train at various towns throughout the province including Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, and Red Deer. The next task was to find agreeable farming land. Once a location was deemed suitable, it was not uncommon for friends and relatives to gravitate to the same area, thereby creating centralized ethnic ties within the community. The Estonians predominantly settled in three locations: Barons, Medicine Valley, and Stettler-Big Valley. Together, they brought both their farming skills and their support for co-operative ventures. In Alberta's first year as a recognized province, 1905, 80 percent of the population was rural; consequently, it was known to the rest of Canada as the granary of the empire.



Alberta's rural towns and villages provided a variety of goods and services for newly arriving pioneer families. Weekly newspapers reporting local, national, and international news were printed. Members of the community would gather to share their opinions on the issues of the day. Moreover, within small towns such as Stettler, professional services, including those of doctors, lawyers, druggists, and blacksmiths, were available. The

railway was instrumental in determining the location of a new settlement. Consequently, many early Albertan settlements, including Stettler and Eckville, were situated along the north-south corridor from Edmonton to Calgary. No doubt Alberta's ethnic rural communities were vital to the province's initial development. In fact, by 1911, immigrants from Eastern Europe, including

Estonia, comprised 12 percent of Alberta's population. Other smaller Estonian settlements became established in Walsh and Foremost in southern Alberta, Sylvan Lake in central Alberta, and Peace River in the northern part of the province.

BARONS

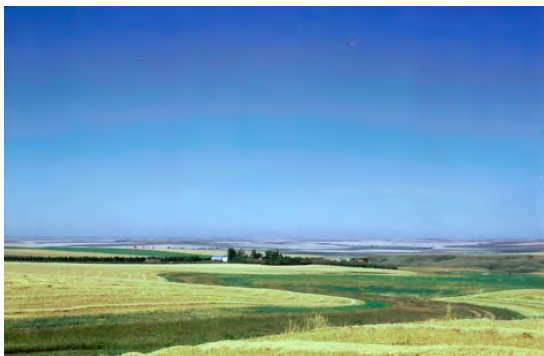
Barons is a village in southern Alberta located 51 kilometres north of Lethbridge along Highway 52. According to Statistics Canada, as of 2006, Barons had a population of 276. In 2004, the village proudly celebrated 100 years in existence. Known for their agricultural productivity, residents of the village aptly call their home the 'Wheatheart of the West'.

Settlers started arriving in the Barons area in 1902 and 1903. A great many more came during the following two years. The pioneers brought their basic staples like flour, sugar and tobacco from Lethbridge, Granum and Claresholm, travelling by foot or by wagon. When grain became available for sale, the farmers often travelled in groups to the same towns in case help was needed along the trail. Prairie fires were a common occurrence and farmers ploughed fireguards around buildings to prevent loss of property. Fast-spreading grass fires were a threat and resulted in serious loss of feedstock for cattle and horses.

Besides freedom, the availability of a quarter-section (160 acres) of homestead land for a \$10.00 fee attracted settlers from many countries, including Estonians. They worked hard to build shelters for family and livestock to live in, to fell trees and to break sod, and to fence the property. Money was earned in mines, sawmills and railroad construction, enabling the settlers to acquire oxen and horses for transportation and land-clearing, and to purchase construction materials and food staples.

By spring of 1909, the Canadian Pacific Railway station, initially named Baron, became known as Barons. Much of the land in the district was brought under cultivation around World War I. The 1920s brought drought and wind, and the rich topsoil was blown into ditches. Farming methods were developed to reduce soil drifting. Cultivators with a blade passing under the soil left the stubble and thrash on top to prevent the soil from blowing away.

Additional information can be found in History - Alberta Estonian Settlements - Barons





AGRICULTURE



Several Estonian families farmed in the Barons area, including the Silbermans, Kotkas, and Erdmans. They often worked together, sharing agricultural responsibilities. For Estonian families living on the outskirts of Barons, farming was a difficult yet rewarding venture. Steam tractors pulling ploughs were reasonably efficient at breaking the harsh soil. Though susceptible to malfunctions and disrepair, the steam engines were considerably more efficient than a walking plough. By the late 1920s, gasoline-powered tractors replaced steam engines and walking ploughs. Tractors maximized efficiency and

productivity, allowing the farmer to cover more area in less time.

Barons, by this time, was known for producing high-quality wheat, and farmers certified their reputation with numerous international awards and accolades. The Estonians, in particular, were rewarded for their hard work. For example, Ralph Erdman was crowned 'World Wheat Champion' in 1961. Years earlier, Alfred Erdman was heralded as the 'World Durum Wheat Champion'.



Elevators were not only places to store grain, but they also represented symbols of growth and success. At one point in its history, Barons had nine brightly colored grain elevators, each indicating its strong presence in Alberta's burgeoning agricultural economy. The first grain elevator was built in 1910 and many more soon followed. The total holding capacity increased with every passing year as Estonian farms, among others,

produced greater quantities of wheat. Various companies tapped into Barons' rich agricultural economy, including the Alberta Wheat Pool and Pioneer Grain Company. This created new employment opportunities. The Barons Co-operative Association blossomed in 1940, managing and organizing Barons' agricultural affairs. The association originally consisted of 18 members, including Gus Kulpas who voluntarily served on the Board of Directors. In 1958, however, all assets belonging to the Barons Co-operative Association were transferred to the Southern Alberta Co-operative Association.

Estonian Farms and families in Barons:

1908: 77 Estonians living in Barons or surrounding farm land

1934: 13 Estonian farms operating near Barons

1965: 2 Estonian farms operating near Barons

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION - 2004



In 2004, Barons celebrated 100 years of heritage and homesteading, highlighted by the establishment of a proud and dedicated Estonian community. From July 30 until August 1 over 500 participants participated in a celebration of Estonian homesteading and heritage. The organizing committee consisted of Martha Munz-Gue (program director), Perry Kotkas (program director), Dee Ryrle (treasurer), Betty Ann Turner (director - heritage and displays), Barbara Gullickson (director - marketing), Alan

Fraser (director - arrangements), Deanna Fraser (director - social events), Toomas Pääsuke (director - finance), Helgi Leesment (secretary), Mary Bishop (Barons and District Historical Society liaison) and George Andrekson (director - registration).

A Friday night reception started the festivities on a positive note. Speeches were delivered thanking all of the volunteers for their tireless efforts. An ad hoc choir, having only practiced a few times before their debut, entertained the crowd. Some of the distinguished guests at the reception included Avo Kittask, president of the Estonian Central Council in Canada and Laas Leivat, Honorary Head Consul representative from Toronto. Government officials and local businesses were also in attendance.

A Saturday morning breakfast presented an ideal opportunity for friends and family to exchange pleasantries and stories. The opening ceremony featured a presentation made by the provincial government awarding five area farming families for their contributions as they had been farming in Alberta for 100 years. The afternoon focused on traditional Estonian games, appreciated by the young and old alike. Displays of Estonian art, craftwork and literature were prominent throughout the entire venue. For instance, the agricultural machinery display featured a plow invented by Victor Erdman in the 1950s.



Speeches highlighting Barons' homesteading history were heard on the Saturday afternoon. Distinguished Estonian guests also prepared speeches thanking everyone for their commitment in preserving and maintaining Alberta's Estonian heritage. Eda McClung and Helgi Leesment were individually acknowledged for their efforts.

In the evening a catered beef dinner was served to the delight of all in attendance. The evening also featured a program of theatre, song and dance.



Sunday began at the Barons cemetery, once the property of pioneers Jakob and Mari Erdman. The ecumenical ceremony was lead by Reverend Don Koots, himself a descendant of Estonian pioneers. A rededication plaque was unveiled in the Sunday morning drizzle. Among the many highlights of the weekend were the well researched brochures highlighting the history of Barons and homesteading in the area. Most importantly, the Barons Centennial was a chance for Estonian descendants to connect

with old friends and new ones too.

EARLY YEARS



In 1904, Estonian pioneers, after a tumultuous journey across Eastern Europe and North America, established the first farming community in the area of Barons, Alberta. Others soon followed. In the years thereafter, newly arriving pioneers transported their supplies from Lethbridge, Granum, and Claresholm by foot or wagon, populating the village of Barons and its surrounding farmland. Trips between Barons and Lethbridge were made frequently; however, prior to the

advent of paved highways and automobiles, the destinations were not always easily accessible. Gus Erdman facilitated this journey by leaving markers along the route so that he could stay the course without wandering off the path.

Barons' geography presented numerous challenges to early pioneer settlers. The area was susceptible to drought, wind storms, and soil erosion. Trees were sparse, and there was no source of water in the immediate vicinity. "Water-witching" became a popular practice whereby one would locate underground water using a forked willow branch or similar instrument. Estonian immigrant Jack Kulpas was formidable at "water-witching" and demonstrated an ability appreciated by many in Barons' arid climate. With neither trees for lumber nor a nearby railway for shipping, settlers in the first decade of the 20th century were forced to build shelters from the only locally available building material, sod.

Estonian families, in particular, were adept at constructing sod houses that stayed warm during the winters and cool during the summers. Typically, a sod house was a one-room structure with walls two feet thick. For instance, Martin and Lisa Silberman's first residence was a tiny sod hut three miles south of Barons. Others who built single-boarded one-room shacks often suffered from the cold.



In 1909, the Canadian Pacific Railway purchased the present townsite, establishing an important connection on the Calgary-Lethbridge railway line. Soon, a hardware store and a grocery store were built along with the Union Bank. The town was initially called Baron, after a local railway official. However, people continually added an s to the name; thus, the name *Baron* gradually shifted to *Barons*.

Prior to its gaining the name Barons, the town was known as Blayney for a short period. The "Big Store" was built by two local carpenters, complemented by a spacious dance hall on the second floor, appropriately labelled the "Big Hall." The hall represented Barons' premier venue for community gatherings including plays, concerts, political forums, and Chautauqua, a dramatic performance held during the summer months. In time, Barons' first newspaper, *The Barons Enterprise*, provided local news of Barons' farming community.

The Arnald Hotel was built in 1910, offering alcoholic beverages to loyal customers and guests.

At the Arnald, customers could take advantage of Barons' first telephone.

Officials opened the Wheatland Centre School in 1907. The school provided education to students, including Estonian children, living in the vicinity. The school closed in 1915 when it amalgamated with the Barons Consolidated School.

Barons' growth and economic development was important to the Estonian farmers living in the vicinity as it provided them with basic goods and services.



BARONS ESTONIANS - A PICTORIAL VIEW



1917 Picnic: L - R: Ellen Erdman, Magda Erdman holding son Alfred, Victor Erdman, Miina (Erdman) Kulpas holding daughter Lillian, Anton Kulpas with daughter Betty in front of him, Robert Kulpas, Ralph Erdman in front of Anna in white dress (hired girl), and Oscar Erdman in front.



1921 Picnic, Oldman River Bottom: L-R: Johannes Kotkas, Helene Kotkas holding Mary Erdman, Mr. Saffel holding Arnold, Mrs. Saffel holding Martha, Magda and Gustav, Miina Kulpas, Anton Kulpas holding son Walter, Mrs. Flink in dark skirt, Lena Krasman in wide-brimmed light hat, Clara Flink in front of Lena, Helmi Silberman and mother Liisa, Louise Kotkas in front of Liisa Children in front: Hilda, Leonard and Elizabeth Saffel, Alfred Erdman in front of Magda, Ellen Erdman in front of Gustav, Ralph and Oscar Erdman



1929 — Welcoming Jacob & Mari Erdman back from Salem, Oregon. Gus Erdman's house.



1. George Andrekson
2. Sally Andrekson
3. Mary Smith
4. Linda Erdman
5. John Smith
6. Karl Karilla
7. Mr. Turk
8. G.J. Erdman
9. Gus Erdman
10. Alex Hebenik

11. Gus Kulpas
12. John Sibelin
13. Lydia Hebenik
14. Mr. Pedajas (hired man)
15. Mrs. Pedajas (hired girl)
16. Magda (Lik) Erdman
17. Helena (Erdman) Kotkas

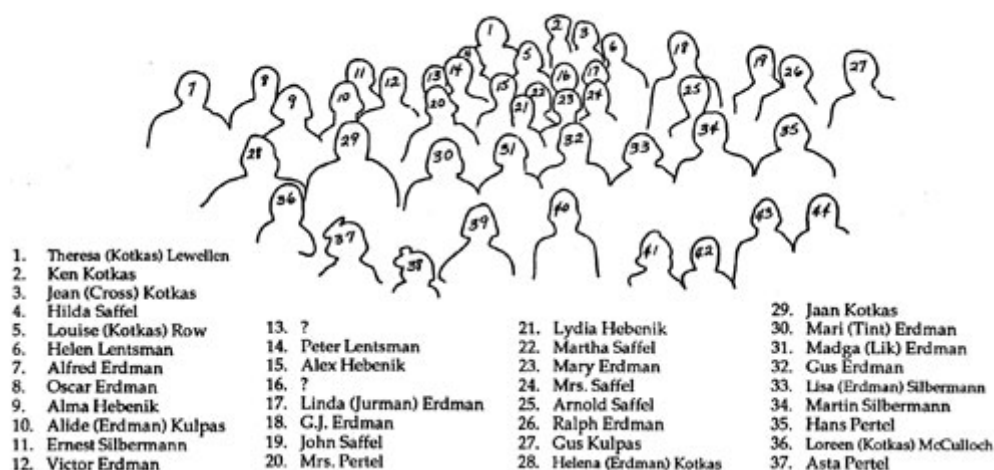
18. Jaan Kotkas
19. Jacob Erdman
20. Mari (Tint) Erdman
21. Pauline (Roos) Erdman
22. Siim Erdman
23. Karl Erdman
24. Carl Hebenik

25. ?
26. Alex Andrekson
27. Ilmar Erdman
28. Dorothy Kulpas
29. Lydia Andrekson
30. Mrs. Turk
31. Mrs. Sibelin

Welcoming Jacob and Maria Erdman back from Salem, Oregon at Gus Erdman's house. - 1929



1935 — Group at Lisa and Martin Silbermann's.



Group at Liisa and Martin Silbermann's - 1935.

JÕULU PUU RAHA (CHRISTMAS TREE MONEY)

By Ellen Erdman

H. Minnik, 75 cents; A. Kewe, 25 cents; Peter Musten, 75 cents; J. Kulpas, 50 cents; G. Krikental \$1.00; J. Kotkas, 50 cents; J. Erdman, 50 cents; A. Kulpas 25 cents; P. Lentsman, 50 cents; J. Musten, 50 cents; J. Reinstein, 25 cents; J. Malberg, 50 cents; J. Kewe, \$1.00; P. Meer, 75 cents; H. Watman, 25 cents; G. Erdman, 25 cents. In 1908 there were 20 Estonian families (77 individuals) in this area.

My grandfather built a wooden house with sod insulation and a large barn which housed Estonians coming to Barons until their own houses were built. Grandfather and Dad prospered at farming and acquired more land. Wheat was hauled to Lethbridge in the early days. Dad would get up at two or three a.m., deliver the grain and return home the same day, getting home very late. It was expensive to stay overnight in the city, especially with a four- horse team. He would bring mail, coal, and groceries home.

In 1908 Dad sent to Crimea for his childhood sweetheart, Magda Lik. He met her in England. When they returned to Canada they were married in Jacob and Mary's house where they lived for several years. My mother never saw any of her family again. Mother and Dad both went to Barons for evening classes, with others, to learn to read and write English.

A Lutheran minister, Reverend Sillak, came from Medicine Hat a few times a year and performed church services baptized, married, and buried the dead. In the meantime, the Bible was read by Dad, who also performed other church services when necessary.

Grandfather gave two acres of land (S.E. corner of S.E.1/4 8-12- 23) to the Estonians around 1905 as a burial ground where the plots were free to all Estonians. This is where Grandmother and Grandfather, my parents and other relations are buried. This cemetery was given to the village of Barons in 1923 and has been used by the community since that date.

Ira Allen and his wife came to the Lutheran church services, which were spoken in Estonian and German, to hear the Estonians sing. Estonians loved to sing (still do) and at every gathering there was a sing-song.

Dad and Mother moved to their own farm in 1914 and in 1918 they built a large house with a Delco power plant, a dumb-waiter, central heating, bathroom, billiard room, and hot and cold running water. Victor, Ralph, Oscar, and I were born at Grandfather's house and Alfred and Mary were born at the new farm. Mary died when she was 15.

My Uncle Robert was the gardener at Grampa's home and ordered tulips, irises, and peonies directly from Holland and Japan. He set up the tennis court at Grandpa's. Robert passed away in 1927.

My father had a threshing outfit about 1919 and at that time had about 180 horses, 200 head of cattle, and 80 or so sheep. My mother carded the sheep's wool in the winter, made quilts, spun yarn and knit socks and mitts. She could knit and read at the same time. Mother also crocheted

and made rugs. We always had a big garden - growing enough vegetables to last till the following year's crop. We used to make 20-gallon crocks of sauerkraut, salt pork and corned beef. Mother canned many fruits and vegetables, as did the other pioneer women. She belonged to the Women's Institute. Mother died in 1941 when she was 55 years old.

At threshing time, there would be two woman cooks in the cook car and 20 to 24 men on the outfit. In the early days, there would be a year-round hired girl and hired man.

When company came in the summer, we often played "anti-i-over" the house, tennis or hide and seek.

My father was a charter member of the U.G.G. and the Alberta Wheat Pool, a school trustee for many years and an elder of the church.

He was well known in Southern Alberta for his horses. He first raised and showed registered draft Belgians and won many prizes for them. At one time his Belgians contracted sleeping sickness. He stayed in the barn to treat them and got sick himself. He took the same medicine that his horses had, and all recovered. Later he raised Palominos and Appaloosas and rode them in parades at celebrations and fairs, winning many ribbons.

Dad was interested in young people and after we all left home he had some city boys come out to the farm to help him during the summer months. Douglas Fitch (lawyer in Calgary) and Rendal Kulpas (writer for a Toronto newspaper) were two of these. He died in 1965 at the age of 79.

Natalie and Charlotte Erdman attended public school at Lundy and Wheatland Centre. Charlotte worked in Lethbridge, as did other young Estonian girls, for \$15.00 a month. She later went to Lacombe to go to high school there and she also took a business course. She became a Seventh Day Adventist and was secretary of this organization for many years, until her retirement. When she became ill, she returned to the farm and stayed with Dad until her admission to the Auxiliary Hospital in Claresholm. She passed away in 1963.

In 1917 Natalie received a B.A. degree from the University of Alberta. She became a missionary and worked in the near east where she met and married Keith Stevenson of Australia.

Helena Erdman Watman married John Kotkas. Lisa married Martin Silbermann. Miina married Anton Kulpas in Crimea. When Miina became ill in Alberta she and her husband and Grandma moved to Salem, Oregon, in 1920 where they bought a fruit and walnut orchard. Grandma and Grandpa came back to Alberta in 1929.

Note: The full story about the Erdman family is published in *Wheatheart of the West: A History of Barons and District*, 1971.

By Rudy Kotkas:

In 1951 we purchased a property in Waterton Lakes and built a house in which we have spent many pleasant holidays, and it has been my pleasure to help several youngsters, besides our own of course, to catch their first fish. This is a tremendous thing for a youngster and even if it is

only seven or eight inches long, in their eyes it is quite an accomplishment. I strongly recommend this co- operation to other grown-ups.

I have acted as a director and later as chairman of our local Co-op. Association, which later joined the South Alberta Co-op. Assn. I was elected to the original board of our Community Hall and in due time, also as chairman. This hall is one of our communities' proudest accomplishments in that every bit of it was done by the local people. As to our family involvement in fraternal organizations, Ken's wife Joyce and my wife, Jean, are both Past Matrons of the Eastern Star. Ken and I are both Past Masters of our Masonic Lodge, and I have been accorded the honor of being the District Deputy of the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Masons in Alberta. Jean is also a Past Honored Royal Lady of the Order of the Royal Purple and I have been the Exalted Ruler of the Elks Lodge.

Finally, here we are on Sunday, October 10, 1971 - just Jean and myself alone once more. Joyce is at her home making preparations for a Thanksgiving dinner tomorrow. Ken and Perry are at a Trap Shoot in Mossleigh. Loreen and Susie are visiting Reta at the University at Reno where she is now in pre-med. Jean is digging carrots to send along with Perry when he goes back to University in Calgary, where he and two other boys are batching, and I am at long last finishing this family history.

We have had our share of the good things in life, and to those of our descendants who follow, and some day many years hence may have occasion to read this, Jean and I wish to close with this verse entitled:

By Jean Kotkas:

"MAY YOU CLIMB 'TIL YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE"

Often your tasks will be many
And more than you think you can do.
Often the road will be rugged
And the hills insurmountable too.
But always remember, the hills ahead
Are never as steep as they seem,
So with faith in your heart start upward,
And climb till you reach your dream.

LEISURE AND POST-WORLD WAR II DEVELOPMENTS

Leisure activities were paramount in developing Barons' social environment as well as in emphasizing the value of community spirit. Barons' dedicated labourers and farmers enjoyed billiards, bowling, baseball, and curling. On Sundays, after weekly church services, locals enjoyed playing pool. However, in the first few decades of the 20th century, doing so was illegal. To circumvent this irritating setback, volunteers perfunctorily stood on the rooftop of the building and scouted the terrain for approaching RCMP officers. If an officer was spotted, the lookout would issue a warning, and participating billiard players would scatter nonchalantly.



Bowling was another popular activity. Estonian settler Jack Kulpas represented Barons when he travelled to Spokane, Washington in a bowling tournament. Showcasing his impressive skills, he bowled a perfect game.

Organized baseball games with rival towns competing against each other drew tremendous crowds. To improve the quality of its squad, Barons would often recruit talented players, including many of Estonian descent, from the surrounding area.



Over the course of its history, Barons has witnessed agricultural booms and busts. The town has also been susceptible to centralization and urbanization, particularly in the post-World War II era. Many examples of relocation demonstrate this trend. For instance, the RCMP moved their offices to Picture Butte in order to cover a broader area. Municipal offices once

located in Barons were shifted to Lethbridge when Barons amalgamated with the County of Lethbridge. Schools in Barons closed when students could use buses as a means of reliable transportation to access Lethbridge's school system. Paved highways allowed for a simple commute into Lethbridge where citizens of Barons could shop and conduct business. Despite this trend toward gradual urbanization, Barons still prospers as an agricultural community-one that cherishes its rural history and cultural heritage. Several Estonians continue to farm in the area.

FOREMOST AND WALSH



With a population of 524, Foremost is situated 106 kilometres southwest of Medicine Hat. The Estonian pioneers who settled in the Foremost area arrived in Alberta via South Dakota. Hans Maar (Meer) and his family purchased a homestead approximately 85 kilometres northeast of the town of Warner in 1907. By 1910, seven more Estonian homesteads emerged in the area.

Prior to irrigation and paved highways, the area surrounding Foremost was a difficult place to start a farm. Isolated, Estonian families relied on each other and hard work to make a living. For instance, The Krasman family arrived here in 1909 while their closest neighbour was over 40 kilometres away. Life on the prairie was a difficult adjustment for newly-arriving Estonians. For the Krasmans a monthly trip to the nearest town was a two-day affair. The nearest doctor was a full day journey. Strong winds wreaked havoc on poorly constructed homes; the Krasmans observed its mighty power when their barn roof was torn to shreds in one particular wind storm. The nearest school was eight kilometres away and because of the sheer distance many Estonian children did not attend on a consistent basis.

Estonian pioneers farming in the semi-arid climate of southern Alberta often experienced severe drought. Before the introduction of irrigation, entire crops were often destroyed by drought. Isolation and the paucity of water were key contributing factors to the gradual decrease in the Estonian population.



Walsh, Alberta is located 57 kilometres east of Medicine Hat, located on the Trans Canada Highway. Situated north of the Cypress Hills, Walsh is well-known locally for its lively auction centre specializing in the sale of livestock.

There is little known about the first Estonians who settled in the area around Walsh. Arriving in 1904, J. Smith (it is assumed Mr. Smith changed his name at some point prior to arriving in southern Alberta) settled in the rolling hills having traveled from as far away as Russia. In total, there were twelve Estonian families living in the Walsh area including the Fridulins, Jurkin, Orman, Tihkane, Witser, Bulow, Eringsen and Juhanson. Given the conditions of the time, successful farming was extremely challenging; therefore, men often earned an income working on the railroad. They would earn upwards of \$1.50 per ten-hour shift. Similar to Foremost, Estonian families living near Walsh soon migrated towards Alberta's urban centres in search of better employment opportunities.

Additional information can be found in History - Alberta Estonian Settlements - Warner and Foremost or History - Alberta Estonian Settlements - Walsh

MEDICINE VALLEY



The Medicine Valley refers to a stretch of land in central Alberta adjacent to the Medicine River. The area functioned as an ideal homesteading location for Estonian pioneers arriving in the early 20th century. The terrain had fertile soil and open prairie supplanted by intermittent groups of spruce and aspen; it was ideal for logging. Moreover, the Medicine River had an abundance of fish. Eckville and Gilby soon emerged as two prominent communities serving the commercial

and cultural needs of the area.

Eckville is situated west of Red Deer and, as of 2006, had a population of 951. Eckville was incorporated as a village in 1921 and became a town in 1966. The term *Medicine Valley*, however, incorporates a broader definition and will be used to describe Eckville, Gilby, and the surrounding farmland in the text to follow.

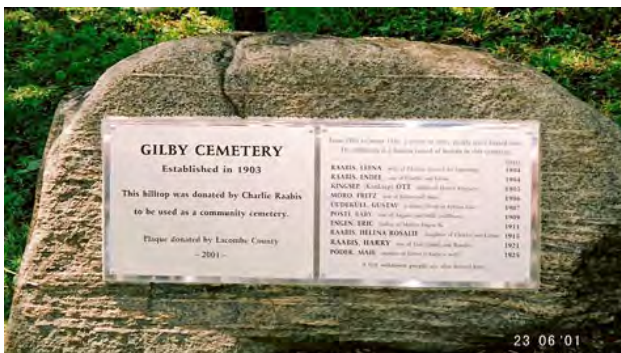


Additional information can be found in History - Alberta Estonian Settlements - Sylvan Lake and Medicine Valley

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION - 2001

Over the weekend of June 22-23, 2001 over 200 people gathered at the Gilby Community Centre and the adjoining Medicine River Recreation Area for a province-wide celebration. For over 100 years Estonian families and their descendants have been living in the Medicine Valley. Many of these families retain connections with today's Medicine Valley community and it was many of the third, fourth and fifth generation descendants who played a pivotal role in planning the successful weekend.

2001's midsummer celebration was an ideal opportunity for guests to rediscover their heritage, visit homestead sites and share stories with friends and relatives. The festivities officially began with a breakfast served at Gilby Hall. Bob Kingsep, the grandson of Hendrik Kingsep who was the first Estonian to homestead in the area, was the host of the opening ceremony. Dave Kiil, representing the Edmonton Estonian Society, outlined the history of traditional summer solstice celebrations.



Guests were invited to participate in self-guided tours of the Medicine Valley using maps provided by the organizers. In the afternoon guests gathered for a dedication of the Gilby Cemetery on a secluded hilltop at the original Raabis homestead. For those in attendance, the restoration and dedication of the Gilby Cemetery represented a tangible link to the past. The

cemetery was groomed, headstones replaced and a chain link fence was erected. A plaque was also unveiled during the ceremony paying tribute to Alberta's Estonian pioneers.

Saturday evening featured a spectacular pig roast accompanied by traditional Estonian dishes. The Gary Raabis Band entertained the crowd as people sang and danced to the music. The highlight of the evening for many was the traditional bonfire where people gathered and sang traditional songs late into the evening.



CO-OPERATIVE ENDEAVOURS

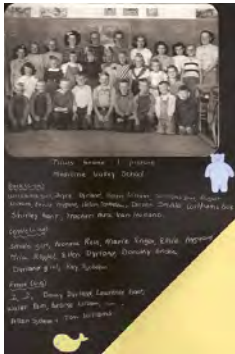


The formation of the Medicine Valley Estonian Society not only established the groundwork for preserving and celebrating Estonian culture, but the Society also spurred the development of a co-operative association. The Eckville Co-operative Association was created in 1912 with numerous Estonian settlers serving as board members, including Fritz Kinna, Henry Kingsep, Charlie Raabis, and Carl Langer. Alberta's Estonian community firmly believed that a community would attain greater economic prosperity and flourish culturally if it voluntarily united through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise to meet common economic, social,

and cultural needs and aspirations. Members of the community-not just Estonians-invested shares in the enterprise, allowing the association to purchase facilities and expand its inventories. Shortly thereafter, the Eckville Co-operative Association operated a general store and, later, a lumber yard. For decades, citizens of Medicine Valley deemed the project a successful venture project due to its brisk business and shared profits. However, by the 1950s, profits began to subside as a result of increased market prices, mismanagement, and personnel issues. Regardless, the existence of the Eckville Co-operative Association reinforces the Estonian model of collectivism and community-based sharing initiatives. Moreover, the Estonian community's influence on the success of the Eckville Co-operative Association was invaluable.

Many citizens of Medicine Valley firmly believed in community enrichment. Altruism was a traditional virtue among early 20th century rural settlements, particularly within the Estonian community. Several organizations blossomed in the late 1930s and 1940s. Initially set up as a casual get-together where friends could converse and reminisce, the Country Ladies Aid morphed into a dedicated charitable organization which helped numerous groups and projects throughout the Medicine Valley. Similarly, the Royal Canadian Legion expanded its branches to Eckville in the mid-1940s. It operated out of a modest tin building and sponsored many community initiatives. The Legion funded upgrades to Memorial Park and provided uniforms for hockey and softball teams. Estonian members of the organization included Ralph Pihooja and Ralph Kingsep. The Lions Club of Eckville was also created in the mid-1940s. Its philosophy was to "determine community needs and develop a means of supporting them". Furthermore, the organization provided a convivial social environment for active members.

EARLY YEARS



The Gilby district was named after Martin Gilbertson, an American of Norwegian ancestry who arrived in the Medicine Valley in 1903. Although Gilby never developed into a township as Eckville had, it remained an important networking centre for Estonians living in the Medicine Valley. The opening of the Gilby Store allowed nearby settlers to purchase groceries, deliver and receive mail, and, most importantly, socialize with neighbours. Before the Gilby Hall was built in 1921, the hall situated above the store functioned as a gathering place for the community. The Gilby Hall was built by a group of Estonian settlers eager to establish a permanent community hall as a means of preserving Estonian customs and traditions. During this time, the Gilby (Kalmu) Cemetery was also built by several Estonian pioneers wanting a peaceful resting place for their friends and family.

Arthur Eckford arrived in the Medicine Valley in 1902 and settled in an area one and a half miles north of the present town of Eckville. Eckford donated some of his land for the initial development of a general store and post office. Two years later, a bridge linking Eckville with the surrounding farming community and facilitating transportation routes among Estonian farmers was constructed over the Medicine River. By 1912, the Canadian National Railway completed construction of the railway. Within a relatively short time, businesses moved to be closer to the railway, thus establishing Eckville's present location. Main Street soon featured a pool hall, hotel, and drug store. Gus Sestrap, an Estonian settler and one of the first inhabitants of Eckville, owned and operated the General Store. Much to the delight of locals eager to conduct business, the Canadian Bank of Commerce soon opened a banking facility.



By 1920, Eckville had 30 buildings, including two real estate offices, a bakery, a lumber yard, a grain elevator, and a butcher shop. On 3 November 1921, Eckville became a recognized village. Members of the Medicine Valley wholeheartedly accepted new technology as a means of improving their agricultural methods. Technicians connected phone lines between Gilby and Eckville, allowing for improved communication. Alberta's

railway system was continually expanding, opening up new transportation networks to other surrounding communities, including Rocky Mountain House and Red Deer. The presence of notable railway companies spurred business with larger corporations. Companies such as John Deere, Imperial Oil, Texaco, and the Alberta Wheat Pool conducted business in the Medicine Valley. With Medicine Valley's economic landscape expanding on a yearly basis, so, too, did the population. By 1966, because it boasted a population surpassing 700, Eckville was formally

recognized as a town by the Alberta government.

Houses in Medicine Valley:

1902-1940: 40 houses

1921-1940: 46 houses

1941-1965: 13 houses

A black and white photograph showing a large, dark, two-story house with a chimney and a porch, situated on a grassy field. A smaller, dark, single-story building is visible in the background to the right, and a tall, thin tree stands between the two buildings.

[illegible][illegible]

piano and a gramophone. The Gilbertsons owned a piano, which they agreed to sell to the school for \$100, providing it remained in the Estonian community. Unfortunately, when the school building was eventually moved to Eckville, the piano disappeared. The community felt the loss deeply, because the piano was an important connection to a pioneer family.

The Estonian School eventually fell under the jurisdiction of the Rocky Mountain School Division, which began the process of centralizing schools. Grade seven and eight students were sent to Eckville by bus. Other changes included providing one teacher for each grade, indoor physical education, etc. Eventually, the entire school building was hauled to Eckville, where it became the Home Economics room.

The Rocky Mountain School Division eventually became part of County of Lacombe No. 14. Records of the early history of the Estonian School had been carefully kept, but they were all destroyed when they were transferred to the county. Most of what is known about the school comes from the memories of surviving community members. Many of the memories include pranks the students played, and the adventures they found themselves in on the days they played hookey.

The community is proud of the number of professionals it produced, particularly in the 1940s and 1950s.

The original school site has reverted to the Langer family.

PIONEER ESTONIAN SCHOOL MEMORIES

Mrs. John M. Tipman

The Estonian School, in the Municipal District of Lacombe, came into existence because of the need of the children of the majority of the Estonian-speaking pioneers who had settled by the Medicine River. Their older children were already nearing their teens and had had no schooling whatever, as there had been no school close by. So, in order to have their children



educated and learn the language of Canada, that is, English, a school had to be built. A suitable spot was selected in the middle of the community and a school was built in 1910. It was an oblong frame building of lumber, painted blue-gray on the inside and the outside. The school room area was on the east side, lengthwise, and the three anterooms, and entrance door were on the west side of the building. The outside door led into the central anteroom and the girls' cloakroom was on the left of this and the boys' cloakroom on the right. But, alas! The boys' cloakroom became the bed-sitting room of the teachers for the first few years. The pioneer homes were too small to provide a "room" suitable for the teacher. He slept and lived at the school and had his meals at the home of a nearby farmer, Mr. Stenvig.

Maybe it is not amiss, at this point, to mention that an additional room was added to the north end of the building in 1920 to form a two-roomed school. Here grades seven to ten were taught for a few years. Later these higher-grade children were taken by school van to Eckville High School.

The school room was furnished by wooden homemade double desks; the desk tops were painted black and the seats yellow. The desktops contained two inkwells - one for each pupil; and below it was a compartment for books. The first heater was a long barrel-like affair; laid lengthwise on the floor and capable of burning three-foot-long spruce logs. Later on an upright school furnace, with a round metal shield, was provided for the school. A one-pail water fountain, with a push-button tap, provided drinking water. This was a delight to us children. Everyone, whether thirsty or not, wanted to push the button and drink the spurting water. The blackboards were just that - boards painted black, with a trough for chalk.



The majority of the children who started their schooling here were children of the Estonian pioneers - hence the name, "Estonian School". Those attending were the Koots, the Kinnas, the Kingseps, the Langers, the Matteus's, (later spelled Matthews), the Moros, the Moos's, the Postis, the Pihoojas, and Raabis's - all of Estonian lineage. There were two families of Norwegians, the Stenvigs and the Gilbertsons; one family of English, the Dekkers; and also one family of Finns, the Hills.

The first couple of years there was school only during the four summer months, due to the scarcity of qualified teachers. Only University students were available as teachers during the summer months. Later some of the University students taught for six months, and finally, as time passed on, the full ten-month school year was established.

The first children who arrived at the Estonian School were bare-foot boys and girls, fresh for their new adventure in life. It was a wonderful adventure as new friendships were formed where no companions had been available before. It did not matter that they couldn't speak with each other; they could hold hands and run and point to a flower, grass or tree, and each would say it in their own language, then each would repeat the other's word and laugh. What a wonderful feeling, just to have someone of another language to share his feelings with you!

It was said that the teachers were hard to get for a pioneer school where the children did not know a word of English. Who would like to grapple with the extra problem of the language barrier in teaching? But the first teacher's we did get to teach the Estonian school were wonderful. They were resourceful, patient, and had a sense of humor and were very understanding of us children.

For our first day of school we carried only our "lard pail" lunch bucket, a slate, and a slate pencil. The teacher was a tall young man, wearing a "suit" and the whitest of white shirts, topped with a red colored tie. His hair was parted on one side and neatly combed. His outward appearance had an electrifying effect on every boy because from that day forward they became conscious that they, too, had hair. Strenuous efforts were made by them to comb their unruly locks into place just like the teacher's, and to be clean like him. To us girls he was from a different world and we wondered if we would ever be part of this outside world.

"School days, school days, the golden rule days, taught to the tune of a hickory stick." It seemed that this rule did not apply in this early Estonian school. There was only one rule: "Learn English during school hours and on the play ground." We left the room quietly, without asking permission, if nature requested, but hurried back so as to miss nothing. Thirst was quenched at the fountain. We lacked the words for asking permission. None of the children ever abused their freedom and no hickory stick made its appearance except as a "pointer" for words or numbers. The days for us were "Golden".

Now to the actual teaching and learning. Believe it or not, our very first textbook was the T. Eaton Catalogue, and a very good textbook it was for that purpose. It had words and pictures of people, clothes, rooms with furniture, curtains, dishes, clocks, horses, harness, sleighs and wagons, houses, barns, and paints. All words and pictures were eagerly absorbed by our receptive minds and repetition etched it permanently there. The whole school repeated each word in unison and then singly. Finally back to our seats to draw on our slates the object and to write the correctly spelled word beside it. The slates were perfect for such work as errors could easily be corrected. Our vocabulary grew by leaps and bounds - it was thrilling to know how many words we learned in a day!

The sentence-building came later and this was more difficult. Our teacher made us act out our sentences. For example, the child would go and sit on a chair and say "I am sitting on a chair." This acting out each sentence was fun. If some of the children didn't understand the English word, for example "open", the teacher asked for the Estonian word for it. He repeated the word

"lahti" after the pupil. His accent often made us laugh and he laughed with us, too. Thus a kinship of understanding and mutual respect grew between teacher and pupil. After sentence building we progressed to the Alexander Readers and then we were on our way!

To further expand our vocabulary the early teachers took the whole school on excursions to the woods, meadows and lakesides. Here we learned to recognize the different types of trees and learn their names. The meadows provided a profusion of wild flowers of every shape, size and color and each with a pretty name. By the lakeside the wild birds were bountiful. We found ducks, geese, killdeers, yellow-headed woodpeckers, red winged blackbirds, robins, snipes, and hawks. The schoolroom possessed a chart, in beautiful colors, of the common wild birds of Alberta. This chart was scrutinized thoroughly after each field trip and the book of wild flowers was examined with care. These field trips taught us not only the names of things we saw, but also a deep respect for plant and animal life.

During the first years our teachers were young men. Then we had a "Lady Teacher". This was a surprise and honor to us. We girls admired her to no end. We aspired to owning clothes like hers - beautiful blouses and skirts with pleats that opened so beautifully as she walked. And her hair styles were beautiful, too. When she taught us girls "hair care" and presented each one of us with a length of red ribbon for our hair we felt we had risen in self respect. Last, but not least, we aspired to have knowledge like hers. But the boys went one step further than us girls, and this irked us because we hadn't thought of it before. They washed their bare feet at the pump before coming into class. We asked the boys why they did this. The reply was, "No one goes before a lady with dusty feet." Believe it or not, we girls were not to be outdone by the boys. We asked the boys to pump water so we, too, could wash our faces and bare feet before we entered the schoolroom. There were no towels in the school in those days, so all of us boys and girls dried our wet feet by standing on a poplar log like birds in a row, and let the wind do the work. Cold water and wind caused chapping of the hands and feet, but this condition was easily remedied by applying "sweet sour cream" sparingly on our sores every evening. This treatment stung, but who cared? Fresh unsalted butter rubbed on our hands also kept them soft. These beauty remedies were always kept handy by our mothers.

The winter months brought the added problem of something hot for lunch. The teacher solved the problem of hot drink by providing hot water and the children were to bring their "tea". Bought tea was hard to get but the teacher was surprised to learn how many different native teas we had. There was chamomile and caraway tea made from dried wild seeds of these plants; mint tea, made from dried wild mint leaves; and raspberry tea made from the wild raspberry plant. All of these teas were very tasty, but caraway became the favorite.

One of the teachers taught us to play checkers during the cold weather, as blackboard games used up too much chalk. Soon the classroom boasted of handmade checkerboards of stiff brown building paper, marked by the right colored squares-the checker men were colored stiff paper squares, or buttons. This game was really enjoyed by older and younger children alike. After a sitting game like this there followed a fast game of "Pussy Wants a Corner", with the schoolroom windows open. Or if there was untrodden snow outside, a fast game of "Fox and Geese" was played.

The teachers not only followed the school curriculum but aroused our interest in other fields,

such as love of classical literature during our story hours; interest in travel, by telling about their travels, or stories about countries they read about. They taught us patriotic, Christmas, Easter, and Folk songs to foster our love of singing. We learned how the debate system was used in Parliament, and we often debated on topics familiar to us. Group games in which all participated taught us the importance of fair play, and honor was the aim.

Thus, in six years these Estonian school children had learned to speak English, had covered their eight years of schooling, and were ready to write grade VIII examinations in Red Deer. Some left school without obtaining a diploma, but from this first crop of pioneer children emerged teachers, storekeepers, and flour and lumber millers. Even a baker and a lady doctor had received a partial year's training in the Estonian school.

GILBY HALL

Gilby Hall was initiated by the U.F.A., which had been meeting in a hall above the Shorrock Brothers store.



Oscar Thubron donated land for the hall. A team of volunteers began work in the spring of 1921, and the hall was completed by July.

The hall was heated with wood-burning stoves that usually smoked. The dedicated Thubrons started all the fires. Men paid 50 cents to attend hall functions. Women attended for free - providing they brought a box lunch.



Starting around 1923, silent films were shown in the hall. A kitchen and ladies' coat room were added by 1927. Power and a new floor were put installed in 1951. In 1971, thanks to Mr. Widden, the hall was resingled and repainted inside and out. A propane furnace was installed in 1972 and replaced by overhead gas four years later.

The present board continues to make improvements to the inside of the hall.

The hall has been used for Sunday School, church services, funerals, 4-H gatherings, political meetings, anniversaries, bridal showers, wedding dances, christenings, and farewell parties. Currently, the hall hosts two cabarets each year and a Christmas party.

HISTORY OF MEDICINE VALLEY ESTONIAN SETTLEMENT

Voldemar Matiisen

(translated by Tõnu Onu)

Foreword

The collection and preservation of the data relating to the early (1900-1920) history of the Medicine Valley Estonian settlement has been a project of this writer for some time. The creation of the Estonian Historical Commission in 1965 provided the final stimulus to implement the project. The assignment became my responsibility and was completed in the 1970s.

Unfortunately the completion of the work has dragged on for too long, due largely to lack of experience in finding historical sources as well as in managing and organizing the material gathered. However, the collection of material could not be delayed any longer. The ranks of those who were part of establishing the Medicine Valley settlement in the early years are diminishing rapidly. Furthermore, few of them have preserved historically valuable material from that period.

The Medicine Valley Estonian Society (MVES) beginning in 1910 was really the central organization for the whole Estonian settlement. The minutes of the MVES activities from 1910-1917 and from 1932 to the present (1965) have been preserved as well as the accounts from 1934 and most of the library and list of books. Significant personal diaries and financial records of only one of the first settlers in Medicine Valley have been preserved, those of August Posti. Fortunately the material has been well kept in the hands of his children, despite being in scattered places. Frits Kinna's financial records from 1910 (exemplary) and from 1913-1915 have also been preserved. Unfortunately the personal documents of Henri Kingsep and most probably the record of MVES minutes starting in 1919 were destroyed in a fire. That record must have still existed in 1932 when a new record was started since the first minutes state that: "The minutes of the previous meeting were adopted." Brothers Sam and Hendrik Kinna apparently had kept an accurate diary and farm accounts but before his death in 1948, Hendrik is believed to have burned all those documents and a large part of his extensive personal library. In March of 1968 Mrs. Hilja Kalev (Hendrik and Sam Kinna were her uncles) revealed that the diary in question was in her possession and had not been burned. However, she is not willing to show it to anyone since it contains much personal information as well as being critical of some individuals (Frits Kinna). My repeated efforts to convince Mrs. Hilja Kalev of the importance of the said diary with respect to the general history of Estonians were in vain.

I was unsuccessful in finding any information in the Lacombe County archives about the early history of the Estonian School.

My main objective has been to gather and preserve as much available information as possible about the Estonian settlement, especially its early years (1900-1920). That information can be found in the appendices. My summary in no way claims to be "historical" in the academic sense

of the word. However, I hope that the information gathered contains elements that will be useful to someone preparing a historical overview.

Historical Background

The trio¹ who at the turn of the century were the founders establishing the Sylvan Lake and Medicine Valley (Alberta) Estonian settlement came from South Estonia. August Posti came from the Tani farm in the parish of Rõngu, in the township of Hellenurme, in the province of Tartu. He attended confirmation classes in Rõngu in 1888 and was married there in 1897. (Appendix 3, note #12) Brothers, Hendrik (also Henri) (younger) and Kristjan (also Christian) (older) Kärсна came from the large and wealthy farm of Horma in the township of Liinamäe in the province of Võru.² They received what at the time was considered a good education. Hendrik Kingsep's childhood friend, most likely a classmate and later of like-mind, was Hendrik Kinna (1864). The father of the two brothers, "Horma Ott", wanted his son Hendrik to become a church minister and Kristjan a doctor. (explanation from Lembit Kingsep) However, during the last decade of the 19th century the young educated class in Russia, especially in border areas including Estonia were bitten by liberal-radical views in opposition to the chauvinism of the Russian Czar's authority. Consequently Hendrik (Kärсна) became a school teacher in Nuustaku, Ottepää. This profession also protected him from being conscripted into the Russian army. Kristjan became a sailor and world traveller. Hendrik Kinna, after having served in the Russian military as a sergeant-major, worked at the turn of the century as a cashier and accountant in a large wine firm.

Sylvan (Snake) Lake Estonian Settlement

Around 1898 Kristjan Kingsep ended his sea travels and came ashore in New York where a great number of other Estonian sailors and port workers had arrived before him. At the time there were huge waves of emigration from Europe, especially to the USA with the Alaska gold rush of 1880 and the Klondike gold rush of 1896-1899. The Canadian government also did its part by supporting the Canadian Pacific Railway's efforts to settle the prairies in the Canadian West, first and foremost with people who would till the soil. Homesteads of 160 acres were given for free from Crown lands with only \$10 being charged for registration. When this information reached Hendrik from his brother Kristjan, he set out to cross the ocean with his whole family (wife Emilie, daughters three year old Linda and year old Salme). At the beginning of 1899 they joined Kristjan in New York and continued their journey to the promised-land - western Canada. They rode as far to the wild-west as the railway went at the time - Calgary. From there they took the Calgary-Edmonton line north to Red Deer. All homesteads ten miles west from Red Deer had already been given out. At that time the land west of Red Deer was covered mainly by aspen and lower areas by willows since forest fires had swept through the areas several times over the years. There were rich grasslands and a few clearings which were suitable for cultivating gardens. This is where on May 9, 1899 Kristjan and Hendrik Kingsep decided to take homesteads about 10 miles west of Red Deer near Snake (later Sylvan) Lake. The available land in the area was covered by rich grass and water for herds. The hope was that it would take a few years before obtrusive neighbours would arrive. They began to raise cattle.

When Horma Ott heard that his son Kristjan had put down roots in Canada's western wilderness and with his brother taken a homestead, in 1899 he put Kristjan's family (wife Tiina and five children) on a train and sent them on their way to his son. Tiina made the long and difficult journey with her small children on her own. (Appendix #4) Word went back from Hendrik to his relative August Posti in the homeland who until then was without land and working on his father's farm, raising cattle to feed his family. In February of 1902 August Posti sold off his belongings and farm animals in Estonia. This gave him 151 roubles and 60 kopecks. To this he added his bank savings (316 roubles 40 kopecks) and sums received from other individuals as well as paid up loans (146 roubles) which gave him 613 roubles. From this amount he paid 363 roubles 40 kopecks for his trip to America (two adults and two children aged four and two) of which 316 roubles was for tickets and 47 roubles for other expenses. (Reference # 16) By March 17th he was on the shores of Sylvan Lake (Appendix # 5) and had joined the collective farm on March 31st.

This agricultural co-operative (Appendix #6) which lasted a mere eight months and had only three (originally four) Estonian families of settlers,³ was undoubtedly the first attempt to set up in practice the idea of a collective farm or kolkhoz not based on religious beliefs. However, the participants were of like political mind and related. (August Posti and Hendrik Kingsep)

When the collective farm was disbanded on October 26, 1902, Hendrik Kingsep and August Posti with their families settled 24 miles to the west in Medicine Valley. Kristjan Kingsep's family stayed put since Kristjan himself left the family in December of the same year. In the meantime, however, Peeter Herman's family who were friends of Kristjan from New York, their relatives the Walls and many other Estonians had settled by Sylvan Lake. (See Appendix #4 and map)

On September 6, 1902 Hendrik Kinna, Hendrik Kingsep's class mate, also arrived in Sylvan Lake. He did not take land there but with the families of H. Kingsep and A. Posti settled in Medicine Valley on October 26, 1902. (Appendix #5 and Appendix #6)

Many Estonians from Russia also settled by Sylvan Lake during the 1901-1904 period. Some of them took homesteads (south of the Sylvan Lake - Red Deer road), many, however, stopped only to look around to find suitable land. After lengthy travels they found suitable land in Stettler and Big Valley (Alberta). Estonians from Russia settled there throughout 1904. (Appendix 4 - ½).

Medicine Valley Estonian Settlement

Early period (1902 -1920): Growth in numbers

The first to settle in Medicine Valley from the Sylvan Lake in October 1902 were the Hendrik Kingsep and August Posti families and Hendrik Kinna. (Appendix 4) The first two and Kristjan Kingsep's family had already been to Medicine Valley in the summer of that year to stack hay and put up buildings in preparation for resettlement in the fall. Medicine Valley did not yet have a single settler and all of the land was still available. August Posti registered a homestead in his name on February 10, 1903. (Reference #14) Hendrik Kinna took a homestead on April 24, 1903. Hendrik Kingsep did not obtain a homestead but settled on Canadian Pacific Railway land.

Five years later (March 20 1908) A. Posti became the actual owner of the land. (Reference #15)⁴

Since the land as well as the natural surroundings in Medicine Valley seemed like the promised-land to the new settlers (Appendix #37). August Posti sent word back to his home in the province of Tartu (Appendix #17) and Hendrik Kinna to his relatives in the province of Võru. Already in the following spring (1903) large groups of new settlers started arriving (Appendix #8) from the Hellenurme area, from the City of Tartu, from Kärghula in 1903 and Sõmerpalu in 1903 and 1904 (in the province of Võru). The Sestrap group came separately from Tallinn in 1905. The last to arrive was a larger group led by Juhan Moro (Muru) in 1905. (Appendix #8-3) With the end of the Russian-Japanese War (started January 28, 1904) and the 1905 Russian Revolution (October 1905) events and sentiments calmed down in the Estonian homeland. Consequently, the urge to settle in Canada also receded. During the 1905-1910 period only a few people came to Medicine Valley (Appendix #26) since the reason for young men reaching conscription age (21) to settle elsewhere was primarily to avoid service in the Russian military. Older people left to settle elsewhere in order to obtain their own land.

From 1910 to 1916 there was a wave of young settlers (Appendix #8) since there was fear that Russia would enter the Balkan War and the tension preceding First World War was starting to build. During the years from 1916 to 1923 there were no new Estonian arrivals in Medicine Valley. However, two families (a total of ten members) and five single individuals left to resettle elsewhere and 11 people passed away. (Appendices #11 and 12)

By the end of this early period the Medicine Valley Estonian settlement had grown to approximately 160 members with 45 households consisting of 30 families and about 15 single individuals. (Appendix #10) This number does not include the third generation born here of whom there were only a few. At the end of this period all of the families and most of the single individuals had started farming. In addition to farming, some did own small enterprises such as watermills. Some of the single young men went out to do seasonal work in mines and forests.

At the end of this period the 33 Estonian households in Medicine Valley owned 57 quarters of land for an average of 1.7 quarters or 272 acres per owner. (Appendix #40 - map #39)

Politics

The early period

As Hendrik Kinna justifiably claims (Appendix #37) the majority of the first settlers had a radical outlook on life. Among them were educated and spirited individuals who were good social organizers. Understandably a close intellectual relationship developed with the "Uus Ilm" ("New World" newspaper which began publication in 1909) group in New York and they came to share the latter's step-by-step change of view from socialism to Communism.

At the MVES meetings and lectures (Feb. 5, 1911, July 9, 1911 and 1912) socialism and aggressive politics soon became the main topics of discussion. For example, during a period of six months at the end of meetings Hendrik Kingsep read all of Karl Marx' Capitalism. The politically more conservative members such as Karl and Paul Langer, Paul Koot, August Pihuoja, Juhan Kinna, Juhan Moro, Mart Sestrap and others (see the membership list of 1914 - Appendix

#30) withdrew to some extent from the activities of the Society. Neutral members Frits Kinna, August Posti, J. Mäesep and others still did try to maintain the activities of the Society. They attempted to carry out the cultural objectives established when the Society was founded, foremost of which was to build their own hall. The list of activities in the Society's 1914 annual report (presented at the annual meeting on January 11, 1915) included Frits Kinna's presentation (March 8, 1914) "Ideas and Rules of the Society". However, in the minutes of the March 8, 1914 meeting which had ten points, there is no mention of F. Kinna's presentation. An addition has been made later at the end of the minutes "Note that the title of the President's speech has been omitted". The recording secretary was H. Kingsep and he devoted nine pages of the minutes to his own speech. There was an attempt to limit political propaganda by permitting Hendrik Kingsep to talk about socialism for only half an hour at each meeting (March 10, 1912). August Posti in his diary on April 16, 1912 wrote: "In the evening we attended a socialist meeting". It is not mentioned where the meeting took place. There is no evidence as to whether the Medicine Valley Estonian political leaders were also caught up in the network of paid Moscow agents working in Western Canada at the time (C. W. Harvison "The Spies in Our Midst" Weekend Magazine of January 21, 1967 - Appendix #46). A police search did take place here and Hendrik Kinna was unluckier than the others and was fined \$200 for possessing banned publications. (Appendix #37)

The growing lack of mutual confidence and disintegration based on political motivations was most evident for many years with respect to building a hall for the society. A complete split occurred in 1918 when the Society's Estonian Hall was built and the question was not only the location of the building. At that time, a group led by Hendrik Kingsep and joined by J. Vares, Mart Sestrap and the Mõttus family from west of Gilby separated from the others. This group later (1921), with Hendrik Kingsep, being one of the organizers, participated with others in building a hall in Gilby.

After the Estonian-Russian Peace treaty was signed, large numbers of Estonians opted to return to their homeland (1921-23). In the West there was an underground (especially in Germany, Albrecht: "Das verratene Sotsialismus" 1941?) as well as public propaganda in the USA encouraging settlement in Russia to build socialism. (Edward Õun, "Perhaps the next night", Sweden 1956 pp. 10-14) The newspaper "Uus Ilm" (New World) in New York was the organizer for Estonians resettling.

Among the Medicine Valley Estonians, New York's confidence was placed in Hendrik Kingsep. At the beginning of March 1923 a group of Estonians left Medicine Valley to build Russia. (Appendix # 32) Although this was a significant loss for the small Estonian community, it did have a sobering effect in its own way. This was especially true when within a year or two, three of the resettlers returned from Russia.

From the minutes of the MVES (1913-15) and August Posti's diary, it can be seen that Estonian farmers regularly participated in the meetings of the regional local of the United Farmers of Alberta and were the founders of UFA's Gilby local. The UFA's endeavours beginning in 1911 and at the end of the First World War and later (1921) also were of a social-political nature. (Grant MacEwan, "Poking into Politics" Edmonton 1966 pp. 111-12 and Appendix #31-c)

A more definite change in direction of the Society's leadership occurred at the annual meeting of

January 1913 when an executive committee was elected instead of an executive. (Appendix #30) It appears, however, that the majority of members were indifferent to socialism despite the best efforts of the leader. Why else would the secretary of the Society at three consecutive meetings, February 9, March 9 and April 13, 1913 have urged the members to take part in the founding meeting of the socialist society in Gilby which had been repeatedly cancelled due to lack of participants? The fourth attempt to establish the society took place in Hendrik Kinna's home on April 20, 1913 when only three people attended. Consequently, the socialist society was not established.

The atmosphere at the meetings of the MVES as early as the beginning of 1913 can be ascertained by the minutes of April 13, 1913 written by Hendrik Kingsep himself. ... "When the Society decided a year and a half ago that I would speak about socialism for half an hour at every meeting, it became necessary for me to start studying socialism to reach solid truth from notions without which there cannot be any results. During this time I have read about 15 books and three socialist newspapers, one regularly and excerpts from two. Each one of the writers, many of them world famous, explains capitalism and its activities very well in his own way. But nothing gave my spirit the same satisfaction as the flashbacks to the goblin stories I had heard as a child...

Capitalism is a goblin - capitalistic government - goblin government - socialism - destroys the goblin and breaks its neck - ... There was also a discussion of the folly of capitalism and since there is no socialist candidate in Lacombe it was decided not to go and vote."

In those minutes alone there are nine long pages of similar text. The purpose of such minutes is shown by the calculation on the last page:

Points 9 and 10 - 9 pages with 33 lines = 297 lines x 7 words per line = 2079 words.

A column in "Uus Ilm" has 107 lines with 6 words per line = 642 words. 2079 divided by 642 = 3 columns.

During 1914 and 1915, socialism was the most frequent topic of discussion at meetings. The executive made particular attempts to assist the "Uus Ilm" newspaper, either by the purchase of shares (May 10, 1914, April 11, 1915), organization of subscriptions to the newspaper (May 1, 1914 and December 1915), contributions to the newspaper (April 13, 1913) and its calendar (July 10, 1915), fund raising (May 10, 1915) and support for the purchase of a new typewriter (March 16, 1916 etc.

In 1916 there was a complete change in the political endeavours of the Society's executive. Hendrik Kingsep, although still Vice-President, did not take an active role in running the Society or the meetings. During the whole year he took part in only one of nine meetings (March 16) where there was a discussion of an issue with political undertones - support of the newspaper "Uus Ilm".

In the six meetings held in 1917 not a single issue of a political nature was raised. Hendrik Kingsep was not elected to the executive since at the time of the annual general meeting in January he was travelling in California. His only recorded participation in 1917 was on February 11th where he gave a long and practical description of his trip to Victoria and California to

explore the possibilities for new settlements.

The written history of the MVES stopped with the minutes of November 11, 1917 and did not resume until 1932. Thus, there is no possibility of taking a closer look at the political campaign that influenced part of the Medicine Valley Estonians in 1923 to emigrate to Russia to build up socialism. (See Appendix #32)

Appendix #2: Chronology of Settlement

1898 Kristjan Kingsep arrives in New York from South America

1899 Hendrik Kingsep arrives in New York from Estonia with his family and joins his brother Kristjan. They set out for the Canadian West and reached Sylvan (Snake) Lake near Red Deer. (Appendix #4) On May 9th both obtain homesteads there.

1900 Kristjan Kingsep's wife, Tiina, arrives with her children in Sylvan Lake.

1901 On March 9th the first Estonian collective farm "Uhisus" is established near Sylvan Lake. (Appendix # 6)

- On March 18th August Posti arrives with his family in Sylvan Lake to find in addition to Hendrik and Kristjan Kingsep, the Kask, Neithal and Wassily Piht families.
- On March 20th Minister Sillak came to Sylvan Lake.
- On March 31st August Posti is accepted as a member of "Uhisus"
- On September 6th Hendrik Kinna arrives in Sylvan Lake.
- On October 26 "Uhisus" puts and end to its activities. Its members Hendrik Kingsep and August Posti with their families settle in Medicine Valley. Hendrik Kinna joins them. (Appendix #6)
- During the year several Estonian families arrive in Sylvan Lake from Russia including Magnus Tipman and others. (Appendix #4)

1902 The following groups arrive in Medicine Valley from Estonia:

- Peeter Perler's group from the area around Tartu (Appendix #8)
- Juhan Kinna's group (in April) from Kõrgula in the province of Võru. (Appendix #8)
- Karl Moro's family from Sõmerpalu in the province of Võru. (Appendix #8-2)
- In the spring brothers Karl and Juhan Rääbis arrive from the province of Võru. (Appendix #8)

1904 The majority of Estonians who had settled in Sylvan Lake from Russia leave to settle in Stettler and Big Valley. (Appendix #40)

1905 In the spring Juhan Muru's (Moro) group arrives in Medicine Valley from the province of Võru. (Appendix #8)

In February the Sestrap family arrives from the Tallinn area.

In the spring Hendrik Kingsep's father "Horma Ott Känksep" arrives.

The first deaths occur in Medicine Valley Estonian families. A graveyard is established on the property of K. Rääbis (Appendix #11)

1906-09 A few families arrive in Medicine Valley from Estonia (Appendix #26)

1909 Building of the Estonian School in Medicine Valley (Appendix #44)

The CPR starts selling land it owns.

1910 In April the Medicine Valley Estonian Society (MVES) is founded (Appendix #30)

In the same year new settlers start arriving from Estonia (Appendix #8)

Juhan Mäsepp's water mill starts up in May

1911 Frits Kinna's water mill starts up in November

1912 In January, brothers Juhan and Karl Pihuoja (Pihooja) arrive from the province of Võru.

A train station is opened in Eckville; a small village and commercial centre develops there.

On June 12 the Eckville Co-op is established (Appendix #38)

1914 Arrival of brothers Mõttus and Huul (Appendix #3)

On June 13 the "Kalmu Cemetery Company" is established in Medicine Valley (Appendix #12)

1916 In the spring, the last of the settlers from the early period arrive from Estonia, travelling through Siberia, over Japan to Vancouver:

1. the family of Juhan Mõttus, his wife and three sons (Appendix #8 and #21)
2. Juhan Wernik settles in Okanagan, B.C. from Medicine Valley

1917 Telephones are installed on the farms in Medicine Valley

1918 The first Estonians from Medicine Valley depart for Estonia, Karl and Juhan Pihuoja and K. Osol;

Juhan Mäsepp - unknown (via Japan)

In April and May the Estonian Hall was built in Medicine Valley. (Medicine Valley Estonian Society) (Appendix #29)

1921 A community hall was built in Gilby, Medicine Valley

1923 In January the first settlers after the First World War arrive from Estonia. Juhan Pihuoja returns with his wife.

On March 1st a group of Estonians from Eckville set out to join other Estonians in New York.

The "Koidu Collective Farm" is established in Russia.

At the end of October Henri Kinna and August Posti arrive at the collective farm. (Appendix #32)

1924 In September August Posti is the first to return from the "Koidu Collective Farm" in Russia.

Appendix #9

List of Estonian Farmers in Medicine Valley in 1913

The list is an extract from the minutes of the meeting of the Medicine Valley Estonian Society on August 10, 1913 containing the names of the Estonian settlers from Medicine Valley (38) and

the four from Sylvan Lake who were likely to participate in building the Society's Estonian Hall.

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1) Kingsep Henri | 20) Möttus Hugo |
| 2) Kinna Juhan | 21) Möttus Jakob |
| 3) Kinna Henri | 22) Möttus Kusta |
| 4) Kinna Samm (Sam) | 23) Mäesep J. |
| 5) Kinna Frits | 24) Ossul Oskar |
| 6) Kinna Art | 25) Perler Peter |
| 7) Koot (Koots) Paul | 26) Pihuoja (Pihooja) Juhan |
| 8) Koot (Koots) Peter | 27) Pihuoja (Pihooja) August |
| 9) Koot (Koots) Ferdinand (Paul's son) | 28) Pihuoja (Pihooja) Karl |
| 10) Huul Karl | 29) Posti August |
| 11) Langer Karl | 30) Rääbis Charlie |
| 12) Langer Paul | 31) Rääbis Jaan |
| 13) Matteus (Matthews) Adam | 32) Sestrap Mart |
| 14) Moro Hendrik | 33) Sestrap Mihkel |
| 15) Moro Jaan | 34) Sestrap Gustav |
| 16) Moro Juhan | 35) Teener Jaan |
| 17) Moro Karl | 36) Toomingas Jaan |
| 18) Moro Peeter (Juhan's son) | 37) Vares J. |
| 19) Möttus Aleksander | 38) Wernick J. |

From Sylvan Lake:

- 1) Herman P.
- 2) Wall Gustav
- 3) Wall Madis
- 4) Piht Wassili (new name Walters Peeter)

Note: August Posti proposed the building of the Hall; the list of names was most likely drawn up by August Posti. It is not the list of members of the Society. According to the minutes nine members (and ? Kinna) and several outsiders participated in the meeting. The names of participants in the meeting are underlined.

V.M.

Appendix #11

Cemetery

The first cemetery for Estonians in Medicine Valley was on a sandy hill north of the farmyard on the property of Charlie Rääbis. (See map #4) According to Olga Rääbis and Kinna the following people are buried there:

1. Ott Kingsep (also Kärnsna or Känksep) 1905
2. Endel Rääbis, son of Charley and Leena, as an infant

3. Leena Rääbis, Charlie' wife, killed when struck by lightening
4. Helen Rääbis, daughter of Charlie and Leena
5. Frits Moro, son of Juhan and Anna
6. The son of August and Miili Posti, stillborn 1909
7. Harri Rääbis, son of Jaan and Rosalie, born 1900, died 1921.
8. Gustav Uudeküll, lived near Sylvan Lake, worked in mining, lived here before the arrival of the Kinnas.

Note: Ott Kingsep's grave is the only one with a more permanent headstone, a massive poured concrete structure measuring 4 x 2 ½ feet. This memorial appears to have been erected in 1923. Three dates are engraved on the square base, 1809, 1818 and 1917. Their significance is unknown.

The other graves are unknown. Only the remains of a fence can be seen under a new aspen forest which is now used as pasture. The land at present belongs to Waldo Rääbis, Charley's son.

V. Matiisen, summer 1965

Extract from the record of minutes of the Medicine Valley Estonian Society

April 9, 1911

Meeting at S. Kinna's residence

Most members present.

Main points for discussion on the agenda:

1. Establishing a collective farm
2. Organization of a graveyard

A discussion followed on the issue of the cemetery. H. Kingsep proposed that whether or not the question is raised, it should be decided by a vote.

The vote showed twelve members in favour and five against. J. Wernick proposed a motion asking if people were in favour of maintaining the site of the old cemetery or choosing a new one. Opinion was in favour of the old site as long as conditions for purchase of the land were satisfactory. C. Rääbis promised to provide two acres of dry land for \$10 an acre. Paul Langer thought that since all Estonians were not present who would gladly participate and help defray costs, it would be preferable to send out a letter and hold a vote to see who supports the project.

That motion was accepted and it was decided that the secretary give the letter to M. Sestrap in Gilby to have people there sign it.

Meeting chaired by the President, J. Wernick

Minutes drafted by the Secretary, F. Kinna

August 13 at S. Kinna's residence

"There was a discussion about the cemetery: Johann Kinna proposed that a new site be chosen which would be more suitable for the purpose. Jaak Kinna promised to provide free land for it.

The majority support the proposal. The Society elected a committee to organize the project and choose the property: H. Kinna, F. Kinna, K. Anton, P. Langer, J. Wernick. (See Appendix #12)
V. Matiisen

Appendix # 12

The Gilby Cemetery

Meeting respecting graveyard in Gilby June 1914

(Copy of minutes: V. Matiisen)

The meeting was called to establish a Cemetery Company. The Secretary read the financial statement which indicated that \$40 had already been contributed by members. Of this amount \$28.15 had been paid for expenses leaving \$11.85 in the account.

This was followed by a presentation of the requirements set out in government regulations for the establishment of a cemetery company.

It was decided to establish the Company and name it the "Kalmu Cemetery Company". K. Langer proposed, seconded by H. Kinna that capital to establish the Company should be \$480 divided into 60 shares of \$8 each.

A board of directors was elected with J. Teener as President, proposed by K. Langer and seconded by P. Perler; F. Kinna as Secretary, proposed by Matteus and seconded by K. Langer; Mike Sestrap as Treasurer, proposed by Pihuoja and seconded by P. Langer.

The size of the grave sites was set at: a single grave 10 x 5 feet at \$5; plots 10 x10 feet at \$10, 10 x15 feet at \$12, 10 x 20 feet at \$16.

The graves were to be seven feet deep.

With that the meeting came to an end.

A note had been added in pencil later stating: It was decided to change the size of the plots and the price of individual graves as stated in the next minutes.

Signature (John Teener)

Note: Gilby is located in Medicine Valley, seven miles north and one and a half miles west of Eckville. There is a bridge over the Medicine River from long ago. On the east shore of the River, Mihkel (Mike) Sestrap opened a farm store, probably around 1906-07. In fact, the meeting was held in his store. Jaak Kinna donated land for the cemetery from his homestead.

In 1921 the Gilby Hall was built near the bridge on a lot beside the store. Mike Sestrap's store, as well as the Gilby Hall, was on J. Teener's homestead. He sold the homestead to an Englishman in 1919.

Jaak Kinna gave the land for the cemetery for free from his homestead. He was also one of the first to be buried in the new cemetery on March 20, 1917. The cemetery is located a half mile west of Gilby. (See map Appendix #12)

V. Matiisen

Meeting at Residence of J. Teener June 7, 1915

(Copy of minutes: V. Matiisen)

J. Teener was appointed to chair the meeting. The members present were: J. Teener, Mart Sestrap, H. Möttus, Oskar Möttus, H. Kinna, Jaak Kinna, P. Langer, K. Langer, Mike Sestrap, P. Perler, A. Pihuoja and F. Kinna.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read but not approved since it was decided to change the size of the plots. K. Langer proposed that the previous plot of 10 x 10 feet be changed to 10 x 20 feet for the same amount of \$10 with a plot being 20 feet measured from south to north and 10 feet measured from west to east. H. Kinna seconded the motion and it was approved by a majority.

Jaak Kinna proposed that everyone carrying out a burial be responsible for preparing their own grave and marking it either with a stone or cross and that the grave be seven feet deep.

The proposal was supported unanimously.

The price was to remain at \$8 for plots measuring 10 x 20 feet which was to be the basic size. The plots on the east side measuring 11 x 11 feet cost \$5.

If someone wishes to buy two plots of 10 x 20 side by side or if they already have one plot and wish to buy another one next to it, the cost would be \$14 for the 20 x 20 feet plot. The rate for an individual grave was set at \$3. The regulation was adopted unanimously.

Mike Sestrap read the following financial statement:

Revenues \$25.85

Expenses \$14.55

Balance \$11.30

With respect to Wall's father, it was considered to not be a matter for the Company. It was decided not to demand a deposit to bury the dead in order to give people a chance to bury their deceased even if they do not have the money at the time. They would be allowed to pay when they have the money. It was decided to place a notice at the gates of the Cemetery that burial without permission is prohibited: permission must be obtained from the executive of the

Cemetery who would indicate where a burial can take place. The following were elected to the executive unanimously: President, J. Teener, nominated by H. Kinna and seconded by K. Langer; Treasurer, Mike Sestrap, nominated by Pihuoja and seconded by Perler; Secretary F. Kinna, nominated by K. Langer and seconded by H. Kinna.

It was decided to purchase two shovels with a short handle and one with a long handle. It was decided to put up a ten foot high wooden cross at the cemetery. Oskar Mõttus accepted the task of making the cross measuring 10 feet high and 6 x 6 inches square, painting it black and installing it for \$3.50. Mart Sestrap took it upon himself to make a tool box measuring 6 x 3 x 3 feet with a lock and hinges, paint and place it at the Cemetery for \$2.

This was followed by a selection of gravesites and the meeting was then adjourned.

Signature (John Teener)

Meeting of June 12, 1916

(Copy of minutes)

Members present: J. Teener, H. Kinna, Paul Koot, Jaak Kinna, P. Perler, Mart Sestrap and F. Kinna.

J. Teener was elected to chair the meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and adopted.

According to the Treasurer's report there was \$6.35 in the cash box. Mihkel (Mike) Sestrap resigned as Treasurer. Paul Koot proposed that 50 cents be paid each time to whoever shows gravesites to people. H. Kinna seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously.

It was decided to rearrange the plots in accordance with the new regulation. It is considered essential to put up a notice, initially on paper, at the cemetery of the regulations required by the Company.

J. Teener was elected President unanimously; H. Kinna as Treasurer, nominated by Perler and seconded by Teener; F. Kinna as Secretary, nominated by H. Kinna and seconded by Perler.

The responsibility of showing gravesites was assigned to J. Teener, for which he would be paid 50 cents each time.

The meeting was then adjourned.
Signature (John Teener)

On June 18, 1917 a meeting was held in the home of J. Teener. Five members were present, all of them Estonian. In addition, Mr. Dan Clausen was present and was elected Secretary-Treasurer (Nominated by H. Kinna). From that meeting on, English became the language of proceedings.

December 27, 1918 meeting in the Gilby store. Nine members were present, all Estonians and the Secretary-Treasurer (English). Estonians remained as the only active members (of the Society) and constituted the executive. Beginning in June of 1930 members from other ethnic groups also participated in the meetings at the Gilby Hall. Up to the present, 21 Estonians and 24 people of other ethnic groups have been buried in the cemetery.

V.M.

Appendix #12

Stories from the Pioneer Period in Medicine Valley

Frits Kinna's story

The store, the post office and the county office were in Red Deer. The first to maintain contact was Hendrik Kingsep. He made one trip which took three days each month to bring the mail and goods from stores. He made the trip with a wagon he had built; the wheels were made of boards but had neither spokes nor iron rims. The wagon was pulled by a horse and ox. A few years later (around 1905-06) someone by the name of Killick built a house in Eckford (this is where the name Eckville comes from) on land near the bridge on the Medicine River a mile north of the present town and now (1965) owned by Onifryzen. Killick had a store and post office in the house and Snell had a hotel at the same place. Later a school was built west of the bridge on land now owned by Lembit Kingsep. In 1912 when the CNR reached Eckville, establishments were moved there i.e. the present town site. When the post office was in Killick's house we all took turns at the beginning to bring the mail from Red Deer. From 1908 to 1912 I brought the mail and goods from stores three times a week. The trip took two days and I was paid \$5. I used two horses. The cost of a horse and also of a mule was \$100 to \$150.

The first threshing machine was owned by Hendrik Kingsep. The machine, which was in common use in Estonia, was powered by horses. When Kingsep stopped delivering mail (1908) he acquired a gasoline motor and later a threshing machine powered by a steam engine. I was the "engineer".

Back in Estonia, in Sõmerpalu and elsewhere in the province of Võru, it was difficult to get water for people and herds, and the soil was poor. For the settlers from Võru, this made the Medicine River Valley very appealing with its deep black soil, rich grasslands, plentiful water and high shore line which facilitated damming water to build water mills.

My father, Juhan, was a tenant on a manor dairy farm, in Kärjala. This, however, meant moving a lot. My grandfather, Jaak, was also a tenant on a manor dairy farm. My father had saved enough money after moving expenses to buy a cow. We got flour, salt, sugar and fat from Red Deer and meat and fish we got from nature. My father stayed at home and I went out to work on a CPR bridge building gang. From my first pay I bought a rifle to go hunting. We went home only during the holidays. We came back from Red Deer by foot (40 miles). We were paid \$2 a day from which meal money was deducted. There were many Estonians with me. I remember some: August Posti, Karl Rääbis, Sam Kinna. Sam Kinna's leg was badly hurt in an accident and he suffered to the end of his life from the injury. The money to buy farm equipment and an ox came

from my wages. My sisters also went out to work in Red Deer as domestic help.

From the experience I gained from bridge building (cement work), I was able to start building a dam for a mill with the help of Karl Rääbis. We began the work in 1911 when I stopped delivering the mail. I built the turbine myself and ordered the mill stones from the USA. The mill started operating in November 1911 (Appendix #41).

When we obtained land, there were two log huts with mud roofs on my homestead used by a rancher named Armstrong. Along with cattle he raised horses on open land. We kept the huts and lived in them until we built our own houses. When we arrived from Estonia we spent our first year with my uncle Hendrik Kinna.

The size of a homestead was 160 acres (1/4 section). The government gave out the homesteads for free from its stock of land to all applicants (men or single women, 21 years of age or older).^{*} The only fee was \$10 for registration. The homestead was certified in the name of the individual if he lived there and cultivated 15 acres of land in the first year. (Appendix #36) Boundary lines had been made which were visible and at the corner of each section and 1/4 section there were numbered steel stakes in the ground. This allowed everyone to find his homestead on his own.

During the first decade (until 1912) when I delivered the mail, the road used between Medicine Valley and Sylvan Lake was an old Indian trail which on higher ground went through Evert. Between Sylvan Lake and Red Deer there already was a road in the same direction as the present Highway 11. (This is not completely accurate V/M.)

The first businesses to be established in the new Eckville when the railway arrived around 1912 were the general store (owned by Forhan and Clausen), a post office, a garage (Isaacson), a hotel (owned by Lumbek) and a co-op store. The school house by the river was also moved there. Around 1915 (?) there was major fire which destroyed all buildings on the east side of the main street.

^{*} For the purpose of settling Canada's three western provinces, a regulation was made for the division of land suitable for agriculture during the second half of the 19th century. At that time the land was divided into six mile strips from north to south. The strips were called ranges and between each meridian in southern Alberta there are 30 ranges and in central Alberta, 28 ranges. Each range in turn was divided into $6 \times 6 = 36$ square mile townships which are numbered from 1 to 112 from the south at the USA border northward. The townships were divided by boundaries of $1 \times 1 =$ one square mile parts called sections (640 acres) and these in turn were divided into quarters of 160 acres or 16 legal subdivisions (see map and Appendix #36).

The even numbered sections in each township belonged to the government's stock of land to be given to applicants for homesteads. From its land, the government gave one section for a school house and one for the Hudson Bay Company. All odd numbered sections belonged to the CPR as compensation for building the railway and settling the Canadian West.

The CPR began selling land in 1909. Pieces of land up to 640 acres were sold to farmers but also to speculators. In 1910 some land near the Edmonton-Calgary line was being sold for

prices of \$22.00-\$30.00 an acre. The conditions for giving land to the CPR were specified on October 21, 1881 in the Syndicate Contract. According to the Contract, each odd numbered section within 24 miles on both sides of the railroad between the 49th and 57th parallel belonged to the CPR. (See reference #20) V. Matiisen

When our family settled in Medicine Valley in the spring of 1903, there were no settlers other than a few Estonian families (Hendrik Kingsep, August Posti) and my uncle Hendrik Kinna. The same or the following year the first to come were the Swedes, Gilbertson (taking homestead NW to SW 22-41-3 and NW -15-14-3, V.M.). The area around Sylvan Lake and westward to Benalto was settled by Finns. Huge numbers of them had resettled from the United States. During the following few years, I don't know exactly when since I was away from home on a CPR construction crew, the Eckville area was also settled by Finns.

The high price of horses led to enterprising initiatives.* In southern Alberta near Calgary while working on the railroad, Frits Kinna and August Posti discovered that ranchers were selling horses for \$50.00. The horses had not been broken in and were of a lighter breed, in other words, riding horses. At the end of June in 1904 (Reference #10) when they left railroad construction, they went looking for horses and from June 1 - 4 "bought horses." F. Kinna recalls that they both bought four horses. They loaded the horses onto a train wagon and set out for Red Deer where the train ride ended. Frits Kinna no longer remembers how they got the untamed horses to Medicine Valley. At home they started "training" the horses. In addition to the time and effort that took, F. Kinna's right thumb was also sacrificed in the process. This required a separate trip to a doctor in Red Deer. He still managed to get himself two teams with which he delivered mail during four years between Red Deer and Eckville, making three trips a week.

August Posti's diary, however, contains an entry for July 5-25: "Training the horses" and on August 23; "Skinned a horse".

Mules were not used in Medicine Valley although Kristjan Kingsep had a mule at the Sylvan Lake settlement.

*Usually \$150.00. On March 15, 1914, August Posti paid A. Pihuoja \$250.00 for a horse and on March 11, 1913 \$300 to P. Perler. A pound of butter at the time cost 20 cents.

From August Posti's diary on November 14, 1914: "There is a sparrow in the family already." Unfortunately, there is no information on magpies as to whether they were here earlier or came later. There are black crows here as a nuisance to farmers. There are no grey crows.

If the first Estonian settlers on the banks of the Medicine River were: "all extremely enthusiastic about their valley," it was undoubtedly due to the fertile soil and geography which felt familiar to those coming from southern Estonia. There were springs when sowing began at the end of March (March 30, 1905) or at the beginning of April (1906). Spring, especially April, was often

very cold and there was seldom a spring that did not have snow and several days of cold weather during the first half of May. There was often late frost at the beginning of June and early frost at the end of July which often ruined or spoiled the potato and wheat field crops in the second half of August. There was often snow in September during the middle of wheat threshing; however, the so-called Indian summer in late autumn nearly every year saved the situation. By November one had to deal with real winter weather just about every year. Serious financial losses were mentioned only once by A. Posti in his diary on September 11, 1916.

It seems that the winter and spring of 1920 were catastrophic. In A. Posti's diary we find:

"A strange winter. It started snowing on October 22nd and the snow stayed. It was very cold before Christmas with temperatures dropping to 40 degrees below zero. From what I can recall, it was not as cold after Christmas but there was deep snow on the ground. In March there was widespread influenza. A lot of snow fell in the first half of April. On April 14th there was a seven inch snow fall and two feet of snow on the ground with no melting.

April 25 - Clear and a lot of thaw and water rising on the river

April 29 - there was five feet of water on the ice

April 30 - It was cloudy and snowy all week. No one has any feed left for their herds and the animals are being fed flour. Many of the animals have died. There is still a lot of snow although some hill sides are bare. Spring birds are all out but no sign of spring.

May

1 - It snowed and cleared up in the evening

2 - It snowed all day... Went to the mill and brought back 2 beavers and a muskrat. (The reference is probably to Mäesep's former mill belonging to Posti)

3 - The ice is going in the river, the water is high, still lots of snow.

5 - Very stifling 12 degrees, a lot melted

6- A lot of melting, the river is very high and carried the bridge away at night."

Early on the Estonians proved to be quite inventive in automating farm work. Hendrik Kingsep was the first to acquire a threshing machine. It was driven by horses (or oxen). This power implement was built by Hendrik Kingsep himself. A similar type of power source was also in widespread use in Estonia. H. Kingsep used this source of power to make roof shingles, saw boards and mill flour on stones. A few years later H. Kingsep acquired a steam powered threshing machine. The wagon with which H.K. in the early years carried mail and goods from Red Deer for the whole Estonian community was home built. The wheels were made of boards cut into a round shape. (Information from Hendrik Kingsep's daughter Emma Lapp)

Mart Sestrap built a small windmill (wooden) on the roof of his blacksmith's shop. He was a

good blacksmith and did work for others also. With the windmill he milled flour. (on stones) A few years later the windmill was demolished by a storm. Mart Sestrap did not build a new one since in 1910 J. Mäesep's more modern turbine driven water mill came into operation on the Medicine River. (Told by Mart Sestrap's daughter, Alma Liivam, as related by her mother)

Industries

The first turbine driven water mill in Medicine Valley was built by Juhan Mäesep. (See map in Appendix #40). He had worked as a miller in Estonia. A canal of about 400 feet long for the mill was built by the Estonians through volunteer labour using shovels drawn by horses. The cost of building the canal was \$500. Mäesep had borrowed the money from August Posti. The canal (still in existence) shortened a long curve on the river and gave a drop of six feet without any need to dam the water in the river. J. Mäesep designed the turbine himself and it was built by J. Vares. The stones for the mill were brought from the USA. The mill started operating in May of 1910. (Reference #11) It was used for coarse milling to make flour for bread, meal for animals and barley. J. Mäesep also used the same power source to saw boards and make shingles. The mill users came from a large area. It came to be used less when Frits Kinna's mill in 1911 and Karl Moro's mill in 1914 came into operation in Eckville. (See map in Appendix #40) The mill and homestead belonged to J. Mäesep until September 28, 1918 when they were auctioned off to pay for a mortgage. They then became the property of August Posti. The mill remained in operation for a few years under the new ownership. J. Mäesep was a giant, 6 foot 4 and a great speaker. He did not farm. He returned to Estonia after the First World War where he continued to build mills according to Karl Posti. K. Pihuoja now farms the quarter that once belonged to J. Mäesep.

The same sort of steam power used for threshing machines was also used for milling. This was the method used by Paul Langer already in 1911 to mill for himself and neighbours. Juhan Kinna also had a stationary steam boiler (upright) as of 1910 which was used for threshing as well as milling. He also did work for others. In this connection Frits Kinna took a course and exams to become a steam boiler operator (engineer) (Explanation by Frits Kinna)

J. Mäesep set up saw mill business and also made roof shingles at his water mill in 1910. (August Posti's diary) During this period Karl Anton also owned a saw mill (chain saw) and made shingles. He stopped operating in 1912 since he left for New Zealand with his whole family. Around 1920 Alek and Oskar Möttus also owned a saw mill mainly for their own use. This is now owned by Richard Möttus and still working. (V.M.)

August Moro's story

Since there were rich grasslands and a lot of free land, people kept cattle. Milk, cream or eggs and also meat were sold or exchanged for other goods in farm stores in Gilby and Eckville. Later from 1910 onward when there was no longer a herd, livestock was also sold. Gilby was one of the nearest places where livestock was bought. From there the animals were herded by land to the railway station in Lacombe. (26 miles) In old Eckville around 1910 there was a cheese factory where you could sell milk. When the railway reached Eckville (1914)* we started sending cream to Calgary. Game (rabbits and some goats) and birds (partridge, duck and grouse) as well as large fish stocks in the river and the nearby Wood Lake provided a huge

supplement to meat. There were great amounts of wild berries (blueberries, bilberries and wild strawberries) and mushrooms. Bread at that time was baked from barley flour.

*Information differs regarding the arrival of the railway. The railway station masters were not able to provide answer for me either. This might be explained by the fact that there were two railways (CPR and Canadian National Railways) (CNR) in Eckville only one mile apart. August Posti wrote in his diary on January 13, 1913 that "Men marking out the direction of the railway went by here" and "Horses were at work on the railway". According to Frits Kinna this occurred in 1912.

Frits Kinna's story

In the Medicine Valley settlement we didn't give specific names to the farms. We used the owner's name and in official correspondence the number of the section and quarter. We did christen our farm as "the Valley Farm" (Oru Talu), but used the name only amongst ourselves.

Frits Kinna was one of the original owners of a water mill with industrial capacity. It was located on his homestead on the Medicine River. (See map in Appendix #40) F.K. put in an application to Ottawa in 1909 to dam water for the mill. The plans for the dam and mill were registered in Ottawa in 1914. F. K. acquired some of the parts for the mill - shaft, bearings, gearwheel etc. (total \$130) already on May 9, 1910. The mill started operating in November 1911. (See details in Appendix #41, 41A and 41B)

"From the "Mill Accounts" (Reference #8) it appears that the mill produced: "rye, wheat flour, grouts for porridge, coarse barley, flour (barley flour was made for Finns) coarse oatmeal, and sour oatmeal. Wheat was also cleaned before being milled.

The stones for the mill and silk sieve for flour were brought from the USA. At times in the winter there wasn't enough water. From the names in the "Mill Accounts" most of the mill users were Finns.

Karl Moro's flour mill

(Information from August Moro)

The flour mill set up by Karl Moro at the edge of Eckville went through many stages over the years. In 1914 Karl Moro, along with his sons George and August, bought two acres of land from Kasper on the banks of the Medicine River at the edge of town. The mill was turbine driven and stones were used for the milling. At the beginning the mill produced barley and meal for animals and later sifted flour. The permit for a dam came from Ottawa and an engineer came out to see it. In 1923 a steam driven flour mill was built on the same property by the side of the road. (See two photos) In 1926 Oskar joined the business while George left it. In 1932 the machine was refurbished and the buildings completely renovated. (See photo) In the meantime Karl Moro had moved to Peace River. From that time on the mill belonged to his sons, August and George Moro.

In 1937 and 1938 the Moro's flour mill furnished the town of Eckville with electricity. The equipment for the power station and the electric cables for the whole town were all installed by

Frits Kinna. (See Appendix #16) In 1938 the Calgary Power bought the rights from the Moros to furnish Eckville with power. In 1947 the flour mill was sold to the Eckville Co-op. By that time August Moro was the sole owner since Oskar had also moved to Peace River.

Appendix #29

Construction of the Estonian Hall

The Medicine Valley Estonian Hall (See Appendix #40) was built in May and June of 1918. In the record of minutes of the Medicine Valley Estonian Society (1910-18) there is a copy of the fire insurance policy NA 16904 in effect for six months from April 15 to October 15, 1918. The policy insured 18,000 board feet of material which was intended for construction of the hall. The site was first shown to be on the property of J. Vares. As of June 14, 1918 it is on Paul Koot's property where the hall still stands.

In August Posti's diary (Reference #11) there is an entry: "The Society's Estonian Hall built on 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25, 29, 31, 1, 2, 3, 4, 21 = 14 days." Subsequently two additions were made to the Hall. In 1931 a stage was built in its present form with a ceiling and walls of panel board. In the same year an addition was put on the east end of the building, a two storey balcony with a hall underneath, stairs to the balcony and storage space. (Herman Lapp's information) In 1944 the whole south side of the building was widened with the addition of a kitchen, banquet hall and two cloak rooms. Another significant expenditure occurred in 1958 when a new aluminium roof was put on the south side of the building and the inside of the banquet hall insulated.

This gives the technical history of the building of the Estonian Hall. Unfortunately the part of the Society's minutes containing how construction actually took place is missing. The first mention of the Society acquiring its "own home" is found in the minutes of July 3, 1910. The first to raise the idea of building a hall was J. Toomingas on January 8, 1911 at a meeting of the Society. The question was left undecided since it was considered premature.

In 1910 the Finns already had two buildings: the "Elsbeth" Hall (also known as the Socialist Society Hall) between Eckville and Sylvan Lake and the "Hyväse" Hall (also known as the Young People's Hall) three miles south-east of Eckville. The Estonian School in old Eckville was also used for parties and dances. (Reference #9)

The question of building a hall for the Society was raised again by August Posti on August 10, 1913 at the annual general meeting. The question appears also to have been discussed outside the Society. This time the question is discussed very thoroughly at the meeting. One of the methods of financing discussed is the possibility of a \$10 donation from each Estonian farmer. Their names are listed in Appendix #9, with a total of 42, four of whom are from Sylvan Lake. At the same meeting both Adam Matteus and Paul Koot promised to provide land for free, leaving it up to the majority to decide.

The people attending the meeting, many of whom were not members of the Society, were apparently unanimous in their opinion on the need for a hall and its construction within financial means.

Hendrik Kingsep, who was also the recording secretary at the meeting, then raised the legal

question of who would own of the hall, the MVES or also the other existing associations of which he, H. Kingsep, was a member. Furthermore, would those associations be able to hold their meetings in the hall without any obstacles? In the next part of the minutes it becomes evident there was a political reason for this serious discord which already at that time had divided the small Estonian community and sown distrust and animosity. People left the meeting shouting in anger.

This deep split appears even more clearly at the next meeting on September 14, 1913 where the question of building a hall is again raised. A proposal is presented from a committee constituted of members from outside the Society (F. Kinna, Sam Kinna, A. Posti, C. Rääbis and Karl Langer). Non-members (guests) leave this meeting also making angry comments.

At a meeting on January 11, 1914, under item 10, the question of building a hall is again discussed. At this meeting it was decided to undertake construction of the hall. It was also made known at this time that a meeting had been held outside the framework of the Society. (August Posti's diary: January 4, 1914 "At Langer's on the subject of building a hall for the Society")

Excerpt from the minutes: ".... The matter was discussed at length ...The enthusiasm to acquire a hall was clearly so great that even those who until the present had doubted our capacity to build a hall were now in favour. Despite the late hour (it was after five o'clock), the meeting decided to undertake construction of the hall. Two donation sheets were given out, one to J. Wernik and the other to G. Wall with the following introductory explanation:

"The Medicine Valley Estonian Society decided at its meeting of January 11th to undertake construction of a building for the Society. The building will be located on the property of either J. Teener or A. Matteus depending on the possibilities. We the undersigned shall participate in the undertaking for the amount specified below:"

Signatories: 1) Peeter Herman, 2) Jaan Moro, 3) J. Wernik. 4) H. Kinna, 5) Sam Kinna, 6) H. Kingsep, 7) J. Toomingas - in the amount of \$10.00. Signed (J. Toomingas)

Annual general meeting of February 8, 1914 with 16 members and a few nonmembers: "The matter of building a hall was the next item, which whipped up waves once again on a stormy sea. In the tumult of virulent baback and forth waves of arguments S. Kinna's proposal was accepted: that the Society would contribute half the expenses of building the hall and individuals who are not members, the other half, and that the hall then be built which would be governed by an executive composed by an equal number of individuals from the Society and from outside the Society." The proposal was adopted with eight votes in favour and seven against.

March 8, 1914 "The list of participants for the building is also signed by Huul, A. Posti and K. Moro bringing the amount promised up to \$150.00, plus \$40 conditionally committed. The total, therefore, is \$190.00 promised by 19 individuals. The question of when to ask for the money is left open.

May 10, 1914 item 11 "The subject of the hall is discussed again, specifically the possibility of purchasing the Eckville store for that purpose. No decision was reached."

June 14, 1914 item 6 "Purchase of the Eckville store is considered impossible."

(The minutes of 1913 and 1914 were drafted by Hendrik Kingsep)

January 11, 1915 item 11 "Construction of the hall is discussed."

February 14, 1915 (The minutes are drafted by Emma Kingsep) item 5 J. Mäesep proposes that construction of the hall begin and states he will provide logs for free.

Posti puts forth a motion that: every member of the Society should donate \$1.00 for the construction of the hall.

F. Kinna considers Litt's proposal for shares.

S. Kinna states that thoughts of festivities and building a hall should be set aside for a while. At the present sad time of war, our thoughts should be with the poor countrymen back in Estonia and that they should be mourned.

Mäesep: "We don't want the hall only for festivities but more for gathering knowledge."

July 11, 1915 item 4 (also August 8, 1915 item 5) "J. Mäesep proposes that a dance be organized in August to raise funds for the Society's hall. No one is opposed to the proposal."

November 1915 - A party took place at Mart Sestrap's grain house. The weather was very cold. There were only a few party goers. Profit \$9.00

In the second half of 1916 three parties and two family evenings were organized which were successful activities financially and for the number of participants. According to the January 1, 1917 MVES report there was \$121 in the bank account. Furthermore, in the meantime during the year (1916-17) political arguments had receded and there appeared to be a renewed desire on the part of everyone to build a hall for the Society. Many former members rejoined the Society and new members also joined. At the meeting of September 9, 1917 there is a decision that the size of the Society's hall should be 26 feet wide, 50 feet long and 12 feet high with an arched ceiling. There is a request for a budget to see if the Society has the means to build such a hall. Frits Kinna takes the task upon himself. On October 14th both he and August Posti present draft budgets in which the cost of lumber comes to approximately \$500. In Hendrik Kinna's opinion, since the Society has \$175 in its account which with some effort could be increased to \$200, but still leaves it \$300 short, the project is beyond the means of the Society's members alone. A long and fierce discussion follows with mistrust again rising up between permanent Society members and "outsiders". The latter group includes some who would support the construction of the hall but do not wish to join the Society. A solution is reached (7 votes in favour, 2 against and 3 abstentions) by deciding to establish a joint stock company for building a hall and constituting a committee to draft a constitution for the company. (Paul Langer, Frits Kinna, Hugo Möttus, Karl Rääbis and Sam Kinna were elected to the committee.)

The committee held a meeting on November 4, 1917 and on November 11 the joint stock company's draft constitution was presented at a Society meeting. The arguments over the draft became fierce. The meeting changed paragraph 4. During the arguments, Karl Rääbis, who was a member of the committee, spoke several times to oppose the joint stock company. When the final version of the company's constitution was read and a vote was held to see who were ready

to participate in construction of the hall in this way, only eight were in favour and they were all were members of the Society. This ended the idea of a joint stock company. K. Rääbis was blamed for scaring people away with his interventions. " ... The meeting came to a noisy end with people in an agitated state as was always the case when construction of the hall was discussed." The Society's record of minutes comes to an end here on November 11, 1917. The following 14 pages have been ripped out.

However, a fire insurance policy in the name of the MVES dated April 15, 1918 for six months for 18,000 board feet of lumber, has been preserved. The site was initially on the property of Jaan Vares and later on that of Paul Koot. Construction took place from May 17th to June 4th 1918. (August Posti's diary) The plans for the hall were drawn up by Frits Kinna and Karl Langer. The latter was often very active in construction activities (Frits Kinna's expression).

Hendrik Kingsep apparently withdrew from MVES activities in 1916 and 1917. His name does not appear in the minutes of meetings in matters relating to the building of the hall. It appears that he was in serious disagreement with respect to the site of the hall. This resulted in Hendrik Kingsep, along with a small group of Estonians (Jaan Vares, Mart Sestrap, Hugo and Alek Mõttus and others) from west of Gilby, not participating in the construction of the MVES hall. The building material, which had been transported by everyone in turn during the winter and spring of 1918 from the sawmill in Leedale to the property of Jaan Vares* at the north end of the settlement, in the spring was taken two miles south-east to a new site on the property of Paul Koot** which was closer to the centre of the settlement. As mentioned earlier, construction of the hall took place in May and June of 1918.

Hendrik Kingsep with Mart Sestrap and Englishmen, Andrew and Thuborn started organizing construction of another community hall in Gilby. It was built in 1921.

*According to Ludwig and Jaan Koot there was a disagreement over the right of ownership of the hall.

**Two acres of land were subdivided from the property of Paul Koot for the hall for a price of \$50.00.

Period II. As mentioned above, a large addition was made to the hall in 1931. This proved to be necessary and possible since the activities of the MVES were given new energy and a boost in 1930-32 when a great number of young new arrivals joined the Society.

In July and August of 1936, Frits Kinna installed electric wiring in the hall for a payment of \$8.55. When necessary for parties, a portable gasoline engine electric generator would be brought to the hall. (Borrowed from Frits Kinna)

Appendix #30

Medicine Valley Estonian Society (MVES)

Early Period

The book containing MVES minutes of 1910-18 has been preserved, although in fact the last minutes are from November 11, 1917. The last 14 pages (181-194) have been torn of the book. A separate financial statement was not kept and the annual report is in the Minutes. The organization meeting of the Society was held on April 21, 1910 in the Estonian School. There was no list of participants in the Minutes. The following names do appear in the Minutes: 1) Frits Kinna, 2) Hendrik Kinna, 3) Juhan Kinna, 4) Peeter Koot, 5) Karl Langer, 6) Karl Moro, 7) August Posti, 8) Jaan Teener, 9) Jaan Wernik. From the minutes of the May meeting it appears that among the founding members, the following were also present: 10) Paul Langer, 11) Artur Kinna, 12) Peeter Perler, 13) Sestrap, Mihkel (Mike) and 14) Jaan Tomingas.

Hendrik Kingsep was elected to chair the meeting, Frits Kinna as secretary and Peeter Koot as "cash master". The objectives of the new society are defined by the first sentence in the minutes: The first question of discussion on the agenda was: "What kind of association do we need, a social or business one? The conclusion, after lengthy discussions, was that both were necessary but there was not a sufficient financial base for a business association. Therefore, a social association should be established to which could be added a mutual fire insurance company.

The meeting organizers had a provisional constitution for the society. It was discussed and adopted with some minor modifications. A committee was elected to finalize the constitution - J.Wernik, J. Kinna, and Frits Kinna. The meeting set the entrance fee at \$1.00 and membership fee at 50 cents a year.

At the meeting of May 9, 1910 in Gilby (chaired by H. Kingsep), a draft constitution was discussed and adopted with minor changes. Unfortunately, the text of the constitution is missing. From the minutes that followed there is no indication that the constitution or the Society was registered with the provincial government. (The present MVES constitution and by-laws were registered with the provincial government only on June 26 1933, when they received a Certificate of Incorporation.) The first executive was elected at this meeting and new members were accepted, 15) Kinna Henri, 16) Kinna Sam, 17) Moro Jaan, 18) Moro Juhan, 19) Mäesep Jaan, 20) Anton Karl, 21) Rääbis Jaan, 22) Kingsep Emilie, 23) Kinna Marie (24) Posti Miili, 25) Wall Gustav (from Sylvan Lake), 26) Herman Peeter (from Sylvan Lake March 12, 1911). It was decided to hold meetings on the first Sunday of each month.

Family evenings were organized once a month and social evenings with a program (choir, play, literature readings, later movies, folk dancing) and dances at least 3-4 times a year (Easter, John's Day (Jaanipäev) and Christmas). Before the Society's own hall was built in 1918, it used Mike Sestrap's rooms in Gilby and the Estonian School at first and later mainly the homes of Sam and Henri Kinna and also of August Posti.

Educational and cultural activities were taken quite seriously right from the beginning. In order to keep better track of events and academic achievements and to present the information to others at the Society's meetings, the following division of assignments was made: (November 6, 1910): H. Kingsep - a farmers' collective, H. Kinna - Alberta politics, Peeter Koot- "Socialist matters", A. Posti - Estonian literature, Sam Kinna - the Duma and activities of associations, K. Anton - inventions. At the next meeting (December 4) S. Kinna took on the task of keeping a "diary"

which he did meticulously until his retirement. His conscientious and accurate work made the diary a source of much valuable information. Unfortunately, his brother Henri destroyed (burned) the diary before his death. (Appendix #16) In it he had noted all weather related information as well as other significant events. He also made a presentation on a summary of weather observations at the annual general meeting. On October 2, 1910 H. Kingsep spoke about "How much we pay in taxes without knowing it".

There was a unanimous decision to hold lecture evenings at the meeting of December 4, 1910. Already at the same meeting there were speakers and presentations: a) Inventions - an airship capable of flying over the ocean (K. Anton); b) the Russian Duma - demands for the mother tongue as language of instruction (S. Kinna); c) Farmers' unions - demands for abolition of tariffs ((H. Kingsep). The first lecture evening in Gilby was held on December 17th which turned out to be very long (it ended at 3 in the morning) with five individuals making presentations, mainly readings. The lectures are listed in the minutes: K. Kinna made a short presentation on the life of Count Leo Tolstoy. Henri Kingsep also spoke on the same subject but veered off from Tolstoy's world views to our Christian church, religion and religion based on God. A. Kinna read an article from "Majapidaja" (The Housekeeper) about a Japanese nature based philosophy regarding the life and development of humans. A. Posti read an article from the "Virulane" about meteorites and the cooling of the earth.* After discussion it was decided that there should be an announcement of the subject of presentations before the meetings and the presentations should not simply be readings from books. H. Kingsep said he would speak at the next lecture evening about criminals and robberies. It was decided to hold the next meeting on January 21, 1911 but there are no minutes for that meeting.

There were presentations and speeches at every meeting after the official part. During the early years (1910-13) there was particular emphasis on issues of an economic nature and many events were organized of which several attracted the whole community. (Appendix #31)

The first two years of activity of the MVES were encouraging. There was a harmony of views and there were proposals and people to carry them out. However, there soon developed a strong tendency toward narrow-minded political party activity on the part of the more active members who were also more experienced and educated. (Appendix #37) There was an increasing amount of socialist propaganda (see Politics) at the Society's meetings. Unfortunately the minutes of 1912 are very cursory and deficient but it is clear that during 1912 there were differences in political opinions in the Society.

* Seem to be two Estonian newspapers or journals (translator's note)

Already in 1913 it appears that people with different political views as well as young people had withdrawn from the activities of the Society. This is shown by Hendrik Kingsep's remark at the annual general meeting in January that: "...the Society should acknowledge its responsibilities and positions clearly and not be dejected or discouraged by the fact that more people do not become members or, more specifically, that all Estonians in the settlement do not become members..."

In 1910 the Society had 26 members with 5-6 members added in the following years. In 1913 there were usually 10 -14 participants. At the family evenings, however, there was enthusiastic participation, even amongst those who had withdrawn from the Society.

The existence of the problems mentioned above could also be seen from the meeting of July 13, 1913 on the basis of J. Wernik's complimentary summary of the achievements of the Estonians in Stettler (J. Wernik was the representative of Medicine Valley at the meeting). After a long discussion, he made the following observation with regard to the planned summer social gathering being: "...that our Society's social aspect is weak since first, there are few of us and second, the organization of the Society's activities have fallen primarily on the older generation, since the younger generation seems less willing to do so."

J. Wernik also thought it relevant to state (at the meeting of August 11, 1912) that "... in our community people live for one association ...and don't wish to join many associations..." There is no explanation of "the many associations".

The activities of the Society in 1913, 1914 and 1915 are characterized by constant aggressive propaganda. The number of active members declined. Only the subject of building a community hall attracted members and outsiders to meetings.

In 1916 there is a complete change in the political aims of the executive (See Politics). Hendrik Kingsep, despite being Vice-President, no longer took an active part in leading the Society and the meetings. In 1917 he was not even part of the executive since during the elections in January he was on a trip to California.

The activities in 1916 for the MVES were in some sense like a rest or transition period. During the nine meetings held in the year, the main topic was the organization of social or family evenings or the analysis of their success. In a period of six months, three social and two family evenings were organized to raise funds for the construction of the community hall. All of them were a success thanks to the energetic organization of J. Mäesep and Sam Kinna's imaginative programs as well as everyone's contribution to the work. J. Mäesep was typical of the Society's "neutrals" since he never took part in the debates involving political themes. From the beginning of the Society he was a loyal participant at meetings and an active member. He was a lifelong director of the social committee as he worked tirelessly and energetically to organize fund raising social evenings for the construction of the community hall and promised to saw all lumber, without pay for the construction of the hall. Unfortunately his "career of service" came to an end due to a seemingly insignificant misunderstanding regarding the calculation of a social evening's expenses. He angrily left the Society at the very meeting (November 11, 1917) where the discussions on his wish for the construction of the community hall were coming to a conclusion.

Already at the beginning of 1917 there appeared to be signs of renewed faith in working together within the families of Estonian settlers. Participation in meetings increased, members who had left the Society joined again and new members also joined. At the annual general meeting of January 14, 1917, 15 people were in attendance. Former members, Paul Langer, Jaan Vares, Liidia Langer, Marie Moro and Lilli Moos, joined again. On February 11th Hugo Posti, August Matteus and Amanda Moro joined as new members.

Six meetings were held during the year (until November 11) and the last three were devoted almost exclusively to the construction of the community hall. (Appendix #29) Exchanges again became very fierce with mutual mistrust being evident. A decision was made to create a joint stock company for the construction of the community hall. However, when it came time for most

decisive step - donation of money - it became clear that many people's true "spirit of sacrifice" had faded.

The written history of the MVES breaks off with the minutes of November 11, 1917. This blank period lasted until 1932.

The only time in this period that the full membership list is shown is in the minutes of the annual general meeting of January 11, 1915.

Members who have paid their membership fees in full:

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1) Hendrik Kingsep | 8) Marie Koot | 15) Adam Matteus |
| 2) Emma Kingsep | 9) Jaan Moro | 16) August Posti |
| 3) Frits Kinna | 10) Karl Moro | 17) Miili Posti |
| 4) Hendrik Kinna | 11) Peter Moro | 18) Jaan Rääbis |
| 5) Juhan Kinna | 12) Gustav Möttus | 19) Jaan Tomingas |
| 6) Sam Kinna | 13) Alex Möttus | 20) Emma Tomingas |
| 7) Peter Koot | 14) Juhan Mäesepp | 21) Gustav Wall |

Fees not paid in 1914: 22) Peeter Herman, 23) Marie Herman, 24) Jaan Wernik, 25) Hugo Möttus (for two years)

One of the most important tasks of the Society was to establish a mother-tongue library. In the early years hardly a meeting went by where this was not discussed. The librarian and his assistant, brothers Sam and Henri Kinna were elected to the first executive. They remained in their positions continuously for two decades. Both brothers had received, what was considered, a good education at the time in Estonia and spoke Russian and German fluently. Sam also spoke Finnish. They were the right men at the right place with respect to the Society's library. They also possessed their own wellstocked multilingual library. (Appendix 16)

A. Posti as early as the third meeting the Society (June 6, 1910) raises the idea of creating a library and wished to subscribe the magazines "Põllutööleht" (Agricultural Journal) and "Näitelava" (Theatre Stage). Henri Kinna thinks: "...at first books with scientific and educational content should be ordered and books of fiction should be emphasized less". H. Kingsep suggests first collecting books from people which they are willing to let the Society use and find out what books other Estonian societies possess so they could be exchanged. He also suggested seeking advice from librarians in Estonia. However, the idea to exchange books with other Estonian societies was dropped since the mailing charges proved to be high. (July 3, 1910) At the first general meeting (January 8, 1911) the librarian's report revealed that the Society had 73 purchased and 9 donated books for a total of 82. At the same meeting it was decided to organize a group book binding session at S. Kinna's home on January 12th. There was also discussion of rules for lending books. On Frits Kinna's proposal (8 for, 5 against) it was agreed to lend books to outsiders for a deposit of ten percent of a book's price. (H. Kingsep's proposal)

The list of books of the MVES library has been preserved. (Appendix #4) Unfortunately the list does not indicate when the books were acquired or the number of books at the beginning of a given year. According to the inventory contained in the 1914 report (meeting of January 11,

1915) the library expenditures had been:

1910	\$18.10
1912	\$23.16
1914	\$18.10
Total	\$59.36

Librarian's report: 244 bound volumes.

At the meeting of October 27, 1963 a committee was elected for the complete organization of the library. This gave the following results:

Books in the 1963 list	454
Lost books	191
Books in the library but not on the list	56
Various journals	13

A new list was drawn up and a copy sent for the information of the Estonian Central Archives in Toronto.

The Society had its own stamp. J. Wernik had come up with the idea (November 6, 1910). He and S. Kinna were elected to work out a design for the stamp which was made by G. Wall for a fee of \$1.00. (March 12, 1910) The stamp was donated to the Red Deer District Museum in Red Deer in 1994.

MVES Relations with other Estonian Organizations in Alberta

The first contacts were established with the Estonians in Stettler from the beginning of the Sylvan Lake settlement. This contact was maintained and developed later with visits between the two settlements and guest performances at summer socials. The MVES and the "Linda" Society also exchanged books and written plays. Later on many of the young people exchanged marriage vows.

Medicine Valley Stettler	
Hugo Mottus	Liisa Tipman
Oskar Moro	Tipman
Anna Posti	Johannes Tipman

During the same period school teachers from Stettler taught at the Estonian School (Ed Tipman) and in Eckville (Ado Tipman).

The more active Estonians from Sylvan Lake were members of the MVES. G. Wall made the Society's stamp. Many of them are buried in the Gilby Cemetery.

On trips to Red Deer, which by horse and wagon took two days, the Medicine Valley Estonians stopped for the night at the homes of friends and relatives in Sylvan Lake where Tiina Kingsep's

home was particularly appreciated. Tiina and Kristjan's son, Lembit Kingsep, settled to farm in Medicine Valley in the 1920s. He left in the spring of 1966 as a pensioner.

In the early period there did not seem to be much direct contact with southern Alberta i.e. the Estonians in Lethbridge and Barons. The distance was too great and travel too slow. The only exceptions to this were the workers on the railway. This is how Frits Kinna went looking for a bride in Lethbridge. In the minutes there are entries that invitations to socials have been sent to Lethbridge. In the later period, the personal contacts became quite close. During that time there were many young men from Estonia moving around Alberta looking for work. Many of the young men who had worked on the Estonian prairie farms in Barons later became independent farmers in the Medicine Valley Estonian settlement. (Appendix #33)

Choir and music ensemble

Early period

Even several years before the establishment of the MVES (1910), there was an active choir and music ensemble in the Estonian settlement, although they were not formal organizations. They joined the MVES and handed over \$14.00 which had been collected for the purchase of a cello. The MVES decided to contribute an additional \$10.00 for the purpose (June 5, 1910).

The Estonian settlement never set itself off as a separate entity from the surrounding multi-ethnic community. The Estonians were more likely leaders and initiators of community events. They organized their own choir and music ensemble early on (1906-08) and performed often, primarily at the region's Finnish social gatherings. The Estonian dance band, made up of the younger members of the music ensemble, was well known and popular in the community.

The soul and tireless leader of the choir for many years was Hendrik Kingsep. (See Appendix #30) He always had his violin with him and never missed an opportunity for a sing-song or a choir practice. The latter were organized, if possible, every two weeks. (See Appendix #27) The long time leader of the music ensemble was Artur Kinna. The group was initially composed of: Artur Kinna (violin), Hendrik Kingsep (violin), Frits Kinna (piano, cello) and J. Wernik (flute). The musicians all also belonged to the choir. H. Kingsep did not join the group when it played at dances. In 1910, for example, the group played in Bentley, Eckville, Evart and Hyvääse halls, the school house and socialist hall. The development of song and music was greatly facilitated by the fact that many of the families in the settlement were very musical and they had transmitted the talent to their children. The Kinna family was an example of this where the head of the family, Juhan, had been a clarinet player in an orchestra in Estonia. He did not play here since he did not have a clarinet. Frits played the piano and later learned the cello which he played even better. (See Appendix #45)

The choir, music ensemble and theatre group travelled to Stettler to put on guest performances in the Linda Hall. The Linda Society in turn paid visits to Medicine Valley. (See photos from 1921) In 1915 and 1916 when Hendrik Kingsep was involved in political campaigning, Artur Kinna became leader of the choir and music ensemble. (Minutes of December 12, 1915)

The accounts contained in the 1914 report of the Society (meeting of January 11, 1915) showed

"Expenditures on music" "Income from performances"

1910 - Cello	\$25.00	1910	\$6
notes	\$6.00	1911	\$3
		Total	\$9
1911 - musical instruments	\$10.55		
notes	\$4.00		
cello bag	\$1.80		
Total	\$ 47.35		

Enterprises

Despite the fact that according to the Society's constitution its main objectives were recreational and cultural, as the only organization in the Estonian settlement, economic problems were regularly on the agenda of meetings.

The idea of a mutual fire insurance association was raised already at the founding meeting of the MVES on January 24, 1910. At the same meeting a committee was elected to draft a constitution: Jaan Teener, H. Kingsep, Karl Moro and A. Posti. The committee presented a draft constitution at the next meeting of the Society (May 9), where it was discussed but no definite decision taken. According to the minutes, the following principles were under debate:

Should payment be made through work or cash? It was decided that that insurance should be paid in cash.

To obtain the money each insured party must present the bill of exchange for the amount which represents his part of the deposit. The bill will be held in the accounts or the bank until it is needed, i.e. when an accident occurs.

Should the association accumulate capital, for example through annual fees?

The claim for insurance should be in line with the value and contents.

The insurance agreement is for a period of three years.

The value of the insurance should be for one-half the total value.

Insurance against prairie fires may also be covered but the applicant for insurance must use means of fire protection determined by the commission.

The constitution was adopted on July 3, 1910 in the form presented by H. Kingsep. Anyone outside the MVES would not be accepted as a member and operating expenses were to be covered by a standard annual fee. Unfortunately, there is no trace of the text of the constitution.

Joint sale of animals (Cooperatives). As early as at a meeting of June 5, 1910 H. Kingsep suggests the joint sale of animals (oxen) to increase income. At a meeting of September 4th, it is reported that the seven members of the Society together would have ten oxen, two heifers and five cows for sale. It was decided to ask the Red Deer farmers union the price of animals

and about the conditions for the joint sale of animals. The response was read on May 11, 1912. A joint sale of oxen took place in the spring of 1912 with five men having 19 oxen weighing a total of 25,035 pounds for a value of \$1,661.05. Another joint sale was organized in March 1916 by Frits Kinna.

On March 16, 1916 Mr. Logan made a guest presentation at the Society's meeting on fattening baby beef.

Acquisition of a purebred bull. At the meeting of May 9, 1915 Adam Matteus raises the question of acquiring a purebred bull with the support or through the government. The Finns had been successful in doing so. It was left to Frits Kinna to get more information. At the meeting of November 12th of the same year, F. Kinna presents the detailed guidelines of the Dominion Government. The establishment of a formal association is required with at least ten members. The bull is provided free of charge. The care of the bull becomes the responsibility of the executive and there is a membership fee of \$1.00 a year for treatment of the bull etc. A discussion followed about the breed of bull. Since few members were present it was decided to call a meeting outside the Society to determine how much interest there was in the wider community.

Butter factory. The first time the possibility of producing butter in common was raised by H. Kingsep at a meeting on June 5, 1910. At the next meeting on July 3rd a decision is made to examine in detail the question of building a creamery and Sam Kinna was to prepare an estimate of costs for the next meeting. Subsequently there were lengthy arguments at the meeting of August 7, 1910. H. Kinna was of the opinion that there is less work with beef cattle and there is not much difference in revenue. There were others in favour of a creamery. The cost of setting one up was calculated to be \$600. Discussions continued on September 4th when H. Kingsep presented statistics from the government on the average revenue from a dairy cow. A. Posti provided data on his sale of butter from nine cows. Surprisingly, the average amount of revenue from each dairy cow per year is exactly the same, \$30. H. Kingsep also presented information on his dairy herd for 1906, 1907 and 1908 and put particular emphasis on the expenses paid to the dairy (a total of \$111.85 over three years). The meeting was unable to come to decision on whether "... to set up a butter factory as a business or at home first." At the meeting of October 2, 1910 Sam Kinna also provided data on the amount of revenue from his dairy herd for a period of four years (1906-09) during which he received a yearly average of \$27.71 per cow. The meeting found that establishment of a creamery ("butter factory") was too costly (on the basis of data received from the government) and decided to drop the question from the agenda "for the time being".

Grain cleaning machine. On December 4, 1910 August Posti raised the idea of buying a grain cleaning machine jointly and a group of participants was formed at the same meeting: Peeter Koot, Karl Moro, Karl Anton, H. Kingsep, J. Kinna, A. Posti, H. Kinna, and J. Wernik. K. Anton and G. Wall were given the responsibility of looking into the price and choice of a machine.

Threshing machine co-operative. The founding meeting was held at the home of H. Kinna on September 24, 1911, a decision to buy a machine (with a gasoline motor) was made on October 1st and by October 7th the machine was already in operation. The cost of the machine was \$1,985 and of the separator \$1,040. On December 10, 1911 there was already a discussion of a

report on the fall threshing. The 1912 fall meeting took place at the home of Mart Sestrap (information from the diary of August Posti).

The idea of establishing a **loan and savings co-operative** was raised by Sam Kinna on May 14, 1911 when he asked about making loans and the expediency of doing so. He thought it desirable if the Society could be similar to an intermediary to assist loan applicants. At the same meeting the participants from Oja gave a lengthy explanation of the activities and utility of loan and savings co-operatives in Estonia. At the next meeting (July 9, 1911) Sam Kinna gave a more complete presentation on loan and savings co-operatives and he was assigned the task of drawing up a draft constitution. On August 13th it appears that S. Kinna presented a constitution for a loan and savings co-operative. Three individuals agreed to act as shareholders and to put up their property as guarantee: H. Kingsep, S. Kinna and (?). On March 10, 1912, a new committee was elected to set up the loan and savings co-operative - J. Wernik (drafted the final constitution), P. Koot and H. Kingsep.

On August 11, 1912 (item 8) H. Kinna presents the report of the Loan and Savings Co-operative and states that funds are available but no one has applied for a loan. At the meeting of November 11, 1912 there is a question as to whether the Co-operative is alive or dead. The business director, H. Kinna, certifies the Co-operative to be capable of carrying on activities. Since the by-laws of the Co-operative prohibit the discussion of its internal matters at a public meeting (February 8, 1914) there is no overview of its actual activities.

From the above it may be concluded that the Co-operative was intended only for the members of the MVES.

The creation of an **economic co-operative** was raised by H. Kingsep at the Society's meeting of April 9, 1911. The Co-op was then established in 1912 in Eckville with Frits Kinna elected as Chairman of the Board. The Society placed the little funds it had (\$49) in the Co-op. There are frequent discussions of the latter's activities at the Society's meetings. (April 10, 1913, March 1914, July 11, 1915, February 13, 1916) (Appendix #31)

The idea of ordering binder twine jointly was raised on August 1, 1912 and Hendrik Kingsep took it upon himself to get the necessary information.

Establishment of a Farmers Association (UFA or United Farmers of Alberta). At the meeting of September 4, 1910, the idea was raised to create a Gilby branch of the Farmers Co-operative (association V.M.) and write to Mr. Carswell about the idea. At the meeting of October 2, 1910 the majority was in favour of the idea of establishing Gilby's own farmers' association. On November 6 the secretary was given the task of publicizing the place and setting the time of the meeting to establish the association and to invite a member of from the "Eckville Society" (= co-operative). It was agreed to spend up to \$1.00 for "postal expenses".

The Gilby UFA Local was established in 1911 and it held several meetings in connection with the forthcoming Alberta provincial elections (August Posti's diary and Grant MacEwan "Poking into Politics" Edmonton, 1966, pages 111-12). There are also repeated reminders to members at the Society's meetings about the need to attend UFA meetings (September 2, 1911, February 3, May 4, December 21, 1912).

Hendrik Kingsep played an active leadership role in the UFA Gilby Local. For purposes of comparison it is of interest to see the following recorded in the minutes of the MVES (March 8, 1914): "From the newspaper, The Guide, the attention of the Society is directed to: 2) Information that the Linda branch of the UFA(i.e. Stettler Estonian Society, V.M.) posses 400 books and a building."

Installation of telephones. A telephone network was installed in the village of Eckville in 1913. This was a local initiative and the required association was created, the Eckville Mutual Telephone Association. The Eckville central station was connected through the Red Deer central station to the provincial government telephone system. At the MVES meeting of April 13, 1913 (item 7 in the minutes) Henri Kinna explained the "installation contract" to the participants and found it to be unfair.

However, in the next two or three years, the conditions in the "contract" must have become more favourable or the need for telephones greater since at the MVES meeting of June 11, 1916 Frits Kinna states that a meeting has been held which supported the installation of telephones on farms. A committee, of which he was a member, was formed to explore the possibilities in greater detail. He encouraged people to participate actively in the undertaking.

In 1917 the first rural line was built northward through the Estonian settlement up to the property of Hugo Möttus. Frits Kinna, Karl Langer, Paul Langer, Henri Kingsep, Juhan Moro, Henri and Sam Kinna, Adam Matteus, Jaan Teener, Mart Sestrap and Hugo Möttus were connected to the line. The only non-Estonian member was C. Kasper.

Since the line had to be built and subsequently completely maintained through resources and expenditures provide by individuals themselves (an average of one mile per farm), a board was set up with Frits Kinna as chairman and Paul Langer and C. Kasper as members. The membership fee was \$10. (Information in part from Frits Kinna)

Note: While the number of rural lines has grown probably to ten (1965), the system is still built and maintained on the same basis as in 1917.

Beginning on March 1, 1967 the provincial government of Alberta will takeover the whole network and replace all lines with underground cables. V. Matiisen.

Appendix #32

Departures from Medicine Valley to Russia in 1923

List of Estonians

A - Individuals Returning to Eckville in 1-3 years

1) August Posti	left alone	Older son Hugo stayed to replace his father i.e. as head of the household. Father returned at the end of September 1924.
--------------------	------------	--

- | | | |
|----------------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2) Paul Mõttus | left alone | now lives on the edge of |
| | bachelor | Medicine Valley with his sister |
| 3) Henri Kinna | bachelor | brother Sam sent him a return ticket |

B- Individuals who left and stayed

- | | | |
|----------------|--|--|
| 4) Jaan Moro | left alone, leaving wife, Katti, in Eckville | Katti later lived with her brother Paul Mõttus |
| 5) Henri Moro | left with his family, wife Anna, | |
| | 3 sons and 2 daughters | |
| 6) Peeter Koot | left with his family, wife Marie | |
| | and 3 daughters | |

From Sylvan Lake

- 7) Peeter Herman - settled in Medicine Valley after returning
- 8) Jaan Smith (Smitt) - left from southern Alberta for Russia, returned in 1927 and started farming in Medicine Valley. He bought two quarters, R-3, Tw 40. Sc 6, SW and SW. He sold his land after World War II and now lives in Calgary.

The settlers who left departed from Eckville on the CPR on March 1, 1923 were Paul Mõttus, Jaan and Henri Moro, and Peeter Koot; they were joined by Peeter Herman from Sylvan Lake. Later in October, August Posti and Hendrik Kinna also left. (Reference 21 and 11, Appendix #37)

Frits Kinna's story: In Medicine Valley the idea to resettle in Russia was started by Hendrik Kingsep who was energetic in promoting the project. Resettlement took place at one's own expense and huge sums of money were taken along. Everyone left together from the Eckville CPR station. In New York they joined the American Estonians leaving to resettle. They also bought machinery and tractors in New York to take along. The name of the commune was "Koit" (Dawn) which was later changed to "Krasnaja Zarjaa". People stayed for 1-3 years. Henri Kinna was the treasurer and interpreter for the group and the collective farm. Henri, it seems, returned after a couple of years with Jaan Smitt. August Posti, it seems, came back a year earlier. Henri's return ticket and the security for Canadian authorities were provided by his brother Sam.

Lembit Kingsep's story: The resettlement to Russia took place in the early spring of 1923, a few days after the Co-op's annual general meeting. Several of the resettlers spoke at the meeting. (Jaan and Henri Moro, Peeter Koot) They were convinced that the collective farm in

Russia had a promising future. In addition to a \$500 deposit and the price of the ticket, they placed all of their money earned from the sale of land and possessions in the future collective farm. "To build a strong collective farm" (Jaan Moro's expression). I (V.M.) asked why August Posti would leave for Russia alone. Based on available information (his accounts and diary) he was quite well off and a keen participant in community work. Lembit's answer was that August apparently was not very happy with his family life; his wife, Miili, governed and commanded at home. I remember that it was harvesting time when August returned from Russia. I happened to be at the railway station. Since no one was there to meet him, I gave him a ride to his farm. When he stepped into the house he found no one there. His son Hugo arrived later and his first question (in an unfriendly tone) was: "Well, how did you like it?" The same scene was repeated when his wife came into the house.

Jaan Koot: The auction of Peeter Koot's possessions was held on February 22, 1923 and the resettlers departed together for New York from the CPR railway station in Eckville on February 28, 1923.

From August Posti's accounts (Reference #11) it appears that he went to Calgary on July 4th (\$5.20), bought a fountain pen (\$1.00), pictures (50 cents), made a deposit of \$514, bought a ticket for \$226 and on July 29, paid \$2.00 for a passport. That was the last entry in the accounts until January 1925. Hugo (the older son) took over his father's duties in 1924. Hugo kept his own accounts (Reference # 13). They contain the following entry on January 24, 1924: "Ticket Moscow-Eckville sent to dad with Anna's money, \$151". These accounts come to an end on September 25, 1924. The father, August Posti, must have been back by then. (See Appendix #32)

Henri Posti's explanation: In order for father to be able to come back, Hugo had to provide security. Father waited six months in Moscow. The Estonian collective farm "Koit" (Dawn) was located in Rostov-on-Don.

Juhan Pihooja: The Koit collective farm was in the region of Kubanskaja.

Appendix #37

Organization of land in Western Canada

Prairie Provinces

Extracts

Grant MacEwan*, "Between the Red and the Rockies"

"The township plan of survey was adopted 1871...Townships would be six miles square and

comprise 36 sq. sections of 640 acres per section. The international boundary commission established the boundary at latitude 49° and principal meridian lines were extended northward. Tiers of townships were numbered from the base line northward and ranges of townships were numbered from one meridian westward to the next.** Time confirmed the appropriateness of the system".

"The Land Act, providing for homesteading in the Northwest came in 1872. It was a spark that set the prairies afire. The head of a family or any person 21 years of age or over could make entry for a quarter section farm on even-numbered sections. The fee was 10 dollars and title could be obtained after three years provided proof was furnished of occupancy and certain specified improvements. A homesteader might add to his holding by pre-empting or buying another quarter section of crown land at a price about \$ 2.00 - # 2.50 per acre."

"The Canadian Pacific Syndicate received its charter in 1881 and agreed to complete a transcontinental railroad in ten years. By the terms of the contract, the company was to be granted 25,000,000 acres of prairie land, \$ 25,000,000 in cash and the ? miles of railroad that the government had already built. Other concessions included exemptions from land tax for 20 years and freedom from import duties on materials for construction".

"Calgary was on the railroad by 1883.... The Calgary - Edmonton line was built in 1890 - 1891. The Crow's Nest Pass Railway was built in 1897.

* Grant MacEwan was born in Brandon, Manitoba; studied agriculture in Ontario, taught university for 18 years in Saskatchewan and was Dean of the Department of Agriculture for six years at the University of Manitoba. He has lived in Alberta since 1953, was a city councillor in Calgary and later mayor. From this position he was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta in 1965. He was a very prolific writer and recognized as an author on agricultural and historical issues. Red here means Red River. V.M.

** The Medicine Valley Estonian settlement location is: Range 3, townships 38, 39, 40, 41 and Range 4 townships 39, 40, (41); all west of the 5th meridian. The Sylvan Lake Estonian settlement covered: Range 1, township 39 west of the 5th meridian and Range 28 township 39 west of the 4th meridian.

Regulations for ownership of homestead

Settling on a homestead was actually simple and financially within the means of settlers. (Appendix #27) However, the process of becoming owner of a homestead at the beginning of the 1900s for the Medicine Valley Estonians was quite complicated and lengthy given their lack of knowledge of English. At the time, the province of Alberta did not yet exist since it was created only in 1905. The Crown land in the area was governed by Ottawa (Department of the Interior, Dominion Lands Office). There was only a government agent in Red Deer. (35 miles away) An applicant for land had to go in person to the agent's office and pay an administrative fee (\$10.00) to obtain an Interim Homestead Receipt from the agent. This was a permit to settle on the land called a Homestead Entry. The document showed the location (number) of the land (the quarter) and a notice printed in red that the right to the minerals on the surface or in the ground belong to His Majesty. Once a settler had actually lived on the land and over a three year period cultivated 15 acres of new land, he could apply to become owner of the land. It was

necessary to send a written application well ahead of time (six months) to Ottawa to obtain a title or patent. After examining the conditions on site, the local agent sent his recommendation to Ottawa for certification. Ottawa, on this basis, sent a Certificate of recommendation to the settler and issued a patent which was sent to Edmonton (Land Registration District of North Alberta) for registration. The settler had to present a written application and pay the required fees to obtain a transcript or copy of the land title.

This is the process followed by August Posti whose documents listed above and correspondence have been preserved. Since he was the first Estonian in Medicine Valley to obtain a Homestead Entry, the process took him five years and 9 months.

1. Brothers Hendrik(Henri, b 1871) and Kristjan (Christian) Kingsep (also known as Kärсна and Kängsep) and August Posti (b. 1871). The latter was a relative of Hendrik Kingsep's wife (a cousin). Hendrik Kingsep married the local shoemaker's daughter, Emilie Saar, when he was a school teacher in Nuustaku.

2. The wealth of the farm was indicated by the fact that in September of 1902, the father sent his sons money in the amount of \$227.11 to Christian and \$252.83 to Hendrik as revenue for the co-operative, likely for operating capital.

3. During the period of the "collective farm" the others at Sylvan Lake were Juhan Kask who took a homestead on April 2, 1900 beside Henri and Kristjan , as well as Peter Walter (formerly Vassili), who took a homestead on July 30, 1900. They did not, however, join the "collective farm". For a short time Juhan Neithal also joined the "collective farm" at the beginning but dropped out. Juhan Neithal came from the "Nurmekunde" settlement in the province of Tver in Russia.

4. For details on the regulations on land regarding the Prairies and homesteads see Appendices #36 and #27.

PEACE RIVER



The Town of Peace River is located in northwestern Alberta along the banks of the Peace River Valley, near the confluences of the Peace, Smoky and Heart Rivers. Located approximately 450 kilometres north of Edmonton the majestic Peace River Valley, with its deep black loam, lies roughly at the same latitude as Estonia.

Otto Luberg and Henry Rosenthal, both of Estonian descent, settled in the Peace River area in the early spring of 1927. They rented a 640-acre farm, a sizeable piece of land where they could begin farming. Farming in such a short growing season, Luberg and Rosenthal built terraces to warm the soil and conserve water. Using such techniques, both farmers were rewarded with a bumper vegetable crop including cucumbers, tomatoes and an assortment of melons. The produce was sold locally and as far away as Eckville, Stettler, and Barons. Evidently, Luberg and Rosenthal established a network of communication with other Estonian families in Alberta and were thus able to sell their produce outside of the local market.

George and Oscar Moro, two brothers from Estonia, moved to Peace River from Medicine Valley in 1927. Upon arrival, they were immediately impressed by the stunning landscape. By the 1930s, approximately 30 Estonian settlers were living in the Peace River area. It was not uncommon to hear Estonian spoken on the streets of Peace River with such a high number of Estonian immigrants living and working in the area. Peace River, at this time, was already established as a burgeoning town complete with a restaurant, hotel, hardware store and meat market. Locals particularly appreciated the opening of the Peace River Creamery in 1931 whereby dairy products were prepared and sold.

The Estonian settlers who chose to work and live here were an entrepreneurial lot. The Moros built a grinding mill, sawmill, and also worked the traplines during the winter so as to generate cash when they were not producing a harvest. The Moro mill was situated where the Canadian Propane Company is presently located. Henry Rosenthal continued to farm profitable vegetables. According to sources, Rosenthal was famous for growing 70 centimetre long cucumbers, 15 kilogram cabbages and 30 kilogram turnips. Neighbour Paul Simm worked as a lumberjack and trapper. Estonians continued to settle in Peace River after the Second World War; Aleksander and Marta Simm arrived in Peace River in 1948.



Maintaining close ties with their Estonian heritage was important for the families of Peace River. Rosenthal and Luberg, for instance, organized the first celebration of Estonian Independence

Day in Medicine Valley, shortly before departing to Peace River. While living in northern Alberta they continued to maintain close ties with their homeland.

Additional information can be found in History - Alberta Estonian Settlements - Peace River

STETTTLER / BIG VALLEY

Stettler is located 101 kilometres east of Red Deer at the intersection of Highways 12 and 56. Swiss immigrant Carl Stettler founded the town of Blumenau in 1905. However, by the end of the year, the town's eight establishments moved two miles west in order to reap the benefits of Lacombe's newly expanding railway network. They named the new site Stettler. Recently, the town has experienced considerable growth-economically and demographically-due to its direct involvement with Alberta's oil field sector. At the time of the 2006 census, Stettler had a population of 5,148.



Additional information can be found in [History - Alberta Estonian Settlements - Stettler](#)

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION - 1999



Estonians from across Canada and the United States gather at historical Linda Hall near Stettler, Alberta to celebrate the centenary of Estonian settlement in Alberta. The three-day celebration, lasting from June 25 until June 27, was the largest gathering of Estonians and their descendants in Alberta's history. Over 500 people gathered to honour the brave pioneers who came to Alberta at the turn of the century.

The celebrations, occurring in late June of 1999, coincided with traditional Jaanipäev (Midsummer's Eve) festivities. Linda Hall, with its spacious grounds and facilities, was the ideal venue for such an event. On the first day descendants of pioneer families covered the walls of Linda Hall with dozens of large family storyboards depicting their rich family heritage. Family trees were included as well as images of log cabins, family portraits and social gatherings. On Friday, families set up motor homes, tents and campers. They viewed exhibits, toured historical sites, purchased souvenirs, and socialized with friends and family. In the evening, guests were entertained by the Garry Raabis Band.



Saturday featured the Opening Ceremonies co-hosted by Bob Kingsep and Bob Tipman, grandsons of pioneer settlers. As the national anthems were sung, a Canadian, Estonian and Albertan flag were raised. Copies of Original Homestead Certificates were presented to over 30 pioneer family representatives. Saturday afternoon featured traditional Estonian games such as log-sawing and nail-pounding. In the evening, a bountiful western barbecue

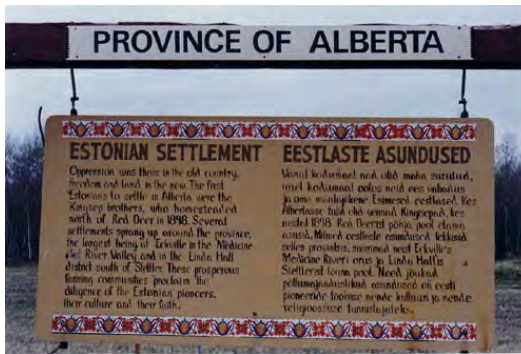
dinner was served. The evening continued with a varied musical program. The highlight of the evening was the traditional Jaanipäev bonfire.

A religious service was held Sunday morning at the chapel, originally built in 1906. Archbishop Udo Petersoo of the Estonian Evangelical Church of Canada presided over the ceremony. The memorable weekend wrapped up with a guided bus tour through Eckville and the Medicine Valley. The tour included stops at the Estonian School, Estonian Hall, Gilby Cemetery and various pioneer homes. The Centennial weekend served to commemorate the lives of Alberta's Estonian pioneers and those who attended developed a greater appreciation for their culture and heritage.

"Pioneers have made this land our home"

"Me tuleme tuhandest tuulest..."

THE EARLY YEARS



Development was rapid and business brisk in the burgeoning new town of Stettler. Over the course of their first winter, seven lumber yards strained to meet demand. By July 1906, there were 600 residents in Stettler. Buildings appeared roughshod and poorly built, indicating that construction was hurried to meet current commercial needs. In the first decade of the 20th century, Stettler had upwards of 70 businesses, including doctors, druggists, a dentist, a lawyer, a

jeweler, a butcher, a furniture store, a real estate office, and several general stores. These services were particularly useful to the expanding Estonian population working the fields in the area south of Stettler.

Some of the first Estonian families settled in the area south of Stettler in 1903. They travelled from Sylvan Lake to Red Deer and then from Red Deer to Stettler. The Tipmans and Kudras are notable examples of pioneer families dedicated to finding quality farmland in the largely unsettled lands of early 20th-century Alberta. Any pioneer family trying to establish a successful farm had to display indomitable resolve and perseverance. Without adequate funds and efficient transportation, the Tipmans and Kudras, like other Estonian settlers, discovered Alberta's unexplored terrain by foot and, over time, they created prosperous farming communities. Other Estonians to arrive shortly after were Alix Saar, Ado Saar, Alex Oro, Martin Oliver, Hennels, and Johannes Kerbes, accompanied by various family members.

ESTONIANS CAME TO STETTLER DISTRICT AROUND 1903-1909

This early Estonian settlement was situated about ten miles south of Stettler, in the province of Alberta. On the east it was bordered by the shores of Lone Pine Lake and from there the border extended south-southwest nearly to the Red Deer River. Linda Hall when built was considered to be in the centre of this community, for most of the Estonians lived here in this area.

In the beginning, because of the suppressive nature of the government under Russian domination, many Estonians left their native land of Estonia and went to other parts of Russia, life here proved just as unsatisfactory. So when the call came from Canada for immigrants, with the promise of greater freedom, and the opportunity to buy acres of land for ten dollars, and with subsidized assistance to help with their fares to Canada, many Estonians came to Canada in this way. It was to them a new land and a new beginning, with the freedom to practise their traditions and cultures in their own way.

Over forty families, mostly large, along with single men came out to this area and took up homesteads around 1903-1909. Some came and stayed with friends and relatives rather than take up land, and later left for other parts of the country. Most of these Estonian immigrants brought with them all of their household goods, garden seeds and whatever else they possessed to start this new life. They were of the Lutheran faith and very devout.

Since at this time there was no railroad in Stettler, they had to pack whatever necessities they needed from the nearest large town, which was then Red Deer. This meant packing such things as flour, salt, sugar, etc. on their backs and walking the eighty miles or more there and back to do so. Later they were able to buy draft animals from the neighbouring ranchers. It also took a great deal of dealing because the ranchers, many of them, resented the homesteaders because they thought they took up too much of the good grass land with their homesteads; and too because many of these homesteaders had no real knowledge of the real threat of prairie fires. Prairie fires were always a great hazard because of the high grass and open prairies. When they were able to buy steers they had to be trained to work, ploughing, pulling a cart and other jobs that horses did. However a trip to Red Deer how with these oxen, while tedious, was certainly a great improvement over packing supplies on one's back. Also usually one trip with oxen would bring back a winter's supply of whatever was needed, whereas by back packing, the settler either made more than one trip or did without. A trip to Red Deer usually took a week either with oxen or on foot.

Most of the Estonian settlers in this area built good substantial homes and farm buildings. They were made of poplar logs which were plentiful. Because of the good community spirit, it was common practice to help each other with construction of these buildings. Those who had oxen, (steers they had trained) were kept busy plowing fireguards, garden plots, and fields for their neighbours and friends. There were prairie fires and these were always a potential threat to the settlers and ranchers.

Sometime between 1909 and 1911 the community organized and built their first community hall. This they named after their legendary Saint, 'Linda'. Today it is still called Linda Hall. This hall

was used for community gatherings, weddings, dances, picnics as well as a place to hold farm meetings. Most of the farmers of this area belonged to the United Farmers of Alberta. The women too belonged and were called the United Farm Women of Alberta. In 1930 the Hall burned down. A new one was constructed on the same site. It is used today by the local community of Canadians of different (many) Ethnic origins and it is considered one of the most modern and better organized community halls in the province.

They also organized their own brass band, with A. Fridulin as the first band leader. Later there were the 4K's who became famous for their band music.

At the time of this writing there are very few of the original Estonian settlers left in this area: Quite a few families have left for one reason or another. Many have passed away. Most of the second and third generation have intermarried. Some of these however are still farming in this area and have proved themselves to be very able and productive farmers. The descendants of those settlers are: Hennels, Soops, Wagensteins, Kerbes, Tipmans, Klauses, Oros, Fridulins, Rahos, Nickloms, Kudras, and Saars. A lot of the younger generations of these Estonians have been absorbed into industry and professions in other parts of Canada.



Early Estonian Settlers — Grandfather Hennel and his wife, and their son William and family.



About a mile east of Linda Hall, with its well kept grounds, stands probably the only Estonian Cemetery in Canada. The 69 early Estonians are a link with the past and a mute testimony to what was once a flourishing Estonian community. In a corner of the Cemetery stands the old Estonian Lutheran church. It was built in 1906 by these settlers, for a place to worship. Rev. John Silak was their Lutheran Estonian Minister. He

came from Medicine Hat to preach and care for the religious needs of this congregation as often as he could. But sometimes only three or four times a year. He is gone now and since his passing the Chapel stands empty, a memorial of the passage of time.

Second of a series

Early Estonian families

The first thing the Estonian settlers did after they had filed on their homesteads was to build a house and other essential buildings. Then they ploughed a fireguard around the buildings, which often doubled as a garden plot as well. They used for their gardens the seeds they brought with them from their native land. This done, they would then leave their families in charge of the homestead while the men folk would go out looking for work. They were mostly employed on railroad construction in summertime, while some worked in coal mines and others

in logging camps in winter. Wages were low and all the money earned and saved was used to buy livestock and draft animals, (mostly oxen), wagons and eventually farm machinery.

Most of the homesteaders' families raised good gardens. With a plentiful supply of prairie chickens and snow shoe rabbits, their larders were hardly ever low, except for tea, coffee, sugar, flour, oatmeal, salt and pepper. These they had to pack on their backs from Red Deer. Later on they were able to get oxen and wagons to do this.

One of the early Estonian settlers by the name of Roon had been a flour miller in his native land. He roamed the area until he found two suitable stones to his liking. With a great deal of skill and ingenuity he chiselled them out to make flour milling stones. Then he constructed a so-called Dutch windmill to turn these stones to grist flour for himself and the community. Later on Mr. Roon left for Australia. This windmill grinding outfit was sold at his auction sale to a Mr. Alex Liiu (Liiv?). Mr. Liiu was a tradesman in the furniture business. He earmarked each piece before he tore it down so he would know where each belonged. Then he tore it down and reset it up on his own homestead. Here it stayed as a landmark in the community after being much used as well. Later Mr. Liiu moved to Calgary and set up his own furniture business. I am told that these flour milling stones are now resting in the Wetaskiwin museum. Some of the Estonians who immigrated to this area were artisans or tradesmen who had left their occupations for the lure of the new land. One of these was a Mr. Reinglas who with his family homesteaded on the north-shore of Lone Pine Lake. He was a harness maker in Estonia. Since he had very little practical knowledge of tilling the soil and farming in general for a living, he found pioneering in this country quite arduous.



The summer of 1905 had been an ideal year with plentiful supply of moisture for good growing conditions, with a good supply of grass all over the prairies. The winter of 1905 and 1906 had been very mild, so very little feed was required to winter cattle herds. Some of the ranchers who had moved in at this period took it for granted that all winters were mild. The winter of 1907 unlike the previous winters was very cold with a lot of drifting snow. This caught these ranchers unprepared to feed and shelter their cattle. Hundreds and hundreds of cattle got drifted in and were frozen to death. They say that some of these cattle got drifted in and were huddled together in coolies or in the shelter of trees, and froze to death here. As the spring thaw came they slowly fell from their standing up positions to the ground.

Mr. Reinglas considered this an ideal opportunity for him. Being a harness maker, and with a ready market for all the harness he could make; these hides could be made into harness leather just for the taking of them. So he and his sons organized themselves into a skinning crew. They were very methodical in their operations. They cut the skin on the belly and around the legs and neck. Then they used a pony to jerk the hide off, by attaching the pony's harness to the hide. This way they could skin quite a few animals in an hour. They salvaged a large number of hides this way, until the animals thawed and the odor of them became too offensive.

They then started to prepare for the tanning operations. He soon learned that a harness maker's trade and a tanner's were entirely two different things. He found he did not have the knowledge

or skill to make good harness leather. It was said that when one hooked a team to a wagon with his harness, every time the team gave an extra pull, the traces stretched and the pole would drop out of the neck yoke. It seems he finally gave up in disgust, hauled the rest of the hides and half tanned leather into the bush and left them there. He then had an auction sale and left for Australia.



On the west-shore of Lone Pine Lake were the Fridulin brothers, Aspers, Johanson, Karl Jurkin, Magnus Tipman and the Oro family. At present Alex Oro is the only original surviving homesteader. He still lives in his original log house that he built in his homestead days. He has renovated it both, inside and out, so that it looks like, and is, a very modern house. He is 88 years old and is still farming, doing this work

in partnership with his son, Harold. His wife is still living and helps as well.

One mile south and across another lake, lived Gus Niklom family. Gus had been a Vesper in the church in the old country with Rev. John Silak. Mr. John Silak was the Estonian Pastor who lived in Medicine Hat and attended to the needs of the community here. Gus officiated at most of the baptisms and funerals.

Sometimes homesteading had its humorous sides as to how some decisions were made. Take the case of Tony Fridulin and his friend Konsa. They had walked out from Red Deer and were south of Settler trying to find a homestead they could file on. While eating their lunch and admiring the scenery and scanning their map, they came to a conclusion that the land they were looking at, which was about a quarter of a mile away had a nice pond on it and was homestead land. Which one was to have it? They agreed that they would have a foot race to the pond and the one, who reached it first, took off all his clothes and submerged himself in the water, would file on this quarter section of land. Konsa being the best runner of the two, had no trouble getting to the pond first, took his clothes off and was taking a swim in the pond, which was to be his homestead, before Tony arrived.

Third of a series:

It cannot be said that all Estonian pioneers that homesteaded south of Stettler, came directly here after reaching Canada. In those years the end of the railroad was Red Deer. This then was the starting place where the search for homesteads began, carrying the barest of essentials which usually consisted of a shotgun and shells, some oatmeal and salt, tea and a pot and pan. They shot prairie chicken, ducks and rabbits for food. Some walked to Hand Hills, and the Hanna country; while others went as far east as Coronation. A lot of these however came back and homesteaded in the area south of Stettler. Others walking out from Red Deer were satisfied with the land and homesteaded in this area, not going any further.

One of the longest treks made by any of these pioneers in the search for a homestead, to their liking, was made by Magnus Tipman and Mike Kudras. They started out from Medicine Hat

carrying as usual the barest necessities and lived off the country. They walked in a north-westerly direction not having found any homesteads to their liking until they finally arrived south of Stettler. Here they located their homesteads, and then walked to Red Deer where their families were.

The government gave a grant of ten acres of land from S.E. 28-37-19 W. 4 to the congregation of the Estonian Lutheran Church, recorded on the title as Trustees were Kristian Hennel, Joseph Tipman Sr. and William Klaus. The balance of this quarter section later was homesteaded by William Hennel.

Harvesting

The first binder in the area was purchased by Joseph Hennel. The first threshing outfit was purchased by Martin Oliver and Adolph Saar in partnership. It was a single cylinder, high wheeled tractor, with a wooden separator. Oscar Roon bought an International threshing outfit about the same time and type. It was all stack threshing those days as there were only a few threshing machines in the country. Consequently they were kept busy most of the fall and winter. The magnetos on these engines were of low voltage using an igniter with a make and breaker system, instead of the impulse system. This made these engines very hard to start in cold weather. The engineers started cranking them about six in the morning, and if it was below zero, they were lucky to get a pop out of it in an hour or two.



After they got started, they threshed until nine o'clock in the evening. After dark two coal oil lanterns were lit and hung one on each side of the feeder for the bundle pitchers to see by. They hardly ever threshed any later than nine at night if they did some smart-alec was sure to throw in bundles cross-wise to plug the machine. If that didn't work, then he would throw a bunch of bundles cross-ways and then let the fork he was using, slip through his hands as if it were accidentally done. This fork would follow the crossed bundles into the machine and usually did the trick of plugging the separator. It usually took the separator man an hour or two to clean it out. Threshing was a lot of hard work and long hours, but they got the job done.

After a couple of years the Oliver and Saar partnership was dissolved and Adolph Saar bought a steam powered threshing outfit. He threshed with this for a few years when he too went to Australia. By this time there were a number of threshing outfits in the country, mostly steam. Some of the other Estonians had got their own threshing machines with much improved gas engines.

Fourth in a Series

In the homestead days, one of the problems of using oxen as draft animals was generally this: During the heat of the day when the gadflies came out they would head for the closest water,

dragging whatever they were hitched to. Here they would stand or lie in the water until the day cooled off and the gadflies disappeared. I can recall quite a number of times when my dad was breaking prairie with oxen hooked to a walking plough, the oxen would suddenly start to twirl their tails and in no time at all would be standing in a slough having pulled the plough behind them. I was generally called to watch the oxen to see when they were ready to come out. This might seem a long time, but I didn't mind, as the strawberries grew in profusion and I spent my time picking and eating them. Later in the season there was also an abundance of raspberries and Saskatoon berries.

The first big change that took place was when the people started selling their oxen and buying horses. With the coming of the horse age, some of the Estonians tried to outdo each other by getting the fanciest buggy, pulled by horses. In that era there was a large number of half broke horses used that often got out of control and were consequently continually running away. When they spooked and started to run away, with whatever they were pulling behind them and scared them even more. This drove them into a real frenzy and they went into full gallop until they usually freed them from what they were hitched to, and eventually tangled themselves with their harness into the trees or bushes.

As a boy I was involved in countless runaways but one I never forgot. There were a large number of spectators. It started innocently enough, and happened at my sister Letha's christening party. Most of the Estonians of the community were present for the christening services and a little party that followed.

One of the neighbours drove up with a very high spirited team and a brand new buggy. He had purchased the outfit about a week before. He stepped out of the buggy while his bride of a few months held the lines. He tied the horses to the hitch rack and took off their bridles and hung them on the harness. He took the lines from his wife, wrapped them around the buggy whip and helped her out of the buggy.

In the evening the party broke up so the people could go home to milk their cows. The man helped his wife into the buggy, and then untied the horses, but for some reason forgot to put the bridles back on and left them still hanging on the harness. He picked up the lines and started out. Some of the spectators noticed the bridles still hanging on the harness and ran towards the team to try to stop them. But they were seconds too late! The horses after standing at the hitch rack in the hot sun for several hours must have felt they needed some exercise, for they started out on a gallop. The people barely had time to get out of the way. The couple in the buggy hung on for their lives! The man was pulling on the useless lines while his wife hung onto him. Every time the buggy hit a rock or bump, it would throw the couple into the air for what looked like a foot or so. The horses headed for a bit of open prairie of about a hundred acres, with bushes around the edges. At about the second round they ran over some bushes overturning the buggy with its occupants. They were lucky to escape with only a few bruises and scratches. The horses kept on running for a couple of turns around the meadow, until the buggy was broken into pieces. After they lost the buggy, they kept on running in a mad panic through the bushes until they had lost most of their harness. When they were found they were lathered and shaking. By coincidence, while I was cultivating the same field now in 1977, the cultivator shovel picked up one of the pieces of a buggy, the scroll work identified it as the buggy destroyed in 1911 by this runaway team. This brought this incident to mind and sharpened my memory of it.

Fifth in a Series on our Estonian Settlers

Water Supplies

One of the essentials of these early pioneer homes was a supply of good clean water. To get the water they dug wells by hand, usually about four feet by four feet square. This size gave the person digging the well, room to work in. Also if the water seeped in slowly this gave adequate space for the water storage. The water was usually found at 20 to 30 feet down. However some had to dig down to 40 or 50 feet, before they found water in sufficient quantity. The usual way was to construct a tripod over the site, then hang a pulley securely to the tripod. A rope would go over the pulley with a bucket at the end. The man doing the digging would fill the bucket at the bottom of the well. Then the person at the top (could be the homesteader's wife) would pull the bucket of dirt up, standing at the edge of the hole, using hand over hand method. Then dump the dirt in a pile and return the bucket for another load. This process was repeated till water started coming in. When it did there was a scramble for the digger to get out of the well. Also a rush to get the well curbed up before the water collapsed the sides of the well.

The curbing had been previously made like a four by four foot tunnel, out of inch lumber, with long two by fours at the corners. This was hastily lowered into the well till it stood about three and a half feet above the ground. Two, two by fours were nailed to the curbing on opposite sides. Another piece nailed on across the top of these. The pulley was then fastened on this and a rope passed over the pulley with a bucket on the end and this then completed the water system.

Huge poplar logs were hollowed out as water troughs for the cattle to drink from. Later on pumps and pipe made out of wood were installed by some of these early settlers. This made the chore a lot easier. Later the steel pumps and pipe and rods, as we know them now were used.

As the cattle herds increased, so did the use of water. This lowered the water tables and the era of the dug wells came to an end. Luckily about this time, some homesteaders coming in from the United States brought with them horsepower operated boring machines. This machine was moved from place to place using a team of horses. One big horse was used for power to operate this machine. The horse was hooked to the end of a ten foot sweep, the other end of which was fastened to the table of the machine. The horse walked around and around turning all the top structure of the machine through gears for pulling up the auger bucket. The auger bucket had to be pulled up and emptied every time it got full. These auger buckets came in two sizes, eighteen inch and twenty four inch. The boring auger bucket was fastened with a series of ten foot lengths of pipe depending on the depth of the well to the top. The top end in turn was fastened to the table with two heavy sliding jacks.

The capabilities of these machines depended mostly on the depth above sand rock, generally from sixty to one hundred feet in this area. Whenever a rock was encountered in the hole, the operator had to be let down on a cable into the two foot wide hole, break the rock loose and bring it up. In a lot of wells the operator had to go down a dozen times to bring up rock that was lodged in the hole.

When water was struck, generally flowing above the sand rock; the wall was curbed up by

spruce boards. The operator had to be careful in his selection of lumber, as one single board other than spruce would taint the water.

I got involved in boring these wells at an early age, by buying one of these machines. One of the previous homesteaders who had bought this machine from an American was known as "Windy Bill" by his neighbours (I don't recall his last name). His first well he made was an eighteen inch hole. Somewhere down twenty feet he encountered his first rock. He worked it loose with the bucket. However the rock was too big to go into the auger bucket so it could be brought up. He had his helper let him down to pick the rock up. Try as he might he found that in eighteen inches of space there wasn't enough room to pick up the rock. He then had his helper with the help of the owner of the homestead, tie a rope around his foot and let him down. He planned to grasp the rock in his arms and have himself and the rock pulled up. Everything would have worked as he planned, if he had not made one miscalculation. This nearly cost him his life. It was the fall of the year and the weather was chilly and he was wearing a short sheepskin coat. After he grasped the rock in his arms and started up the hole, the sheepskin coat doubled up on the edge and wedged tight in the hole. The house wife who was washing clothes at the time saved his life! She poured the soapy clothes water down the hole while the men sloshed him up and down, until they were able to pull him out. When he revived he was through with boring and well making. So there was a boring machine for sale cheap!

It passed through quite a number of owners and finally I acquired it. I bored quite a number of wells every year as off season work on the farm. The last well I made I distinctly recall even today! It was, Good Friday on the farm of Dick Tremmel, south of Botha. I had bored down about 70 or 80 feet when I hit a rock and water also. I let the Tremmel brothers let me down the hole, to see if I could pick up the rock. When I got down I found water coming in fast, so I signalled for them to pull me up. I had come up about ten feet when the water coming in from the bottom undermined the walls. These were made of marl, and they started caving above my head and fell into the hole with a great splash, filling the hole at my feet. With the noise of the splash the horse stopped. The Tremmel brothers thinking the machine itself was going to fall in, (they thought the whole well was collapsing) jumped off the machine. After the vibrations of the dirt falling and the splashing of the water, there was a complete silence. I hollered at them to pull me up. I distinctly heard one brother say to the other, "I thought he was dead."

This incident capped all the previous ones I had, so with it I also lost all interest in boring wells. There was a cheap boring machine for sale again!

This was also the final passing of an era for the boring machine. By this time there was quite a number of well punching machines with four and six inch holes. The two inch well going to depths of several hundred feet, it used water pressure to bring the drilling sediment to the surface and now the rotary with four and six inch holes. Submersible pumps in farm wells capable of bringing up ten or more gallons of water up under pressure for the household use and cattle, for the whole farmstead.

The horse powered boring machine also belongs to the bygone era by the passage of time.

Sixth in a Series on our Estonian Settlers

John Kerbes donated the first acre of land to the community. On this land Linda Hall was built. It was always been a tradition of special significance for the old Estonians to celebrate St. John's Day on the 24th of June, with a picnic and social gathering in the evening. This was always celebrated at Linda Hall in the early years. To this gathering came Estonians from other parts of Alberta and Canada. This was also the occasion for those who had left for other trades and professions to be at the picnic to visit with friends and relatives.

The social evening usually started out with everybody getting up and joining hands with one couple in the middle of the ring. Then they would start singing some popular folk songs. When they came to the chorus, the singers would immediately increase the tempo. Then those in the centre of the ring would each pick a new partner and dance a fast polka to the tune of the chorus. This process was repeated till everybody was in the centre of the floor, each one having had a share in the singing and dancing. By this time the violinists would start tuning up their instruments for the dances to follow.

The dances always started with and ended with a waltz. Then there was the fox trot, the one step, two step, and four step; also the beautiful French Minuet. There were square dances, about half a dozen of them, in the course of an evening.

The violin players as I remember them in those days were, John Kerbes, Martin Neithal, Mike Tipman, John Raho and Dick Hennel. Most of the musicians started playing their instruments when they were very young. I can remember Archie Kerbes; while his father played the violin for the dances he would accompany him on the piano when he was five or six years old.

I started calling square dances at an early age. I had a loud clear voice and got a kick out of contributing to the enjoyment of the occasions. I was generally invited to call for square dances for miles around. Some of them were quite large gatherings.

I remember calling a square dance in the Trocadero Hall in Edmonton with about fifty squares participating on the floor. The square dance I like to remember best was for our group on the main street in Peking, China. There were over seven hundred thousand people dancing in that street that night. All of those in seeing or hearing distance stopped and watched the Canadian delegates of farm people go through one of our old fashioned square dances.

In the course of my readings and taking an interest in the other parts of the world, has created in me a yearning to see some of these far away places. This included the so called Seven Wonders of the World. In 1963 as a director of the Canadian Co-operative Implements Ltd., I had the opportunity to participate in a delegation to China with a group of thirty two other people. Most of them were directors of farm cooperatives. There was also a prominent doctor, school teachers, a nurse, a civil servant and journalists and newspapermen. We were given the real red carpet treatment. On our arrival at the Peking station (railroads), each one of us was presented with a huge bouquet of flowers by the Chinese ladies. Then the band started playing for us all the way through this huge new station. When we got to the busses outside, the Chinese had lined themselves on both sides of the street, clapping their hands as we passed on our way to the hotel.

We travelled about three thousand miles by plane, train, bus and taxi while we were in China for those 21 days. Observing the people and noting their resourcefulness, their methods of farming and soil conservation on land that had been farmed for thousands of years. Their ways of doing things reminded me so much of our homestead days. Not only was I to see new ways and new beginnings on this trip but also to walk on the Great Wall of China. It is a couple of thousand miles long and three thousand years old. It is today still in a reasonably good state of repair. While I was walking and standing on top of it, I was contemplating the engineering feat and superb workmanship of that time, in comparison with quite a few of our older brick buildings that are less than a century old. To me it was a momentous occasion, to stand on this Great Wall that has passed its usefulness and is left as only an historic site by the passage of time.

Last of a series on the history of the Estonians:

Off the farm work was sought in slack times

It was only natural that the sons of these early pioneers would follow in the footsteps of the older generation, by seeking "off the farm" work in the slack periods on the farms. The railroading was practically finished at this period in time, and only the logging industry was left in which to get this kind of employment. The methods of logging until then had hardly any chance of modernizing from the earliest times. In the early 1920s I got my initiation into logging in a railroad tie camp. It didn't take me long to realize a man had to be skilled and an expert to handle the tools in this trade.

A proper sized tree had to be picked out, then notched or undercut with an axe to make it fall in the direction you intended it to go. Then with a one man crosscut saw, it was sawed just a little above the notch or undercut on the opposite side. After the tree had fallen down the branches were cut off and the tree was notched or scored on each side. The tie hacker then took his broadaxe with its 12 or 14 inch blade and stood on the log placing one foot behind the other. Every time he made a chop or stroke with his broad axe it would cut a slice about a foot long, leaving a smooth glazed surface or face. When both sides of the tree were hewed, the tree then would be cut into either foot lengths. These ties were then pulled together with a picaroon and put into a pile.

The tie haulers could then come with four up teams and haul them to the railroad siding. The tie loaders, usually three in a gang would then load them into the box cars. A four inch thick plank, sixteen inches wide; would be placed from ground level to the box car door level. The tie loader would leave these green, No. 1 ties averaging between two and three hundred pounds each on his shoulder and walk to the plank and deposit them in the box cars. The No. 1 ties as I remember it had to have at least nine inches of smooth face on the small end and be seven and a half inches thick. Packing them into the box car at three cents each, a loader earned every penny of his wages. The tie loader generally averaged about fifteen dollars a day, which was a big wage compared to driving a four horse team for fifty or sixty dollars plus board, a month.

It seemed it was just natural for me to graduate from hacking ties to driving a four up and hauling ties to the siding. Then when I got hardened up I started loading them into the box cars. My brother Mike and another Estonian from the east, worked as a tie loading gang for the better

part of three years. By this time I figured I had saved enough to start farming on my own.

The farm I got was the land that was originally what my Dad and my brother Gus had homesteaded. I went in for a totally continuous cropping program about twenty years ago. I have slowly evolved into a program that has proven reasonably successful. I've had the minimum of erosion by either wind or water. In that time I have found that the land has been very generous to me. I simply follow the old adage that if you treat the land right, the land will always treat you right.

When the rural electrification came into the area, I gave a helping hand as a guest speaker, in order to start some of the R.E.A.'s first meetings. I had been taking electrical wiring lessons in my earlier years, so I had no problem in passing my exams for certification as an electrical wireman. In my off season work from the farm, I was able to help quite a number of farmers in the community to get their farms and homes wired for electricity. The reason I lost interest in farm yard wiring came by an accident to me. While working on a farmer's yard pole, five miles east of Fenn, I failed to notice that the pole was rotten at the bottom before I climbed to the top end of it. It tumbled over and crashed to the ground while I was on the top! I had no choice but cling to it and ride it down to the bottom. After this incident I have no notion of repeating this performance!

When I think of general practise of individuals of this generation specializing in just one profession, occupation or trade, I wonder. It now appears that the general practise of people of the previous era who branched out to acquire many different kinds of knowledge and skills is out-moded by the passage of time.

Written by Jos. J. Tipman, May 18, 1977.

STETTLESTON ESTONIAN PIONEERS FLOUR MILL

Homesteaders in the Linda Hall district needed to travel to Red Deer for food and farm supplies. They went by horse or oxen and wagon, and the return trip was four or five days. When Magnus Tipman and Hans Johansen arrived in the early 1900s, they set about designing and building a flour mill on the Johansen homestead.



The mill was made primarily of wood. A fan, made with four blades and covered with canvas, powered it. The blades were attached to an axle; the "Big Gear" was mounted to this. This gear drove the pinion gear, which drove the upper grinding stone. The teeth of the big gear were made of hardwood and sawn to size. The back part of the tooth was rounded to fit a hole in the gear wheel; the gear tooth was driven into the hole and pegged.

A small building housed the mill, and the whole structure could be moved so that the mill could face the wind.

The mill produced wheat and rye flour as well as pearled barley, which was used for porridge and an Estonian delicacy, barley sausage.

Following the deaths of Hans Johansen and Magnus Tipman, Magnus's son John took over the operation of the mill. Sometime in 1920s, John dismantled the mill and relocated it on land he had purchased. Here, the mill was powered by a one cylinder engine. It operated on occasion until 1945, when it was dismantled once more and moved to the Stettler Museum.

LABOUR

The farming communities south of Stettler and north of Big Valley were soon to be known as the Linda Hall district. Estonian settlements were spread out across Alberta's sweeping prairies. The farms were roughly 10 miles south of Stettler, bordered by the shores of Lone Pine Lake and extending south-southwest in the vicinity of the Red Deer River. The area was largely settled between 1903 and 1909.



The Estonians arrived with only the clothes on their backs, household goods, and garden seeds-enough to start subsistence farming for the first couple of years. More importantly, they brought their customs, language, and traditions. As soon as possible, an Estonian family would purchase a draft animal from a nearby neighbour. This was a welcome addition to any pioneer farming community. Oxen allowed quicker access to the commerce available in Red Deer. For instance, a single trip using a cart and oxen could return a winter's supply of food and materials whereas if one travelled by foot, several trips were needed to achieve the same end.



The Estonians were keen on fostering a sense of community and helped their neighbours whenever possible. Community projects to build log houses were undertaken, and the sharing of draft animals was common. Each Estonian settler applied his or her skills to improving the community as a whole. For example, a man named Reinglas was a harness-maker and served the needs of his

community until he departed for Australia. Another settler named Roon built a small flour mill from two suitable grinding stones found on his property.

During the early part of the 20th century, many pioneer families had to overcome the challenge of obtaining potable water. Typically, wells were dug to access clean water. A shovel was the tool of choice in creating a large hole four feet wide and four feet long. Usually, if the labourer was fortunate, he/she discovered water at a depth of only 20 to 30 feet deep. A rope, bucket, and pulley system was implemented to remove loose soil as the digging process ensued. Creating wells was a necessary but dangerous task with labourers often running the risk of having the well cave in while they were digging beneath the surface.

LINDA AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY (LINDA PÖLLUMEESTE SELTS)

Estonian pioneers settled in the Stettler-Big Valley area in 1903-1904. In 1910 the settlers discussed the need for a community centre to serve their social and economic needs, including the establishment of a Linda Agricultural Society (Linda Põllumeeste Selts). Meetings of the Society included discussions of events and celebrations such as Jaanipäev (midsummer solstice), Christmas, music/theatre, weddings and other gatherings.



Minutes of Linda Agricultural Society meetings, covering the period from 1913 to 1932, were prepared in Estonian until the 1950s. In the early 1920s, the name of the Society was changed to the Local Linda 485 of the United Farmer's of Alberta (UFA). The Minutes of the initial meetings for each of the 1913-1926 and 1927-1932 periods are included; complete sets of Minutes are preserved as part of the Estonian Collection at the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton.

LINDA HALL

At one point, the Linda Hall district, which consisted of 45 families living immediately south of Stettler and 15 more west of Big Valley, was recognized as the largest Estonian settlement in Canada. With so many Estonians residing here, the Reverend John Sillak made frequent trips to the community to preside over baptisms, weddings, and funerals.



Between 1909 and 1911, work began on the construction of a community hall. Members of the Estonian community aptly named the structure Linda Hall in honour of the famed Estonian mythological character. Linda Hall was officially opened 24 June 1911. The festivities were marked by a festive supper and lively dance (more on Linda Hall in the Cultural Life section). The Estonians who helped build the hall believed that its location represented the very center of all of the Estonian settlements located south of Stettler and north of Big Valley. An Estonian Men's Club, largely organized by Magnus Tipman, was soon established. Initially, there were 28 members eager to participate in social events and deliberate on current events.

Like other rural communities across Alberta during the post-industrial era, younger generations within the farming community often migrated to large centres in search of a higher education or technical or professional employment-all in an effort to attain a better paying job. Alberta's Estonian



communities saw much of the younger generation move to Calgary and Edmonton or to other places beyond Alberta's borders. An exception to this trend is the Hennel family whose farm in the Linda Hall district was recently recognized as a Century Farm, a farming operation that has stayed in the same family for a monumental 100 years. The Hennels continue to represent the tradition of cooperation and teamwork many Estonian families displayed when they first settled south of Stettler over 100 years ago.

HISTORY OF LINDA HALL

Irene and Deane Kerbes

Linda Hall was built by Estonian pioneers. They arrived in the area about 1901-1906 to be agricultural farmers and realized they needed knowledge in crop production, harvesting and marketing, as well as government and politics. So they decided to pool their knowledge and form a club. At a general meeting in 1910 under heavy brush at Neithal's home, the Estonian pioneers formed "Linda Eesti Põllumeeste Selts", ("Linda Estonian Agricultural Society"). John Neithal was elected President, John Kerbes as secretary, John Oro as treasurer. Thirty-five men became members. It was decided to hold monthly meetings on the second Sunday of each month. The farm homes soon were too small for meetings so a decision was made to build a community hall.

Why was the hall named "Linda"? The name derives from the Estonian epic "Kalevipoeg". Kalev is a mythical super hero and Linda is his wife. She travels everywhere with him and is beloved for her beauty, intellect and culture. There was much discussion by the men's club about the choice of name for the hall. Since "Linda" embodied cultural values, her name was chosen for the hall as well as the "Linda Põllumeeste Selts". Kalev's prowess was not forgotten. The Estonian settlement northwest of Big Valley was named "Kalev".

The land for Linda Hall, located eleven miles south and one and half miles east of Settler, was donated by John Kerbes in 1911. To raise money, box lunches were sold at the picnics with a total of \$300 raised this way. In those times, this was a considerable sum and enabled basic building materials to be purchased. Members also donated equal amounts, to be repaid from rental revenues or to remain as a gift.

The first hall was a small rectangular building, positioned lengthwise, west to east. The west entrance door opened directly to the hall proper and the stage. The hall was later lengthened by several feet and the entrance changed to the east. The first building, built entirely by volunteer labour, was a simple roomy structure. It had a grand opening on Jaanipäev, June 1911. In just one year, an idea had been transformed into a community hall.

The furniture consisted of homemade orange colored benches and wooden tables with folding legs. The benches and tables were stored under the stage or in a storage space under the building. There was a wooden book-case filled with books, some from Plum Tree Publishing Co. in Estonia, about farm economics, history, travel, geography, medicine, veterinary science and fiction. Over time this library grew to contain approximately 2000 books which were lent out once a month during meetings. The hall had an upright piano. Lighting was from coal-oil lamps resting on wall brackets high above peoples' heads. A disastrous fire in 1930 destroyed the hall and all of its contents. The books were missed most of all as they had been ordered directly from Estonia after WW I.

Finances for rebuilding the hall came from fire insurance and donations by Society members, each according to financial ability. The new building was rebuilt by volunteer labor and came into use in the early 1930's. The Society sought to have a building with fine acoustics. Despite

their efforts, they had to settle for the ceiling as it now is. The basement kitchen also had drawbacks, being too cold and the stove pipes being unable to draw. Eventually a kitchen was built on the outside central part of the south wall.

The Society looked after all activities at the hall for many years. Meetings of the "Linda Põllumeeste Selts" were conducted in Estonian until the early 1950s after which a switch was made to English. The hall had outdoor equipment for physical development with a swing, trapeze, parallel bars, sand and poles for high and long jumping. Distance runners used the adjacent road. The brass band, formed by Tony Fridulin, entertained mostly outdoors while the mixed choir entertained indoors.

The Linda Men's Club planned five or six events each year: a fall masquerade, Christmas, Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day and St. John's Day (Jaanipäev). Family nights were held once a month. These usually began with a "Circle Song" where everyone joined hands in a circle, with a pair in the center, and everyone sang a familiar folksong. During the chorus, the tempo increased and the dancers in the middle picked a new partner and danced a fast polka until everyone in the hall was up, singing and dancing. This was followed by games of skill, a program of educational presentations (by either sex), musical entertainment and a dance. Lunch would be served. The dances always began and ended with a waltz.

Everyone enjoyed square dances called by Joe Tipman, Ed Kerbes and many others. The violin players in the early years included John Kerbes, Martin Neithal, Mike Tipman, John Raho and Dick Hennel. The musicians started playing their instruments while they were still very young. John Kerbes on violin, was accompanied by his six year old son Archie playing the piano. In future years, Archie played the piano and his brother Alec played the violin at many district dances, parties and social gatherings. John Kerbes' younger sons, Ernie and Jim, also played the violin. John's daughter, Helen (Kerbes) Mulligan was the pianist with the original 4K's Orchestra, a group which for decades was the band of choice at Linda Hall.

During summer picnics, there were indoor and outdoor sports, speeches and plays. The society as a group made trips to enjoy nearby rivers and lakes.

The ladies of the Linda Hall district formed a club in 1925, soon after the men-folk had formed "Linda Põllumeeste Selts". The ladies club was called "Linda Naiste Rahvaste Ühisus - translated "Linda Women's Society". Meetings were held in Estonian. Some of the original members from the Linda and Kalev area were: Mrs. Minnie {John} Kerbes, Mrs. Lizzie {John} Saar, Mrs. Minnie (Tony) Fridulin, Mrs. Hilda (Martin) Oro, Mrs. Alide Wartnow, Mrs. Annette (Jaan) Kerbes, Mrs. Annie (Felix) Cusick, Mrs. Pauline (Kristian) Mägi, Mrs. Ida (William) Hennel, Mrs. Marie (Martin) Oliver, Mrs. Leena Klaus, Mrs. Pauline (August) Nicklom, Mrs. Julia (Peter) Kerbes, and many others. For a time the club was associated with the U.F.W.A. Among the members in the 1920's was Mrs. Maria Oliver, Mrs. Elizabeth Saar, Mrs. Anna J. Tipman, Mrs. J. Klaus, Mrs. B. Mägi, Annie Raho and others. This club was dissolved during the 1940s. For a time, some ladies in the district made lunches and catered dances individually. In 1952, some district ladies got together, these being Anna Tipman, Salme Hennel, Dulcie Hennel, Dortha Laing and Doris Hennel. They were a quorum of five, and formed the present Linda Hall Ladies Club which conducted business in English. Anna Tipman acted as President, and Dulcie Hennel as secretary. Although minutes were kept of the meetings, unfortunately they

have been lost. Doris Hennel remains a honorary member of the ladies' group.

Over the years, the men's and ladies' clubs cooperated in many joint financial ventures. Along with support from government grants, they were able to make improvements and upgrades to Linda Hall. Forced air heating and running water were installed, and the kitchen was updated with a cooler, new flooring and paint. The ladies' club purchased chairs, tables, kitchen equipment, electric stoves etc. A micro-wave was donated to the hall following a school reunion held to remember 'the good old times' enjoyed at Linda Hall.

At club Christmas concerts, children and adults took part in plays, singing and recitations, and of course, there was a visit from Santa. The annual summer picnic is still held around Jaanipäev. The entertainment at the picnic includes horseshoes, log sawing, nail pounding, rolling pin throw, children's games, and a pot luck supper. The ladies buy gifts for member's children who graduate from grades 9 and 12. The Club caters for weddings, funerals, parties and meetings. Each year on the first Sunday of November, they host a fall supper complete with Estonian rye bread. The Ladies Club, Linda Men's Club and the Recreation Board all work together on the fall supper and share the proceeds.

Before a kitchen was built at the hall, the ladies brought cream cans of water for coffee which was boiled on a wood stove in the basement. They made the lunch on a table upstairs. Gas lanterns hung from the high ceiling. A big pot-bellied stove at the back of the hall and a small stove in the ladies room provided heat. In 1953, the Men's Club decided to give the catering to a group of ladies instead of one or two persons, with 20% of the profit to be given to the hall. In 1954 electricity was installed. In 1957 a kitchen was built on the south side of the hall, all with volunteer help. In 1965 a new dance floor was installed in the hall and in 1966 a stoker was installed. In 1974 a well was drilled. In 1977 and 1978, the Hennel brothers, Henry and Harvey, held a threshing bee at their farm to raise money for the hall. The Ladies Club sold lunches at these functions. As a result in 1979, indoor washroom facilities were installed. In the same year, ball diamonds with back stops were completed with ample room for parking and camping. An extension of the kitchen and large walk-in cooler were welcome additions in 1984. Also in 1984, Glen Collins made signage for the hall.

In 1988 an improved heating system was put in place. A playground for children was made on the south side of the hall which included swings, a slide and merry-go-round. Horse-shoe pits were built for grown-ups. An extension was built on the north side of the hall and a built-in vacuum cleaner was installed in 1986. A burning pit was also developed. The renovation included construction of a liquor bar and a carpeted social dining area on the north side of the hall which easily accommodates 150 people. A covered Bar-B-Q annex was added to the north side and the roof changed to cover the whole area.

The original 1911 wooden hall was probably unpainted. The second hall was painted white and aqua. When the roof was changed, new white siding was added. It is quite a different looking hall now it was in the early years. When the Estonian-Canadian Centennial was celebrated at Linda Hall on Jaanipäev, June 1999, two flag poles and a plaque were placed beside the main door. The plaque commemorates pioneers 'who made this land our home'. In 2005, a small patio was poured near the plaque and a garden seat was placed nearby. This area is accented by chain railing leading to the main steps of Linda Hall.

From the early 1900's to the present, Linda Hall has been the scene of many community events such as agricultural meetings, concerts, Estonian gatherings, dances, weddings, funerals, reunions and many assorted functions. Province-wide Estonian Jaanipäev celebrations have been held here over the years, including the first Jaanipäev of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society in 2005. In 2000, Lennart Meri, President of Estonia, visited Stettler to view its pioneer past and meet Estonian pioneer descendants at a reception at Linda Hall. The past and present members of the Linda Hall Clubs have generously volunteered their time and skills to keep the hall an active and inviting place. Hopefully future members of the clubs will continue traditions set so long ago.

The above information was taken from articles by Anna Tipman, Joe Tipman, Doris Hennel, and from "Eestlased Kanadas" (1975). The information was compiled by Irene and Deane Kerbes, February, 2006.

THE LINDA HALL PIONEERS

In 1901, after hearing of the "free" land in Canada, settlers began to arrive in Alberta from Estonia by way of Russia, where they had tried to make a living. John Neithal, Mike Raho, and John Oro were the first to arrive, and lived first with Tony Kask near Red Deer (Sylvan Lake) before finding homesteads. Within a year, Magnus Tipman and other families arrived, but there were no homesteads left in the area, so Magnus and Mike Kudras went to Medicine Hat by train to in search of land to farm.

Mike and Magnus were not satisfied with the land near Medicine Hat, so they bought pack sacks, supplies, and shot guns and started the long walk back toward Red Deer in search of suitable land. It took them three weeks. They eventually settled in an area southeast of Red Deer in what became known as the Linda district.

Other homesteaders soon joined them, including Alex Saar, Alex Oro, Martin Oliver, Joseph Tipman, John Kerbes, Tony Fridulin, Joseph Hennel, William Hennel, Chris Hennel, Miko Raho, William Klaus, Jacob Cusick, Hans Asberg, Hans Johansen, John Neithal, John Oro, and Mr. Kroon. Sixty Estonian families had arrived by 1909. They made countless trips on foot or by ox team to Red Deer to buy food and farm supplies; the round trip took four or five days. To save trips to Red Deer for flour, Hans Johansen and Magnus Tipman built a flour mill using field stones that they had chiselled into a grindstone, powered by a type of Dutch windmill. Mr. Kroon later built a similar mill.

Mr. Tipman, Mr. Neithal, and John Oro formed the Linda Estonian Agricultural Society, which boasted 28 members in its first year. Summer meetings were held out of doors and winter meetings in members' homes. Because homes were small, Linda Hall was built, on land donated by Johannes Kerbes. Discussions at meetings ranged from agricultural to political issues. The club also built a library, which once held 1000 books in both Estonian and English. Hans Asberg led a choir, and Tony Fridulin put together a brass band.

The Docendo School was built for the pioneer children, who went on to various professions, though many stayed on to farm. In time, an Estonian cemetery was founded east of Linda Hall, and the Estonian community helped establish the first co-operative store in Stettler.

SYLVAN LAKE

The town of Sylvan Lake is located about 20 kilometres west of Red Deer and is situated on the southeast edge of Sylvan Lake, a 15 kilometre long freshwater lake. Currently, Sylvan Lake is a popular resort town featuring numerous restaurants and bars. During the summer, the lake is teeming with swimmers, boats and sunbathers; however, Sylvan Lake also possesses historical significance, particularly in reference to Estonian migration. Initially settled as early as 1884 by Dr. Leonard Gaetz the area would soon become the home to numerous ethnocultural groups.



In 1899, Hendrik and his brother Kristjan Kingsep were some of the first people to establish permanent settlements in the Sylvan Lake area. Attracted by the abundance of fish in Sylvan Lake, the Kingseps were not alone as French-Canadian and Finnish families had also recently settled here. Kristjan's wife Tiina and their five young children arrived one year later. Other Estonian families -Jaan, Alex and Anton Kask, Peter and Mihkel Piht, John Herman, Mihkel and Elizabet (Kask) Wartnow, Juhan Oru, Juhan Neithal and Mihkel

Rahu - arrived in 1900 and 1901. Known as the Livonia Estonian settlement, families from Saaremaa in Estonian and Nurmekunde in Tver province in Russia, purchased more homesteads and, by 1903, there were 61 individuals residing in Sylvan Lake. Available land soon became scarce as an influx of Swedes, Finns and Estonians flocked to the open west. Families arriving after 1903 opted to relocate at Stettler, to the east, and Medicine Valley, to the north.

The pioneering families of Sylvan Lake formed an agricultural collective to ease the burden of farming. Without proper equipment and often facing unfavourable weather conditions, profitable farming was a challenging enterprise in the pioneer era. The agricultural collective was established by the Kingsep brothers and Juhan Neithal, originally from Nurmekunde. Other early community initiatives saw the construction of a school on land granted by Juhan Kask.



When Kristjan left Sylvan Lake in 1903, his wife, Tiina, remained on the farm and opened it up as a "midway" house to new settlers. When the railroad eventually arrived at Sylvan Lake in 1911, Tiina sold goods and supplies to construction workers camping in the vicinity. Eventually, some members of the Kask family, among others, would relocate to other areas of western Canada and USA in pursuit of better employment and a higher education.

Sylvan Lake Settlement, 1899-1904

Name	No. of Family Members	Origin	Arrival Date
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Kingsep, Hendrik	4	Võrumaa	1899
Kingsep, Kristjan	7	Võrumaa	1899
Kask, Jaan	1	Saaremaa	1900
Piht, Peter	?	Saaremaa	1900
Piht, Mihkel	?	Saaremaa	1900
Herman, Peeter	?	Saaremaa	1901
Kask, Anton	?	Saaremaa	1901
Kask, Alex	?	Saaremaa	1901
Oru, Juhan	2	Nurmekunde	1901
Rahu, Mihkel	?	Nurmekunde	1901
Neithal, Juhan	?	Nurmekunde	1901
Kask, Johan	?	Saaremaa	1901
Herman, John	?	Saaremaa	1902
Wall, Madis	2	Saaremaa	1902
Wall, Gustav	?	Saaremaa	?
Posti, August	4	Tartumaa	1902
Kinna, Hendrik	1	Võrumaa	1902
Vaartnõu, Mihkel	?	Nurmekunde	1901
Tipman, Magnus	6	Nurmekunde	1902
Tipman, Juhan	?	Nurmekunde	1902
Tipman, Joosep	?	Nurmekunde	1904

Editor's Note: This list was compiled by Voldemar Matiisen.

Additional information can be found in History - Alberta Estonian Settlements - Sylvan Lake and Medicine Valley

URBAN COMMUNITIES

Alberta in the 20th century, particularly in the decades following World War II, witnessed the rapid urbanization of its population. The most striking immediate change accompanying urbanization is the transition in the prevailing character of Alberta's local communities. As agriculture, local services, and small-scale industry give way to the emergence of modern industry and post-industrial services, cities soon develop-economically and

demographically-leaving Alberta's small towns to cling to their history and agricultural roots. In 1901, only a few years prior to Alberta's official birth as a province, 75 percent of the population lived in a rural setting. A century later, that number has substantially dropped to 19 percent and it continues to plummet.



Younger generations within the farming community, including Estonians living throughout the province, have not been immune to the lure of the urban environment. Keeping in



mind that the majority of post-World War II Estonian immigrants settled in Canada's larger centres, cities such as Toronto, Calgary, and Edmonton, this section will examine Estonian culture in Calgary and Edmonton. There will be a keen focus on the efforts made by members of the urban community in preserving and promoting Estonian customs and traditions, largely through the establishment of organizations.

Preservation and promotion of Estonian customs and culture in Calgary and Edmonton are examined in detail under Cultural Life - Organizations.

CULTURAL LIFE

This section explores the various aspects of cultural enrichment held in high regard by Alberta's Estonian community. This section examines Estonians' dynamic cultural experiences through customs and traditions, leisure and recreation, religion, education, and formal organizations that preserve and promote Estonian heritage.



ARTS AND CRAFTS

In the late 19th and early 20th century, artists of Estonian descent developed and perfected their trade by studying abroad, grasping all of Europe's eclectic artistic styles. In 1914, the Tallinn Arts and Crafts School was established, and it actively promoted modern art and artwork infused with nationalist sentiment. Colourful, romantic, and symbolic paintings were very popular during this time. Johan Koler and Amandus Adamson are credited with creating the Estonian national art movement. Some of the most popular artwork depicts the Estonian mythological character Kalevipoeg demonstrating various feats of strength. One such example, *Kalevipoeg lauakoormaga* (*Kalevipoeg with Load of Boards*), depicts the hero crossing Lake Peipsi, carrying a load of boards on his back in order to build a city.



Members of Alberta's Estonian communities have drawn upon their Estonian roots and heritage, incorporating various themes into their own artwork. Estonian descendant Lea Ruus has knitted numerous garments based on Estonian knitting designs. The Koddo family has demonstrated its passion for art through portraits of various family members and picturesque scenes of Alberta's landscapes. Of particular interest, Galina Koddo has recollected memories of Estonia through paintings and wood burning techniques of windmills in Saaremaa, sunsets in Tallinn, and colourful displays of Tallinn's Old Town.

The annual harvest festival celebrates the successful completion of yet another farming season, but the harvest celebration was not complete without consuming litres and litres of homebrewed beer, served and consumed in wooden beer tankards displaying wonderful art and skillful hand-craftsmanship. Incorporating traditional symbols or figures into their carefully crafted artwork, highly skilled artisans began designing beer tankards as early as the 17th century. The tankard is structurally solid, built from diamond-shaped pieces of wood; the exterior of the tankard relays pleasing images, often of a natural landscape or mythological symbols. In short, the tankard incorporates functional woodcraft and an imaginative use of art into a single object. Hand-carved tankards are frequently referred to as the king of Estonian woodcrafts.



CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

Estonians living in Alberta fostered their Estonian heritage by continuing to practice and promote Estonian customs and traditions. By incorporating traditional Estonian holidays, celebrations, cuisine, and clothing into their daily lives, Alberta's close-knit Estonian community ensured the preservation of its heritage. Moreover, the use of Estonian customs and traditions provided an excellent opportunity to socialize with other Estonian families living nearby. As this section explains, Alberta's Estonians continue to host traditional Estonian events as a means of reconnecting with their heritage.



ESTONIAN CUISINE

Alberta's Estonian Pioneers



Upon their arrival in Alberta, Estonian pioneers had two priorities - building shelter and acquiring food. For all pioneers who arrived in Alberta during the first decade of the 20 th century, there were no large grocery stores, no imported foods, and no pre-packaged foods. Very small shops and markets selling limited types of food were located far from the Estonian farms, often requiring a day or two by horse cart to get there. This meant that the pioneers had to grow and produce nearly all of their own food on their own farms. There were no refrigerators or freezers; people had to find other ways to preserve food so that they would have something to eat through the long cold winters. Pioneer farming was reflective of what the climate and soil conditions in an area allow. Both Estonia and Alberta have short, relatively cool growing seasons, so the early Estonians arrivals knew how to get their farms started here.

For Estonian pioneers, work on the cultivation of grain fields began immediately so that *rukkileib*, black rye bread, could be produced. This was the basis for many meals among Alberta's Estonian pioneer families. Pioneers soon invented an assortment of gadgets to accommodate the production and storage of food. This was essential for maintaining a large supply of food over Alberta's long winters. One such example was the hand-cranked cabbage shredder that enabled the production of sauerkraut at an accelerated rate. One such cabbage shredder now belongs to the Glenbow Museum.

Root vegetables such as carrots and parsnips were frequently stored in a barrel filled with sand. The barrel was then stored in a cool, dark cellar. Doing so would prevent animals from infiltrating the family's vegetable supply.



Poultry (chicken, turkey, goose, and duck) was a popular dish among Alberta's Estonian settlers. It was not uncommon to see every part of the chicken used in a variety of different recipes, with the exception of the head. Farms were often equipped with their own smokehouses for the curing and smoking of meat including sausages, pork and chicken.

In the Medicine Valley, pioneers had access to an abundance of nearby fish which was a welcomed substitute for meat.

Traditional Estonian Foods

The country's northern climate defines much of Estonians' culinary practice of utilizing vast quantities of pork, potatoes, and root vegetables grown in the countryside. With its short and cool growing season, Estonians relied on a multitude of grains (primarily barley, oats and rye) as the basis for much of their diet. Estonian cuisine draws much of its influence from German and Russian recipes.

Grains

Rukkileib (black bread) can be found at every Estonian kitchen table regardless of geography or class. Leib is so important to the Estonian diet that many claim that "meat is only something that accompanies leib". The dark loaf, made from rye, has a distinctive sour taste adored by all. In a typical Estonian grocery store, there are 30 different varieties of leib from which to choose.

Vegetables

Kartulid (potatoes) are another staple ingredient in many Estonian dishes. Introduced in the 1700s, kartulid are a versatile ingredient that can be prepared in a variety of ways. Potato based salads are especially popular in Estonia, including "*rosolje*" which is rendered pink by the addition of beets. The most common vegetable in Estonia is cabbage, often converted into sauerkraut. Pickles, lingonberry jam, pickled pumpkin, and mushrooms are commonly consumed at mealtime with hazelnuts or filberts being a very popular snack.

Soup

Hernesupp (pea soup) is a popular soup prepared during the cold winter months. The dish contains dried peas, water, smoked pork shank or trotter, onion and sometimes barley. Cabbage soup is another favourite, especially the day after a lively party.

Meat



Traditionally, pork is the meat of choice; it is frequently served with potatoes and vegetables such as cabbage and turnips. One particularly popular ham dish was prepared by maturing the pork in a sauna (steam bath house).

"*Sült*" is Estonian style jellied meat. Often prepared for large gatherings, mostly it is made using pork, but can be made with veal, chicken or fish plus an assortment of spices for flavouring. It is cooked either making use of the natural meat gels produced during the boiling process or by adding the head or extra shank to the pot in order to enhance the amount of natural gel released. This form of meat is called "head cheese" in English, although in the 21 st Century, most Estonians throughout the world make "*sült*" without using any animal head. *Sült* is traditionally served at Christmas whereby it was custom to butcher pigs prior to the festive holiday. *Sült* is served regularly at Tallinn's famed restaurant, the Golden Piglet .

Another festive meal served on special occasions is black sausage, also known as blood sausage or Christmas sausage. Consisting of barley, pork cubes, fresh pig's blood, this national dish is enjoyed throughout Estonia with oven-roasted potatoes, stewed sauerkraut, and lingonberry jam or pickled pumpkin salad.

Some food historians consider Estonian style "*pirukad*" to be a possible forerunner of the hamburger. *Pirukad* begins with a delicate and savoury dough, rolled thin and cut into circles. The small circles are filled with either ground meat, egg, carrot, or cabbage, then either baked or deep fried. *Pirukad* can be eaten as finger food or as a meal traditionally accompanied by clear chicken or beef broth. Also popular are large rectangular *pirukad* which are cut into thick slices and eaten with a knife and fork.

Fish

As two-thirds of the Estonian border is adjacent to water, the consumption of fish is only natural. Fish is often smoked, salted, sundried or marinated. The most common varieties include smelts, brisling or sprats, perch, pike, trout, whitefish flounder and Baltic herring. Estonians are especially adept at various ways of smoking fish. Crayfish, a type of freshwater creature similar to lobster, is considered a real treat.

Dairy

Today, Estonians are moving away from consuming buttermilk and switching to the consumption of *kohupiim*, or cottage cheese, as a means of maintaining a calcium-rich diet. One can find close to 30 different varieties of cottage cheese in an average grocery store. An assortment of yogurts and cheeses are also quite common in Estonian homes.

Berries and Desserts

Estonians consume a variety of berries including blueberries, strawberries, red currants, black currants, gooseberries, cherries, cranberries and lingonberries plus great quantities of apples and plums. With land particularly suitable for a large variety of berry bushes, berries and berry-based desserts have been popular among Estonians for centuries. They would be eaten fresh with sugar and fresh cream; cooked as a preserve or they would be spread on special doughs to make a kind of open-face berry pie. *Vastlakuklid* (sweet buns) are a cream-filled pastry resonating with a distinct vanilla and almond flavour. Typically, this sweet dessert is served with whipped cream.

On special occasions, Estonian pioneer families prepared kringel, a traditional dessert featuring sweet dough, almonds and raisins. Today, many of the aforementioned ingredients are still used by Estonian descendants particularly during festive occasions.

ESTONIAN-STYLE APPLE PIE



Image Copyright Estonian Private Collection

Description :

Apple slices are arranged on a bottom crust on a cookie sheet with low sides and baked to delicate perfection.

Comments :

INGREDIENTS:

2 1/2 cups (300 g) all-purpose flour
1 1/4 cups sugar
1 tsp baking powder
1/4 tsp finely ground cardamom (optional)
1/4 tsp cinnamon (optional)
1 egg slightly beaten
3/4 cup butter or margarine

2 1/2 cups cored,
peeled, thinly sliced apples
(approx. 7 to 9 apples)
1/2 tsp (or so) cinnamon for sprinkling on top of apples

METHOD:

Combine flour, sugar and baking powder (with cardamom and/or cinnamon) in a bowl. Add butter and slightly beaten egg. Using a pastry cutter, cut the butter into the flour until it looks like coarse meal. Spread the dough into a 15 x 9 inch cookie pan, pressing it down with your hands. Cover it with the apple slices, neatly overlapping them in rows. Sprinkle with cinnamon. Bake in 375 degrees F oven for 30 minutes or until brown.

OPTIONAL:

For additional visual appeal, when cooled, the pie may be covered with red or clear commercial fruit glaze (available at Scandinavian and German delicatessens), strawberry glaze (available in the fruit section of most supermarkets) or 3/4 cup of warmed red currant jelly.

TRADITIONAL BARLEY SAUSAGE



Image ... copyright Estonian Private Collection

Description :

A traditional barley sausage recipe, served traditionally at Christmas.

Comments :

Ingredients:

3 kg. ground pork
3 lbs. bacon (ground)
3 pkg. pearl or pot barley (total of 1.35 kg.)
3-4 large onions (chopped)
1/8 cup salt
2 1/4 tsp. pepper
2 1/4 tsp. garlic power
2 1/4 tsp. sage
2 1/4 tsp. thyme

Preparation:

Mix ground bacon and pork.

Cook ground meat mixture in frying pan with spices. Cool overnight. Boil barley and chopped onions, stirring frequently, until barley is soft. Combine the two mixtures (ground meat and barley/onions). Let the mixture cool to room temperature.

Soak casings in cold water to remove excess salt. Finally, run cold water through casings. Feed casings into sausage stuffer and fill with mixture to desired size and firmness. Boil each sausage for about one minute. Allow to cool before bagging and freezing.

Serving

Gently pierce thawed sausages on all sides with a fork and place the rings on a pan sprayed with Pam vegetable oil. Heat at 375 F for about 30 minutes, or until casings are brown and crisp. Serve hot!

Notes

Sheep casing is thinner than pork or beef.

Sausage grinders and stuffers can be purchased at Butchers and Packers Supplies. (#10 stuffer was used in preparing this recipe).

This recipe yields roughly 20 25" - 28" long sausage rings.

Sausages should not be frozen for longer then one year.

This recipe is supplied courtesy of Irene and Deane Kerbes of Stettler. They are members of the Edmonton Estonian Society.

BIRTHDAY KRINGEL

Ingredients:

6 ½ cups all-purpose flour
2 cups warm cream
1/2 cup butter
3 egg yolks
1/2 to 1 cup sugar
2 Tbsp. dried yeast
1/2 tsp. saffron crumbled into ¼ cup boiling water
1/2 tsp. ground cardamom
1 tsp. salt
Juice, grated rind of 1 lemon and 1 orange
1/2 cup slivered almonds
1 1/2 cups golden raisin, washed and dried

Preparation:

In 1/4 cup of warm water, mix 1 tsp. sugar and sprinkle yeast on top. Let stand for ten minutes.
In large bowl, combine cream, yeast and 3 1/4 flour. Mix well. Cover and let rise.
Whip butter with sugar and eggs. Add to risen dough. Add juice, rinds, saffron, cardamom, and salt. Add remaining flour with raisins. Mix until smooth then cover and let rise.
Place dough on floured board and knead until smooth and elastic. Grease large cookie pan and preheat oven to 350F. Stretch dough into wide, long strands with tapered...

DESSERT PIRUKAS

Recipe courtesy of Linda Hall Ladies Club



Dough :

- 3 Cups of Flour
- 1 Cups of Butter
- 1/2 Cups of Sugar
- 3 tsp. of Baking Power
- 1/2 tsp. of Salt
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1/4 Cup of Milk
- 1 tsp. of Vanilla

Filling :

- 2 Cups of Rhubarb
- 2 Cups of Strawberries or Raspberries
- 2 Cups of Apples
- 1/2 Cup of Golden Raisins
- 1 Cup of Water
- Sugar (sweeten to taste)
- 1 tsp. of Cornstarch

Method :

Mix flour, sugar, salt and baking power in a bowl and work in butter as for pie crust. Add beaten eggs, milk and vanilla. Mix well and knead until smooth. Roll to 1/4 inch thickness on a floured board. Cover bottom of a 9 x 12 inch pan with dough and bring to 1 inch height on pan sides. Roll top dough to just fit pan to cover filling.

Cook filling ingredients for 10 minutes. Pour hot filling into bottom of dough-covered pan and top with crust. Bake for 20 minutes at 400 degrees F. until golden brown. Serve with whipped cream topping. Delicious!!!

This is Annie Raho's recipe, an original member of the Linda Hall Ladies Club. The Linda Hall district ladies formed a group in the early 1900's soon after men of the community formed the Agricultural Club (Põllumeeste Selts). The club was originally called Linda Eesti Naiste Rahvaste Ühisus and meetings were held in Estonian. In 1952, the ladies formed the Linda Hall Ladies Club and business was conducted in English. The group catered functions at Linda Hall such as Jaanipäev, Christmas concerts and dances. Annie and Oscar Raho (now both deceased) farmed near Linda Hall and were active members of the community. Their two sons, Tom and Vern, have traditionally supplied and prepared logs for the midsummer bonfire and will do so again for Jaanipäev 2009.

GINGERBREAD (PIPARKOOGID) COOKIES



Image ... copyright Estonian Private Collection

Description :	Estonian gingerbread or "piparkoogid", a traditional Estonian Christmas treat.
Location :	Edmonton

Comments :

Ingredients:

1/2 Cup Dark Karo Corn Syrup
1/2 Cup Molasses
1 Teaspoon Cinnamon
1 Teaspoon Cloves
1/2 Teaspoon Ginger
1/2 Teaspoon Cardamon
1/4 Teaspoon Allspice
1/4 Teaspoon Black Pepper
2 Eggs, Beaten
4 Cups or more of Flour
1 Cup Sugar
1 Cup Butter
1 Teaspoon Baking Soda and 1 Teaspoon Water Mixed together

Heat the syrup and spices in a saucepan. Stir vigorously as the mixture cools. While still lukewarm slowly add the creamed butter, the eggs creamed with the sugar. The Baking Soda mixed with the lukewarm water and gradually add the Flour to form a stiff dough. Chill overnight or longer. Thinly roll out dough onto floured board (I use 2 plastic bags and roll dough in between them. Less sticky and easier to manage). Cut out with cookie cutters of desired shapes. Place cookies on a greased cookie sheet. Decorate some with Blanched Almonds if you wish. Bake at 325 F for about 8 minutes. When cool store in airtight container.

HERRING IN SOUR CREAM SAUCE

Ingredients:

1 cup sour cream
2 tsp. sugar
1tsp. vinegar
1 tsp. prepared mustard
1 tsp. chopped dill
2 hard boiled eggs, chopped
Slices of red onion

Preparation:

Soak salt herring in cold water for 24 hours. Skin and remove fillets from bone. Cut in 1-inch strips and arrange in a rather pleasing on a serving dish. Combine other ingredients and pour over herring. Garnish with eggs and onion slices.

ROSOLJE



Image ... copyright Estonian Private Collection

Description : A traditional and delicious Estonian salad with beets, potatoes and herring.

Comments :

Salad:

2-3 boiled beets
1 whole salt herring, soaked and cleaned
5-6 boiled potatoes
2 dill pickles
2 hardboiled eggs
1 apple
1 cup diced roast beef
1/2 carrot
1/2 onion

Dressing:

1 1/2 cups sour cream
1/4 cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
1 teaspoon dry mustard
3 tablespoons white vinegar
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon sugar
1/2 teaspoon pepper

Method:

Cube all ingredients. Season sour cream to taste. Mix carefully into salad. (Optional): Decorate with chopped beets, eggs and dill. Serve cold.
Recipe courtesy of Shirley Pilt

SAUERKRAUT: TEN EASY STEPS

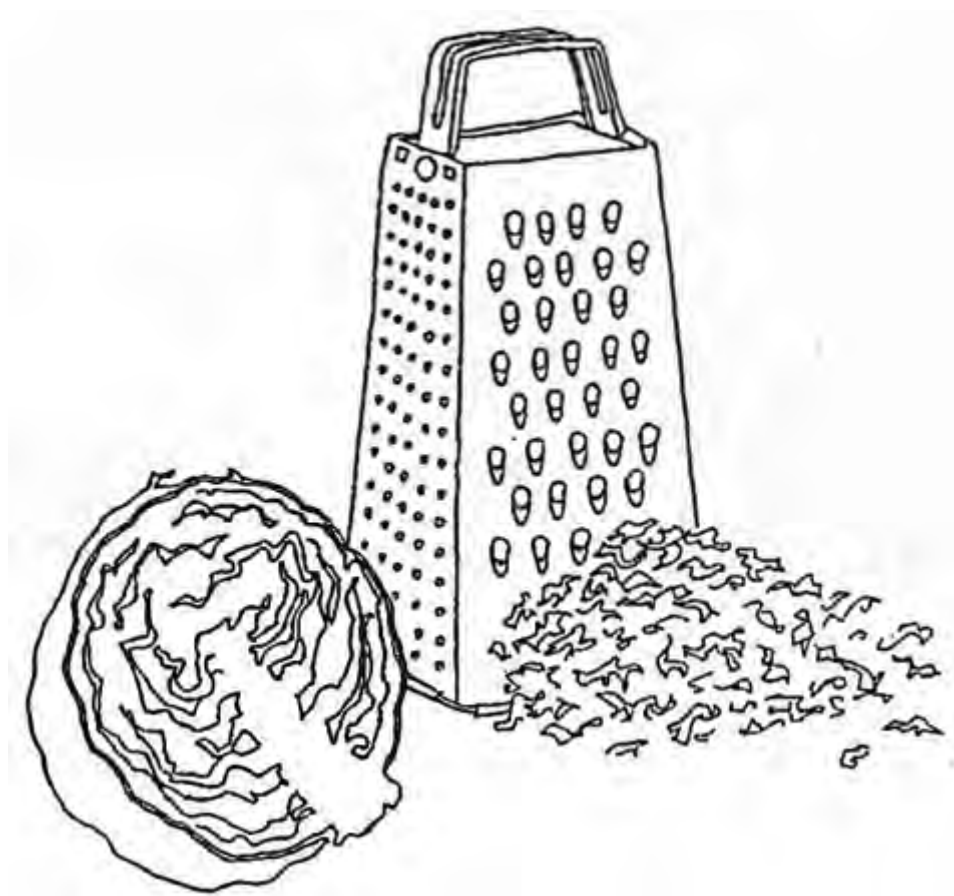


Image ... copyright Estonian Private Collection

Description :

Edmonton Estonian Society Brine Method

Comments :

1. Select large firm heads of cabbage. Remove dry or damaged outer leaves and cut heads in halves or quarters, depending on size. Save some outer leaves for later use.
2. Shred finely and evenly into a crock.
3. Tamp each layer gently to crush and release juices.
4. In a bowl, prepare a mix of 1 cup pickling salt to 1/4 teaspoon of caraway seed (more or less to taste).
5. Sprinkle a small amount of salt (to taste, but be sure to use enough to create a brine solution) over each layer as the tamping progresses and the crock fills.
6. Fill the crock to 2/3 full (do not overfill as the kraut expands during fermentation). Push down to pull the brine over the kraut as it is important that the shreds be submerged in liquid. Cover this surface with some large outer leaves to keep it clean. Lay a cutting board on top of the leaves and set a large clean rock as weight on top of the board. Cover the crock with a cloth or towel to screen from fruit flies.
7. Leave crock to ferment in a warm (room temperature) place for 7-10 days. During fermentation juices will rise and foam will appear. When the juice recedes, the kraut is ready.
8. Remove the top layer, excess cloudy juices, foam and mold.
9. Pack kraut firmly into jars with enough brine to cover. Or pack into freezer bags to freeze.
10. To can and seal, process the jars in gently simmering water for 30 minutes. Jars will keep for 2-3 years.

SAVORY PASTRY (PIRUKAD)



Image ... copyright Estonian Private Collection

Description :

These stuffed pastries can be filled with meat, ham, cabbage or carrots. They are particularly well-suited as a snack when unexpected guests drop in.

Comments :

0.5 liters Milk
2 Tablespoons active dry yeast
2 Tablespoons Sugar
About 6-8 Cups of Flour
200 g butter (or margarine)
1 egg, beaten

Mix lukewarm (37 C) milk with yeast and sugar, and add enough flour to make a very soft dough. Let it rise in a warm place for 1-2 hours. Then knead in the butter and enough flour to make a dough that can be rolled out and folded into pockets. The softer you can keep it, the more tender it will be. Return the dough to a warm place and let rise until double in bulk.

Roll out portions of the dough to form a thin sheet. Place tablespoonfuls of filling in a row on the dough and paint the area surrounding the filling with the beaten egg. Fold the edge of the dough over the row of fillings, and use a glass or cup to cut halfmoons with the filling inside. Crimp the edges with your fingers to keep the filling from seeping out. Place the pirukas on a greased cookie sheet, paint with the beaten egg, and bake in a medium oven (350 F or 270 C) until golden, about 15 minutes.

Alternatively you can place the filling as a strip along the dough, fold the dough over the seal to make a thin log, and bake this - it takes just a little longer. The log can be sliced at serving time. This is less work, but not as elegant, and not as easy to pack for a picnic or for lunches.

Filling for Pirukad

Liha (meat)

Grind a pot roast or other well cooked beef. If cooking meat specially for this, boil it and use the broth for a soup (see beet soup). Grind the meat and season with salt and pepper. Cooked mashed vegetables such as green peppers, carrots and onions, and flavorings such as parsley and garlic can be mixed with the beef. If the meat mixture won't stick together, moisten with some broth.

FESTIVALS

Alberta's tight-knit Estonian community primarily celebrates two annual festivals: Independence Day and *Jaanipäev*. In fact, the birth of Estonian societies in both Calgary and Edmonton stems from a grassroots effort to unite these respective cities' Estonian population and celebrate Estonia's independence from Russian rule. On 24 February 1949, members of Edmonton's Estonian community gathered to celebrate Estonian

Independence Day. Estonian songs, dances, and reminiscent conversations brought vivid memories of Estonians' homeland. The celebrations continued every year with numerous additions, including talented folk dancers and authentic Estonian cuisine. Independence Day was an important event for Estonian immigrants living in Canada. It was an opportunity to reflect on their newfound freedom and to share their story of oppression under the Russian regime. Not only was Independence Day an ideal place to revel in Estonian culture, but the setting also provided an opportunity to inform others of the hardship felt living in a country dominated, politically and economically, by another.



In Estonia, *Jaanipäev* (also known as St. John's Day) remains one of the most important days of the year. The short summer season, accompanied by long days and brief nights, holds special significance for the people of Estonia. Traditionally, *Jaanipäev* is celebrated within a few days of the summer solstice. The celebration has a long history dating back centuries. When Estonians settled in Alberta during the 20th century, they wanted to preserve as many elements of Estonian culture as possible. *Jaanipäev* was the ideal event to begin with. Alberta's Estonian community has celebrated *Jaanipäev* for decades.

Jaanipäev marks a change in the farming year; specifically, the break between spring sowing and the hard work of summer threshing. Estonians farming in Alberta understandably related to the concept and eagerly anticipated the arrival of *Jaanipäev* every year. An event of such precedence carries with it numerous traditions including strong folkloric roots. For instance, a bonfire is a prerequisite to hosting *Jaanipäev* because participants are expected to leap over the bonfire to guarantee prosperity and avoid bad luck during the farming year. The large flames also serve to dispel any mischievous spirits lingering in the area.



Traditionally, *Jaanipäev* has been celebrated at historic Linda Hall, south of Stettler, Alberta. People have travelled from across the province and beyond to take part in the festivities. More recently, the celebration was held at the larger Lincoln Hall near Gull Lake, not far from Hendrik Kingsep's original homestead. In 2007, the activities included a pig roast, the Garry Raabis Band, and a video documenting the history of Alberta's Estonians. Daytime activities have always varied depending on participation, but sports have

remained popular. Traditional competitions such as log sawing and nail pounding have remained popular. Speeches commemorating Alberta's Estonian pioneers typically follow

supper. For decades now, *Jaanipäev* has united Estonians living throughout Alberta in a day filled with games, song, food, and fire jumping.

TRADITIONAL CLOTHING

Traditional Estonian clothing was largely dependent on what local nature provided as well as on some influence from other ethnic groups. Estonia's northern climate was conducive to natural fabrics like homespun wool, linen fabric and sheepskin, keeping Estonians warm during the damp and cold winter months. Colours for the clothing came from plants which were a source of dye for the weaving wool and embroidery thread. Patterns, styles, designs as well as methods of sewing, weaving and knitting have influenced, and have been influenced by neighbouring cultures. Culture always seeps through the political boundaries and the boundaries of ethnic Estonians have shifted a lot over the centuries.



Styles varied by region, reflecting well-established native traditions and customs. Moreover, folk costumes denoted national belonging and social status and both everyday and festive clothing directly referred to the wearer's social status, age, marital status, and region. Even though folk costumes change over time, many of these traditional aspects have passed down the generations and are seen today in Estonia and elsewhere in the

world where Estonians live and gather for small and large festivities.

Traditionally, linen garments were bleached white while woolen outer garments ranged from natural grey to black. There was no marked difference between the clothes of a bachelor and those of a married man, but a strict difference was maintained between the clothes of an adolescent female and those of a married woman. In most parts of Estonia, girls did not wear aprons. Part of the marriage ceremony consisted of tying the apron on the bride which designated her married status. At the same time a married woman's cap or headgear was placed on her head. Girls braided their hair or left it loose for festivities and wore narrow or wider headbands according to the local custom, occasionally floral wreaths. Such hair covering fashions served the same purpose as wedding rings do today to indicate a woman's marital status.

Generally, traditional Estonian clothes were divided into three parts:

- Festive clothes worn only on special occasions and often handed down from generation to generation;
- Visiting clothes for errands, business, and visits of a less festive nature and
- Working clothes worn every day and made of poorer material and without decorations.

The belt has remained an integral part of traditional Estonian clothing for centuries. Even the Estonian word for belt, "vöö", is one of the oldest words in the language, dating back 7000 years. Tightly woven when made, then tightly wrapped many times around the waist, the belt gave the women back support when doing heavy field work. Later the patterned belts served to hold up a skirt style consisting of an unsewn rectangular fabric piece. To this day, most of the women's national costumes include the belt worn that way.

Stylized flower patterns derived from the water lily or tulip are among the most common found on women's blouses and head gear, mostly embroidered in coordinated hues of the skirt in understated brightness. Silver brooches function as fasteners on most blouses. Brooches, necklaces, earrings and bracelets based on traditional designs continue to be common among some Estonian women as the jewelry they wear frequently.



Formerly a prestige item, wool socks with elaborate designs form an integral part coastal area national dress. As a result, a few folk dances include a step where the man momentarily bends down to admire his partner's socks. The designs and their knitting are sufficiently unique, that several books have been published recently in North America about Estonian socks.

In spite of Estonia's small size, there are numerous local differences in folk costume, as worn today on special occasions. Northern Estonian men wear breeches (a type of pant reaching down to the knee) accompanied by a short-coat, mostly blue. Women wear a distinctive short, loose, long-sleeved midriff blouse embroidered in floral patterns over a sleeveless shirt. The skirt stripes may be vertical or horizontal. These are the most popular styles among Estonians in Canada, United States and elsewhere beyond Estonia.



Central Estonian women's outfits are characterized by headgear with ample embroidery on wide fabric swaths. Southern Estonian folk costumes are characterized by the survival of several very old garments. These patterns are always geometric. Western Estonian folk costume is primarily characterized by sheep-brown and black outer garments for men. Women wear a long-sleeved blouse with a jacket over it, complemented by a bodice and a floral patterned scarf folded into a triangle. These are also characteristic of the Estonian islands. It should be noted that on the tiny western island of Kihnu, girls and women continue to wear their regional skirt as part of their daily activities. At folk dance performances, the male dancers often wear the distinctly patterned orange and black knitted vest of Muhu Island as a kind of generic national costume for a unifying effect on the stage.

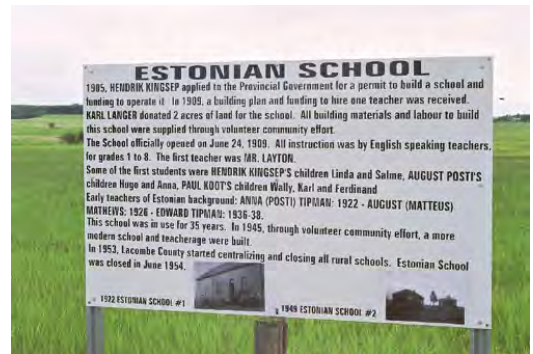
As urbanization increased in the later half of the 19th century and particularly during the 20th century, traditional folk costume diminished somewhat in popularity. However, in direct contrast, the rise of Estonian nationalist sentiment directly encouraged the wearing of such garments at festivals and various public events. Proudly displaying traditional Estonian clothing was an effective means of preserving and promoting Estonian heritage both at home and abroad.

Estonian pioneers settling in Alberta brought some national costumes with them along with their weaving skills. In their spare time, women wove traditional costumes if the necessary materials were in supply. Today, Albertans can see traditional Estonian costumes at special occasions such as the Stettler Centennial celebration in 1999 and other like events. The largest event featuring Estonian national costumes is the Song and Dance Festival which takes place in Tallinn once every five years. Some choirs wear national dress as their uniform making for a

splendid display of the 20,000 singers. The 7000 folk dancers weave many interesting patterns punctuated by the traditional costumes from various regions of Estonia.

EDUCATION

Estonian pioneers were staunch supporters of educating their children and grandchildren. As a result, Alberta's Estonian communities organized schools and encouraged their children to complete all available schooling. A large proportion of Estonians went on to pursue a higher education at Alberta's colleges and universities.



With a well-established Estonian community living in the Medicine Valley, the idea of building a local school was well received. Estonian pioneer families recognized the urgent need for their children to learn English and other subjects. As early as 1905, Henry Kingsep arranged meetings with the local community to discuss various ideas. Within a few years, with funds and resources available, a central site was chosen for the school and the Estonian School District's borders were mapped out, designating who was eligible to attend. The school board consisted primarily of local Estonian farmers who collected the school tax, hired a teacher, and maintained the school.

Opening in the fall of 1909, the Estonian School was located on the northeast corner of Carl Langer's property. The school was another community-based initiative built from lumber hauled in from mills scattered throughout the general area. Duncan Layton was one of the school's first teachers, providing English to everyone so as to meet the needs of the entire community. In its inaugural year, the Estonian School taught 17 students ranging between the ages of 6 and 13.



By 1915, the Estonian School District had enrolled 52 students, many of whom travelled miles and miles to attend. There was no gymnasium; however, most students were probably content with their daily exercise consisting of walking miles to and from school in a variety of unsettling weather conditions. Estonians and non-Estonians alike shared the school, learning English, history, and general sciences. The intellectuals of the local community were the school teachers; subsequently, they were

constantly treated with courtesy and admiration. With a passion for music and the arts, members of the Estonian community raised money to allow the school to purchase a gramophone and a piano.

By the early 1950s, the centralization of rural schools became popular as a means of providing a better quality education within an economically feasible budget. The Rocky Mountain School Division soon transferred Grades 7 and 8 to Eckville and provided bus transportation. The Estonian School was lifted and hauled into Eckville where it joined the school there and served as a home economics classroom. Eckville's school featured one teacher per grade, a gymnasium, and several classrooms.



In 1961, the County of Lacombe assumed responsibility for the educational needs of students living in Eckville and the surrounding area. Unfortunately, all records related to the Estonian School were destroyed upon the transfer from Eckville to Lacombe. The original site of the Estonian School reverted to Carl Langer's property.

Norma School near Sylvan Lake



Norma School, named after a local district near Sylvan Lake, opened in May, 1904 as "Finland School" with 21 students. Mr. George H. Glover, who led church services, was the first teacher. The school was on homestead land of Johan Kask.

In 1909, the name of the school changed to Sylvan Lake School; in 1915 it was renamed Norma School. The school, a log building, was rebuilt in 1929. When the second school was closed in 1956 or 1957, the remaining 16 students were bussed to Sylvan Lake or Red Deer.

ESTONIAN PRESIDENT MERI

Lennart Meri, the President of Estonia from 1992 to 2001, visited Alberta for two days in July of 2000. Accompanied by his wife Helle, daughter Tuule, press secretary Epp Alatalu and his bodyguard Alvar Ridamäe, Meri was welcome at the Calgary International Airport by twenty local Estonians.



Peter Leesment, wearing a Stampede cowboy hat, read the welcome speech. Milvi Tiislar and Melanie Matiisen, dressed in traditional Estonian costumes, presented flowers to the President and his wife. President Meri wanted to visit Alberta for primarily three reasons: to visit the oilsands at Fort McMurray, greet Alberta's Estonian descendants and view the world famous Rocky Mountains.

President Meri had expressed his own personal interest in learning about Estonian diaspora. Decades before Estonia's independence in 1991, President Meri had studied and visited numerous Estonian villages across western Russia.

Years later he wanted to learn about 19th and 20th century Estonian settlements in Canada. His interest in Alberta's Estonian community was spurred by Estonia's media coverage of the Stettler Centennial celebration in 1999. Of particular interest to president Meri was Linda Hall.

The organizing committee of Helgi Leesment, Parja Tiislar and Helle Kraav meticulously planned the two-day affair. Alta Flights Inc. of Edmonton, owned by Dave Robertson and his Estonian wife Christine Lepik-Robertson, flew the six member delegation to Stettler in a private Cessna. En route, the President had an opportunity to chat with Bob Kingsep, the grandson of Alberta's first Estonian pioneer (Hendrik Kingsep), and Bob Tipman, an Estonian descendant and oilsands engineer.





In Stettler, President Meri toured the Estonian Chapel, Cemetery and the Stettler Outdoor Museum. The President found the log house and its contents of particular interest. At Linda Hall, president Meri humoured the crowd and signed a 100th birthday card for Anne Tipman.

While President Meri toured northern Alberta's oilsands his wife and daughter did some shopping in Calgary and learned about Alberta's cowboy culture at the Calgary Stampede. At a barbeque later that night the Estonian delegation members were each presented with white cowboy hats.



President Meri's visit sparked an interest among Alberta's Estonian descendants in retracing their family lineage and broadening their knowledge about Estonian culture. This resurgence of interest in all things Estonian directly contributed to the formation of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society in April 2005.

President Meri passed away on March 14, 2006 at the age of 76. A sympathy card bearing a photo of the Rocky Mountains was mailed to the late president's wife and daughter on behalf of Alberta's Estonian community.

LEISURE AND RECREATION

For much of the 20th century, Linda Hall was the premier venue for Estonian get-togethers and cultural events in the area south of Stettler. The idea for a community centre stemmed from a shared interest in creating a space where Estonian settlers could host social activities and political fora and share agricultural knowledge with one another. At a 1910 general meeting at the John Neithal home, several Estonian pioneers formed Linda Eesti Põllumeeste Selts (Linda Estonian Agriculture Society). John Neithal was elected president and John Kerbes secretary while John Oro served as treasurer. Soon, 35 men became members. Naturally, the farmhouses became too small to host such large gatherings, and the idea of a community hall would soon become a reality.



The term *Linda* is derived from the Estonian epic *Kalevipoeg*. Kalev was the protagonist in the story-complete with superhero powers-and Linda was his supportive and caring mother. Linda exuded intellectual traits and a love for Estonian culture. Members of Stettler's Estonian community recognized the correlation between the hall's objectives and the cultural values Linda embodied. Consequently, the community centre was appropriately named Linda Hall. Kalev's relevance in Estonian culture was not forgotten as the settlement northwest of Big Valley was dubbed Kalev.

The land for Linda Hall, located 11 miles south and 2 miles east of Stettler, was donated by Johannes Kerbes. To raise funds, box lunches were sold at local picnics, in turn raising over \$300. Members of the Linda Estonian Agricultural Society also donated funds in equal amount. The hall was a modest rectangular building, positioned lengthwise from west to east. The west entrance doors opened directly into the spacious hall and faced the stage at the opposite end. Exclusive volunteer labour was used in building the structure and, on Jaanipäev 1911, members of the community officially opened the hall.

Inside the hall, furniture consisted of homemade benches and wooden tables. A large bookcase featuring various works about history, science, travel, and economics stood impressively in the corner. Over time, the collection expanded to over 200 titles; often people would drop by to borrow a book, thereby turning the hall into an impromptu library. The hall also featured an upright piano and was lit using oil lamps perched in the rafters. Tragically, a blazing fire in 1930 destroyed the facility and its collection of books.



Community spirit remained high as donations soon trickled through and volunteers reconvened to build a new structure within the next few years. Activities and meetings were conducted in Estonian until the 1950s when a gradual switch to English became necessary due to the increased presence of the younger generation. Five or six large events were planned each year, including a fall masquerade, Christmas, Easter, Mother's Day, Father's

Day and Jaanipäev. During the warm summer months, picnics were held outdoors adjacent to Linda Hall. Sports, speeches, and plays would often accompany a jovial picnic.

In 1925, the women living in the Linda Hall district formed a club of their own, known as Linda Naiste Rahvaste Ühisus (Linda Women's Society). Dozens of women attending functions conducted in Estonian also maintained close relations with the United Farmers of Alberta Women's Association. The club formally dissolved in the 1940s; however, many former members remained active in the community. In 1952, Anna Tipman, Salme Hennel, Dulcie Hennel, Dorthea Laing, and Doris Hennel established the Linda Hall Ladies Club with business conducted in English. Over the years, the men's and ladies' clubs cooperated in numerous joint financial ventures. With support from government grants, they were able to make considerable upgrades to Linda Hall. A kitchen was built along with the installation of electricity, forced air heating, and running water.

Since 1911, Linda Hall has hosted a plethora of community events, including meetings, concerts, dances, and weddings, among others. In 1999, Linda Hall was the site of the Alberta Estonian Centennial celebration, the largest gathering of Estonians in Alberta's history. Province-wide Jaanipäev celebrations have been held here, including the inaugural Alberta Estonian Heritage Society's Jaanipäev celebration in 2005. The history of the Linda Hall is an invaluable resource demonstrating Estonian camaraderie and the importance of community-based initiatives.

MUSIC AND DANCE

Music and dance go hand in hand when discussing Estonian culture in Alberta's rural communities. For Estonian settlers, without one, the other almost ceased to exist. Community halls, whether they were located in Gilby, Stettler, or any other Estonian settlement, were often filled with the joyous sounds of accordion, banjo, guitar and, of course, pleasant voices.



Typically, family nights were held once a month and were known for their lively musical renditions. The "Circle Song" was a popular activity whereby everyone joined hands in a circle, encouraging a pair of dancers in the center while everyone sang a familiar folk song. During the chorus, the tempo increased and the dancers in the middle found a new partner. The new couple would twist and twirl its way across the floor until everyone in the hall was standing, singing, and dancing, or at least one of the three. Traditionally, dances began and ended with a waltz. Other dances included the fox trot, two-step, four-step, and the French minuet.

Square dances were another popular form of dance. In Stettler, Edward Tipman and Johannes Kerbes shared a passion for organizing large, lively square dances. There were numerous talented violinists including Johannes Kerbes, Martin Neithal, Mike Tipman, John Raho, and Dick Hennel. This impressive list of talented musicians learned to play their instruments at a relatively young age. Johannes' children, Archie and Helen, accompanied their father in his musical endeavours: both played the piano. August Kerbes, also of Stettler, sang many folk songs, entertaining those in attendance. Some of the primary themes incorporated within his work included establishing a stable home in the West, working hard in the fields, and finding time to relax.



Long before the days of television, computers, and even radios, Estonians in Alberta entertained each other through music and dance. Talented musicians provided the rhythm for everyone to participate-young and old alike. No doubt, lively weekend gatherings were a welcome retreat from a strenuous week of farming. Moreover, the establishment of large halls such as Linda Hall, Estonian Hall, and Gilby Hall

provided ideal settings for social functions. More recently, the Garry Raabis Band has entertained crowds at various functions.

SANDRA ERDMAN

Sandra Erdman was born in Lethbridge, Alberta on February 3, 1947. She attended school in Barons, but for grades 11 and 12 she attended Mount Royal College in Calgary. Mount Royal College gave Sandra an opportunity to develop her musical talents with the guidance of Mrs. Egbert, the school's piano teacher.



In Grade 11, Sandra was awarded the 1963 Kiwanis Grand Award for her exceptional piano skills. The following year she graduated as the valedictorian of her high school class. During her time spent as a student in Barons, Sandra was an active member of Christian Girl In Training and often played the organ for the local church.

Aside from winning numerous awards in piano she received a scholarship from the Banff School of Fine Arts. In 1970 she graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Toronto. Two years later Sandra obtained a Master of Music degree from the University of Alberta. In 1972 she studied the harpsichord in Siena, Italy and then traveled to Antwerp, Belgium to pursue her music studies further.

Upon her return to Canada, Sandra taught music in Edmonton for two years before she accepted a job at the Lethbridge Public Library in the Audio-Visual department. She currently lives in Lethbridge.

LYDIA PALS (1915-1983)



Lydia grew up in Narva with her parents Elsa (nee Heinze) and Aleksander Anton and her younger sister, Elsa. She completed her schooling at the Narva Gymnasium and then went on to study music at the Tallinn Conservatory of Music where she worked with Professor Leimer. Her professional concert debut was in Tallinn where she lived with her Uncle Otto and Aunt Ebba with whom she maintained close contact throughout their lives. Her uncle Major General Otto Heinze, was commander of the military Division 1 in *Vabadussõda* (Estonian War of Independence). She later studied under Walter Giesecking in Wiesbaden, West Germany and continued her concert career subsequent to her marriage in 1938 to Julius Kass. Lydia developed life long friendships from her membership in the sorority "Fidelia" and as a result of her classical education, Lydia was fluent in Estonian, German, Russian and English.

Lydia left Estonia in 1943 with her mother and two small children, Heidi and Vello and fled to Germany. During this time she lived in the DP camp at Aglasterhausen. She came to Canada as a "farm labourer" in the spring of 1949 and settled in Barons, and then Lethbridge, Alberta. It quickly became apparent to the farm owners that she was not suited to the labourer occupation and through their generosity and kindness, alternate work was found so that she could complete her year of service in order to remain in Canada. With the friendship and support of the Enerson family, Lydia began her career as a music teacher, a career that was to extend for thirty-four years. Lydia met Ilmar Pals through the matchmaking efforts of other Estonian expats settled in southern Alberta and they married in 1952 in Medicine Hat. Ilmar was a Land Surveyor with the Department of Highways, Government of Alberta and they moved to Edmonton in 1953 where their daughter Ann was born in 1955.

Lydia was active in the Edmonton Estonian community as an organizer, educator, and cultural ambassador. Events and displays of folk costumes, Estonian art, explanations about Estonians traditions and music, whether at Independence Day celebrations or to the Minister of State for Multiculturalism saw Lydia at the center working to promote her culture and recognition of the illegal occupation of her homeland. Throughout her life, Lydia remained close to her Estonian roots and was considered an authority on Estonian culture and Estonian cultural contributions in Canada. She was actively involved in the Centennial celebration, the Estonian contribution to the Provincial Museum and appeared in a variety of radio and TV programs about Estonian music, art and culture.

Lydia was also very proud to be a Canadian and felt strongly that she needed to give back to the community that helped her and her family get a new start. As a result she was a very active volunteer in the music and cultural life of Edmonton. In addition to teaching music both at her studio at home and at Alberta College, she was a President of the Registered Music Teachers Association Edmonton Branch and of the Women's Musical Club. She pioneered pedagogical methods for teaching music composition to children and her contribution to music education is recognized annually at the Kiwanis Music Festival.

JULIA SAAR



Julia's grandparents were born in Estonia but were forced to leave their homeland during the Second World War. They later immigrated to Canada where they settled in the Toronto area. Toronto is home to Canada's largest Estonian population and Julia's grandparents were active in the local Estonian community. Her grandparents moved to Calgary in 1999.

Julia attended Calgary's Estonian supplementary school where her father volunteered as a teacher on occasion. Although Julia does not speak Estonian she has learned to sing numerous songs in the language. Julia performed in Estonian at the Stettler Centennial celebration in 1999.

Julia has been a member of the Calgary Girls Choir. Under the direction of Elaine Quilchini, the choir was invited to compete in the world-famous Llangollen International Eisteddfodd in Wales; They placed second and third in two separate categories. In 2000 Julia won the Silver medal for Grace 7 voice exams, achieving the highest mark awarded by the Royal Conservatory of Music. Further, she achieved a number of first place awards in various solo voice categories at the Calgary Kiwanis Festival over the years. In 2008 for example, she was awarded first place in the Solo Opera Aria category. As of 2008 Julia continues to study voice at the Mount Royal Conservatory of Music. She is simultaneously in her third year of chemical engineering at the University of Calgary.

HELVE SASTOK



Helve Sastok is a creative and innovative published and performed composer. Also an educator and pianist, she teaches at advanced and specialized levels. Helve is well known for instilling a passion and love for music of all styles.

Sastok also works as a clinician, adjudicator and composer. She also does graphic design for children's piano books. She is the sole proprietor of "Music Everywhere." She currently lives and works in Calgary.

Sastok has a Master of Music and a Bachelor of Music degree (with distinction) in composition as well as two piano performance diplomas. She is an Associate Composer of the Canadian Music Center, a member of the Canadian League of Composers and the Association of Canadian Women Composers. Since 1994 Sastok has been involved as a composer and educator with The Artist in Schools Residency Program throughout Alberta. She has worked as an artist for the Learning Through The Arts program since 2007. Workshops given in various centers on composition, improvisation, piano pedagogy, Canadian music and twentieth music have been well received.

Sastok's compositions have been performed across Canada and in Europe. Two of her pieces have been released on CD: 'Duologue' on Brief Confessions (1997) and 'Elegy' on Glossa (1999). Her electro-acoustic composition 'Sailing the High' is being released on CD in 2008. Her piano trio, 'Misty Mountain Morning' was performed in a New Works Calgary concert in March 2008.

Helve preserves her Estonian culture through her music by creating piano arrangements that have distinct Estonian melodies in them. One of her inspirations was Lydia Pals, a distinguished music teacher whose family is also of Estonian heritage. Before having moved to Canada in 1953 and later, getting married to her husband Ilmar Pals, Lydia was a concert pianist in Estonia. She recalls organizing and participating in numerous Independence Day celebrations in the 1950s. During these celebrations, Lydia would sing songs reflecting Estonia's oppressed history. For Lydia and Helve, music is an integral part of her Estonian identity.



JAN URKE

Jan Urke began his musical studies with respected Toronto Estonian piano teacher, Talvi Jaldre. He also spent five years studying the violin in the Toronto school system. Upon starting high school at North Toronto Collegiate, he decided to take up the double bass. He is a graduate of the University of Toronto with a Bachelor of Music Degree in Performance. Further studies were taken at the Banff Centre for the Arts with Stuart Knussen.



Jan's career started by freelancing with the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, the National Ballet Orchestra, the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. He moved to Edmonton in 1980, where he has been Principal Double Bass of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra to the present day. He has appeared as a soloist with the Edmonton Symphony and Pro Coro Canada and freelanced extensively in Edmonton.

Jan is Visiting Assistant Professor of Double Bass at the Music Department of the University of Alberta. He has also served as resource artist with the Banff Centre for the Arts.

JEFFREY WHITE

Anneli, Jeff's mother, is of Estonian descent. Jeff and his younger brother Josh attended Calgary's Estonian supplementary school. He was eight years old when he started playing the bass.



Jeff became a permanent member of the bass section with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra in 2006. He obtained a Bachelor of Music degree from Indiana University where he studied with the renowned pedagogue Lawrence Hurst. He has also studied at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. Jeff was a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Canada from 2000-2003. In 2004 he was the head of the bass section with the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra before permanently joining the Calgary Philharmonic

Orchestra.

SPORTS

Dancing was not the only means of participating in physical activity. In fact, Linda Hall possessed outdoor equipment for everyone to use. The complex consisted of a swing set, trapeze, parallel bars, a sand pit for long jump, and a large mat for high jump. The road adjacent to Linda Hall was frequently used as a course for long- and middle-distance running. In Eckville, baseball was a popular activity during the summer months with members of the Raabis family frequently participating. In the southern Alberta community of Barons, bowling and baseball were popular activities among Estonian settlers. Estonian settler Jack Kulpas developed a reputation among the community as a prolific bowler, successfully competing in numerous tournaments.



The female sport of rhythmic gymnastics traces its roots to Europe in the 1800s and early 1900s. Over the course of the 19th century, eastern European countries, including Estonia, have excelled at the sport. During the same time frame, several waves of Estonian immigrants arrived in Canada, bringing with them a variety of skills and abilities. One of those contributions has been rhythmic gymnastics. Combining artistic impression with physical strength, rhythmic gymnasts incorporate a variety of hand apparatus, including a ball, rope, hoop, or ribbon into their routines. Rhythmic gymnastic coaches, often immigrants or descendants of European countries, including Estonia, have played a major role in developing the sport in Canada. In Calgary, for example, Helgi Leesment has been the Ladies' Coach at the Norglen Rhythmic Gymnastics Club, which she co-founded over 25 years ago.

LIISA AND ANDREW CHISHOLM

Liisa and Andrew Chisholm are third generation Estonians who grew up knowing their Estonian-born great grandparents and grandfather. They have been lucky enough to meet many of their Estonian relatives both here and in Estonia as well as spend several vacations with them. Their Grandpa, Enn Kaarsoo, was very proud when they and their cousins, Alison and Callum McLeod received their Estonian passports and began to learn the language.

Andrew:



Ever since I joined biathlon five years ago, it seems that it has become the centre of attention in my life. I am in grade 12 at Sir Winston Churchill High School in Calgary and am set to graduate in June of 2009. I also applied and was granted my Estonian citizenship just over a year ago. As for post secondary education, I have not yet made a solid decision of where to go. My other (and preferred) choice is to move to Canmore, where I will be able to train full time and hope to achieve my goals in biathlon. I will have to have made my decision soon enough.

Other than in April, I am training around 6 days a week. Last summer I was lucky enough to go to Estonia and attend a training camp in Haanja. This was a bit strange at first as my Estonian was limited, but I soon found myself making friends throughout each training session. I was able to train with many of Estonia's top biathletes. Some of the ones I met were Meelis Laht, Martin Pajos, and Tõnis Uiboupin. I trained with them almost every day at the camp, but the exciting part was that after I left Estonia, they came to Canmore this winter for the World Junior Championships! It was an awesome experience having them come here, as they allowed me to train with them on many different occasions. It was in this time that their coach (and my coach from the summer) Tõnu Paasuke helped me with different training methods and skiing techniques. I used their knowledge and integrated that into my own training to achieve results I could not have imagined possible! I won double gold medals at the BC championships and became the Alberta Champion the week after. Unfortunately due to a slight illness and extreme exhaustion I was unable to perform equally well at the National Championships, but there is always next year!



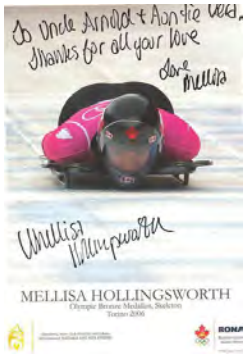
RYAN DAVENPORT (SKELETON)



Ryan began his career in skeleton in 1992 when he noticed a newspaper article on the sport. He immediately fell in love with the sport and began training. During the 1990s he won seven gold medals at the Canadian Skeleton Championships until his retirement in 1999. He also garnered two gold medals (1996 and 1997) and a bronze medal (1995) at the World Skeleton Championships. Unfortunately, skeleton was not yet recognized as an Olympic sport.

Since retiring from competition Ryan has dedicated his efforts to designing and manufacturing skeleton sleds. Like his cousin Melissa Hollingsworth-Richards, Ryan is a descendant of Gustav Mottus.

MELLISA HOLLINGSWORTH-RICHARDS (SKELETON)



Mellisa Hollingsworth-Richards won a bronze medal in the sport of skeleton at the 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Torino, Italy. Some of her other achievements in the sport of skeleton include:

- 6-time medalist in Canadian Skeleton Championships, including a gold medal in 1996.
- Silver medalist at the World Championships in 2000.
- World Cup Champion in 2006.

Mellisa has been active in the sport for over ten years. She attributed much of her success to her custom-made sleds, designed and manufactured by her cousin Ryan Davenport.



Mellisa's great-grandfather, Gustav Mottus, left Estonia at the age of 21 and eventually settled on a homestead west of Eckville, Alberta in 1911.

JIM KOTKAS

Jim Kotkas, who currently lives in Lethbridge with his wife Darci and their two children Jay and Kara, is a talented baseball player who possesses a wealth of playing and coaching experience. He is currently the assistant coach of the Vauxhall Baseball Academy, a program designed to allow all students to fulfill their baseball and academic goals. The program provides the best coaching, training, and facilities needed for students to work towards baseball scholarships and/or professional aspirations.



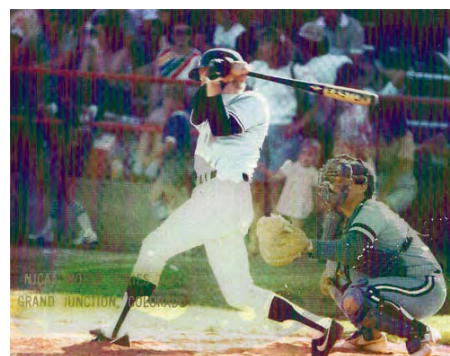
His other coaching responsibilities have included hitting coach for the Lethbridge American Legion Baseball program (A' Miners) from 1992 until 1994. The following year he became the hitting coach for the AA' Lethbridge Elks where he remains today. In 1999 and 2004 he was voted as hitting coach of the year.

Jim has played at various levels throughout his lengthy career. In 1981, he was a member of the Canadian Junior National Team that participated in the World Friendship Series in Ohio. In 1985 he played in Edmonton's Intercontinental Cup as a member of the Canadian National team. Some of his other accolades include:

- Pan-Am Games at Indianapolis, Indiana; Intercontinental Cup, Havana, Cuba, 1987.
- Pre-Olympics Tournaments in the Netherlands and Japan; World Championships, Italy; Summer Olympics, Seoul, Korea, 1988.
- Pacific Cup, Taiwan, 1989.
- Goodwill Games, Seattle, Washington; World Championships, Edmonton, 1990.
- Pre- Pan Am Games, Netherlands; Pan Am Games, Havana, Cuba, 1991.
- Represented Canada at the inaugural World All-Star Game, Atlanta, Georgia, 1992.



Jim played college baseball in Twin Falls, Idaho. In 1987, he was a proud recipient of the Jimmy Rattlesnake Memorial Award for recognition in outstanding ability and sportsmanship on Canada's National team. In 1992, he was inducted into the Lethbridge Sports Hall of Fame.



KEN AND JOYCE KOTKAS



Sports have been a huge part of the Kotkas family over the years. Joyce has excelled in mainly track and field and basketball. Ken has participated in a number of sports including track and field, baseball, football, badminton, curling, badminton, and trap shooting.

In 1966, Ken was recognized as the Provincial "overall" trap shooting champion and was named to the Provincial All-Star Team. The following year he was the winner of Calgary's Centennial Trap Shooting competition. In 1976, he participated in the Montana State Trap Shooting competition and was crowned the overall winner.

Ken and Joyce have four sons who all participated in a variety of sports. Kerwin played baseball and football; Chris played basketball at the high school and collegiate level; Ken Jr. played baseball and hockey. See Jim's biography for a summary of his accomplishments.

HELGI LEESMENT (RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS)

Helgi Leesment pioneered the development of non-competitive rhythmic gymnastics in Calgary. She co-founded a community centre program now operating as the NorGlen Rhythmic Gymnastics Club which has been in existence for 30 years, starting in 1979. Helgi now coaches the ladies program.

Helgi has received various accolades from both federal and provincial sport federations including a Sport Volunteer recognition Award from Alberta's Minister of Parks, Recreation and Sport in 1992. That same year, officials in Calgary created a volunteer award and named it the "Helgi Leesment Award." As of 2008, 16 Calgarians have won the award.



ALLAR LEVANDI

From the viewpoint of Estonians, at the 1988 Winter Olympic Games in Calgary Alberta, Allar Levandi put Estonian winter sports on the world map, but more importantly, his win inspired Estonians to strive for excellence at international winter sports. He won the bronze medal in individual Nordic Combined, the sport combining cross-country skiing with ski-jumping. This was a very important moment in the evolution of Estonia's national sport. Cross-country skiing has been a common recreational sport in the country for decades; it is an activity to which most of the citizens can easily relate and consider their own, like hockey is for Canadians.



It was three years before Estonia would regain its independence, so Allar was competing on the Soviet team. Nonetheless, half a world away from Alberta, hundreds of thousands of Estonians stayed up past midnight to watch television coverage of his competition on February 28, the last day of the Games. Previously he had jumped along with two other Soviet athletes at Canada Olympic Park in the team event, with a group of approximately 25 Calgary Estonians among the cheering thousands of spectators. Then, when it was the Soviet team's turn to do their second jump, the takeoff seat was

empty. The Nordic Combined Team event continued about 20 minutes later without any Soviet athletes.

The weather was uncooperative, thus the Nordic Combined Individual event was held later than originally scheduled. Both parts of the event took place on the same day, rather than a day apart as normal. Exhausting for the competitors but Allar Levandi did not mind. He came fourth in the jump segment and later, at Canmore, came third in the skiing event. The point totals result was bronze medal for Allar Levandi. The lights in Estonian homes stayed on, hundreds of thousands remained awake the rest of the night to celebrate.

Even though it was officially in the name of the Soviet Union, the Estonian Olympic Committee counts Allar Levandi's bronze as the first Winter Olympics skiing medal for Estonia and Estonians (Ants Antson won speed skating gold in the name of the Soviet Union in 1964 plus there were a total of 52 Summer Olympic medals won by Estonians prior to the Calgary Winter Games - variously representing Russia, independent Estonia or the Soviet Union, depending on the stage of Estonia's complex political history). Previously Estonians did not dare to hope for consistent greatness in ski based sports despite a few major stars. Since 1988, and especially after re-gaining independence in 1991, Estonians have been motivated to support their coaching and funding systems. Estonians now have faith in their cross-country ski sports athletes.

Since 1988 Estonian skiers and other ski-based athletes have won Olympic, World Championship, World Cup and European medals of all colours and hosted myriad World Cup events.

Allar Levandi was voted best male athlete of the year for 1988 in Estonia, and later, when the government of the new nation established an award system, he was accorded the Order of the

Estonian Red Cross Class Three Decoration in 2001.

Born in 1965, Allar Levandi was 22 years old at the time of his Olympic bronze. He had previously won bronze in 1984 and gold in 1985 as a member of the Soviet Union team at the World Junior Nordic Combined championships. He also won bronze in the team event at the 1987 World Championship. He continued competing for another six years after winning his Olympic bronze medal, retiring after the Estonian team came fourth at the Lillehammer Winter Olympics in 1994. He coached in Norway and Estonia for many years. In December 2000, he brought two Estonian competitors to a Nordic Combined World Cup event at Canada Olympic Park in Calgary. Allar Levandi married Russian figure skating star, Anna Kondrasova, whom he met at the Olympic athletes' closing party in Calgary in 1988. She has learned to speak fluent Estonian and is head coach at her own figure skating school in Tallinn. They have three sons born 2005, 1992 and 1989. Allar Levandi is currently a businessman owning a chain of sporting goods stores across Estonia.

GERHARD (GERT) LUKK (TENNIS)



Gert Lukk won the provincial men's singles tennis championship in 1958. He is also a four-time doubles champion capturing first place in 1958, 1960, 1962 and 1963. Gert dominated the men's tennis scene in Calgary claiming the top spot five years in a row, from 1959 to 1964. He and his wife Greta won numerous local mixed doubles tournaments in addition to his accolades as a singles player. Gert was a member of the Calgary tennis Club and Glencoe Tennis Club.

Gert grew up in a family deeply involved in the sport of tennis. He started swinging a racquet by the age of ten and soon developed a passion for the game. Growing up, Gert was inspired by the success of Kristjan Lasn, an 8-time tennis champion in Estonia.

The events of the Second World War propelled Gert to leave Estonia and relocate in Germany. He immigrated to Canada in 1948. His love for tennis was reinvigorated when he won the intercollegiate men's singles championship in 1951 and 1953 while attending the University of Toronto. He later became a geophysicist/seismologist while living in Calgary and Australia.



LEMBIT SAAR (MASTERS TRACK AND FIELD)

In 2002, then 83 year old Lembit Saar of Calgary won three medals at the Alberta Masters Track and Field Championships. He won gold in shot-put and hammerthrow, and silver in high jump. He began competing in track and field at the age of 70 while living in Toronto.



Lembit was born in Estonia and immigrated to Australia following the Second World War. He later relocated to Canada in 1952.

DANITA SEPP

Danita Sepp is the youngest daughter of Lea Linderman Sepp, member of an Estonian pioneer family of settlers in the Foremost area of southern Alberta. During her university days at the University of British Columbia, Danita was a competitive rower. She was a member of Canadian 1991 Pan-Am Games team and won a gold medal in the 2,000 meter straight four. She received the gold medal from Fidel Castro.



At UBC, Danita was the last cut for the 1992 Olympics. She subsequently accepted an invitation to join the Estonian rowing team in 1992 but did not qualify for the Olympics.

Anita Linderman Madill

Visiting Estonian Athletes

KRISTINA AND KATRIN SMIGUN



Among the more illustrious Estonian athletes to compete in Alberta is Kristina Smigun. She was a winner already in 1997 at the World Junior Championships in the Nordic disciplines at Canmore where she took gold medals in the 5 km and 15 km cross-country races. The list of her World Cup, World Championships and Estonian Championships medals would take up several pages. Suffice to say that her supreme accomplishments were two gold medals at the 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino, Italy in the 15 km and 10 km races. This was Kristina's fourth Olympics. Her teammate Andrus Veerpalu also won a gold medal in 2006, in the 15 km race. These placed

Estonia first among the individual cross-country gold winning nations and second in the overall cross-country medals count behind Sweden who had 3 golds (one individual & two team wins) plus 2 bronzes and ahead of the traditionally strong nations such as Norway and Finland. Kristina was the major reason for raising Estonia into this elevated category.

Some people are born with a silver spoon in their mouth; Kristina Smigun and her younger sister Katrin were born with silver skis on their feet. Their father is Anatoli Smigun, Estonia's men's champion for many years; their mother is Rutt Rehema-Smigun, Estonian women's champion for many years and medalist at many international competitions. The two met as teammates on the former Soviet Union national team, fell in love and married. When their daughters were pre-schoolers, the parents began to coach them. Father later became their one and only coach. Both of the young ladies clearly recognize their parents' accomplishments and knowledge as inspiration for them.



Younger sister Katrin has competed in the 1998 and 2002 Winter Olympics as well as elsewhere internationally, winning a silver medal at the Canmore World Junior Championships in 1997. Katrin attended university in the United States and has since retired from competitive skiing. Her family, including a daughter, lives in Norway. Kristina retired from competition shortly after the Torino Olympics, and lives in Estonia with her husband and young daughter.

MILVI TIISLAR (TUMBLING)

Milvi Tiislar won several gold medals in tumbling by the time she was 12 years old, including the Alberta Winter Games in 1995 and 1994. After finishing first at the championships of British Columbia and Alberta she went on to become the Canadian Junior Women's Champion. As of 2008, Milvi is studying medicine in the hopes of becoming a medical doctor. Milvi has been a member of the Calgary Estonian Society and attended the Estonian supplementary school. Her entire family are active members of Calgary's Estonian community.



Editor's Note: Tumbling is governed by Gymnastics Canada. The sport is characterized by quick and complex acrobatic elements. The work is performed on a 25 meter-long surface combining a balance of speed and rhythm.

ESTONIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE THEATRE AND ORCHESTRA



Estonians value the arts and consider them an essential component of many community activities and events. When Estonian immigrants first settled in Alberta, they carried on this tradition by featuring bands, orchestras and theatre troupes at numerous gatherings and celebrations. It is not surprising, therefore, that native Estonians and people of Estonian heritage who live elsewhere often choose to pursue careers in the arts today.

Hal Kerbes, owner of Shadow Productions, a performing arts company in Calgary, says music was a big part of his family's life "from the day we were born." Hal is a descendant of one of the first Estonian families to settle in the Stettler area, Jaan and Annette Kerbes. Hal played in family orchestras at wedding dances and community celebrations for many years. Today, he is involved in writing, producing and acting in presentations such as *The Ice Queen*, a Stage West for Kids theatre event (2001), and murder mystery dinner theatre.



One staff member and two guest conductors at the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra are of Estonian heritage. Lucas Waldin is the Assistant Conductor in Residence, 2009-10 and 2010-11. Anu Tali (2009, 2010) and Eri Klas (2009) were guest conductors with the ESO

- Waldin was born in Toronto to an Estonian father and Hungarian mother. He is a graduate of the Cleveland School of Music and now conducts orchestras throughout Europe as well as in Edmonton.
- Tali is a pianist as well as a conductor, educated in Estonia, Finland and Russia. She has conducted orchestras in Europe, North America and Asia.
- Klas is a native of Estonia who also conducts in Europe and North America. He studied in Tallinn and Leningrad and teaches at the Estonian Music Academy.

ORGANIZATIONS



Over the years, Alberta's Estonian communities have introduced various clubs, societies, and organizations as a means of formally preserving and promoting Estonian heritage. These organizations have been founded based upon geographical location. Estonians living in Medicine Valley, Stettler, Calgary and Edmonton have all established organizations in order to connect and

reconnect with members of Alberta's Estonian population. Not only did organizations create a public social network, but their endeavours also helped fund and construct halls, churches, and cemeteries.

For Estonian descendants who were born in Canada or migrated at a very young age the very existence of a local Estonian organization provides a gateway for reconnecting with their past and preserving their heritage. Independence Day celebrations, for instance, were organized by local Estonian societies and were viewed as one of the most important days of the year.

Alberta's Estonian societies connect Alberta's Estonians with their past, sharing its history and preserving its heritage.

ALBERTA ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

With the disintegration of the Medicine Valley Estonian Society, the Calgary Estonian Society, and the Edmonton Estonian Society, the need for a unified Estonian organization in Alberta became increasingly evident. At a meeting in Red Deer on 23 April 2005, 33 committed members of the fledgling Alberta Estonian Heritage Society established its official name and its primary objectives. These included:



1. To provide for the recreation of the members and to promote and afford opportunity for friendly and social activities;
2. To promote and preserve Estonian heritage and culture in Alberta;
3. To facilitate contact and current awareness among persons with an interest in Estonian heritage and culture in Canada, Estonia, and elsewhere.

Other initiatives put forth by those in attendance at a formative meeting held in Red Deer on November 6, 2004 include:

- A coordinating council, consisting of at least two representatives from each of the Calgary, Stettler - Red Deer, Eckville and Edmonton regions, was established to develop and implement the goals of the new organization. An interim provincial Coordinator was also appointed.
- The Coordinator, Council and necessary committees will be responsible for the overall development and administration of Society business including major events, finances, membership, bylaws and communications.
- A set of bylaws, followed by a submission for registration as a non-profit organization, will be pursued to enable the Society to apply for grants and other fundraising activities.
- A website will be developed and maintained to inform members and prospective members of Society news and happenings. A Society logo will be developed for use on letterheads and other such correspondence.
- The AEHS will assemble a province-wide mailing list. The information will be used solely for the purpose of Society business and every effort will be made to protect all members' privacy.
- The newsletter AjaKaja, previously published by the Edmonton Estonian Society, will become the AEHS newsletter. AjaKaja will be distributed to all Society members whom have paid their annual fees.
- Membership dues are as follows: \$25/year for families and \$20/year for individuals. These dues will cover the cost of publishing and distributing AjaKaja, various administrative costs

and general support of Society activities. Membership dues will be reviewed annually.

The official website is www.aehs.ca.



The first issue of AjaKaja was published in May 1989, following a 10-year hiatus when the newsletter was published under the name Pajataja. Mare Maxwell, with her strong background in graphics, agreed to initiate the publication of the newsletter. The Executive of the Edmonton Estonian Society supported this effort "to heighten interest in and awareness of events and issues that are relevant to the Estonian community". Eda McClung, Society President, noted at the time that "there is much noteworthy for our local group."

Publication of the newsletter continued until the end of 1991. These were heady times, with an increase in Edmonton Estonian Society's membership, numerous events and celebrations, and the declaration of Estonian Independence in 1991. A balanced mix of bilingual articles captured the rapidly-changing political theatre in Estonia and provided newsworthy information about the resurgent Society.

With Estonian Independence secured in 1991, the Society resumed traditional celebrations including the summer solstice (Jaanipäev), Christmas and Estonian Independence Day. Publication of AjaKaja resumed in 1997 when Anne-Marie Hodes took over as Editor. The revived and expanded newsletter, with a balanced mix of articles in English and Estonian, focused on news about Alberta's Estonians and happenings in Estonia. AjaKaja continued as a publication of the Edmonton Estonian Society until the fall of 2004.

With the formation of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society in 2005, the Summer 2005 issue became the official newsletter of the provincial organization. In line with the Society's policy it is published in English. The next issue of AjaKaja, Volume 28, will be published in summer 2008. Eda McClung and Dave Kiil, assisted by a team of contributors from Alberta and elsewhere, continue to produce the highly-acclaimed publication. It is distributed to members of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society and other interested subscribers.



AjaKaja is one of a few regularly-published newsletters by Estonian societies in Canada. Our focus is on preserving and promoting Estonian heritage such as traditional music, foods, and festivals. The production of AjaKaja is made possible by contributions from members of Alberta's small but active Estonian community.

HERITAGE PROJECTS

Introduction

The virtual archive 'AlbertaSource.ca/abestonians' was produced as part of a multi-year project of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS) to celebrate the history of Alberta's Estonians spanning over 100 years. It is based on extensive source materials made available by generous support of individuals, institutions and agencies in Alberta and elsewhere in Canada, Estonia, Australia and the United States.

The initial project was the documentary DVD 'Alberta's Estonians' completed in 2007, followed by the publication in 2010 of an illustrated book 'Freedom, Land, & Legacy: Alberta's Estonians, 1899-2009.' The same year all source materials were donated to the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA) (<http://hermis.alberta.ca/paa/>) and are available onsite, online, and in perpetuity. Following the completion of an updated website in late 2011, a second donation to the PAA, referred to as the Alberta Estonian Collection, is planned for early 2012.

The updated virtual archive comprises a comprehensive selection of materials about the history of Alberta's Estonians under the following headings: History, People, Communities, Cultural Life and Multimedia Resources. These selections tell the salient stories about Alberta's Estonian community, linked by common origins, culture and history, past and present. They tell stories about pioneers and immigrants who found their way to Alberta and established themselves and their communities in their adopted homeland. In this context, the selections provide richly-illustrated overviews of societies, community halls, libraries, archival collections, cooperatives and cemeteries. These in turn are interconnected by an emphasis on education, technological innovation and cultural expression, resulting in a rich and progressive legacy.

This digital record of Alberta's Estonian legacy was made possible by the leadership of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society and its members. Thousands of family documents and photographs, extensive coverage of the community's activities in Canadian and Estonian media, and retrieval of archival materials from Canadian and Estonian memory institutions provided a historically important collection to be preserved and accessed by future generations.

The AEHS Heritage Project captures the unique history of Alberta's Estonians in visual, written and digital media formats. These diverse deliverables were made possible by generous financial support from government and private granting agencies. Their participation is noted throughout the virtual archive. Many individuals, near and far, participated in the prodigious effort writing and compiling stories; searching, printing and digitizing photos spanning a century; and contributing artifacts for inclusion in the Estonian Collection at the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

This collection represents an impressive, wide-ranging overview of a small group who nonetheless had a sustained influence in this province.

In five short years, the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS) has accomplished a tremendous amount.

- Archival collection at the Provincial Archives of Alberta.
 - Materials about Alberta's Estonians previously stored at the National Library and Archives of Canada and at the Tartu Institute and Estonian Historical Commission Archives in Toronto were transferred to the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton. As well, members and friends of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society have donated many items to this collection. Additional records will be donated to the PAA early in 2012. Cataloguing is ongoing and is expected to be completed by the middle of 2012.
- Heritage Book.
 - A richly illustrated 298-page book, *Freedom, Land, & Legacy: Alberta's Estonians, 1899-2009* was published in the fall of 2010.
- The DVD.
 - In 2006 the AEHS was invited to make a presentation about Alberta's Estonian pioneers at the 2007 West Coast Estonian Days in Los Angeles. The response was a 30-minute documentary DVD entitled *Alberta's Estonians*.
- Website.
 - Having received very positive reviews of the DVD, the society was inspired to begin establish a digital archive. The original website content, www.albertasource.ca/abestonians, was posted in the summer of 2009.

The rich and inspiring history of Alberta's Estonians, which in 2011 spans three centuries and six generations, is now easily accessible to people of Estonian background, historians and other interested persons. These amazing and unique stories of hardship - but also of achievement, willpower and pride - are well worth preserving.

ALBERTA'S ESTONIAN COLLECTION AT THE PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF ALBERTA

The Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA) now has a substantial collection of materials relating to Alberta's



Estonian community. Items about Alberta's Estonians previously stored at the National Library and Archives of Canada and at the Tartu Institute and Estonian Historical Commission Archives in Toronto have been transferred to the PAA, located at 8555 Roper Road in Edmonton, Alberta. Also, the materials collected by the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society have been donated to the PAA. Items in the collection include historical records, accounts of Estonian pioneer families, maps and rare books.

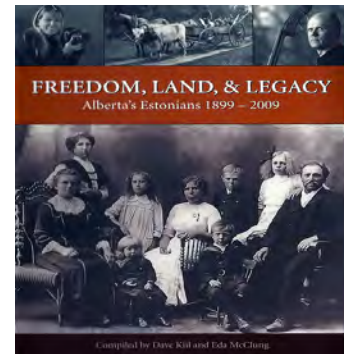
The PAA's mission is "to acquire, preserve and make available records of enduring value that represent the history and culture of our province." The PAA makes these records available to the public once the archives staff have appraised, processed and described them. The records are housed in acid-free enclosures and preserved in climate-controlled and secure vaults. File lists make it relatively easy for researchers to access the records, either on site or through the PAA website.

Everyone is welcome to visit the PAA, and tours for larger groups can be arranged. As well, individuals who wish to donate family, personal, business records are encouraged to discuss the possibilities with the PAA. (Contact Tom Anderson, Team Lead, Private Records, 780-415-0700, tom.anderson@gov.ab.ca.) The PAA accepts papers, letters, photographs, home movies, audio tapes, maps and plans.

Part of collection is now available on site (at the Provincial Archives of Alberta) and online, <http://hermis.alberta.ca/paa/>. Cataloguing of all materials is expected to be completed by the middle of 2012.

FREEDOM, LAND & LEGACY HERITAGE BOOK

Freedom, Land and Legacy: Alberta's Estonians, 1899-2009 (2010) brings together for the first time a variety of source materials describing the stories of Estonians who immigrated to Alberta. Compiled by Dave Kiil and Eda McClung as a celebration of the 110-year history of Alberta's Estonians, this richly illustrated 298-page book is organized into two sections. Part One describes the legacy of the early pioneers. Part Two documents the stories of post-World War II immigrants and extends to present-day activities and achievements. The book also includes articles that had never before been translated into English.



As Tamara Palmer Seiler writes in the introduction, "although they were a small group, [the Estonians] seemed to defy easy categorization." This fascinating community brought with them influences from western, northern and eastern Europe. And, while facing the extreme challenges of carving out a place for themselves in a new land, they maintained their exceptional passion for literature, music and politics.

Palmer also highlights - in addition to the Estonians' success in dealing with the incredible difficulties that all Alberta pioneers faced at the turn of the 20th century - how this group of people had technical ingenuity, how Estonian women made an enormous contribution and how the importance of community is a major theme running through all the stories. Another ongoing theme is memories of the homeland, both bad and good, and how that shaped the way Estonian immigrants lived. They were thrilled to be Canadians and have freedom and land. They were also culturally attached - at least in the early years - to another place.

A major source of the inspiration for this project was Estonian President Lennart Meri, who visited Alberta in 2000 during the celebration of a century of Estonian settlement in this province. Meri was fascinated by the stories about adventurous pioneers who braved hardships to find a new life, yet never forgot their roots. He suggested that the people of Estonia today know little of the history of Estonians abroad, and that the situation should be remedied. Subsequently, The Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, Compatriot Program (Eesti Vabariigi Haridus-ja Teadusministeerium) provided financial support for the project, along with the National Estonian Foundation of Canada (Eesti Sihtkapital Kanadas), and the Canadian and Alberta governments.

For information about how to obtain a copy of the book, go to www.aehs.ca.

ALBERTA'S ESTONIANS DVD

In 2007 the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS) completed a 30-minute documentary DVD entitled *Alberta's Estonians*. This project was inspired by an invitation from the organizers of the 2007 West Coast Estonian Days in Los Angeles to make a presentation about Alberta's Estonian pioneers. It was decided that a DVD would be a good format to use (along with a Reader's Theatre play about the Erdman family).



The DVD was produced by Polar Bear Entertainment, and funded primarily by the National Estonian Foundation of Canada and the Community Initiatives Program of the Alberta government. To assist with the production, AEHS members provided thousands of images, video clips and notes, as well as moral support. In particular, Dave Kiil was a key contributor to the project.

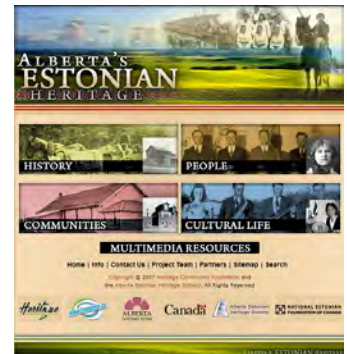
At the Los Angeles event, the DVD received widespread critical acclaim from the audience, which included people from Estonia as well as from many parts of North America. A month later the DVD was shown at the Estdocs Film Festival in Toronto - the only Canadian film on the program. Once again, the DVD *Alberta's Estonians* was warmly received.

Then on November 16-18, 2007, the DVD was shown to appreciative audiences in Calgary, Red Deer and Edmonton, each time with Charge d'Affaires for Estonia in Canada, Rasmus Lumi, in attendance.

For information about how to obtain a copy of the DVD, go to www.aehs.ca.

ALBERTA'S ESTONIAN HERITAGE WEBSITE

A website about Alberta's Estonian heritage, www.albertasource.ca/abestonians, was officially launched in 2008. The website, which currently includes hundreds of articles and approximately 1,200 images, continues to grow and develop. The website (stored at the University of Alberta) is organized into five sections: History, People, Communities, Cultural Life and Multimedia Resources.



The website is designed for use by young students as well as adults interested in their heritage or genealogy and historical researchers. Consequently, the language is simple but the content is extensive.

The idea for the website originated with the collection of a large volume of materials during production of the Alberta's Estonians DVD. Only some of these resources could be included on the DVD, and members of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society agreed that they needed to be accessible to as wide an audience as possible.

Initial work was done in cooperation with the now-defunct Heritage Community Foundation, headed by Dr. Adriana Davies. Funding for the project was provided by the Community Initiatives program of the Alberta government and the New Horizons for Seniors program of the Canadian government. This project would not have been possible without the generous sharing of images, records and other materials by the members of the AEHS and their families and friends.

A celebration of the project took place in Red Deer on May 3, 2008, with government leaders and other honoured guests in attendance. In addition to speeches and a demonstration of the website, the event featured a display of Estonian national costumes belonging to the Red Deer Museum and Art Gallery.

DEVELOPMENT OF A VIRTUAL ARCHIVE

Ain Dave Kiil

Introduction

The history of Canada's Estonians began in 1899 - 110 years ago - with the arrival of the first Estonian pioneers to Canada's Northwest Territories. Part of this huge, sparsely-populated region became the Province of Alberta in 1905.

Two brothers, Kristjan and Hendrik Kingsep, had left their home in Võrumaa in search of a new life. Within a few years, over sixty of their compatriots joined them and provided the impetus to establish several Estonian settlements. The story of Alberta's Estonians is unique in all of Canada.

The purpose of this paper is to:

1. outline the history of the first Estonian settlements in Alberta and later-arriving immigrants,
2. describe the development of a major project to collect and preserve the history and cultural heritage of Alberta's Estonian community,
3. provide an online demonstration of Alberta's Estonian Heritage website, and
4. outline steps to collect, consolidate, preserve and provide access to the archival materials of the Estonian community.

Alberta's Estonians: A historical snapshot

By the start of World War I the so-called 'First Wave' of about 500 Estonian pioneers had settled in Alberta in search of freedom and availability of agricultural land. Sylvan Lake was the first Estonian settlement in the province, but soon most of the contiguous homestead land in the area was taken up by other ethnic groups, preventing the Estonians from establishing a larger community. Some of the early arrivals, especially a group from Saaremaa, applied for homestead land in the Sylvan Lake area and settled there; many others ventured in easterly and westerly directions in search of suitable agricultural land.

Alberta's Estonian Settlements

- Sylvan Lake: 61 Estonians in 1903
- Big Valley: 15 Estonians in 1905
- Stettler: 171 Estonians in 1910
- Medicine Valley: about 160 Estonians in 1916
- Barons: 77 Estonians in 1908
- Foremost/Warner: Nine Estonian homesteads in 1912
- Walsh: 12 Estonian families in 1907
- Peace River: 30 Estonians in 1920s

A small group from the Võru region travelled about 40 km in a westerly direction and found the landscape in the Medicine River Valley to their liking as it reminded them of their homeland.

Another group arrived from the Nurmekunde - Tver region in the Russian Empire and travelled in an easterly direction into Prairie Country. After several weeks of travel, they found suitable farmland about 100km east of Sylvan Lake, near the small communities of Stettler and Big Valley.

These two settlements-Medicine Valley and Stettler/Big Valley-were established in 1902 and 1903, respectively, and became sizeable pioneer communities. A third Estonian settlement, Barons, in southern Alberta, was established in 1904 by settlers arriving from South Dakota in the U.S or directly from Crimea. During the next twenty years, smaller groups, families and individual settlers established three additional Estonian communities: Foremost/Warner and Walsh in southern Alberta and Peace River, some 350 km northwest of Edmonton.



Quarter-sections (160 acres or 64.75 ha), of homestead land were available for \$10.00 and, for most settlers, the availability of land and freedom from oppression were the primary magnets attracting Estonians from Estonia, Livonia, and Estonian communities in the Tver, Samara, Simbirsk and Crimea regions of the Russian Empire. The difficult early period of settlement involved clearing land for cabins and houses, and for agriculture.

As the settlers became established, socioeconomic initiatives in the form of societies, traditional festivals and celebrations, and other collaborative activities became common. Medicine River and Stettler/Big Valley soon established societies and clubs. Community halls, a small church, several cemeteries, marketing cooperatives, a variety of social activities like Christmas and midsummer (Jaanipäev) celebrations, bands and sports clubs became integral parts of community life. The Medicine Valley Estonian Society (MVES) in particular produced and preserved minutes of their meetings from inception in 1910 to dissolution in 1984, a span of 74 years! An Estonian agricultural society (Põllumeeste Selts) was established in Stettler in 1909, followed by the opening of the venerable Linda Hall in 1911.

The three largest communities maintained the traditions of their ancestors. Weddings involving pioneer families were common during the first few decades, especially in the Stettler area. In Barons, family get-togethers and social events were popular. Not surprisingly, second and third generation descendants of Estonian pioneers increasingly left the farm to obtain higher education and employment in the cities. Mixed marriages became common.

An additional 100 Estonians, sometimes referred to as the "Second Wave" of settlers, arrived between the two World Wars.

The so-called "Third Wave" of about 500 post-World War II Estonian immigrants arrived in the late 1940s and the 1950s. The majority of these newcomers eventually settled in Calgary and Edmonton, with Medicine Valley also a prime location. They contributed to a revitalization of the province's Estonian community and heritage preservation. Societies were established in both cities.

The Edmonton and Calgary Estonian Societies were established in 1949 and 1950, respectively, and were comprised largely of post-World War II immigrants whereas the pre- World War II societies drew their membership primarily from the local pioneer agricultural settlements in Stettler/Big Valley and Medicine Valley. The societies sponsored Independence Day celebrations, midsummer festivals and Christmas gatherings, including several province-wide events.

By the 1950s about 1,000 Estonians had settled in Alberta. According to the 2001 and the 2006 Canada Census, about 1,900 and 2,100 Albertans, respectively, claimed Estonian roots (Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2: Albertans with Estonian Ethnicity

Location	Total	Single	Multiple
Calgary	750	115	630
Edmonton	500	115	390
Red Deer	110	10	100

Stettler County	100	15	100
Lacombe County	60	10	50
Lethbridge	60	30	30
St. Albert	50	0	35
Canmore	35	15	20
Others	495	50	460
Totals	2,160	360	1,800
Source: Canada Census 2006			

Note: Of the total population of 2,160 17% of Alberta Estonians claimed single ethnicity in the 2006 Canada Census. A Total of 470 of 2,160 Albertans with Estonian ethnicity, or 22% are younger than 15.

Table 3: Albertans with Estonian Ethnicity: Pop. 15 years and older.

Location	Total	1st Generation	2nd Generation	3rd Generation
Calgary	580	75	225	285
Edmonton	430	110	165	155
Red Deer	100	15	10	80
Lethbridge	45	20	15	15
Others	535	45	545	340
Totals	1,690	265	960	875
Source: Canada Census 2006				

Note 1: In the 2001 Canada Census, 8,720 respondents across Canada claimed Estonian as their mother tongue. A total of 22,085 respondents reported that they had Estonian roots.

Note 2: According to the 1951 Canada Census fewer than 1,000 Albertans claimed Estonian roots.

The history of the Estonian diaspora in the province has been preserved by pioneers and their descendants, and recorded in family histories and local history society publications. In 1965, the Estonian Canadian Historical Commission (EHC) in Toronto sponsored a major research project to document the history of Alberta's unique Estonian community. Robert Kreem and Helene Johani interviewed many Alberta Estonians to collect historical documents, audio recordings, photos and written accounts of pioneer life. These materials were loaned to the EHC by Alberta's Estonians and formed the basis for articles later published in "Eestlased Kanadas" (Estonians in Canada, 1975).

During the same period of time, post-World War II immigrant Voldemar Matiisen of Medicine Valley researched and wrote a definitive account entitled the "History of the Medicine Valley Estonian Settlement" (Matiisen, 1975). The original document is in Estonian but, because of its importance, an English translation is now available. It has been used as a primary source of information for the aforementioned "Estonians in Canada" and "Estonians in Alberta" (Palmer

and Palmer 1985) of the University of Calgary. These documents cover the history and culture of Alberta's Estonians from the viewpoints of both Estonian and Canadian researchers.

In 1983, the Tartu Institute's Library and Archives in Toronto received five boxes containing 354 unique Estonian books and files, including a list of titles of the extensive Medicine Valley Estonian Society's (MVES) Library. Some files of the Calgary Estonian Society are also stored there.

In 1984, a major exhibit about Alberta's Estonians opened at the Red Deer Museum and Archives in central Alberta. The exhibit, coordinated by Rita Matiisen of the MVES, ran for many years and informed Albertans about the Estonian presence in the province. She also donated the Society's valuable historical records to the Library and Archives of Canada in Ottawa. The collection has been catalogued and copies of the files are available for a fee. Following a request by the AEHS, the Library and Archives of Canada has agreed to transfer the MVES collection to the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

In 1990, Mati Talvik and an Estonian TV production crew visited Canada and produced a 12-part series entitled "Eestlased Kanadas" (Estonians in Canada), later shown on ETV. Part 2 is a 45-minute DVD about Alberta's Estonian community.

More recently three major celebrations were held in Stettler, Gilby (Medicine Valley) and Barons in 1999, 2001 and 2004, respectively, marking 100 years since the arrival of Estonian pioneers to these settlements. All three centennials drew large crowds of post-WW II immigrants and multi- generational descendants of earlier settlers and stimulated interest in their cultural heritage. Descendants of pioneer families prepared illustrated displays or Family Storyboards and, in some instances, detailed family trees. More recently, one of these family trees shows about 1,750 connections involving numerous Estonian pioneer families in the Province.



In the year 2000, Estonian President Lennart Meri visited historic Linda Hall near Stettler and the nearby small Estonian House (Museum), and expressed keen interest in the history of the province's Estonian diaspora while stressing the need to keep our cultural heritage alive.



The centennial celebrations and President Meri's visit were highly successful. At the same time, it was increasingly obvious that the Calgary and Edmonton Estonian Societies, with an ageing post-World War II membership, could not maintain effective programs much longer.

During a visit by Estonian athletes at the 2001 World Athletics Championships in Edmonton, an article in "Eesti Päevaleht" (Lääne 2001) referred to the need to consider a provincewide

organization to more effectively preserve and promote Estonian culture and traditions. By 2003 a consensus was forming around the idea that a province-wide society would best help us achieve this goal.

Discussions and a formative meeting in 2004 led to the formal establishment of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS) in 2005. Membership is made up of mostly multigenerational descendants of pioneers and immigrants from across Alberta, a province with an area nearly 15 times the size of Estonia! Owing to the makeup of the membership, our working language is English. Province-wide, perhaps 20 older post-WWII immigrants are proficient in their mother tongue. It is encouraging to note that Estonian language lessons are still available on a private basis in Calgary.

Twenty years ago, the Edmonton Estonian Society started publishing "AjaKaja", a singlesheet newsletter, covering activities and news of general interest. Initially published in Estonian, then in both English and Estonian, most issues during the last five years have been in English. "Ajakaja" became the official publication of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society in 2005. Issued twice annually, the 30 to 40-page publication contains articles about Society activities, stories about pioneer families and current members, and news from Estonia.

The AEHS sponsors annual general meetings, major midsummer (Jaanipäev) festivals every two years (2005, 2007 and 2009) and other events of interest. An AEHS website enables members and other Internet users to be introduced to the Society.

Other recent program and activity highlights include a meeting of the Board of Directors in Tallinn in 2007, the so-called Great Estonian Stone Exchange (GESE) in 2008 between relatives to commemorate the link between the first Estonian pioneer family to settle in Alberta and their ancestral home in the Võru area, and participation in recent West Coast Estonian Days in Los Angeles and Seattle along the Pacific coast of North America.

Alberta Estonian Heritage Society's legacy project

Until about three years ago, the collection, preservation and availability of historical material about the province's Estonians was, at best sporadic with little, if any, thought given to the establishment of a permanent archive. Historical materials have been maintained by individual families and local societies, and made available to researchers and the media on an as needed basis. Since the mid-1960s, historical files and photos have also been made available to Library and Archives of Canada and the Estonian Central Archives in Toronto.

In 2006, the AEHS received an invitation from the organizers of the 2007 West Coast Estonian Days in Los Angeles to make a presentation about Alberta's Estonians. A decision to accept the invitation set in motion a major project for a small society, including the production of a 30-minute documentary film "Alberta's Estonians" and a more or less concurrent development of a digital heritage website.



The remainder of this presentation will describe and demonstrate the collection, preservation and accessibility of archival material pertaining to the history and cultural heritage of Alberta's Estonians.

Planning for the project got underway in summer of 2006. In the absence of easily accessible information about the province's Estonian pioneers and immigrants, Society members were contacted and asked to review and to make their heritage material available for the DVD and the digital heritage archive.

In response, many textual materials, photographs, audio cassettes, videos and a variety of historical documents were received. The material ranged from publicized accounts of family histories, "AjaKaja" articles, homemade movies, recordings of music, articles from local history society publications and newspapers, to printed and/or digitized photographs.

Early in 2007 a story outline and production timetable were developed for the DVD as the centerpiece of our presentation in Los Angeles in fall of 2007. Photographic images, video footage, oral interviews, music and narration highlighted the storyline tracing the history and culture of the Estonians who made Alberta their home.

The next phase of the memory project involved the production of a website. Its development has proven both challenging and, at the same time, rewarding. Printed and digital materials include literature, audiovisuals and thousands of photographs. Digitizing, formatting, captioning of images, writing of stories, researching, and maintaining contact with contributors of historical information have generated an impressive data base.

In addition to the collection of materials provided by Society members, the project has involved visits to libraries, archives and museums, contacts with and acquisitions of relevant information from the Provincial Archives of Alberta, the National Library and Museum of Estonia, Saaremaa Museum, Estonian Central Archives in Toronto, Tartu Institute in Toronto, the Library and Archives of Canada, and the University of Alberta Library and Archives in Edmonton.

As part of its centennial celebration in 2005, Alberta launched a visionary project AlbertaSource.ca, home of the Alberta Online Encyclopedia. It is a web portal developed by the Heritage Community Foundation (HCF) "to bring Alberta to the world and the world to Alberta." Having explored different approaches to develop the Alberta Estonian heritage project, the AEHS decided to become partners with AlbertaSource.ca to produce an authoritative website entitled Alberta's Estonian Heritage.

The Society assumed responsibility for project coordination, the development of the storyline, the collection and preparation of materials for website production, and research. The HCF looked after the data base design, website production and online maintenance.

The so-called Phase 3 of website production was completed in May 2009. A new section about the role and cultural contributions of post-World War II immigrants, several hundred photographic images, newspaper articles and other published material, digitized copies of "AjaKaja", and enhanced coverage of athletes and musicians, both local and Estonian, expanded the storyline substantially.



Alberta's Estonian Heritage website contains several hundred pages of illustrated stories, historical documents, over 1100 searchable photographic images with captions, and nearly an hour of audiovisuals. A sitemap (table of contents) and search webpage provides the user with a roadmap to available information on this digital highway.

The HCF recently transferred the maintenance of the heritage website to the University of Alberta in Edmonton and ceased operations in June, 2009. Our intent is to enhance the heritage website with new materials.

An online demonstration of the AEHS digital archive introduces the major themes, website design, and highlights the history and cultural heritage of Alberta's Estonians in words and pictures.

A digital highway for information and networking

Alberta's Estonian Heritage website tells the story of individuals and families, from pioneers to present-day descendants and immigrants, who have made Alberta their home. The story is told under five main thematic elements:

1. **History:** Introduction of Estonian history with a more detailed look at why Estonians came to Canada, their origins and their journeys.
The section explores the social and political conditions in Estonia before and after the arrival of Estonian pioneers in Alberta. Their origins in Estonia, Livonia and other regions of the Russian Empire, and their emigration patterns and settlements in Alberta are covered. Several major documents provide detailed descriptions of Alberta's Estonian community from initial agricultural settlements to present-day efforts to preserve and promote their cultural heritage.
2. **People:** Description of pioneer families and later immigrants, including currently active individuals involved in preserving their Estonian cultural heritage in an ethnically diverse province.
This section tells the story of the individuals and families who settled in Alberta and who contributed to the development of the province from 1899 through to the first decade of the 21st century. Pioneer families as well as post-World War II immigrants who shaped the growth and development of Alberta are included.
3. **Communities:** Coverage of the early agricultural communities as well as Estonian organizations in urban areas.
This section explores the main Estonian settlements - Sylvan Lake, Medicine Valley, Stettler/Big Valley and Barons- established before Alberta became a province in 1905, and the three smaller communities of Walsh, Foremost/Warner and Peace River established between 1907 and 1924.
4. **Cultural Life:** This section describes the life and times of Alberta's Estonians and efforts to preserve and promote their culture.

Cultural heritage continues to be highly valued among Alberta Estonians. Arts and crafts,

customs and traditions, leisure and recreation, and organizations are the main categories included. A memorable visit by former Estonian President Lennart Meri in 2000 and numerous appearances by Estonian musicians, conductors, choirs and athletes heightened interest in things Estonian and strengthened the commitment to preserve our heritage.

5. **Multimedia Resources:** This section provides a searchable digital photographic archive and audiovisual footage from oral interviews. Entire issues or selected articles from "AjaKaja" are included, as are Estonian media clippings.

This journey along the information highway provides us with an opportunity to stop at over a thousand locations to learn about the history and culture of this small but active ethnic community.

The website provides excellent opportunities for cooperation and networking within and between individuals, organizations and memory institutions. Associated documents, data and images stored on computers can easily be accessed and exchanged to facilitate research, to communicate information on topics of mutual interest, and to preserve materials for use by future generations.



Alberta Estonian Heritage Society Archival Collection

The final phase of this heritage project, now underway, involves the collection and preservation of historical information about the Estonian diaspora in the Province of Alberta. It will include historical records used in the development of the digital archive as well as materials, submitted by members and friends of the Society, but not used in the production of "Alberta's Estonians" DVD and the heritage website.

In September 2009 the Society's Board of Directors established an Archival Committee to solicit archival materials from members and past members, including Estonians who have lived in Alberta but now reside out of province or the country. Qualifying materials include documents, photos, correspondence, diaries, certificates, drawings, cassettes and films.



The AEHS has decided to donate its materials to the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA) in Edmonton. In

the future, donations can be made by the AEHS as well as individuals who want their family records preserved in a safe location for use by their descendants, historians, and other interested individuals and institutions. Individual donations will not be part of the AEHS Collection.

Current plans call for the initial donation to be made by March 2010. The Collection will be described and catalogued and will eventually become accessible onsite at the PAA and online.

We anticipate that relevant collections currently stored in a number of out of province locations, including the Estonian Central Archives and Tartu Institute in Toronto, will become part of the AEHS Collection. The Medicine Valley Estonian Society files are being transferred from the Library and Archives of Canada to the Provincial Archives of Alberta. Several major documents about Alberta's Estonian pioneers, including relevant sections in "Estonians in Canada" (Laaman, 1975; Piirvee, 1975) and the "History of the Medicine Valley Estonian Settlement" (Matiisen, 1975) have been translated from Estonian to English and will be included in an illustrated print version of the "Story of Alberta's Estonians".

Summary and Conclusions

The history of Alberta's Estonians spans 110 years, a period longer than many other Estonian expatriate communities worldwide.

In the absence of a traditional archive for the preservation of historical-cultural information about Alberta's Estonian diaspora, we decided to develop and produce a documentary "Alberta's Estonians" DVD and a dynamic Alberta's Estonian Heritage website. The information is based on thorough research, enthusiastic participation by Alberta's Estonians, and collection of materials from individuals, organizations and institutions in Canada and Estonia. Much of the material has been digitized, and preserved on CDs and DVDs.

The collection, organization and verification of submitted materials and development of descriptions such as captions for images were done by a handful of dedicated AEHS volunteers and HCF staff. Meetings, scanning sessions and progress reports about the DVD and website helped to increase awareness of the project and donation of materials. Given the nature of this memory project, i.e. absence of a central archival collection, the preparation of storylines for the digital archive proceeded in a step-wise fashion as new materials and funds became available.

Going forward, an important challenge to be tackled is the need to preserve all of the historical and cultural heritage information, including original literature, photographic images and audiovisual materials.

Volunteers interested in their heritage know their subject matter and are invaluable for collecting, describing and preserving these materials. Training of volunteers is important, but the availability of professionals and funds, especially for development of digital archives and proper procedures for organizing and preserving collections, is important for accessing archival files and digitized materials. Archives developed and managed by volunteers are often not organized systematically or in a timely manner, with the result that collections may not be widely available.

Most 3rd to 7th generation descendants of Alberta's Estonians do not speak Estonian, yet many have connections with and an interest in their ethnic roots. "Alberta's Estonians" DVD and Alberta's Estonian Heritage website are in English to better inform Alberta's Estonian community and the public-at-large about the history and cultural heritage of the province's Estonians. This approach is consistent with our experience that the preservation and promotion of the Estonian spirit, culture and traditions can, in a specific setting, survive and even thrive with limited use of

the mother tongue.

Future work to enhance the heritage project will continue as needed, but the main focus will be on the establishment of a comprehensive Alberta Estonian Heritage Society Collection at the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton. Almost all materials, including thousands of photographs and many of the printed articles and documents, are already in a digitized format. Publications, documents, photographs, both originals and copies, will be part of the collection. Procedures for donating archival materials are being developed and will be communicated to AEHS members and others with Alberta connections.

With the help of a grant from the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research (Kiil and McClung, 2009), and in collaboration with the Baltic Heritage Network and interested memory institutions, the intent is to preserve and make available the history and cultural heritage of Alberta's Estonians. Professional guidance and contributions will continue to be sought, and a priority will be placed on increased awareness of and accessibility to the Collection.

Acknowledgements:

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- National Estonian Foundation of Canada (Eesti Sihtkapital Kanadas), (2006, 2009),
- Government of Alberta (2007),
- Government of Canada (2007), and
- Estonian Ministry of Education and Research (Eesti Vabariigi Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium), (2009).

I am indebted to many members of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society for their valuable contributions to the heritage project: President Bob Kingsep for his overall leadership, members of the Board, and many members and friends of the Society. Eda McClung and Helgi Leesment deserve special recognition for their many significant contributions to the project since its inception.

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OUTREACH

As the name suggests, the focus of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS) is on people, places and events in the province of Alberta. However, the AEHS is also becoming known and receiving praise in points beyond, including eastern Canada, the U.S. and Estonia. Following is a summary of recent AEHS outreach activities. Undoubtedly, there will be many more to come.

Los Angeles, Seattle and Toronto



When the AEHS was invited to make a presentation about Alberta's Estonian pioneers at the 2007 West Coast Estonian Days in Los Angeles, a decision was made to produce a 30-minute documentary DVD entitled Alberta's Estonians as well as a play called "Thrice Pioneers," written by Lillian Munz and performed by Helgi Leesment,

Martha Munz Gue and Dave Kiil. The DVD made its premiere in Los Angeles (with the seemingly inevitable heart-stopping technical problems). Eda McClung and Dave Kiil participated in the showing of the DVD at the 2007 Estdocs Film Festival in Toronto - the only Canadian film on the program.

About a dozen AEHS members attended the two West Coast Estonian Days mentioned above, where they shared information and exchanged ideas with other North Americans of Estonian heritage.

Dave Kiil made a PowerPoint presentation about Alberta Estonian history at the Seattle conference.

Estonia

At the Baltic Heritage Network Conference 2009 in Tartu, Estonia, AEHS Communications Convener Dave Kiil gave a presentation with PowerPoint illustrations. The presentation was entitled "Alberta's Estonian Heritage: Development of a digital archive."

In 2007 newly-appointed AEHS President Bob Kingsep visited Estonia with his family to locate the boyhood farmstead of his grandfather Hendrik Kingsep and his brother Kristjan, the first Estonian settlers to register a homestead in Alberta. During an extraordinary evening involving members and international friends of the AEHS, Bob presided over the first-ever AEHS board meeting outside Alberta.



The World

The digital heritage archive/website, is of course now available to anyone, anywhere in the world.

CALGARY ESTONIAN SOCIETY

In Calgary, a strong desire to preserve and promote Estonian culture has remained despite the presence of only a small Estonian representation. The official establishment of the Calgary Estonian Society on 17 June 1950 was successful in unifying Calgary's Estonian population which was scattered across the city. Its first president was Nikolai Rouk.



The activities of Calgary's Estonian Society revolved around small weekly events and large annual celebrations blended with private social functions. During the 1950s, Estonian pioneers gathered on a weekly basis at the downtown YWCA. Gradually, Second World War immigrants who arrived in Canada via Scandinavia and Germany joined the organization. The most popular annual events were the commemoration and celebration of Independence Day, occurring every 24 February; Jaanipäev, the festive midsummer solstice gala; and Christmas concerts and church services. Celebrations typically included speeches, songs, dance and food.

Estonians also participated in local multicultural fairs showcasing Estonian cuisine, crafts, and costumes. It was here that Calgary's Estonian community introduced participants to homemade cranberry juice (years before the beverage found its way into grocery stores). During the 1950s and 1960s, there were approximately 200 people of Estonian ancestry living in Calgary. Calgary's Estonian Society contributed a float to the famous Stampede parade in 1955 and 1973. Otto Laaman was the president of the society from 1953 until his retirement in 1978; Peter Leesment was his elected successor.



During the late 1980s and early 1990s, an Estonian language school functioned on a bi-weekly basis: Calgary's Estonian population was large enough to justify having its children learn about Estonian culture and speak the language in a formal setting. The late 1980s and early 1990s (Estonia regained independence from Russia in 1991) were joyous and featured numerous activities. An Estonian basketball team played two friendly exhibition games at the Calgary Saddledome. The rock band Ultima Thule played a concert as the warm-up band for the Canadian band "64-40". As

well, a large boys choir accompanied by a chamber orchestra entertained a crowd of classical music and choir enthusiasts. In October of 1991, members of Calgary's Estonian community organized a joint celebration with members of the Latvian and Lithuanian communities honouring the Baltic states' regaining their independence earlier in the year. On another day that autumn, an airplane flew overhead displaying a banner that read "The Baltics are free. Thank you Canada." The regained independence was an especially important event because large segments of the Calgary Estonian Society were political refugees who had escaped from Estonia during Soviet occupation in the Second World War.

The association's status during the 1990s became somewhat undefined and even dormant for numerous years as there were difficulties in establishing an executive committee. However, despite this organizational setback, individual members of Calgary's Estonian community spontaneously organized various events. These included the visit of then president of Estonia, Lennart Meri, to Calgary and elsewhere in Alberta in the year 2000.

A free, independent Estonia transformed the relationship between Estonians living in Canada and Estonia itself. Suddenly, one could visit relatives abroad, compile historical and genealogical research, and establish new contacts. Consequently, these possibilities drastically altered the goals of the Calgary Estonian Society. In 2006, the organization disbanded as the recently formed Alberta Estonian Heritage Society embraced former members of all Alberta Estonian organizations, setting new goals reflecting changed circumstances.

CALGARY ESTONIAN SOCIETY PRESIDENTS

The Calgary Estonian Society was formed on 17 June 1950 and has had a number of presidents that have contributed to the organization. This section will profile some of them including Nikolai Rouk, Enn Tiislar, Marta Kivik, Tarmo Lobu and Ottomar Laaman. In 2006, the Calgary Estonian Society disbanded with the formation of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society, a province-wide organization.

- Enn and Pärja Tiislar
- Helgi Leesment
- Marta Kivik
- Nikolai Rõuk
- Ottomar Laaman
- Tarmo Lõbu

ENN AND PÄRJA TIISLAR



Enn Tiislar was president of the Calgary Estonian Society (CES) from November 1991 to November 1995. The Society became dormant as of November 1995 when the long-serving executive resigned after many unsuccessful attempts to find replacements. However, Enn Tiislar's term came to a formal end in 2003 when a new president and treasurer took over the reins in order to facilitate the formal closing of the organization and formation of the new AEHS.

Enn is a retired chemical engineer. He worked for many years at BA Oil / Gulf Oil and Petro-Canada in the finance, marketing and systems departments.

Enn's family originally came to Canada to the Peace River area near Bonanza, on the north shore of Bear Creek, in 1949. They were sponsored as refugees to Canada by Stanley and Anna (née Lustwerk, born in Tallinn, Estonia on June 16, 1894) Tomkins.

Enn's family moved to Toronto where he grew up and received an education. He married Pärja in 1972. Enn and Pärja have lived in Calgary on and off, having been transferred to Ontario on several occasions, since 1986. They now reside in Canmore.

Enn characterizes his presidency generally as a quiet time. The executive annually organized Independence Day commemorations and Christmas church services combined with short concerts featuring children's choral singing and various musical soloists. Pärja, along with the help of several other CES women, enthusiastically directed the programs and food arrangements. The ladies typically served Christmas sausages, sauerkraut with rye bread and homemade sweets. Under Enn's guidance, Independence Day was celebrated as a Sunday brunch at a hotel, making it a family affair rather than an adults only event.

Members were encouraged to attend Jaanipäev celebrations at historical Linda Hall in Stettler, an event held roughly every other year in June.

Pärja volunteered as the Calgary area coordinator for the Centennial Celebration of Estonians in Alberta, headed by Toomas Pääsuke of Edmonton. She provided considerable support as a board member on several committees: programme, music, songbook, Calgary publicity and registration. Pärja helped compile an extensive mailing list tracking down descendants of pioneer Estonians and former Calgary residents regardless of whether they lived in Alberta or elsewhere in the world. A total of over 500 attended the highly successful July 1999 event, many arriving from outside Alberta.



When Estonia regained its independence in 1991 Estonian athletes, musicians and other individuals travelled to the Calgary area for international competitions, guest appearances and

exchange programs. The Calgary Estonian Society always attempted to help with travel arrangements, provided local contacts, and held small gatherings where local Estonian-Canadians could meet with the visitors from Estonia on an informal basis.

The highest profile visitor came while Enn was president of the otherwise dormant Calgary Estonian Society. Fellow Calgarians Helgi Leesment and Helle Kraav, along with Pärja, organized the official visit of Estonian President Lennart Meri to Alberta in July of 2000. Many local members of the Calgary Estonian Society were able to meet the President at an informal barbecue at the Tiislars. It was a thrilling evening for all the participants.

HELGI LEESMENT

Helgi Leesment served as president of the Calgary Estonian Society from 2003 until 2006.



Helgi's family moved to the west coast of British Columbia in 1951, having previously lived in Sweden. The Leesments traveled throughout Canada rather extensively having spent time in southern Ontario, greater Vancouver and Calgary. After obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree she later returned to school for another degree in Library Studies. She has worked at three universities and has spent time as a freelance library consultant.

Helgi has contributed to Alberta's Estonian community in a number of ways. Her articles on Estonian heritage have been featured in AjaKaja on numerous occasions. Over the years, several dozen articles and photos have appeared in several Estonian publications in Toronto.

While living in Calgary Helgi was the Citizenship Council representative for the Calgary Estonian Society. She organized the Estonian cultural displays and refreshment tables at the annual Food Fairs. She helped modernize the organization by transferring the membership list and other important documents from typewriter to computer.

Helgi played a pivotal role in the development of non-competitive rhythmic gymnastics in Alberta, serving on the provincial board for ten years. The rhythmic gymnastics club she co-founded in 1979 is now functioning in its 29th year with Helgi serving as the ladies coach.

Upon returning to Calgary after another stint on the west coast, Helgi helped established a small Estonian supplementary school. The school operated for three memorable years. Helgi was instrumental in organizing the visit by Estonian President Lennart Meri in 2004 and the Barons Centennial celebration in 2004.

Helgi is one of the founders of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society and served as its first Vice-President. She is recognized as a major contributor to historical projects documenting the efforts and contributions of Estonian pioneers in Alberta.

MARTA KIVIK

Marta Kivik moved to Calgary from Toronto with her family in 1988. Having been active in the Toronto Estonian community, Marta was quickly recruited into the executive of the Calgary Estonian Society and was president from December 1988 to March 1990.



Those were heady years for Estonian communities throughout the world. Glasnost and Perestroika were introduced in the Soviet Union. Consequently, Estonians experienced greater civil liberties and were permitted to travel abroad. Estonian musicians and sports teams visited Calgary to showcase their skills and see another part of the world. Calgary's Estonian Society welcomed their guests with open hearts as Marta organized receptions for her Estonian visitors.

A Soviet basketball team played against the Calgary 88's in the Saddledome. The players' names were nearly all Estonian. With only a few hours to organize, Marta arranged a reception and dinner for them at the Ranchman's Restaurant on MacLeod Trail.

Marta handled other visiting groups with equal aplomb including the return of the basketball players the following year, the rock group Ultima Thule, and the greatest challenge of all, 120 members of a boys' choir accompanied by a chamber orchestra.

Marta's daughters both attended the Calgary Estonian Supplementary School where Marta also volunteered as a parent. The Kivik family returned to Toronto in 1990. Marta continues to be active in the Estonian community.

NIKOLAI RÕUK

Nikolai Rõuk was a co-founder, president and vice-president of the Lõuna Alberta Eesti Selts, or Southern Alberta Estonian Society, which had a brief existence in the late 1940s. The Calgary Estonian Society was established on June 17, 1950 with Nikolai Rõuk at the helm as co-founder and president until January 31, 1953. He continued on the executive in the position of Vice-President for many additional years.



Mr. Rõuk's term of office as president may have been a short 2 ½ years, but he continued to function in a leadership role in the Calgary Estonian community for several decades. He had solid experience in this regard from Estonia where he was a lawyer, a director on the Estonian Egg Export Board and a leader within the Sakala fraternity which he had joined during his years at Tartu University. He was also legal consultant to various businesses and organizations. The Second World War caused his family to escape from Estonia, winding up temporarily at a large Estonian refugee camp in Germany where he became one of the directors.

Nikolai Rõuk's European credentials as a lawyer were not accepted once he settled in Canada in 1948. He and his wife Gerda both worked as bookkeepers. Their daughter Kadri became a high school teacher.

Nikolai Rõuk was an excellent speaker, being invited occasionally to deliver key speeches at other Estonian communities across Canada. Upon his arrival in Calgary he was unable to speak English, thus at gatherings involving non-Estonians, Enzio Mägi frequently shared the podium, providing instant translation. At other times Inge Zach provided the translation until Mr. Rõuk acquired English, adding it to the several languages he already spoke. Among his many functions, Mr. Rõuk was the Estonian representative on the Canadian Citizenship Council.

Nikolai Rõuk had the bearing of an elder statesman, exuding a quiet yet firm confidence. As a result he developed good relations with the media, raising awareness about Estonia and the local Estonian community in the Calgary area. He arranged Calgary Albertan and other media interviews when prominent Estonians visited Calgary. During the early decades of the Calgary Estonian Society, Mr. Rõuk maintained close ties with other Baltic states. He arranged a display of Estonian cultural items at the T. Eaton department store in February 1956. At the time Eaton's was a prestigious store and it was considered a major coup to be permitted an entire window display at its prominent downtown location.

Many people of various ethnic backgrounds paid their respects at the funeral of Nikolai Rõuk who died in 1992 at the age of 90.

OTTOMAR LAAMAN

Ottomar Laaman served as the president of the Calgary Estonian Society from January 1953 until June 1978, a total of 25 years.

He was born in the Crimea in 1900. Decades earlier his grandparents migrated here from Estonia to escape Russian oppression. Ottomar grew up in the village of Samruk on the Crimean west coast where his father operated a small store within their farm house.

In his book, *Mälestused Krimmist* (Memories from Crimea), Ottomar provides an account of family life in the Crimea. He describes the history of Estonian settlement in the Crimea and the politics behind the migration.

Ottomar moved to Estonia in 1918 where it had recently reestablished its independence. He studied agriculture and law at Tartu University. The Second World War forced Ottomar to again flee his home. He relocated for a short time as a refugee in Germany before immigrating to Canada in 1948. Ottomar lived in Calgary for 30 years, 25 of which were served as the president of the Calgary Estonian Society. He later moved to an exclusive Estonian community near Kitchener, Ontario. He passed away in 1988.



TARMO LÕBU

Tarmo Lõbu was president of the Calgary Estonian Society from November 1981 to March 1983.

Tarmo grew up in Toronto among the largest population of Estonians living outside of Estonia. Among his activities there, he sang in the Leelo and Estonia choirs. He is a Chartered Accountant with a business degree from Carleton University. He moved to Calgary in 1979.

During his tenure as president, Tarmo organized several important annual events including:

- Estonian handicrafts display and refreshments table at the 1982 Citizenship Council Food Fair.
- 1982 Independence Day program and dinner held at the Rathskeller Room, Mount Royal College.
- 1983 Independence Day program and dinner held at the Hungarian Cultural Centre. The program featured three talented rhythmic gymnasts dressed in traditional Estonian colours, coached by Helgi Leesment.

Tarmo returned to Toronto in 1983 and held the position of president at the Estonian Credit Union Bank from 2001 - 2007.

ESTONIAN SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOL



In the late 1980s Calgary's Estonian community sought to establish a school solely dedicated to teaching the Estonian language and other aspects of Estonian heritage. The community turned to former high school teacher Helgi Leesment who had already conducted semi-formal Estonian language classes for several years at her home. Helgi agreed to be the principal as well as a teacher. The school was established in October 1988 as a subsidiary of the Calgary Estonian Society. It became a member of the Southern Alberta Heritage Language Association (SAHLA). Estonian Dr. Livia

Kivisild was a director of the Association for many years.

With parents eager to volunteer their time, classes were initially held at the Tiislar home before moving to a larger facility located at the Lacombe Centre on Bannister Rd SE, Calgary. A year later classes switched to a more central location at the Connaught Community School on 12 Ave SW & 11 St SW.



Initially there were seven students ranging in age from five to twelve. Some spoke fluent Estonian while others knew only a few words. This meant the creation of four groups divided by age into younger and older groups, subdivided by the level of the spoken language. Thus, two to four language teachers were needed in addition to volunteers organizing crafts, singing, folkdance and other activities. Each day included games and snacks. Local and out-of-town visitors offered guest classes occasionally, depending on their field

of specialty.

At least two such visitors came from Estonia, a rare treat for students because travel restrictions were still in place for Estonians living under Soviet rule. The school applied for funding to purchase language learning materials and to subsidize the rent. The National Estonian Foundation of Canada, in Toronto, responded generously. Under the terms of the grant, the teachers were paid \$5 to \$7 per day. The teachers immediately donated their "salaries" back to the school.



Classes were held for two hours every other week. When parents brought their older children to the school, younger siblings often wanted to participate in many of the activities. As a result, parents organized simple activities for those toddlers while the older ones had more serious instruction.

The students who spoke Estonian were taught reading and writing skills with an emphasis on increasing their vocabulary. Those who were new to the language learned basic words such as numbers, colours, family and home-related terms, and exchanging pleasantries. All students received instruction in Estonian geography and simple facts about its history. Crafts and other related projects were enjoyed by the younger students. As a way of demonstrating progress, students, for instance, had to ask for scissors or a crayon colour in Estonian. Teachers and students organized special events and the events were well attended by members of the Estonian community. Such examples included Christmas concerts, Independence Day (February 24), Mother's Day and a choral performance at Jaanipäev in Stettler.

The school organized special outings such as an afternoon of indoor skating, a horse drawn hay-ride followed by hot chocolate around a bonfire, swimming at Willy G. Kalvee's private indoor pool, participation at an Estonian style confirmation celebration, watching and meeting professional Estonian basketball players at the Saddledome, attending traditional Jaanipäev celebrations at Stettler, a picnic and treasure hunt at Fish Creek Park, attending a choral concert presented by 120 professional young boys & older chamber orchestra members from Estonia, a patio celebration at the Saar residence, a trip to the Red Deer Museum to see the Estonian display and a Mother's Day brunch at the Palliser Hotel. The older students also participated along with Latvian and Lithuanian youth at a joint Baltic celebration of the newly regained independence of these three countries in fall 1991.

The school closed in 1991 as several families with children moved out of Calgary. It was decided to continue with limited activities, with an emphasis on preparing the students to perform at various special events. Helgi Leesment was among those leaving Alberta. Upon her departure, the supplementary school families held a farewell gathering where they presented her with a wall-poster size certificate of appreciation signed by the students. Subsequently, former high school teacher Pärja Tiislar directed the students' activities for the next few years, on the agreed upon informal basis.

In 1995 the Calgary Estonian Society became dormant when members of the Executive resigned and attempts at finding suitable replacements were deemed unsuccessful. The Society formally ceased to exist in 2006, transferring its loyalties and funds to the newly formed Alberta Estonian Heritage Society.

Students (1988 to 1991):

Nicole Asmus, Andrea Kivik, Erika Kivik, Krista Leesment, Karl Leetmaa, Melanie Matiisen, Erika Ojamaa, Elizabeth Saar, Julia Saar, Brigid Soide, Vivian Soide, Milvi Tiislar, Jeffrey White, Joshua White

Kindergarten Students (1988 to 1991):

Michael Asmus, Krista Leetmaa, Kersti Ojamaa, Sylvia Soide.

Instructors (1988 to 1991):

Kathy Asmus - crafts, Marta Kivik - language & choir, Helgi Leesment - language & director, Krista Leesment - language, Kersti Leetmaa - language & treasurer, Christina Robertson - guest, Rein Saar - guest, Ingrid Soide - folkdance, Laila Soide - guest, Pärja Tiislar - choir & many other functions, Anneli White - choir.

EDMONTON ESTONIAN SOCIETY

Edmontonians of Estonian descent trace their roots to two distinctly different environments. The first group consists of second- and even third-generation Estonians who moved away from their farms and gravitated towards Alberta's urban centers in an effort to pursue post-secondary studies and, eventually, find suitable employment.

The other group is comprised of World War II Estonian refugees desperately trying to escape Russian occupation of Estonia and Siberia's gulags during a period of grave violence and uncertainty. Soviet officials viewed Estonians who fled their country during World War II as traitors; for their treason, these so-called Estonian traitors were subject to work in labour camps in Siberia upon their return to Russian soil. Many of Alberta's newcomers had a contact here, typically a friend or relative. Families wishing to emigrate had to seek out sponsorships from Canada, often a difficult and arduous process.



The first World War II Estonian refugee to arrive was Mari Sörra, who married a French-Canadian from Edmonton. Mari Sörra-Pelletier and her husband ventured into Edmonton's restaurant business, purchasing the "Four Aces" restaurant in the city centre. The restaurant flourished under their management. Mari went on to become one of the Edmonton Estonian Society's founding members and served on its executive committee. Estonians eager to begin a new life in a new country soon followed in her footsteps. Many of the Estonians who arrived in Edmonton were skilled professionals, including architects and agricultural experts. Members of Alberta's original Estonian homesteading societies, such as Edward Moro and Robert Kinna, were already living in Edmonton and were happy to accommodate their long-lost friends or relatives.

EDMONTON ESTONIAN SOCIETY PRESIDENTS



On 24 February 1949, members of Edmonton's Estonian community gathered at Robert and Mai Kreem's residence to celebrate Estonian Independence day. The date, 24 February 1918, marks the anniversary of Estonia's independence from the Soviet Union at the end of World War I. Thus, in 1949, when Estonians gathered in celebration of their independence, Estonian songs, dances, and reminiscent conversations brought vivid memories of

their homeland and greater appreciation for their new home, Edmonton. The following year, Independence Day was held at the much larger Social Credit Hall where the program not only consisted of music and dance but important speeches as well.

It was here that the idea of creating an organization was born. Such an organization would allow active members of Edmonton's Estonian community to coordinate future Estonian activities, preserve Estonia's history, and promote its customs and traditions. St. John Lutheran Church hosted the first general meeting on 4 December 1949. Those present were appointed to committee positions and discussed possible future activities. Precisely one year later, in 1950, participants celebrated Estonian Independence Day with speeches, music, and art exhibits. The following year's celebration was slightly improved and featured Estonian folk dancers and a joint gala comprised of members from Edmonton's Latvian and Lithuanian communities. Each Independence Day celebration would begin with the Canadian national anthem and conclude with the Estonian national anthem.

By 1975, the EES had 48 members. *Jaanipäev* was held at Lydia Pal's cottage at Sandy Lake in 1977 and 1978. The 60 th anniversary of Estonian Independence was a tremendous celebration featuring an 8-member choir conducted by Eva Weir. In 1978, several members of the society participated in Edmonton Heritage Days with the assistance of a folk dance group from Toronto. Society activities blossomed in the late 1970s and early 1980s culminating with the publication of the newsletter *Pajataja*.

Maintaining close ties with other successful Alberta-based Estonian societies was important. Edmonton had a particularly close relationship with the Medicine Valley Estonian Society. As the years progressed, the Edmonton Estonian Society (EES) found a comfortable groove, maintaining a consistent annual schedule of celebrations and social functions. The EES remained active over the decades with membership peaking at the time of Estonian independence from the former USSR in 1991. Activities included the hosting of Estonian athletes participating in various international sports, publishing the newsletter *Ajakaja*, and hosting special events.

Throughout its years of existence, the Edmonton Estonian Society was organized by a small but dedicated group of individuals who include A.E. Pilt, Feliks Lasberg, Walter Reili, Ilmar Pals, Nurmi Simm, Siim Ruusauk and Ludmilla Kivi.

The declaration of Estonian Independence in 1991 led to a renewal of interest in all things Estonian. Eda McClung was instrumental in launching a new wave of activity featuring annual celebrations. Her term as EES President was followed by others during the 1990s including Viivi Piil, Jan Urke, Toomas Pääsuke and Dave Kiil. 1999 was a particularly busy year for the EES, highlighted by the society's 50 th anniversary and a centennial celebration at historic Linda Hall near Stettler, Alberta. The following year, a group of EES members travelled to Linda Hall to welcome Estonian President Lennart Meri and his family to Alberta. In 2001, the EES hosted the Estonian National Track and Field team, including Olympic champion Erkki Nool.

Younger generations were encouraged to participate in Estonian activities. In 2004, there was an effort to combine all of Alberta's Estonian societies into a unified, coherent network. Within a year, the Edmonton Estonian Society closed its doors, making way for the newly formed Alberta Estonian Heritage Society .

Robert Kreem: 1949-1951

Andreas Pilt: 1951-1954, 1956, 1958, and 1973

Feliks Lasberg: 1955 and 1957

Nurmi Simm: 1978

Siim Ruusauk: 1979-1982

Nurmi Simm: 1985-1987

Eda McClung: 1988 and 1991

Rita Viivi Piil and Jan Urke: 1992 and 1993

Toomas Pääsuke: 1994-1998

Dave Kiil: 1999-2005

MEDICINE VALLEY ESTONIAN SOCIETY



By 1910, there were an estimated 50 Estonian pioneers living in the Medicine Valley area. In that same year the *Medicine Oru Eesti Selts* (Medicine Valley Estonian Society) became the focal point for Estonian community life in central Alberta. The organization amalgamated other Estonian groups into one coherent network. For example, the local Estonian band and choir, originally founded in 1906, joined the Medicine Valley Estonian Society (MVES) in 1910, performing at various Estonian functions

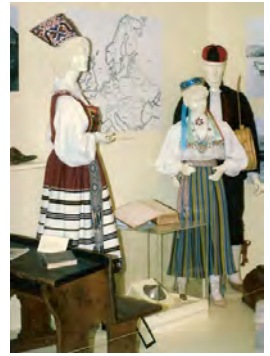
throughout the Medicine Valley. Within a year, the MVES established a lending library providing literature for adults and children. Communal enterprises were also incorporated into the MVES framework. These included a branch of the Co-operative Association (1912), Gilby (Kalmu) Cemetery Board (1914), and the Eckville Telephone Association, organized in 1917. The MVES utilized a multi-faceted approach in its relationship with the Estonian community of Medicine Valley. Dynamic and resourceful, the MVES reflected the Estonian commitment to teamwork, cooperation, and community-based initiatives. Moreover, by incorporating other groups into the organization, the MVES could meet its cultural, economic, and political objectives.

Medicine Valley's Estonian community firmly believed in the value of a good education. Estonians living in the area provided the land, construction materials and the manpower to build a one-room schoolhouse for grades one through eight. Known as the Estonian School the building opened its doors on June 24, 1906. A second classroom was added in 1922. Three teachers taught at the school during the first half of the 20th century.

By 1918, with close to 200 people of Estonian heritage living in the area, the need to establish a permanent home became a paramount concern, alleviated when the Estonian Hall was built that same year. A two-acre parcel of land was purchased from a local farmer for \$50. A library consisting of over 500 books was soon added to the Estonian Hall. At monthly meetings, members discussed business affairs, politics, and Estonian literature. The Society also sponsored folk dances and theatre groups. The Ladies' Club, another component of the MVES, hosted box socials and bazaars and knitted garments to be used for fundraising events.

Medicine Valley Estonian Society meetings were a regular occurrence. Topics discussed included farmers' cooperatives, improving education, Russian politics and religion. Members even engaged in thoughtful conversations on the writings of Leo Tolstoy. Left-leaning members of the community supported the New York newspaper *Uus Ilm* (*New World*), a paper promoting working class ideologies. Several meetings were devoted to reading and exchanging thoughts on Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*.

MVES was officially incorporated under the *Societies Act* of 1933, reaffirming its influence and popularity. Only years earlier, Estonian Independence Day was publicly celebrated for the first time ever in Canada in 1926 at the Estonian Hall. However, during the 1940s, the MVES became temporarily dormant, due in part to World War II. However, the increase in the number of refugees from Estonia during the post-WWII era brought new vigour to the organization. The revival was short-lived, though: many of Alberta's Estonian immigrants settled or moved to Alberta's larger urban centres. The Medicine Valley Estonian Society, the first Estonian society established in Canada, eventually ceased all activities in 1984. That same year, MVES sponsored a major Estonian display at the Red Deer Museum. During its time, MVES, primarily through its activities held at the Estonian Hall, provided a centralized point of contact for the waves of immigrants arriving in Alberta throughout the 20th century.



MEMBERS LIST AT TIME OF DISSOLUTION, 1980.

- Arnold Matiisen, *President*
- August Liivam, *Treasurer*
- Rita Matiisen, *Secretary*
- Robert Kinna
- Leida Koots
- Herman Koppel
- Maria Koppel
- Alfred Matiisen
- Salme Matiisen
- Hans Moos
- Juliana Reining
- Oskar Reining
- Erna Soerd
- Volli Soerd *
- Salme Veen

* Volli Soerd was a signatory of the Medicine Valley Estonian Society when it registered under the Societies` Act in 1933.

RELIGION

Many of the Estonians who settled in Alberta were devout Lutherans. Attending mass on Sundays was a tradition Alberta's Estonian settlers sought to continue in their new country. A church was a place of worship and, moreover, it created an ideal environment for socializing with friends and relatives.



CEMETERIES

Stettler-Big Valley's Estonian Chapel also featured an Estonian cemetery built in 1906. The local community appointed Hans Asberg the first undertaker as he was fluent in English. Joseph Tipman Jr. was the cemetery's secretary-treasurer and maintained burial records until his death in 2000. In 1907, there were three recorded burials. Reverend Sillak was adamant in his request to bury only Estonians in the cemetery. Anyone of non-Estonian descent was buried outside the cemetery.

The property required proper enclosure and members of the community soon built a fence around the premises. In 1996, a trust fund was established for the perpetual care and maintenance of both the chapel and the cemetery. Beneath rows of iron crosses and beautiful headstones rest approximately 100 Estonian pioneers and their descendants: they provide testimony to the Estonian presence in the Stettler-Big Valley area.



Inevitably the Estonian community living in the Medicine Valley required burial land. In 1903, a small plot of land on Charlie Raabis' property south east of Gilby was used as a cemetery. Otto Kingsep, visiting from Estonia, and father of Henry and Kristian Kingsep, was one of the first persons buried in this Cemetery. Within a few years it was abandoned in favor of the new Gilby (Kalmu) Cemetery and the original grounds

fell into disrepair. The cemetery was rededicated during the Gilby Centennial in 2001.

Estonian pioneers reconvened on 13 June 1913 to discuss the origins of the Gilby (Kalmu) Cemetery Company. Kalmu, in Estonian, refers to a resting place. The community strongly sought the establishment of a permanent resting place for friends and family. Members of the organizational committee included Mike Sestrap and Fritz Kinna. Minutes compiled during the meeting stipulated that all graves were to be elevated and a cross erected above each plot. Initially, plots sold for \$8 but rose another \$2 over the next few decades. Oscar Mottus constructed a 10-foot cross, painted black, to be erected in a central location in the cemetery. Volunteers gathered once a year to properly maintain and clean the cemetery. By 1977, the Gilby (Kalmu) Cemetery was the final resting place of 231 bodies; three decades later, it continues to serve the needs of the Medicine Valley community. The Estonian cemetery in Barons was rededicated in 2004.

BARONS CEMETERY

DEDICATED TO THE FORTRESSES OF THE EARLY 1800'S
THEIR RESERVANTS AND THOSE WHO FOLLOWED
AND NOW WITH THEIR FOLLOWS

THEY'VE GAINED THEIR MARRIAGES
BUT NOT THE LOVE AND RESPECT
FOR THE OLD AND NEW WORLD
-WAS SETTLED INTO AVAL-

FOUNDED BY
JACOB AND HARRI LEHMANN 1805
AND JOHN AND ANNE
LEHMANN AND FERNAND CEMETARY
MOVED TO THE VILLAGE OF BARONS IN 1925
FOR THE CHURCHES USE

REDEDICATED AUGUST 1 1964
BY THE
BARONS AREA 2008
CENTENNIAL COLLABORATION OF
LEHMANN AND BOWENSTADT

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BARONS CEMETERY

The land for the Barons Cemetery was originally donated by Jakob and Mari Erdman in 1905 for use by Estonian and Finnish pioneers. They and most of their nine children are buried there, as are some members of later generations. It was donated to the Village of Barons in 1923 for community use.



The Barons Centennial celebrating Estonian homesteaders took place in 2004. An ecumenical ceremony was held at the Cemetery. A choir and the patriarchs of two of the Estonian families were present. A rededication plaque was unveiled by one of descendants who commented that six generations of his family were present; three underground and three above ground.

GILBY (KALMU) CEMETERY

In June 1914, members of the Estonian community met to form the Kalmu Cemetery Company. John Turner was president; Fritz Kinna, correspondent; and Mike Sestrap, treasurer. Others who took part in the first meeting were: Mart Sestrap, Hugo and Oscar Mottus, Henry and John Kinna, Paul and Karl Langer, P. Perler, A. Piihoja.



Land for the cemetery was donated by John Turner. The company sold 60 shares for \$8 per share for a plot. It was stipulated that all graves be mounded, have a cross, and be kept tidy.

Oscar Mottus erected a 10-foot tall, black cross in the centre of the cemetery. He was paid \$3.50 to do this. Mart Sestrap was hired to build a tool box and provide markers.

The cemetery treasurer received a salary of \$5/year plus fifty cents for each plot. In 1930, this salary went up to \$10/year plus a dollar for each plot.

The cemetery is maintained largely by volunteers, who hold an annual cemetery clean-up and have put up a fence, new gates, and a large sign. "Kalmu" means "resting place" in Estonian, and since the cemetery was organized primarily by Estonians, it was agreed to keep Kalmu in the cemetery sign, which reads: "Gilby (Kalmu) Cemetery."

Mrs. Perler was the first Estonian Pioneer to be buried in the Gilby (Kalmu) Cemetery.

SETTLER CEMETERY NEAR LINDA HALL IN ALBERTA

The Estonian Cemetery and Chapel were established in April, 1906 on a parcel of land about a mile east of present-day Linda Hall. The land was part of a grant from the Alberta Government. The first caretaker of burials was English-speaking Hans Asberg in 1906. In 1909, the job was taken over by Gustav Nicklom. In subsequent years, Martin Hennel, Joseph Tipman Jr., Jay Tipman and Vern Raho maintained the burial records. The local people helped maintain the Cemetery and gave generously of their time and money to build a fence around the burial plots. In 1996, a trust fund was established for the perpetual care and maintenance of the Cemetery and Chapel grounds. Approximately 100 Estonian pioneer family members are buried in the Cemetery. "May they rest in Peace and not be forgotten."



ESTONIAN CHAPEL

Reverend John Sillak, an Estonian living in the Medicine Hat area, made frequent trips to the Stettler-Big Valley area, presiding over baptisms, weddings, and funerals. On one particular trip, he explained that the government would donate 10 acres of land, tax free, if the Estonian community living in the area would build a chapel. The government's arrangement was an appealing prospect to many, granting them a fortuitous opportunity to build a house of worship.



Stettler-Big Valley's Estonian community built its quaint sanctuary in 1906. The modest structure, built from lumber, is situated one mile east of Linda Hall and rests on a knoll overlooking the landscape. Estonians living throughout the area made frequent trips to the picturesque and conveniently located Estonian Chapel. A cross stood on the top of the building, a structure with spacious windows on both sides and whose main entrance was located on the south side. The interior, a reflection of Estonian modesty, provided a functional and respectful place setting and featured plain wooden pews and an altar painted gold. Members of the Tipman, Hennel, and Kerbes families helped finance and build the church. During the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, the Chapel gradually settled into a state of disrepair. The government demanded a thorough upkeep; otherwise, burials would be located to another cemetery. The Estonian community immediately reunited to preserve its heritage. New windows, doors, and a fresh coat of paint were promptly applied. A new fence and new gates and signs were erected, complemented by new trees and a hedge of lilacs. In 1997, a new roof and siding were added to preserve the original structure. The interior remains unchanged from its original appearance.

1825 ESTONIAN BIBLE

Donated by Glorian Louise Smith (nee Tipman) b. May 31, 1934 Stettler, Alberta to Anna Louise Tipman-Kirton and Joseph J. Tipman d. June 20, 2008

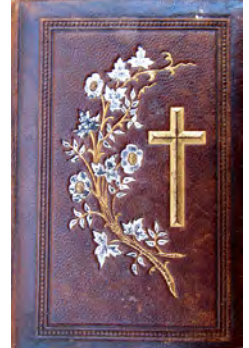
The Bible was brought to Canada from Estonia in 1903 by Joseph Tipman and his wife Anna Redeer. Before coming to Canada they had lived in Russia, purchasing land from the Estate of Baron Brante, farming there until land in Canada was being offered at \$10 for a quarter section. The Bible was passed on to Joseph J. Tipman, their son, and his wife, Anna Louise Tipman-Kirton. It remained in the deserted farmhouse for many years after the Tipman's left and was eventually retrieved by their daughter, Glorian Louise Smith and her husband, Leigh. They took the Bible from the deserted farmhouse to their home in Kingston, Ontario. In 2008 Glorian was diagnosed with an incurable condition and, when she realized that she had only a short time to live, wanted to find an appropriate place for the 1825 Bible. She contacted a cousin, Marlene Kuutan (nee Tipman), in Toronto hoping that Marlene's connection to the Estonian community there would assist in finding an appropriate place for the Bible. After much research and thought and then the realization that the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society would be establishing an 'Estonian Collection' at the Provincial Archives of Alberta, it was determined that the most appropriate place for the 1825 Bible would be to return it to Alberta to become part of the AEHS Collection in the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton.



1901 LAULIK (SONG BOOK)

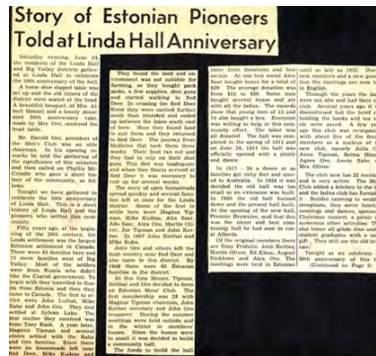
Donated by Marlene Kuutan (nee Tipman)
Belonged to Olga Klaus (nee Soop)

The Laulik came to Canada in 1922 when Otto and Olga Klaus arrived with their children, Alide and Alfred. Originally from Estonia, they had moved to Russia, close to Tver (or Brante Mets as they called it) for economic reasons. The Russian Revolution forced them to flee to Estonia where they worked in order to get money for passage to Canada where Otto's five brothers had gone to reside around 1900. Some of the brothers were able to send money so that the Otto Klaus family could come to Canada and settle near Big Valley, Alberta. The Laulik remained in Olga's possession until her death in 1977, was passed on to her daughter Aletha Tipman (Alide's name had been changed to Aletha when she started school in Canada) and when Aletha passed away, the Laulik went to her daughter, Marleen Kuutan.



MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES

This section contains a number of photographs documenting the history of Estonian immigrants in Canada, and their cultural events and organizations, spanning over the last century.



AASTA PEAKOOSOLEK

Edmontoni Eesti Seltsi peakoosolek peeti 12. novembril, 1978, Kensingtoni algakooli ruumes koos kohvilaua ja ESTO '72 filmi näitamisega. Koos oli 27 isikut - kaks korda enam eelmisest aastast.

Tegevuse aruande esitas esimees Nurmi Simm. Eestlaskonna tutvumiseks korraldati 'Open House' Nurmi Simmi kodus. Vabariigi 60. aastapäeva aktusest-peostvottis 110 isikut osa. Jaanipäev peeti perekond Palsi suvilas.

Uude juhtusse valiti: Siim Ruusauk - esimees, Eva Weir - abiesinaine; Nurmi Simm - slsesekretär, Tiina-Mai Sastoklaekur, Ann Holtz - välis-sekretär/varahoidja/archivaar, Linda Peet - seltskondlike urituste korraldaja, Hilja Koot - ametita liige.

Kavas on: Vabariigi aastapäeva ja traditsiooniliss jaanipäeva pühitsemine, ning osavõtmine Edmontoni 'Heritage Day' peost augustis.

VABARIIGI AASTAPÄEV EDMONTONIS

Laupäeval 24 veebruaril tähistas Edmontoni Eesti Selts Vabariigi Aastapäeva. Osavõtjaid oli umbes 85 isikut. Õhtu algas karastavate jookidega mugavas Kingsway Royal Canadian Legion klubi saalis, mille järele serveeriti maitsev külm ja soe laud.

Pidulik osa algas Kanada hümniga. Avasõna oli E.E.S.'i esimehe S.Ruusauk'ult. Tervitusi Lättlastelt andis üle Hr. Stals ning Leedulastelt Hr. Kasper. Tervituse saatis ka endine Kultuuri Minister Horst Schmid.

Muusikalist osa tutvustas Pr. Ann Holtz. Prl. Helve Sastok esines oma uue kompositsiooniga Klaveri Sonaat #1, mida ta hiljuti oli ka tutvustanud Torontos esimesel muusika konverentsil. Prl. Aime Sastok kandis ette Scriabini Etude.

Edmonton linnapea Hr. Ces Purvis austas meie väikest organisatsiooni enda ja abikaasa osavõtuga ning mainis enda kõnes et kohalikud Kanadalased võibolla ei mõttele küllalt vabaduse peale ning sarnased koosviibimised kui tänane õhtu tuletavad neile meelde olukordi mis ekssisteerivad raudeesriide taga. Ta ütles ka et sellegi poolest et eestlasi Edmontonis on vähe, suudetakse siiski palju korda saata. Peale ametliku osa kingiti seltsi poolt linnapeale Arved Viirlaidi "Graves Without Crosses".

Hr. Andres Pilt tervitas ka külalisi ning andis huvitava ülevaate tema enese elamustest ühe päeva jooksul eesti talus. Kõne sisu on eraldi trükitud.

Pikema kõne pidas Pr. L. Kivi-Kowalski. Inglisekeelses osas ütles ta et väikesed riigid on aastaid taotlenud iseseisvust ja lõpuks seda saavutanud, kuid balti rahvad on suurte lääne võimude poolt täielikult unustatud. Meile on suletud uks vabaduse ja iseseisvuse saavutamiseks. Kuid meie ei tohi alla anda. Meie kohus on edasi kanda vabaduse sädet kuni see kord jälle lõkkele lööb. Eestikeelses osas mainis ta et meil on vaja uut aktiivset noorust, uude ideedega, kes votaks üle kohustused meie kodumaa vabastamise eest võitlemiseks. Ta soovitas ka uue organisatsiooni loomist mis koosneks rahvast kes segaabelude kaudu eestastega on liitunud, kes jätkaks eesti huvides töid, kuid tegutseks inglise keeles.

Balti koor, Eva Weir'i juhatusel, lõppetas kava osa eesti lauludega "Helise, Helise Ilma", "Tule Koju", ning Eesti hümniga.

Tantsuks mängis kolme meheline orkester. Vahepeal loositi välja mitmed eestlaste enda tehtud kasitöid ja teisi annetatud esemeid. Pidula lõppes kell 1 hommikul.

ESIMENE ALBERTA EESTLASTE JAANIPÄEV

Laup. 5 Mail toimus Hr. ja Pr. Tipmani talus väljaspool Stettler'it koosolek Jaanipäeva pühitsemise läbirääkimiseks. Koos olid esindajad Calgarist, Stettlerist ning Edmontonist. Uhisel kokkuleppel otsustati Jaanipäeva pidada 23 & 24 juunil Linda Hall'i maaalal. Kavas on mängud lastele ja täiskasvanuile ning võrkpalli turniir linnade vahel. Õhtusöök oleks "Pot Luck" stiilis. Õhtul toimub ühine lõke ja informaalne kava kõnede, soolode, ja koori lauludega. Pühapäeva hommikul on Stettleri eestlaste poolt hommikusöögiks pankoogid.

Võimalik on et sellele järgneb eesti keelne helifilm "Esto 76". Osavõtjatel on võimalik külastada Stettleri muusiumit kus kohalikud eestlased on asutanud eesti osakonna. Ühtlasi võib ka külastada eesti surnuaeda. Linda Hall'i maal ovõimalik telgitada. Nendele kes soovivad mugavamad öömaja on Stettleris mittmed motel'id.

"HERITAGE DAYS PÜHAPÄEV & ESMASPÄEV 5 & 6 AUG."

Vancouveri Eesti Rahvatantsu Institut'ilt on kiri saabunud. Nead on nõus meile esinema 4 või 5 paariga.

Torontost on ka mõned esinejad valmis teekonda alustama, kuid majanduslik abi Alta. valitsuselt jääb vist liiga hiljaks üleva artikli põhjusel.

Päevade korraldamiseks on Edmontoni eestlastelt suurt abi vaja soogi, kasitöö, ehituse, transpordi, ja teiste ametitega. Palume mõttelge sellel

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

The Edmonton Estonian Society executive is happy to present the first issue of Ajakaja. We hope that it will heighten interest in and awareness of events and issues that are relevant to the Estonian community. Perhaps 'ärkamisaeg' will also have meaning in Edmonton!

The decision to resume publication of a newsletter, following a ten year break, was made at the general meeting of the EES held in January. It was apparent that the membership wanted to have available more information about Estonian activities, cultural events, people and viewpoints, both locally and from further afield. Mare Maxwell has agreed to be in charge of publishing our newsletter. It is hoped that this sharing of news will arouse interest in our heritage and lead to greater participation in available ethnic activities.

As the contents of this first issue indicate, there is much that is newsworthy for our local group: there are numerous exciting Estonian celebrations taking place, we are privileged to have a visiting academic from Tartu University at UofA, we can access an increasing number of videos of recent events in Estonia, and this winter we can look forward to hearing the renown RAM boys' choir in Calgary, arranged by their active and energetic Estonian Society. Ajakaja's ability to be informative and interesting is largely dependent upon its readership submitting news and views. We are therefore soliciting articles and comments (in either language) from you, and ask that we receive your contributions for the second issue by September 1, 1989.

A second and important decision made at the general meeting was in regards to formalizing membership in the EES. It was decided to do this by selling of memberships. In recent years, the EES has had no fund raising activities and has operated with an ever-depleting bank account. As a result, its scope of activities has been limited. With additional funds however, efforts such as this newsletter are possible. Other suggestions for the use of these funds could include the purchasing of an Estonian flag and flag pole, acquisition of Estonian videos, music and songbooks for local use and the provision for more frequent mail outs as significant events or news occur. (Each mail out costs a minimum of \$25.00).

Memberships were sold Vabariigi Aastapäeval and the response was excellent. It was particularly heartening to sign up many new, young members who to date had not participated in the EES. The membership drive is still on-going, and you are urged to support the society's efforts by purchasing a membership. An application form is included with the newsletter. To those already signed up, your support is genuinely appreciated.

The newly elected executive of the EES is looking forward to its term in office. By all accounts, the first activity that was planned, Vabariigi Aastapäev, was a success. *The next major social event will be the combined Edmonton-Stettler-Calgary Jaanipäev picnic on June 25 at Linda Hall in Stettler.*

This location is significant as Stettler is one of the pioneer Estonian communities in Canada. It is hoped that Estonians from around the province will join in.

The new EES executive is comprised of seven new members, some of whom are familiar to the

local community as well as those that are new. They bring to the society a broad range of interests and talents. The executive will be pleased to be of help in matters related to the Estonian community and welcomes your input and suggestions. Please feel free to contact either Eda McClung, president or Nurmi Simm, past president.

We hope that the forthcoming year is one of renewal and expansion for the EES. We welcome all new members and appreciate those who have shown support throughout the years.

Eda McClung
Edmonton Estonian Society president

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Edmonton Estonian Society held its AGM on January 28, 1990, at Hosanna Lutheran Church with approximately ten members who braved the miserable weather. Eda McClung, president, gave a comprehensive review of the events of 1989; the doubling of the mailing list to 75 people was terrific news. Our newsletter has been well received, not only by our members in the Edmonton area, but by others throughout Alberta and by the Toronto and Vancouver groups as well. Many thanks were extended to Mare Maxwell who does the bulk of the work for AjaKaja.

There was discussion of upcoming events:

1. **Vabariigi Aastapäev** - now a happy memory for the many people who came
2. **Jaanipäev** - this celebration will be held in Stettler again, June 23 & 24. Unanimous support was given to the idea that this big weekend event be held in Stettler every two years with the assistance of our group.
3. **Estonian school** - some of the parents in the group are beginning to explore the possibility of some sort of regular class to familiarize their children with aspects of Estonian culture and language. Tiina Burns is spearheading this effort.

The executive of last year will continue their work for the coming year with a few changes. To our regret, Ann Holtz resigned from her position of secretary. Anu Tirrul-Jones stepped into this vacancy and Tiina Burns joined the executive as a new member. The executive now is: Eda McClung (president), Tiina Burns, Mare Maxwell, Linda Peet, Viivi-Rita Piil, Nurmi Simm. Membership fees were set at last year's level of \$10 for individuals and \$15 for families.

Everyone went back out into the cold weather fortified by wonderful food, a sense of accomplishment for last year's activities, and most of all, happy hopes for an exciting 1990!

1989 PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REVIEW

The EES can be proud of its accomplishments in the past year. It was a year of growth in membership, increase in number and variety of events, establishment of ties with the Calgary Estonian Society for promotion and support of joint activities and the year that our society showed financial growth. These activities were guided by an executive committee that gave willingly and often of their time and talent.

The success of the past year was largely due to the doubling of the Society's membership. This is reflected in the increased attendance at events as well previous members have shown renewed interest, and more importantly, new members of Estonian background have joined. Our Society now includes members from Red Deer, Eckville, Grand Prairie, Edson, Hinton and Camrose.

The activities of the EES in 1989 began with its Independence Day celebration in February at the Marchand Towers. Despite a snowstorm, there was a good turnout of about 50 people. A video from Estonia, "Eesti Laul" was well received. By switching the celebration to a public venue, and by charging admission, it was possible to induce a program and to organize an event for the larger gathering.

1989 was the first time in the recent past that an optional membership fee was charged. This resulted in approximately \$400 revenue for the Society. This provided the basic monies for operational expenses, such as mail outs and postage, as well publication of our newsletter "AjaKaja". As revenues accumulate, purchase of flags and flag poles is planned.

The 'Ajakaja' was initiated this past year following a 10 year hiatus. It serves to keep members informed of ongoing events and carried reports and articles from local Estonians as well as those from abroad, e.g. Tokyo, Pärnu, etc. Two issues were published, with three being planned for the coming year. Our newsletter has caught the attention of Estonians elsewhere who have asked to be on our mailing list.

Main social event for the EES in 1989 was participation in a province-wide 'Jaanipäev' in Stettler on Sunday, June 25. Organized by the Edmonton and Calgary Societies, and hosted by Stettler Estonian Community at Linda Hall, the event attracted 175 people. It was an opportunity to meet other Estonians and celebrate ethnic tradition, music, and food. The success of this event has led to plans for a weekend-long Jaanipäev celebration this year.

By fall, the executive was involved with plans to assist Calgary in hosting the 110 member Estonian Boys' Choir and ERSO Chamber Orchestra in a December concert. Calgary deserves enormous credit for undertaking such a large event and carrying it out with resounding success. The EES also made a significant contribution: 46 people traveled by chartered bus to attend the concert and our Edmonton membership donated more than \$500 directly to the Choir and Orchestra. The executive was pleased to have along 15 people from the Latvian community. Our Society enjoys good relations with the local Latvian and Lithuanian groups.

In November, the Estonian rock group 'Ultima Thule' performed at the U of A Campus. The six

members of the band were housed and entertained by local Estonians, and at their concert, several new and younger Estonians were in the audience.

It was a pleasure to have Professor Volli Kalm in Edmonton for nine months. He was a visiting scientist to the U of A Geology Dept. from Tartu University. His participation at our events, contributions to our newsletter, and his first-hand knowledge of happenings in Estonia were appreciated by all those who had a chance to meet him.

In summary, we can be proud of what we achieved in the past year. The increased support of our members indicates that the Society has an important function in bringing together those who maintain an interest in their Estonian heritage.

Eda McClung,
President

EDMONTON ESTOS REALLY COOK!

A brainstorm! That's what "Edmonton Sun" food editor, Rita Feutl, had while planning her Thanksgiving column. Why not do a bit about how the local Baltic communities would be celebrating their extra special Thanksgiving.

A dozen of us gathered at Eda's one sunny September afternoon with our culinary delights and the "Sun" photographer shot away.

We were overwhelmed when we saw a full 2 page colour layout of our ethnic goodies in the special Thanksgiving food section on October 9.

Irene's sült, Mrs. Koppel's devilled eggs, Rita Matiisen's herring, Jaan's rosolje, Tiina's pirukad ja kringel, Viivi's porgandi pirukad, Eda's beginner's luck skumbria, Viru Valge vodka, a pitcher of Rolling Estonians and the Sini-must-valge were all decked out by Mrs. Koppel on Rita Matiisen's handwoven tablecloth. Because Nurmi was unavailable, Viivi was coerced to portray the barmaid. The folk costume was an interesting mix of Rita's blouse, Mare's skirt and Tiina's brooch Festively ethnic.

With the Esto cooking talent in this city, could the Tartu Cafe be a real possibility? Any backers?

1990 ANNUAL REPORT

EES successfully concluded another year that saw us add to and build upon our past accomplishments.

1. Mailing list has increased to over 80 individuals or families. Significantly more people purchased memberships providing approximately \$650.00 revenue for the society. This money is used for the newsletter, subsidizing social events, mail outs, memorial donations, special purchases, etc.
2. 1990 Vabaliigi Aastapäev was celebrated at the Victoria Golf Course Clubhouse in February with a large turnout in a lovely setting.
3. In May, a wine and cheese party was held to host Marcus Kaevats, a young Estonian seeking to emigrate to Canada. He gave a first hand account of the political developments unfolding there.
4. On June 23 & 24, a Jaanipäev weekend was held at Linda Hall in Stettler, hosted jointly by Edmonton, Calgary and Stettler Estonians. For the 100 or so people there it was a fine time of outdoor sports, outstanding ethnic food and a singalong and bonfire. The CES and EES gifted to Linda Hall a set of volleyball equipment as a thank you for their hospitality.
5. The year's activities concluded with a well-attended Estonian Christmas service and festive coffee party.
6. In addition to social events, EES continued to publish its newsletter, AjaKaja twice a year. It also maintains contact with those unable to attend functions but remain interested.
7. Due to the political events of the past year in the Baltics, we were increasingly called upon to show ethnic solidarity with the other local baltic societies. Speakers from EES attended Latvian, Lithuanian independence celebrations, as well as Black Ribbon Day in August. We joined in signing petitions, writing letters, granting interviews and making statements to the media to focus on the Baltic's political independence drive.
8. The Society made a significant investment of \$270 to purchase two oak and brass flagpoles which have already been used at various ceremonial occasions.
9. There was insufficient interest in an Estonian school at this time so plans for this have been deferred.
10. The drive to collect books to ship to Estonia was very successful. The shipment, through the assistance of the Latvian Society, will leave in the upcoming year.

In conclusion, the EES can take pride in its active and successful past year. We feel that the Society has been able to bring together those who wish to maintain an interest in their Estonian heritage. The Executive thanks all of you for your support.

Eda McClung,
President

73 VABARIIGI AASTAPÄEV

Edmontoni Eesti Selts tähistas traditsioonilise kokkutulekuga 73ndat vabariigi aastapäeva 24. veebruaril Commonwealth Lawn Bowling Clubi ruumides. Arvukas osavõtt tõendas EES elujõulisust ja Balti rahvaste koostööd.

Aktuse avasid rahvariides lapsed Kanada ja Eesti lippude saali toomisega laulu "Jää vabaks Eesti meri" ja Kanada hümniga saatel.

Pävakohases avakõnes tervitas seltsi president Eda Matiisen-McClung Parlamendi liiget James Edwardsi ning Läti ja Leedu seltside esindajaid. E.Matiisen-McClung rõhutas oma kõnes vajadust koostööks kodumaa püüdluste kordaminekuks ja tänas Kanada valitsust poolehoidu ja otsese toetuse eest Balti riikidele. President tutvustas koosolijatele uut seltsi juhatust.

Tervitussõnu üteldes kinnitas Parlamendi liige Jim Edwards Kanada jätkuvat poolehoidu Balti riikidele. Jim Edwards tõendab oma isiklikku huvi Balti riikide vastu sellega, et on astunud Balti Assotsiatsiooni liikmeks.

Leedu Seltsi president Dr. Philip Klemka ja Läti president Zigurdis Scribo andsid üle tervitused, kinnitades lootust, et Balti rahvaste ühine saatuse viib meid ühisele eesmärgile - iseseisvusele.

Peakõneleja proua Miriam Isberg Anderson, INTRATravel Toronto agentuuri president, kes on hiljuti avanud ka reisibüroo Tallinas, rääkis muljetest, mis saadud korduvatest külaskäikudest Eestisse. Tema võrdles elu linnades ja maal ja imetles eestlaste sitkust ja visadust raskuste ülesaamisel. Kõikjal on vaja abi. Meie kohus on sirutada abistavat kätt sinna, kus vajadus suurim. M. Isberg Anderson kinnitas, et praegu pole julgeoleku probleeme ega liikumise piiranguid. Lennuliinid Helsingi ja Tallinna vahel jätkavad lende.

Aktusele järgnes meeleolukas ning eestipärane ja toidurohke koosviibimine.

R. Matiisen

See artikkel ilmus esimest korda "Meie Elu" 21. märtsi väljaandes.

ESTONIAN-CANADIANS IN ALBERTA: A DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

The first Estonian settlers-the Kingsep brothers- arrived in Canada in 1899 and settled in the Sylvan Lake area of central Alberta roughly halfway between Edmonton and Calgary. Within five years an additional 22 Estonian families settled in the vicinity. Owing to increased immigration in the region and the unavailability of large blocks of land for an Estonian settlement, some of the first Estonian settlers soon moved to new homesteads in the Medicine River Valley near Eckville. By 1920, there were nearly 200 Estonian settlers in the area, with close family and community ties and traditions.

The other major concentration of Estonian settlers developed a few miles south of Stettler and, by 1905, there were about 60 Estonian households in the area. The third significant colony of Estonian settlers, involving 26 families, became established near Barons in southern Alberta by 1908.

By the end of the First World War there were about 500 Estonians in Alberta. Smaller groups of Estonian immigrants arrived in the 1920s and 1930s, but they didn't have a significant impact on the population dynamics of this small ethnic group. Near the beginning of the Second World War, many of the pioneers had passed away and their offspring were being assimilated into the Canadian mainstream.

A relatively large number of Estonian immigrants-about 400 in total- arrived in Alberta in the late 1940s and the 1950s. They settled largely in Edmonton and Calgary and revitalized Estonian social and cultural traditions.

Thus the 1951 and 1961 Census of Canada data show 819 and 1,115 people, respectively, of Estonian ethnic origin living in Alberta. Thirty-five years later, ie. in 1996, the comparable figure had increased to 1,735.

Preliminary information suggests that nearly one-quarter of the respondents gave a single answer to the question about their ethnic origin, i.e. both parents were Estonian. The remaining three-quarters identified multiple ethnic origins, reflecting the assimilation of the offspring of the early Estonian pioneers into the province's population mosaic.

Note: Most of the statistical information in this article was gleaned from "Estonians in Alberta" by Howard and Tamara Palmer (in Alberta History 31: 22-34, Summer 1983) and from various Census of Canada sources.

A. Dave Kiil

WHY I JUMP OUT OF AIRPLANES

When I tell people what I do for fun, the typical response is "You've gotta be crazy!". What's my hobby? I hurl myself out of airplanes. The bigger the plane, and the higher the altitude, the better. I can't remember how many times people have asked me why I would jump out of a "perfectly good airplane". Skydivers deal with this sort of reaction all the time. We're perceived as crazy, reckless, exhibiting some sort of death wish. Yeah, we're crazy but few of us are reckless and none of us wants to die. On the contrary, we love life and that's why we skydive.

Ever since I was a little girl, I wanted to fly. This was no passing childhood fantasy it was an obsession. At the age of seven, I saw some military footage of a paratrooper in free fall and realized that THIS would be the means by which I would fulfill my dream: by exiting an aircraft with nothing but a parachute on my back.

In the meantime, school and piano lessons dominated my life as I pursued a future in music. The dream of flying had to be put on hold, but it was never forgotten. My dreams while sleeping were frequently dominated by scenes of overcoming gravity and floating above the earth.

In university, the demands of studying as well as the tightening of the purse strings put my dreams of flight on hold. Three university degrees later, with a "real job" under my belt, the demands of teaching music classes and performing concerts (I'm a classical pianist) took over my life. Jumping from an airplane was still one of those unfulfilled promises to myself. And now that I was older, presumably wiser, and much more aware of my own mortality, I even wondered whether I'd have the courage to drop from several thousand feet above the ground.

My dream came true suddenly and unexpectedly. Skydiving was the last thing on my mind on a summer day in July of 1992. The college where I was working had terminated part of its music program and I was faced with the heartbreaking prospect of leaving a job and a home that I loved.

Walking down the college corridor in a wave of despondency, I stumbled across a brochure offering a first jump course by a big city skydiving school doing a "satellite school" in our small town. The decision to go and forget my problems was made in a flash, and the next day found me sitting through six hours of "ground school" in preparation for my first skydive.

They took four of us up in a small Cessna airplane: my flamboyant instructor, myself, and two other students: a young fellow from B.C. and his terrified younger brother. When the instructor opened the plane door, I was more scared than I had ever been in my life. This fear was intensified by the blast of cold air and the deafening roar of the engine- a chilling and deafening assault on the senses.

The next thing I remember was floating under canopy at 3000 feet above the ground. This was more than the fulfillment of a dream this was the beginning of a new addiction! Floating under a canopy is a philosophical and esthetic kind of fulfillment. You enjoy the peace and the quiet. You soar with the hawks, drift with the clouds, and peek down at the farm houses and the animals as if they were all part of a miniature display.

But the true adrenaline rush, the thing that really feeds the addiction, is the free fall. Your pulse quickens as you approach your exit from airplane to airspace. Your concentration becomes intensely focused whether you are flying solo, or in formation with other skydivers. You don't feel like you're falling, but you do feel the wind as you plummet towards earth at 120 miles per hour.

Perhaps there is such a thing as addiction to the adrenaline rush. The sensation I feel in my heart and stomach prior to exiting a plane is remarkably similar to what I feel standing in the wings of a concert hall, eyeing a grand piano sitting in the middle of the stage and hearing the rustle of an expectant audience waiting for that piano bench to be gainfully occupied by myself.

In both cases, the thought often crosses my mind: "why subject myself to this kind of stress? And inevitably, the exhilaration of a successful performance whether on the concert stage, or in the sky, makes me want to repeat the whole process again and again.

Airplane pilots speak of flying, yet piloting a plane is no more like flying than driving a motorboat is like swimming. Skydiving gives you the illusion that you're defying gravity. You are actually flying your own body. Skydiving fulfils my childhood fantasy and makes it a reality. I am one of the few, privileged people who can say that the sky is my playground.

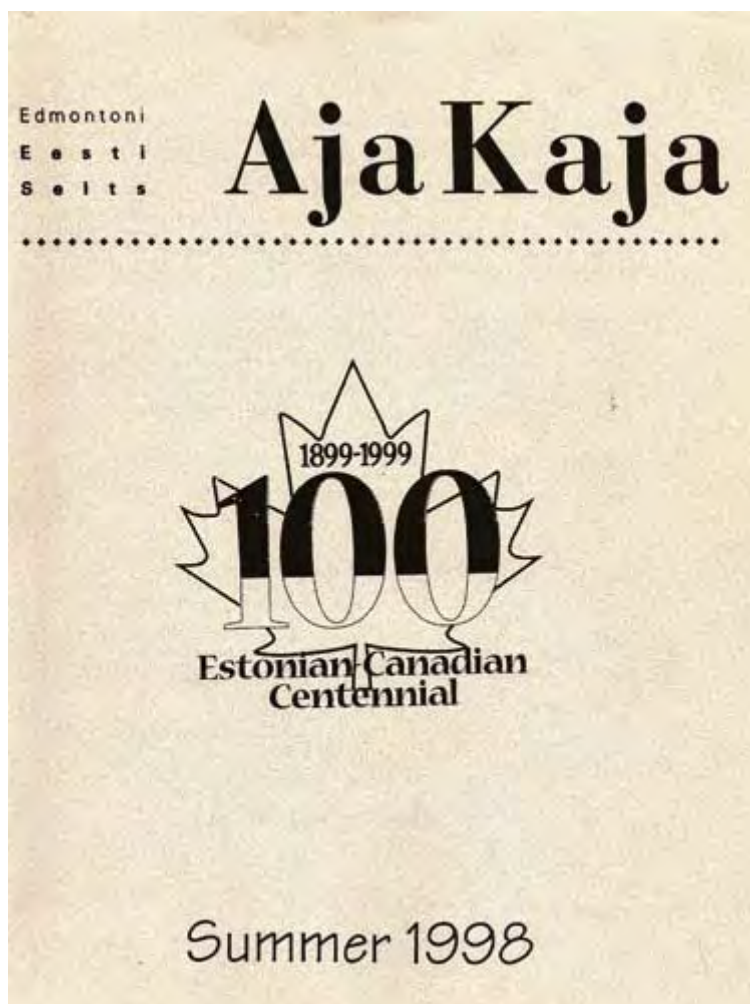
Tiiu Haamer,
November, 1998

E.E.S. MEMBERSHIP LIST (1998)

1. AIDLA, Harry
2. AKSBERG, Alar
3. BURNS, Dr. Jim & Tiina
4. DE-ELESPP, Ricardo & Kulliva
5. ENNO, Walter
6. GUE, Mrs. Martha
7. HAAMER, Dr. Tiiu
8. HALL, Gwen
9. HODES, Dr. Harry & Anne-Marie
10. KADIS, Dr. Vince
11. KAERT, Mati & Linda
12. KALEV, Ms. Lori
13. KALEV, Walter & Tiiu
14. KERBES, Elmer & Mrs.
15. KIIL, Dr. David & Betty-Ann
16. KLAUS, Alfred & Mrs.
17. KOOSEL, Jaak
18. KOOT, Clarence & Aida
19. KOOT, Leida & Ludwig
20. KORRIS, Mrs. Neola
21. KOWALSKI, Mila
22. KRIIK, Laine
23. KUESTER, Matt & Karen
24. KUUSK, Allan
25. LAANSOO, Dr. Arvo
26. LAMBUR, Peter & Mrs.
27. LANGESTE, Helmut & Airi
28. LISEVICH, Mrs. Eda-Malle
29. LUIK, Aavo & Mrs.
30. MADDISON, Detlef & Anneliese
31. MATIISEN, Dr. Rita
32. MATIISEN, Mrs. Salme
33. MCCLUNG, John (Buzz) & Eda
34. MCELROY, Mrs. Elve
35. MUELLER, John & Helen
36. NAKONECHNY, Mrs. Greta
37. NUDEL, Michael
38. NUDEL, Olavi
39. OLUPER, John & Mrs.
40. PAAP, Ms. Thea
41. PAASUKE, Toomas
42. PALLAS, Mrs. Raisa
43. PALLAS, John & Mrs.
44. PALO, Rani & Katelyn

45. PASTEWKA, Elmer & Astrid
46. PEEK, Mikk & Mrs.
47. PEET, Mrs. E.
48. PEET, Ms. Linda
49. PENT, Arnold
50. PILT, Andreas & Shirley
51. POHLAK, Mrs. Vaima
52. RANNE, Ronald & Audrey
53. REILI, Mrs. Alide
54. RHEINWALD, Ms. Irene
55. ROBERTSON, David & Christine
56. RODGER, Jim & Betty
57. RUUSAUK, Siim & Lamour
58. SAFRONIUK, Mrs. Marge
59. SASTOK, Ms. Helve
60. SASTOK, Rein & Laine
61. SAUKS, Dr. Arvo & Maimo
62. SECK, Fred & Priidu
63. SEEMAN, Mrs. Laine
64. SILVERTON, Ms. Lori
65. SILVERTON, Ernie
66. SIMM, Eric
67. SIMM, Nurmi
68. SKRIBIS, Zigurdis & Mara
69. STACEY, Ms. Edia
70. SZADY, Mrs.
71. TAMMETS, Rein
72. TIISLAR, Enn & Parja
73. TIISLAR, Ms. Inna
74. TIPMAN, Bob & Kathy
75. TIPPEY, Mr. & Elizabeth
76. URKE, Jan
77. USTINA, Mrs. Astrid
78. VAREP, Leo & Tatiana
79. VARNEY, Mr. & Sharon
80. VEENEMAN, John & Linda
81. VEENEMAN, Ms. Linda
82. VOLLMAN, Karl & Sharon
83. WATSON, Mark & Maret
84. WEIR, Maylon & Eva
85. WERNICKE, Henry & Mrs.
86. WILKES, Greg
87. ZIELINSKI, Michel & Kristine

ESTONIAN-CANADIAN CENTENNIAL LOGO



EDMONTON ESTONIAN SOCIETY CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

About forty members of the Edmonton Estonian Society gathered in the beautiful Wedgwood Room of Hotel MacDonald on Sunday, February 28 to celebrate the 81st Anniversary of Estonian Independence and the 50th Birthday of the Society. Members were also apprised of planning activities underway to host the Estonian-Canadian Centennial Celebration at Linda Hall near Stettler.

Dave Kiil welcomed members to this important event and concluded that we owe a debt of gratitude to our ancestors who persevered over the centuries in their quest for independence for Estonia. He also noted that a celebration of our heritage such as the annual Independence Day gathering help instill a sense of pride in the generations to come.

The Society received numerous congratulatory messages on its 50th Anniversary, and these were read to the audience. A particularly heartfelt message was received from Ann Holtz, the daughter of one of the original members (Pals) and the letter is printed in its entirety in this edition of Ajakaja.

A number of the longstanding members of the Society, including Helmut and Airi Langeste, Andreas and Shirley Pilt, Mila Kivi Kowalski, Eugene and Astrid Pastewka, Arnold Pent and Laine Sastok, were in attendance. They were introduced and recognized for their valuable contributions in furthering the aims of the organization over the years.

A highlight of the afternoon's program was a guest appearance by Tiiu Haamer who performed three classical selections on the piano. It was a powerful recital and resulted in enthusiastic applause and an encore. Eda McClung presented the artist, also noted for sky-diving exploits, with a beautiful bouquet of beautiful yellow roses.

Andreas Pilt, one of the early members of the Society, reminisced about the reasons behind the influx of Estonian's to Edmonton in the late 1940's and early 1950's. The Edmonton Estonian Society was formed in the fall of 1949 under the leadership of Robert Kreem to provide a forum for social and political activity. Andreas also read a congratulatory letter from Robert Kreem.

In thanking the speaker, the President commended Andreas for his exemplary leadership during the half-century and thanked him for his major contribution in pursuing the aims of the EES. The speaker was also presented with a framed Letter of Commendation from Mr. Ilmar Heinsoo, Honorary Consul-General of Estonia.

About a year ago, Toomas Pääsuke, Eda McClung and Bob Tipman, realizing that the first Estonian pioneers settled permanently in Alberta in 1899, decided that this historically significant event should be marked by an Estonian-Canadian Centennial Celebration in the summer of 1999. As the Event Coordinator - Facilitator, Toomas provided an overview of planning activities to date and concluded that this promises to be an outstanding Party in honor of the Estonian pioneers who settled in Alberta about a century ago. He encouraged EES members to spread the word to their relatives and friends, and to become personally involved to

ensure that this event will be a major success.

The ambience of the Wedgwood Room was further enhanced by displays covering the activities of the EES during the past 50 years. The photographs, newsletters, signs and artifacts were assembled from various sources and mounted on display boards. Kristiine Zielinski did an outstanding job in preparing the displays and deserves our gratitude for adding to our enjoyment of the gathering. Similarly, Helmut Langeste's album of EES activities over the past decade was enjoyed by the guests.

The celebration opened and closed with heartfelt renderings of the Canadian and Estonian National Anthems, with piano accompaniment by Helve Sastok. Finally, I'd like to extend a special vote of thanks to Eda McClung for choosing the venue and for coordinating the entire program.

As the newly-installed President of the EES, I look forward to working with the members of the Executive Committee in serving the needs and interests of the members. I am very enthusiastic about the upcoming Centennial Celebration during Jaanipäev and I firmly believe that it will be an outstanding event for all Estonians and their Canadian friends. The hardy Estonian pioneers who settled in Alberta are already part of Canada's heritage; our support of and participation in the Centennial Party will further integrate the customs and traditions of our ancestors into the mosaic of our adopted home.

Dave Kiil

EDMONTONI EESTI SELTS PÜHITSES 50. SÜNNIPÄEVA JA EESTI VABARIIGI 81. AASTAPÄEVA

Ligikaudu nelikümmend Edmontoni Eesti Seltsi (EES) liiget tulid kokku pühapäeval 28. veebruaril, ilusas MacDonald Hotelli Wedgewood Room'is, et pühitseda EES'i 50 juubelit ja Eesti Vabariigi 81. aastapäeva. Samas oli liikmetel võimalus saada ülevaade planeeritavast 100. aastat eestlasi Kanadas pidustuse korraldamise progressist, mis toimub Linda Hallis, Stettleri lähedal 25.-27. juunini 1999.a.

Uus seltsi esimees Ain Dave Kiil kutsus kõiki liikmeid osalema sellel tähtsal sündmusel ning täheldas, et see on meie aukohus esivanemate ees, kes kandsid endis kõikumatut tahet elada vabas Eestis. Tema märkis ka, et nii Eesti Vabariigi aastapäeva tähistamine kui ka osalemine 100. aastapeva pidustustel on hea võimlus esimeste Kanada eestlaste järeltulijatel uuendada huvi ja arusaamist oma juurtest.

Selts sai mitmeid tervtusi 50. Juubeli puhul ja need loeti publikule ette. Eriti südamlük tervitus saabus Ann Holtz'ilt, ühe esimese liikme, Ilmar Palsi, tütrelt. Önnitlejateks oli ka Hr. Robert Kreem, seltsi esimene esimees ning Eesti aukonsul Hr. Ilmar Heinsoo.

Kohalolijate hulgas olid ka mitmed kauaaegsed liikmed, Helmut ja Airi Laneste, Andreas ja Shirley Pilt, Mila (Kivi) Kowalski, Eugene ja Astrid Pastewka, Arnold Pent ja Laine Sastok. Neid auvääraseid liikmeid tutvustati kõigile osavõtjatele ja tänati neid panuse eest seltsi elus pikkade aastate jooksul.

Eda McClung tutvustas konsertpianisti Tiiu Haamerit, kes on õppinud Toronto Ülikoolis, Eastman School of Music'us ja Michigani Ülikoolis, mille ta lõpetas doktori kraadiga. Uheks tema õpetajaks oli kuulus Ungari pianist Gyorgy Dandor. Enne elama asumist Edmontoni 1992. aastal, oli Tiiu Haamer külalis solistik Vancouveri ja Edmontoni Sümfooniade juures ning andis konserte terves Kanadas ja ka teistes maades. Edmontonis töötas Tiiu muusika kriitikuna Edmonton Journal'ilc, mida ta teeb praegu vabakutsetisena Journal'ile ja Alberta Report ajakirjale. Samal ajal õpetab ta Alberta College'is ja annab eratunde oma stuudios. Vabal ajal meeldib Tiiule langevarjuga hüppata.

Tiiu Haameri kolme klassikalise pala esitus oli erakordne ja publiku nõudmisel esitas ta ühe lisapala.

Külalis kõneleja Andreas Pilt meenutas eestlaste Albertasse saabumist 1940-te aastate lõpul ja 1950-tel aastatel. EES loodi 1949. aasta sügisel Robert Kreemi eestvedamisel, et organiseerida seltskondlikku ja poliitilist tegevust. Andreas tutvustas osavõtjatele seltsi tegevust esimesel paaril aastakümnel.

EES'i esimees tanas Hr. Pilti seltsi juhtimise ja seltsis osalemise eest möödunud viiekümne aasta jooksul ning andis üle aukonsul Ilmar Heinsoo poolt väljaantud tänukirja.

Umbes aasta tagasi tulid Eda McClung, Toomas Pääsuke ja Bob Tipman, mõttele korraldada suurem pidustus, seoses eestlaste saabumisega Albertasse 1899. aastal, et tähistada 100.

aastat eestlasi Kanadas 1999. aasta suvel. Ürituse korelineerija Toomas Pääsuke andis ülevaate plaanidest ja kui kõik läheb korda saab sellest üks vägev pidu. Toomas kutsus kõiki liikmeid üles levitama infot sõprade ja sugulaste hulgas ning ka osalema planeerimisel, et kindlustada pidustuste kordaminek.

Pärastlõuna jooksul oli seltsi liikmetel võimalus tutvuda väljapanekutega EES'i tegevusest 50-ne aasta jooksul. Kristine Zielinski poolt kokkupandud väljapanekute hulgas oli fotosid, uudiselehti ja esemeid mitmetest kogudest. Tutvumiseks oli väljas ka Helmut Langeste fotokogu seltsi tegevusest viimase kümne aasta jooksul.

Kokkusaamine algas ja lõppes Kanada ja Eesti hürnnidega, klaveril saatis Helve Sastok. Kõigi osavõtjate eriline tänu läheb Eda McClungile väga torele ja ilusa sündmuse korraldumise eest.

Omalt poolt vaatan vastu viljakale koostaole seltsi juhatusega ja loodan, et suudan täita liikmete soove ja huvisid. Olen väga huvitatud 100. aastapäeva pidustustest tuleval Jaanipäeval, millest minu veendumise kohaselt saab olema äärmiselt huvitav sündmus eestlastele ja nende Kanada sõpradele. Esimesed asunikud ja nende järeltulijad, mõned juba kuues põlvkond, kes asusid Albertasse, on osa Kanada ajaloost. Tõetus ja osavõtt pidustustest annab võimaluse integreerida meie eelkäijate tavasid ja kombeid meie ühise adopteeritud kodumaa mosaiiki.

Dave Kiil

(Teksti tõlkis Külliva De-Elespp)

EDMONTON ESTONIAN SOCIETY

IN RETROSPECT

At the start of the Second World War Estonia was occupied by the Soviet Union then Germany and at the end of the war the Soviet Union again. Thousands of Estonians were arrested and deported to Siberia, thousands were conscripted to Russian and German armies and labour camps. Many crossed the Inlet and joined the Finnish army and helped to hold back Red Army attacks, like the Finnish Volunteers were helping the Estonians In our War of Independence in 1918 and our partisans in 1940.

To avoid the returning Russian Army and occupation, many Estonians and our prominent people risked their lives and crossed the Baltic Sea to Neutral Sweden and to Germany. Therefore after the end of the Second World War, thousands of Estonians found themselves in Allied Prisoner of War Camps and in refugee Camps in Germany, Sweden, Denmark and some other countries.

Soviet Union was occupying Estonia and Eastern Europe. They demanded the return of all Prisoners of War and refugees. Only a very few returned. They were treated as traitors and sentenced to serve time in Siberia. Therefore, whoever was lucky to have the opportunity, immigrated to USA, Canada, Australia or even to some South American countries to get as far as possible from Russia.

Many who immigrated to Canada settled in Ontario, mostly in the Toronto area, where various industries and construction needed able workers. Many settled In the Montreal area, as well as in Vancouver and British Columbia, where the sea and warmer climate attracted the newcomers.

The newcomers to Alberta had relatives or friends here already, or were professionals or skilled tradesmen. Domestic help and farm labourers were coming with Canadian Pacific Railroad sponsorship and agreed to work a year at a given job.

The first newcomer to Edmonton was a warbride, Mari Sörra-Pelletier, who married a French Canadian from Edmonton. They arrived in 1946 and bought "Four Aces" restaurant In the city centre, it flourished under Maris's management. She was well liked and known in Estonian and Canadian circles. She was one of E.E. Society's founding members and In the executive. Later, she was the President of the Alberta Restaurant Association. She sponsored her niece, Mai Sörra-Kreem, and her husband, Robert Kreem to get Immigration Visas and to find work in Edmonton. They arrived in the fall of 1948, at the same time as her friend Astrid Pihlakas-Pasevka and her husband Eugene. They were soon allowed by Vet, Dr. Evald Söerd and Erika Ins. Feliks Lasberg, Ursula and daughter, Sigrid, Mrs. Dr. Silvester and her mother, Surveyor Iimar married later, Ins. Harry Melts and Siina, Colonel August Kivi, Ludmilla and daughter Eva, Ülo and Aliide Mägi, Pianist Mrs. Kivistik, Lieutenant Mart Napa, Elisabet and daughter Eneken, Ballet teacher Laine Mets and electrician Ed Kreek. Laine and Ed married later, and Loreida Kesamaa. The following years brought more Estonians to Edmonton. I. name some, who were active in our society and often in the Executive: Captain Walter Reili, Aliide, with son and daughter, Agriculturist Jaan Raud and Salme, Architect Kristjan Päm and Ilse, Helmut and Airi Langeste, Gustav and Helmi Neland, with son Hillar, Irma Ruus with sons Albert

and Ivar who started to study at the U of A, Karin Simm-Halisky, Albert and Ellen Pihlak, Jaan and Ethel Peet, Rein and Laine Sastok, Edgar and Mrs. Kastehein, Georg and Inga Neufed, Anni and Arnold Pent, Geologist Hugo and Nelda Miina, Bert and Agnes Koppel, Hans and Anni Erdell, Hugo Laanela, and the Pallases family.

All newcomers were greeted like long lost friends or relatives by Ed Moro, Henry Vemik, Robert Kinna and a few other Estonian families living in Edmonton since before the war.

On the 24th of February 1949, some Estonians were gathering at Robert and Mai Kreems apartment to celebrate Estonian Independence Day. Pleasant fellowship, Estonian songs and language brought vivid memories of homeland, mothers and fathers, friends and relatives who were still there. An idea came up and suggestions were made to form an organization and work together for re-establishing Estonian Independence, to co-ordinate our activities, mark our historical and national dates and heritage, promote our culture and language.

Robert Kreem agreed to work out the Statutes for Edmonton Estonian Society and when ready call a general meeting of all area Estonians.

The first general meeting was held on 4th of December, 1949 at St. John Lutheran Church social room. The Statutes were accepted as presented. Robert Kreem was elected President, Mara Kruberg as secretary, Henry Vemik, O. Luberg, Robert Kinna as Executives. Yearly activities were suggested to include; Estonian Independence Day Celebrations, May or Spring time party, Remembering the Deportations, Alberta Estonian Summer days, possibly in Eckville. Some picnics and outings to the lakes, Fall Seasons party, General meeting, Christmas Service and social.

The 1949 Christmas Service and following Social was at St. John's Lutheran Church and Social room.

In 1950 Estonian Independence Day was in the Social Credit Hall. The program consisted of Speeches, recitals, Estonian music and exhibits of Arts and Crafts. News media was present and their write-ups were very good. A local French Radio Station broadcasted Estonian music and a short talk on Estonian History and life under the Russian occupation. Later in the year some other local Radio Stations had also several Estonian broadcasts.

The first Alberta Estonian Summer Days were held in Eckville Estonian Hall and participated by all Alberta Estonian Associations.

The General Meeting was on the 16th of December at St. John's Social room. Robert Kreem was re-elected President, Mara Kruberg as secretary, Feliks Lasberg, Henry Vemik, Robert Kinna, and Andres Pilt as executives. Christmas Service and the Social followed the meeting, and was participated by the Finnish Society like many of our Social Activities at that time.

In 1950 the Independence Day was celebrated in the Corona Hotel Banquet room. The program was similar to the previous year. Our Folk-dancers were performing for the first time. All Edmonton Finnish, Swedish, Lithuanians, and Latvians were invited and presented, as well as all Alberta Estonian Societies. All representatives were bringing short Greetings. Banquet and Dance followed the programme. The next day was a meeting of Delegates. Topics included our

co-operation in Alberta and with the newly formed Central Organization in Toronto, and aid to the Refugees still in the European refugee camps.

Sadly, this was the last time Robert Kreem organized an activity in Alberta. In the spring of 1951 Robert and his family moved to Toronto, where his organizational talents found much larger fields to work on for the benefit of all Estonians.

The following few years I carried on as President. I received lots of good help and advice from our membership and also from our newly formed War Veterans Association and Colonel Kivi's family.

We kept in contact with other Alberta Estonian Associations and Estonia's neighboring country organizations. Especially close contact was with Eckville Estonians. They were always numerous present at our Get-togethers. Dr. Rita Matiisen was often our highly regarded guest speaker, like the Canadian Centennial and Estonian Independence Day.

Our yearly activities were basically similar every year, with occasional changes. In one year we had the Alberta Estonian Summer Days in Edmonton, with great success and attendance from all Alberta Estonian Society's. Highlite was the play "Mikkumärdi" staged by our members and directed by Vaike Viil. The play was followed with a dance, like it was in the Rural Community Halls in Estonia. The next day was a meeting of the representatives and a picnic in the afternoon.

The weekend outings to the lakes were getting further apart. More and more of our members were buying houses and the weekends were spent working around the houses and gardens.

My workload and added responsibilities at the workplace started to take more of my time. Feliks Lasberg, Walter Reili, Ilmar Pals, Nurmi Simm, Siim Ruusauk, Ludmilla Kivi ja Hiljs Koot were taking turns as the Presidents or Executives. They did remarkably well keeping our Society alive and active.

Especially happy am I to see so many new and younger members and Executives with endless energy and new ideas. I am very impressed of the progress and results of activating the Alberta Estonians to work together to Commemorate the arrival of first Estonian settlers to Alberta and to Canada, 100 years ago.

I would also express my sincere appreciation and thanks to the members who do not have their roots in Estonia, nor speak our language, still continue to take part in our activities with helping hands and presence.

In closing, I wish a long and successful life to the Edmonton Estonian Society and all of its members and to Canada, Alberta and Edmonton, who accepted and helped us in our difficult times and last but not least to our homeland Independent Estonia.

God Bless and Thank You.

A.E. Pilt
February, 1999

INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS

Ann Pals was born, raised and educated in Edmonton, Alberta and has a degree in Cultural Geography. She is the mother of three children; Kaila, Aleks and Matthew. The Holtz family has resided in North Vancouver since 1990, but continues to maintain strong roots in Alberta.

My parents Lydian and Ilmar Pals arrived in Edmonton in 1953 from Calgary to an established Estonian community network. My earliest memories then were of people who may have had little else in common except for their Estonian roots, their language and customs and their shared newness as immigrants.

My clearest memories growing up in Edmonton was the Independence Day celebrations in February. Depending on the year and the President some celebrations were memorial, some were political and some were social in nature. The program was made up of the Canadian anthem, greetings from the city and provincial dignitaries, music and speeches, sometimes very long speeches, finally ending with the Estonian National Anthem. The speeches were passionate, sometimes drawing tears and always giving a call for those present to not forget, to remember their homeland, freedom and those left behind. My earliest memories were of Ülo Magi, Col. Kivi, my father, and others speaking passionately about concepts and a place that were foreign to me. The themes were always the same... don't forget, freedom or independence and/or get those Russians out. Some in the community questioned the relevance of all this politics ... we lived in Canada now, what could we do from here?

By 1966-67, we as a community marched publicly, lobbied publicly for recognition of people who had no voice. We explored similarities with the Latvians and Lithuanians for a larger voice with which to speak to Canadians. We began a long period of educating our fellow Canadians about Estonian people. Coincidentally we were also educating my generation on what it meant to be an Estonian Canadian.

My parents' biggest dream was that Estonia would obtain its freedom. My father was lucky to see that dream come true and to go back home one more time. For him though, home had changed, perhaps too much time had passed. The home he remembered of his youth no longer existed. He could not go back to the Estonia he had left. Home was in Canada now.

Were those Independence Day memorials for naught? Was it a preoccupation with things "ethnic"? I don't think so. What those early Estonian gatherings taught me was the importance of our roots, to me Estonia was a far off place with which I had no connection, so to call for independence for this far off place meant little to me. What touched me was the power of the emotion, the need to speak out for political justice, the love for a place, a shared history, a community that gathered to remember where it came from. We had no family roots here so this community became part of our family.

I would like to commend the Edmonton Eesti Selts for continuing to meet, for continuing to encourage and support the Estonian community in Edmonton and Alberta. The needs of your community today are just as important as those 50 years ago - friendship, community connection, cultural roots and the pride in sharing our Estonian heritage.

CELEBRATING A CENTURY

This past summer, Estonians from across Canada and the USA gathered at Linda Hall near Stettler to celebrate the centenary of Estonian settlement in Canada. The three-day Estonian-Canadian Centennial celebration was the largest gathering of Estonians in Alberta's history. Over 500 people gathered to honor the brave pioneers who came to Alberta at the turn of the century. The organized Estonian community in Canada had begun in Alberta and Alberta Estonians were proud to host the celebration.

The June 25 - 27 Centennial was planned to coincide with traditional Jaanipäev festivities. Linda Hall, with its spacious grounds and facilities, was an ideal venue for the friendly, informal event. On Friday, pioneer family descendants covered the walls of Linda Hall with dozens of large family storyboards. What history these pictures conveyed! Family trees were depicted through original pioneer photos: pictures of log or sod homes, of family events, social occasions. Pioneer families invested immense effort to compile these family histories and they experienced pride in the knowledge gained about their forefathers. For all others, these storyboards made the Centennial event memorable and unique.

Throughout Friday, people gathered at the Hall to set up motorhomes and campers, view exhibits, tour historical sites, purchase souvenirs (complete with the Centennial logo) but, most of all, to socialize. For many, it was a time for family reunions. For others, it was a "homecoming". For all, it was a time to enjoy meeting friends and other Estonians. The persistent rain ensured that all stayed inside the Hall and got to meet one another, as well as sing and dance to Garry Raabis' band in the evening.

By Saturday noon, the sun appeared and a moving Opening Ceremony took place in front of Linda Hall. Masters of Ceremony were Bob Kingsep and Bob Tipman, both grandsons of pioneers. Three flag poles had been gifted to Linda Hall to commemorate the Centennial. As the anthems were sung, Canadian, Estonian and Alberta flags rose over the Hall. It was a proud moment and one of giving thanks to the "pioneers who made this land our home". Invited guests included Ilmar Heinsoo, Hon. Consul-General of Estonia in Canada; Udo Petersoo, Archbishop of the Estonian Evangelical Church in Canada; and Robert Kreem, who delivered the keynote address. Copies of Original Homestead Certificates were presented to over 30 pioneer family representatives. Musical entertainment was provided by Evelyn Klaus Shursen of Stettler and Rosie Lindau and her band from Toronto.

Saturday afternoon was a time for casual socializing as well as lively, competitive pioneer games such as log-sawing, and nail-pounding. In the evening, a bountiful and delicious Western BBQ dinner was served from a tent on the grounds. Everyone agreed that "This was Alberta beef the way it should be". The evening continued with a musical variety program including Rosie Lindau and her group. Excitement had peaked for the lottery draw of a "Trip for Two to Tallinn". Tônu Orav of Goliger's Travel, Toronto, arranged for this prize and he was present to make the draw. The lucky winner was Kitty Nippak, from Toronto. The highlight of the late evening was the huge traditional Jaanipäev bonfire, and a singsong from the specially prepared "Centennial Songbook".

An open air worship service was held on Sunday morning at the 1906 chapel and pioneer cemetery. On a warm and sunny morning, with a view of lush green fields and gently rolling hills, Archbishop Pedersoo used King David's Psalm to describe the struggles of the pioneers to overcome hardships and settle the land. He gave thanks for "the heritage, history and roots brought from the shores of the Baltic Sea, planted into the soil here." Rosie Lindau, soloist, accompanied on flute by Pille Aavik-Annist, provided an evocative musical tribute to the beautiful setting and occasion. Many were heard to say that the service was the most meaningful part of the commemorative weekend.

The Centennial weekend ended on Sunday afternoon with a half-day bus tour to historical pioneer sites in the Eckville/Medicine River area. The sold-out tour was organized and narrated by Bob Kingsep, grandson of Hendrick Kingsep, the first Estonian pioneer to settle permanently in Canada. Having grown up by his grandfathers' homestead, he was knowledgeable about the history of the area. The tour included stops to view original pioneer homes, the site of the Estonian Hall and Estonian School, and the Gilby/Kalmu Cemetery, where many of the pioneers are buried. A stop was also made at the original unmarked cemetery beside the Medicine River. With the assistance of Allan Posti, tour members placed wooden crosses where they believed the graves to be, and Archbishop Pedersoo offered a prayer of remembrance. Plans are now underway to place a permanent marker there.

The Centennial weekend served to commemorate the lives of the Estonian pioneers. Those who attended felt pride in their heritage and history.

Eda McClung

"Pioneers have made this land our home"
"Me tuleme tuhandest tuulest..."

Herk Visnapuu

FESTIVAL MEMORIES

By Arnold Mottus, Grandson of Estonian Pioneers Gustav and Linda Mottus

Reflecting on the Centennial Festival in Stettler, several points come to mind. Firstly, the event brought a renewed sense of identity within the Estonian community. It also brought recognition of the accomplishments of our forefathers. Despite their many hardships, their contributions as the first generation of Estonian people in Canada have now been recognized at the international level.

My perspective of the June 1999 celebration was a very positive one. The friendly atmosphere was apparent from the outset. The members of the Organizing Committee deserve accolades for such a fine-tuned agenda which succeeded in spite of some inclement weather. Many families were brought together as one, and a totally free and unabated fellowship was born; with handshakes and conversation, mutual bonds were established. The story boards unfolded a treasure trove of information, many pieces of first generation history were brought to light and a sense of pride was instilled in succeeding generations.

The majority of people partaking in the festivities were of the third generation of pioneer families, and they were graced to be accompanied by pioneers of the second settlement era as well. Age differences proved to be no barrier: people conversed freely) interests and experiences were recounted both openly and privately, and a nurturing of body and soul resulted for all.

The Centennial will ingrain itself into the annals of our public history for future generations to observe. This cache of Alberta history has in effect been cast in bronze and stone, a deserved monument to our brave Estonian forefathers.

Special thanks must be given to those individuals who initiated the efforts and formulated the plans to make the jubilee a reality. Names that come to mind include Eda McClung, a lady with impeccable work and organizational skills; also David Kiil for his untold hours of dedicated work in tracing homesteading records; and all members of the Organizing Committee who donated generously of their time and talent to make this celebration a memorable one. Individuals such as Allan Posti, Bob Kingsep and others deserve recognition for their contributions to extend the scope of the festival to include a bus tour to historical sites such as pioneer homesteads, schools, cemeteries and community centres. Efforts and input from all these people enhanced the tribute to our forefathers. The Centennial was a deserved recognition and honor to those brave pioneers who carved a niche into Alberta's history.

ESTONIAN TRADITIONS

ST. JOHN'S DAY (JAANIPÄEV)

Estonia and Canada are both northern countries but, unless the reader is a keen student of geography, it may be surprising that Edmonton, Alberta is some 500 kilometres south of Estonia's capital city Tallinn. This observation suggests, at least in part, why the celebration of the summer solstice, generally known as Jaanipäev, continues as a strong national tradition in Estonia as well as abroad where people of Estonian heritage congregate.

Jaanipäev appears to be rooted in ancient pagan rites and customs, although its name is attributed to the Crusades (Jaan used to be a variation of Johannes; hence, the name Jaanipäev and St. John's Day, respectively). Nor did the arrival of Christianity entirely eliminate the pagan beliefs surrounding the holiday. In the late 15th century, Balthasar Rüssow wrote in his Livonian Chronicle that Estonians by-passed Church only to spend their time lighting bonfires, drinking, singing and dancing!

The arrival of the summer solstice signified the end of work in the fields for the purpose of establishing a new crop and the onset of the harvesting season. Magical deeds and rituals became part of Jaanipäeva celebrations. For example, farmers acquired the habit of walking around flowering rye fields to protect the crop against damage by strangers. Aspen, birch and rowan tree sticks were sometimes inserted at the four corners of a field to reduce the growth of weeds. Others started fires around their fields to achieve the same goal. Similarly, sticks might be placed adjacent to rows of cabbage to increase their growth.

Livestock were given special treatment during the midsummer solstice. Cows were kept in barns behind securely-fastened doors to prevent witches from entering and thereby reducing the cow's milk production. The hired hands who looked after the livestock in the field were usually given special delicacies as a bonus for a job well done and were free to visit their families or to attend the midsummer eve bonfire.

The arrival of the midsummer solstice also signalled the preparation of special holiday treats such as fresh butter and bread, and homemade beer. Birch branches (vihalehed) were gathered and prepared for use in the sauna. Maidens wore wreaths of wildflowers during the evening bonfire and sometimes tossed them into the fire at the end of the evening to fend off bad luck in the future. Others considered this action to increase the likelihood of finding a suitable mate. In some regions people, sans their clothes, searched for wildflowers considered to be good luck charms as well as possessing medicinal value.

Estonian fairy tales tell of two lovers, Koit and Hämarik (Dawn and Dusk), who meet momentarily during the shortest night of the year to exchange kisses. It is also rumored that the flower of a very unique fern only blooms on that night, causing lovers to search for it.

Water from springs was considered to have special qualities, especially for washing of eyes. On the eve of Jaanipäev (Jaaniõhtu), the more adventurous went swimming in a river, thereby hoping for a long and healthy life. It was believed that church bells, accidentally drowned or purposely hidden on lake bottoms, would emit sounds on this occasion. Well-water was reputed

to taste sweeter at midnight.

For us, it is difficult to visualize a Jaanipäeva celebration without a bonfire. A couple of years ago the writer was able to attend such a celebration in a village 'square' on Saaremaa. Hundreds of villagers and the surrounding countryside had gathered to sing, dance, and be merry. A traditional 'platform' swing attracted the attention of the younger set, just as it did over 50 years or so ago. A huge bonfire, with flames leaping many metres into the air was the tour de force of the evening.

In the olden times, Estonians believed that the bonfire was beneficial to the surroundings wherever the fire's glow was able to reach. The absence of a bonfire was seen as an invitation that evil spirits might prevail; worse still, lack of a bonfire might somehow cause a farmhouse to be destroyed by fire. In general, the bigger the fire the further is caused the evil spirits to scatter. Occasionally, firebrands from the Jaanipäeva bonfire were taken home and kept burning throughout the year.

It is clear that the celebration of Jaanipäeva stems from pagan times and continues as an important holiday marked by Estonians and their descendants globally; it is firmly entrenched in the country's folklore. The bonfire is considered widely as a holy fire that provides many benefits for humans, animals and crops.

It seems entirely self-evident that present-day celebrations of Jaanipäev continue to symbolize the spirit and national traditions that have evolved since ancient times. Jaanipäev is also linked to Estonia becoming a free and independent state in 1919 and again in 1991. In 1992, Jaanipäev (St. John's Day) was officially declared a National Holiday.

Sources

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Dave Kiil
Edmonton, Alberta
October, 2000.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

One hundred years ago the first Estonian settlers arrived in Alberta determined to carve out a new life in a new land. Last summer we celebrated the centenary of their arrival and the founding of the oldest Estonian settlement in Canada with the festivities in Linda Hall in Stettler. This past summer in an unprecedented and unexpected visit, the President of Estonia came to celebrate their spirit, to visit with their descendants and to recognize their contribution to the history of their former homeland.

Welcome to a very special edition of Ajakaja! This issue commemorates the historic visit by President Lennart Meri to our province.

After opening ESTO 2000 in Toronto, the President traveled west to meet with Suncor officials in Fort McMurray for discussions on potential partnering in the development of the shale oil industry in Estonia. His itinerary included private visits to Calgary and then Vancouver traveling by train through the Rockies. As part of his visit to Alberta, the President had requested a side trip to Stettler to see the historic Estonian settlement for himself. Through the generosity of Christine Lepik-Robertson and her husband Dave who donated the use of one of their planes he was able to get his wish and the historic visit took place on Tuesday, July 11, 2000.

It was a very emotional moment when the President of Estonia stepped out of the plane and into the glorious prairie sunshine. But from the beginning the mood was convivial and relaxed. The President and his entourage, which included his wife and daughter, talked and joked informally with the individuals who were there to greet them. He patiently allowed himself to be photographed whenever asked as the numbers in the crowd increased at every stop along the way to Linda Hall where the official reception took place. The number of guests was limited due to the size of the hall and to enable as many of the local families as possible to attend.

President Meri is an historian, author, linguist, playwright, film-maker and a passionate proponent of all things Estonian. It was obvious during his tour of the area that his imagination was caught up by the story of these brave and adventurous pioneers who braved such hardships to find a new life yet never forgot their roots. He was visibly moved as he handled an old Bible and a 19th century copy of Kalevipoeg which had been lovingly preserved. Noticing the absence of an Estonian flag in the Museum and the 1970's date on the calendar, he promised to replace both. True to his word, a brand new Flag and current calendars arrived within weeks of his departure.

The visit concluded with a pleasant buffet prepared in the spirit of true western hospitality under the competent supervision of Evelyn Shursen, the local organizer.

President Meri's remarks at the reception left us with the following thoughts: that the history of a country is also defined by those who leave to make their mark in the larger world; that it is time to celebrate their achievements; that the first Estonian arrived in North America in the 1600's; that the history of the Alberta Estonian community should encourage historians to look beyond the Second World War in researching the external history of Estonia. As a start he promised to send a summer student next year to record the history of the Estonian pioneers in Alberta.

Thank you President Meri for honouring our community with your gracious and charming presence. It is an afternoon we will long remember!

Anne-Marie Hodes, Editor

ESTONIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION EESTI VABARIIGI 82. AASTAPÄEV

The Edmonton Estonian Society celebrated the 82nd anniversary of Estonian Independence on Sunday afternoon, February 27. A capacity crowd filled the Strathcona Room at the Royal Glenora Club to commemorate this historic event. Estonia formally declared its independence from Russia on February 24, 1918, and this date has remained a national holiday in the newly Independent Estonia today.

The celebration began with the singing of O Canada and Mu Isamaa, accompanied by Helve Sastok. Toomas Paasuke was Master of Ceremonies and welcomed the guests, many of whom were from out-of-town. It was a special honor to have in attendance several families who were descendants of the first Estonian pioneers to Canada. These families played a central role in the immensely successful Centennial celebration last June in Stettler. For many, this event had stirred an interest in their Estonian roots and they were attending Independence Day for the first time.

Eda McClung introduced Bob Kingsep, grandson of Henrik Kingsep, the first Estonian pioneer to settle in Canada. Also present were Arnold Mottus, Allan Posti, Ralph Pihooja, Astrid Oro Ustina and Bob Tipman - all had grandparents who settled in Alberta at the turn of the century.

A sumptuous buffet meal was served, made even more enjoyable by the bright sunshine and the scenic river valley setting. The room buzzed with lively conversation and laughter, as friends enjoyed the occasion.

The meal was followed by a video presentation, "Touring Estonia." It was a well-narrated, circle tour of Estonia and included highlights of the 1999 Song & Dance Festival. It left viewers in awe of Estonia's historical sights, and left no doubt that this was a nation that could (and had) sung its way to freedom! Ain Leetma, an Estonian seminary student in Edmonton, spoke afterwards and reflected on the current meaning and challenge of freedoms for Estonia. The afternoon ended with a lively lottery draw of a variety of ethnic items.

The celebration evoked pride in our heritage, which has survived against all odds. The strength of the Estonian spirit has long been recognized:

"Ühe rahva vaimu võib paenutada ja suruda, aga ei iial murda. Järeltulejad pärast meid seisavad imekspannes tema ilmutise ees, mis nagu maa seest tõuseb ja endale uue nõi võtab: aga ta on seesama muutmata vaim, kes rahvaste elu aastasadadel loonud."

J.V. Snellman
(Eesti Postimees, 17.II, 1882)

PRESIDENT MERI KÜLASTAS ALBERTAT

Kaljumäed, esimeste eestlaste ajalugu Kanadas ja põlevkivi tööstus meelitasid Eesti Vabariigi Presidendi Lennart Meri ning tema abikaasa ja tütre Albertasse.

President Meri, tulles Toronto Esto 2000 pidustustelt, kohtus 11 juulil Calgary lennuvälja erasaali vastuvõtul Calgary eestlaste ning Eesti asunike järeltulijatega.

Kaassõitjateks olid proua Helle Meri, 14 aastane tütar Tuule Meri, presidendi vanem käsundusohvitser, pressiesindeja, ja ihukaitsja. Kuna samal nädalal toimus Calgary linnas kuulus Calgary Stampede, siis olid vastuvõtjad riietunud nii cowboy stilli kui ka eesti rahvariietesse. Kõigile kuuetele Eesti külalisele kingiti Calgary linna ametlik sümbol - valge cowboy kübar. Tseremoonia viis läbi Helle Kraav, kes, olles Calgary lenniväljal "White Hatter" vabatahtlik saabujate vastuvõtja, kandis sel puhul oma ametliku vormi. Rahvariietes Calgary neiud Melanie Matiisen ja Milvi Tiislar kinkisid presidendile ja proua Merile lillekimbud. Kolme Balti riigi lpu värvidega rosetti andsid üle endised Calgary Eesti Seltsi juhatuse liikmed Arne Matiisen ja Aino Asmus. Tervitajaks oli endine kauaaegne Calgary Eesti Seltsi esimees, Peeter Leesment, kes seletas rosetti tähendust inglise keeles, kuna kohal oli ka neid, kes eesti keelt ei valda.

"We ask you, President Meri, to accept a special gift from us to the Estonian nation
...

On October 6, 1991, six weeks after the Baltics regained their independence, the Calgary Estonian Society and the Calgary Latvian and Lithuanian Societies jointly organized a celebration to commemorate that event. This was held in a beautiful atrium, where the main decoration was a rosette with 5 metre long streamers in the national colours of the three Baltic states.

At this gathering, we celebrated the rebirth of our nations, but also expressed concern about the still ongoing dangers of Soviet military presence and the difficult economic times ahead. Now that many of these difficulties are resolved, we feel that the rosette should go home.

President Meri, please accept this gift from us."

Peale mõnusat vestlust ja suupisteid siirdus grupp Alta Flights eralennukiga KeskAlberta eestlaste hällialale. Firma lahked omanikud on Christina Lepik-Robertson ja abikaasa David. Cessna Grand Caravani 230 km. lennul Alberta sinises päikeserikkas taevast olid kaassõitjateks peale eelmainitud kuueliikmelise aukülalisgrupi veel kolm albertalast: Bob Kingsep, kelle vanaisa oli esimene Eestist saabunud asunik, Bob Tipman, kes ise on eestlaspioneeride kolmanda põlvkonna liige ja Helgi Leesment, Alberta reisi peakorraldaja.

Nii saabus grupp edukalt Stettleri väikelinna lennuväljale, kus tervitajate eesotsas oli Evelyn Shursen-kohalik tegevuskava kompetentne läbiviija. Esimesena siirduti Stettler Town and

Country küla-muuseumile eestlaste poolt ehitatud palkmajasse, mis algselt asus umbes 15 km linnast edela suunas. Viimati elasid selles majas kadunud Bill ja Blanche Nicklom 20nda sajandi keskpaiku. Billi vend Otto Nicklom oli presidendi 11. juuli visiidi üks kohaliku ajaloo valgustajatest -tehes seda omalaadse magusa huumoriga. Palkmajas leidis president huvipakkuvaid ajaloolisi raamatuid, vana Piibli koos perekonnaseisu andmetega, põllumajanduslikku kirjandust ja akna alusel riivil ühe 19. sajandi lõpul välja antud Kalevipoja.

President püüdis kõiki natuke lugeda külaliste poolt esitatud informatsiooni ja küsimuste vahele. Samuti lehitses ta 1974 a. VESKA kalendrit, mille ta seinalt koos naelaga võttis, lubades kiiresti teise saata. Muuseumi kuraator teatab, et juba on saabunud kaks uut tänapäeva kalendrit ilusate Eesti vaadetega. Palkmaja orelit kaunistab nüüdsest peale marmoralusel värke sini-must-valge lipp, ka kingitus Eesti Vabariigi Presidendilt.

Järgmine peatus tehti maantee #56 äärse eesti rahvusmuuseumi kaunistatud suurtahvi juures, kus on avaldatud tunnustust eestlastele Kesk-Alberta asustamisel. Silt asub umbes 12 km Stettleri linnast lõuna pool.

Kolmandaks peatuspaigaks oli 1906. aastal ehitatud Estonian Chapel ehk tilluke kabel ja seda ümbritsev surnuaed. Nüüdseks oli juuresolijate arv kasvanud ning terve aukülaliskond sai mitmetelt kohalikelt selgitusi oma esivanemate haudade ja elude kohta nii inglise kui eesti keeles.

Viimast külastuspaika, Linda Hall, Kesk-Alberta Eesti rahvamaja ehtsid Kanada, Eesti ja Alberta lipud möödunud suve kanada eestlaste 100. aastase juubeli puhuks püstitatud lipuvarrastel. Rahvamajas lõi kindlalt välja kuulus "western hospitality". Meeleolu oli samaaegselt nii austav kui ka mõõdukalt vaba. Naeru oli kuulda nii aukülaliste lauas kui 60-liikmelise vastuvõtjaskonna seas. Tutvuti, peeti lühikõnesid, anti kingitusi, esitati lühi ülevaateid kohalikust ajaloost ja võeti maitsvat kerge einet. Esitlejate seas olid Rodney Hennel, Ron Hennel, Thomas Pääsuke, Evelyn Shursen, Bob Tipman, Helgi Leesment, Alfred Klaus ja Bob Kingsep. President Meri mainis oma sõnavõtu, et oli liigutatud terve pealelõuna kavast.

President lisas lahkelt omapoolsed õnnesoovid Anne Tipmani 100, sünnipäeva kaardile järgmise päeva pidustuse jaoks. Rahvamajas uuris ta ka kogutud sugupuude väpjanekut. Sugupuud olid valmistatud eelmise aasta 100. aasta juubeli jaoks, kus nad juba siis suurt tähelepanu pälvisid. Teatati, et on valmimas raamat, kus ilmuvad needsamad huvitavalt kujundatud sugupuude tahvlid. Nii tekkis presidendil veel kord võimalus kanda oma ajaloolase müti ja vesteldes eestlaste järeltulijatega saada neilt täpseid andmeid.

Järgmisel päeval lennati Suncori firmaga Põhja-Alberta põlevkivi kaevandusse ja lähedalasuva Fort McMurray linna. Suure firma inseneri arvates on nende väljatöötatud õlitootmistehnoloogia rakendatav ka eesti põlevkivi puhul. Läbirääkimised sellel teemal käivadki. President Merit imponeerisid ka Fort McMurray linna kodud, kus elavad need, kes seotud sealse kaevandustööstusega. Ja veel, et "seal inseneridega rääkides nimetas üks või teine mõnda eestlasest professorit või kolleegi, kelle käe all õppinud või kellega käsi-käes töötanud."

Viimasel õhtul Calgarys meenutas president kõiki kanada-eestlasi, niihästi 19. sajandil Eestist lahkunute mitmenda põlvkonna järeltulijaid kui ka Teise Maailmasõja põgenikke ja nende järeltulijaid, ning nende mitmekesest elu.

"Väikese riigi president on liigutatud kohates kaasmaalasi kaugetes kohtades; kaugused tänapäeval ei eksisteeri." Ta imestab kuidas Albertas "kahe sirge tee ristumisel saabusid lausmaastikule esimesed eestlased: välja rändav rahvas, kes olid juba Venemaal ja Krimmis õnne proovinud, ja leidsid, et tuleb veel edasi rännata." ...Et läbi kolmanda, neljanda ja viienda põlvkonna on alles hoitud taskukalender, kus täpselt kirjeldatud ümberasuja rasket teekonda. See viis Lihulasse, edasi rongiga Pärnu, Riiga, väikese laevaga Inglismaa idarannikule, Liverpooli rongiga, sealt aurikuga üle ookeani Halifaxi, seal kuue päevase rongisõiduga kohta, mis nüüd kannab nimetust Alberta. Märkis päeviku pidaja "see on minu kodu ja siit ma enam kuhugi ära ei lähe". ...Et on nii palju säilitatud kohalikus omavalitsuse muuseumis Stettleris." Muu hulgas veel mainis ta ka sellist detaili, et kusagil Kanadas on ühele lapsele eesnimeks pandud "Tallinn".

Eesti Vabariigi President lahkus Albertast varahommikuse rongiga läbi imponeerivate Kaljumägede Kanada läänekaldale Vancouverisse, jättes kõigile Albertas meeldivaid mälestusi.

Helgi Leesment, Calgary, Alberta

Keele parandus, MM Tallinnas

MEDICINE VALLEY ESTONIAN PIONEERS HONORED AT MIDSUMMER CELEBRATION

Estonian people world-over love to celebrate Midsummer or Jaanipäev. This past summer, the event was combined with festivities to honor pioneer Estonians who homesteaded in the Medicine Valley at the turn of the 20th century. On the June 22-23 weekend, over 200 people gathered at the Gilby Community Centre and the adjoining Medicine River Recreation Area and Campground for a province wide celebration. The Gilby area is the site of the original settlement and Estonian pioneers helped the building of Gilby Hall in 1921. Within a few years of the Kingsep, Kinna and Posti families arriving in 1903, there were over 40 Estonian families in the area. They formed large extended family networks. Many of these families retain connections with today's community and it was the third, fourth and fifth generation descendants who played a central role in planning the successful weekend.

The Estonian-Canadian Centennial in 1999 in Stettler served to renew interest in their family histories and led to rediscovery of the historical significance of their lives. "Pioneer Days" in this case was not just a theme. Rather it was a genuine opportunity to learn about and visit actual homestead sites, to share in the restoration of the first cemetery, to learn about the Estonian School and Hall, as well as enjoy the rolling landscape and beauty of the valley that had attracted them in the first place. As with most Estonian festivities, convivial company, sumptuous food and lively music contributed to a memorable event.

The program began early Saturday with the serving of a hearty Pioneer Breakfast in the Gilby Hall. August Liivam was in charge of preparing their family recipe of double dipped "Estonian Toast". Homemade barley sausage was provided by Stettler Estonian families. Lori Kalev Sparrow organized a display of storyboards of the local pioneer families. Most of these families were in attendance to acknowledge their historical roots to the community.

At noon, Bob Kingsep, the grandson of the first Estonian to settle in Canada, officiated at the opening ceremony. He spoke of the honor and pleasure for him to participate in this event and at this site which has such close historical ties to his family. He also noted a need to keep his orations to a minimum in order to avoid comparisons with his storied, loquacious grandfather. August Liivam as Councilor in Lacombe County welcomed all guests and David Kiil from EES outlined the history of these traditional summer solstice celebrations.

After the opening, guests were given maps to set out on self-guided tours to view over twenty historic sites in the vicinity. Signs at each site had homestead and historical descriptions, and had been prepared by Bob Kingsep and Garry Raabis. Traffic jams occurred along the rural roads as people stopped to view and reflect upon pioneer life and times. At 2:00 P.M., guests gathered for the dedication of the Old Cemetery on a secluded hilltop on the Raabis homestead. Many arrived from the Hall via horse-drawn wagons. Myrna Kalev, a fifth generation Canadian Estonian on the Kinna side organized the wagon convoy. Her brother Brian drove one of the teams.

For those in attendance, the restoration and dedication of the Old Cemetery represented a tangible link to the past. The cemetery had been used in the early years but since 1925 had

gradually fallen into disrepair and nearly forgotten. One massive headstone, with the name "Horma Ott Kanksep" lay on the ground. This remaining landmark was the gravestone of Bob Kingsep's great-grandfather who passed away in 1905 while visiting his sons in Canada. The Centennial in 1999 brought renewed interest in these historical details and led to the rediscovery of the Old Cemetery. Through the determination and dedication of Allan Posti, Arnold Mottus and his sister Jean Maki, the site has now been groomed, the headstone uprighted, symbolic crosses put in place and a surrounding chain link fence erected.

Bob Kingsep officiated, as a plaque installed by the Lacombe County, was unveiled. The plaque is affixed to a stone that had been moved from the grounds of the original Estonian School. With his notes resting on his great-grandfather's headstone, Bob read from the account written by his aunt Selma Kingsep Pallo where she wrote of her memory of her grandfather Ott Kanksep's passing and subsequent funeral. The perceptions of a seven year old were magic. The simple references from the past were as relevant to the present attendees as they were to the little girl who had stood on the same ground 87 years earlier. As the ceremony concluded, second and third generations of Raabis family sang "Amazing Grace". Bob noted "I will always remember the few seconds after the conclusion when my eyes met with those of Allan and Arnold. No words were spoken. None were necessary". For all present there was an overwhelming awareness of the value of links to the past.

Back at the Hall, preparations for the pig roast were underway. People were hungry after a lively afternoon of social and outdoor activities. As the crowd grew, overflow tables were set up outdoors. This seating proved to be a challenge during the dinner when a crashing hailstorm hit. With the Hall filled to capacity, a huge roast pig was brought to the table. It was a sight to behold! Flash bulbs popped everywhere. A variety of dishes including traditional Estonian rye bread and sauerkraut accompanied the delicious pork. All agreed the occasion well earned this plentiful and succulent feast.

Following the meal, people sang and danced to the music of Garry Raabis and his band. The Raabis family members are notable musicians. Garry's father Waldo played for many years at Gilby dances and joined with Garry this evening to play again. Shirley Raabis Moos sang with the band, and joined the family in singing "Nagu Linnu Tiivul", a song that their pioneer grandparents had known but for which the family now has English words. All joined in singing "Happy Birthday" to mark the 80th anniversary of Gilby Hall.

Midsummer tradition demands a huge, late-evening bonfire, even if the wood and ground are soaking wet. Showing true pioneer grit, August Liivam persisted until the large log pile was ablaze. The bonfire became the gathering spot for a singsong that lasted into the wee hours of the morning. With this, a memorable and meaningful event came to a close.

Following the celebration, the organizing committee received much favorable feedback: "first rate celebration", "wonderful experience for all", "terrific event", "allowed me to connect with my Estonian roots and stay in contact with my community", "fortunate to have been involved", "experienced real historic ties", "suurepärase pidu"...

This was a worthy celebration of the pioneer Estonians who have earned a special place in the history of this province.

A RECEPTION FOR ESTONIAN ATHLETES

The 2001 World Championships in Athletics - The Worlds - were held in Edmonton during the first two weeks in August. The competitors enjoyed a well-organized event under near-ideal weather conditions.

While no world records were broken, many of the athletes achieved personal bests and set many national records.

Two of Estonia's top athletes - Erki Nool and Aleksander Tammert - competed in Edmonton. The winner of the gold medal in the decathlon at the Sydney Olympics in 2000, Nool won the silver medal in Edmonton with a point total of 8,815 - a new Estonian record. Tammert competed in the discus throw and placed amongst the top dozen or so athletes in his event. A third athlete - septathlete Larissa Netsheporuk - was unable to compete owing to the status of her Estonian citizenship.

The Estonian contingent at The Worlds comprised about 20 individuals, namely athletes, trainers officials, sportswriters, and nine members of the Erki Nool Fan Club. The Fan Club is made up of very enthusiastic fans who travel to competitions to cheer their hero on to victory. In Edmonton's Commonwealth Stadium, the Fan Club attracted a lot of attention in their yellow Erki Nool t-shirts, accompanied by loud drumming and the waving of Estonian flags.

The Edmonton Estonian Society took advantage of the opportunity to sponsor a reception for the Estonian delegation. Over 60 people gathered in the acreage home of Dave Kiil to socialize with old friends and to make new friends. A Western BBQ, along with traditional delicacies and refreshments supplied by Society members, contributed to a most enjoyable time.

The Estonian Track and Field Association, as well as Nool and Tammert, were presented with a commemorative plaque and medals, respectively, in recognition of their athletic accomplishments during the Worlds in our city.

The informal reception provided an opportunity for participants to get acquainted with each other and to catch up on happenings in Estonia. The arrival of Nool and his entourage was unquestionably the highlight of the evening. The athletes were greeted with prolonged applause and camera flashes lit up the night sky.

As the centre of attention, Nool complied with numerous requests for autographs and responded to an endless stream of questions about himself and his life as an athlete. A couple of young fans were so impressed with their hero and were later reported to be ready to follow in Nool's footsteps.

Members and friends of the Edmonton Estonian Society were enthusiastic about the opportunity to meet these outstanding athletes and to honor their accomplishments on the international stage. New friendships were formed and the memories will last a lifetime!

Dave Kiil

SENIOR ATHLETE STILL ON TRACK FOR RECORDS - EVEN AT AGE 83 IT'S NOT LEMBIT SAAR'S LAST CHANCE YET - HE PLANS TO KEEP ON JUMPING, THROWING

SARAH O'DONNELL.

Journal Staff Writer

Edmonton, Alberta, December 2, 2001

Lembit Saar didn't jump as high or throw the shot as far as other competitors Saturday, but he was one of the stars at the University of Alberta Butterdome.

At age 83, Saar was decades older than almost everyone else taking part in this weekend's annual Last Chance track and field meet.

It's the last opportunity of the year for athletes to break records in their age group, and Saar hoped to make history among 80-85 year olds in the shot put, hammer throw and high jump.

"This little one here, that's a record," Saar said after clearing one metre in the high jump.

It wasn't much, he said modestly. But his spirit impressed the far younger athletes swirling around the track.

Most didn't know the Estonian native, who emigrated to Canada in 1952, only took up these sports competitively in his early '70s while living in Toronto.

"A retired man, I have lots of time," Saar said.

Today, he said, he holds four national records in field sports.

Attinaw Aytenfisu, who was at the Butterdome to watch his daughter Melissa compete in shot put, said he initially thought he was looking at a coach out on the track when he spotted Saar.

"For him to come compete against these younger and bigger guys, he's an inspiration really to everybody," Aytenfisu said.

"It's wonderful to have him there."

Competitors and track meet officials applauded as Saar made it over his 95 centimetres and one metre high-jump attempts, flashing him the thumbs-up sign after he heaved an orange four-kilogram shot almost nine metres.

It was the first time Saar's son, Rein, has watched him compete.

His father moved to Calgary from Toronto in July, and the pair made the day trip to Edmonton together.

While there are far fewer competitors in his age group in Alberta than there are in Ontario, Saar

said he plans to be a regular at Alberta events now that he calls Alberta home.

"I want to compete as long as I can."

EESTLUSE TEINE SAJAND ALBERTAS

- Esimesed eestlased hakkasid Kanadas vilja kasvatamama 1899. aastal
- Karmid elutingimused on eestlastele kontimööda olnud

Esimesed eestlased jõudsid sajanditaguse hõreda asustusega Kanadasse 19. sajandi lõpul ning valisid oma elukohaks tulevase Alberta provintsi.

1899. aastal saabusid Võrumaalt pärit vennad Hendrik ja Kristjan Kingsep Edmontoni ja Calgary vahel asuva Sylvani järve äärde ning alustasid seal uut elu. Alles kuus aastat hiljem moodustati Alberta provints ja tänase suurlinna Edmontoni sünniaastaks kirjutatakse 1910. Kaks aastat tagasi tähistati suurejooneliselt eestluse esimest sajandit Kanadas.

EESTI ELUS PETTUNUD TALUMEHED võtsid Kanada tee esmakordselt jalge alla 19. sajandi lõpul. Kauge tundmatu maa ahvatles vabaduse ja piiramatu võimalustega Eesti talupidajaid. Samuti ka Krimmi õnne otsima läinuid ja sealsetes oludes pettunud väljarändajaid. Teekond hõreda asustusega Kanadasse oli juba omaette julgustükk, kuid kohalejõudnuid ootas Kesk-Kanadas viljakas 160 aakri suurune põllumaatükk, mille eest tuli esialgu tasuda vaid 10 dollarit. Kui talunik oli kolme aastaga üles harinud vähemalt 15 aakrit maad, võis ta selle jäädavalt oma nimele kinnitada. Samas oli võimalus soodsalt maad juurde osta.

Esimeste eestlastena said Edmontoni ja Calgary vahel asuva imekauni Sylvani järve ääres endale hingemaa Võrumaa kooliõpetaja Hendrik Kingsep ja tema meremehest vend Kristjan. See oli 9. mail 1899. Kaks aastat hiljem elas järve ääres viis eesti perekonda ja aastal 1903 oli Livonia asunduse nime teeninud eestlaste koloonias 16 talu. Vahepeal jõuti aasta isegi ühisuses elada.

Eestlaste elu-olu talletas Tartumaalt pärit August Posti, kes pidas päevaraamatut, kuhu ta tegi esimesed sissekandeid juba oma tormisel merereisil.

"See oli tühi, ürgne maa, täis pajuvõsa ja metsatulekahjudest jäänud suitsenud risu ja kannustikku. Kliima oli karm: hilishallad olid sagedased juunikuu algul ja varajasi öökülmi tuli ette juba juulikuu lõpul. Lund sadas pahatihti septembris, keset viljapeksu, kuid hilissügis oma kauni "indiaani suvega" päästis olukorra. Püsiva talvega tuli arvestada juba novembris. Temperatuur kõikus - 45 C ja + 36 C äärmuste vahel," kirjeldasid vana-eestlased oma esmatutvust Alberta provintsi.

EESTLASED OTSISID PAREMAT ELUPAIKA. Väljarändajad ihkasid aga midagi paremat ja eelmise sajandi esimestel aastatel siirduti elama kas Medicini jõe orgu või Stettleri. Esimese elupaiga valisid rohkem Tartu-ja Võrumaalt pärit eestlased, sest uus elukoht meenutas igati Lõuna-Eesti kuppelmaastikku. Eestlased olid silmapaistvad nii saagi kasvatamises, tootmise arendamises (esimese vesiveski ehitas Fritz Kinna) kui ka kultuuri edendamisel. 1909. aasta jaanipäeval avati Karl Langeri poolt antud maatükile ehitatud koolimaja. See oli ümbruskonnas esimene, kus lisaks eestlastele õppisid ka teised kohalikud. Kool tegutses kuni 1953. aastani, mil väikeste maakoolide sulgemisega lõpetas tegevuse ka Gilby kool.

"Sealt alates pidid meie lapsed hakkama koolis käima Eekvilles," ütleb praegu Alberta ülikoolis

psühholoogina töötav Eda McClung.

Teine eestlaste suurem asundus tekkis pärast Sylvani järve äärest lahkumist Stettleris, kus elu aktiveerus tänu aastail 1905 - 1906 ehitatud raudteele. 1911. aastal ehtasid eestlased oma seltsimaja (Linda Hall), tegutses mänguselts, Stettleris oli isegi eestlaste jalgpallimeeskond.

Esimene eestlaste matmispaik asutati 1903. aastal Karl Raabise (Rääbise) talumaal pärast seda, kui tema naine Leena oli pikselöögist surma saanud. Esimesel kalmistul, mis paar aastat tagasi taastati, on tosin hauda. 1914 asustati juba üldisem Gilby kalmistu, kuid sinna maetakse ka teisi, mitte ainult eestlasi.

Valdavalt on nimed hauaplaatidel eestipärased. Võrumaa mehe August Pihooja kalmul ka pikem tekst: "Siin hinka rahus mula põwes, sa wäsint rëntaja."

EESTLUS ON MUUTUNUD AUASJAKS. Praegu elavad Medicini jõe oru kaldal kunagiste pioneeride kuuenda-seitsmenda põlve järeltulijad. Talud, enamik neist veel elujõulised, on endistiisi eestipärased: Kalevi, Kingsep, Posti, Mottus, Kinna, Koot, Langer, Matiisen ...Ununenud on vaid eesti keel. Sekka leidub ka mahajäetud talumaju, vanemad neist saja-aastased. Kõigil iseloomulikult Eestile kuusehekid ümber maja ja saun õue peal.

Eestlastest talupidajad teenivad igapäevast leiba viljakasvatamisega. Ka nisukasvatuse maailmarekordid olevat eestlaste käes. Ilusa lisaraha annavad aga naftapuuraugud, mille pealt kompaniid nii leiutasu kui ka rendiraha maksavad. Nafta leidmine Albertas 1950. aastatel oli kohalikele talumeestele tõeliseks õnnistuseks.

Kui kaks aastat tagasi võttis Edmontoni Eesti Selts nõuks suurejooneliseit tähistada eestlaste Albertasse saabumise sajandat aastapäeva, mida austas oma osavõtuga ka president Lennart Meri, tärkas paljudel uuesti huvi oma esivanemate sünnimaa ja juurte vastu.

"Siis alles tegelikult hakati hindama oma päritolu," meenutab juubelit Eda McClung.

Viimasel kahel aastal on Kesk-Albertas asuva Medicini jõe orus elavad eestlased olnud omavahel tihedates kontaktides. Viimast jaanipäeva tähistati esmakordselt suurejooneliselt üheskoos Gilby külas. Kohal oli umbes kakssada eestlaste järeltulijat ja nende kaaslast.

EDMONTONIS OMA SELTS. Edmonton on siiski ainus koht Alberta provintsis, kus tegutseb veel Eesti Selts. Calgarys lagunes see mõni aasta tagasi. Kolm aastat tagasi hakkas presidendina seltsi juhtima Saaremaalt pärit Edmontoni lähedal maal elav Ain Dave Kiil.

"Seltsimaja meil pole, sest eestlaste kogukond on siin väike. Umbes 75 liiget. Sellepärast asub peamine kokkutuleku paik minu pool. Siin teeme jaanituld ja tähistame jõulusid. Eraldi tähistame vabariigi aastapäeva. Vahel tähistame neid ka teiste seltsi liikmete juures. Toimuvad ka iga-aastased kapsategemise talgud. Kaks korda aastas ilmub meil oma ajaleht," tutvustab president seltsi elu.

"Vana-eestlaste otseseid järeltulijaid, kes oskavad eesti keelt, jääb aina vähemaks. Oleme suutnud seltsi koos hoida just tähtpäevade tähistamisega.

Arvan, et lähiajal tuleks moodustada üldine Alberta Eesti Selts, see toimiks paremini, kuna Edmontonis on eestlasi vähe. Kuskil kümne aasta pärast peavad seltsi juhtimise üle võtma ilmselt eesti keelt mitterääkivad inimesed. Usun siiski, et Eesti tähtpäevade tähistamise kaudu jääb selts ka tulevikus püsima," loodab 65-aastane Ain Dave Kiil.

CELEBRATION OF ESTONIAN INDEPENDENCE 2002

About 50 members and friends of the Edmonton Estonian Society gathered at the Highlands Golf Club on March 3, 2002 to celebrate the 84th Anniversary of Estonian Independence. It also marked 10 years of Estonia's progress as an independent republic since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

We were especially pleased that Mr. Sulev Roostar, the Charge d 'Affairs of the Estonian Embassy in Ottawa, and his wife Anna, were able to join us on this festive occasion. Mr. Roostar delivered the keynote speech, outlining highlights of Estonian history, the current political situation, and noteworthy progress toward Estonia's acceptance into the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

We were also pleased to have Mr. Allan Wachowieh, Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta, and his wife Bette, in attendance. He brought enthusiastic greetings on behalf of the province and lauded Canada's focus on multiculturalism and the benefits of maintaining an interest in one's ethnicity and traditions.

A trio of accomplished musicians, the Incognito Trio, aka The Baltic Babes, presented several musical selections for the listening pleasure of the guests. All three (Nora Bumanis-harp, Shelley Younge-flute, and Edith Stacey-bassoon) are members of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. The trio's name, Baltic Babes, is derived from their ethnic roots, namely Estonian, Latvian and Danish. Edith Stacey has Estonian roots.

During his visit in Alberta, the Roostars were able to accompany Toomas Pääsuke for some downhill skiing in the Banff area and to participate in a social event in Calgary to celebrate the lives of Estonian pioneers in southern Alberta.

The Alberta Government hosted Mr. Roostar to exchange views about topics of mutual interest. Estonia is rightfully recognized as having made much progress in the application of high technology such as e-mail and the Internet in government operations.

The Province also sponsored an official luncheon at Government House involving several MLA's and guests. Mr. Roostar responded to numerous questions from the MLA's to inform them about topical issues vis-à-vis Estonian politics, the economy, and culture. Eda McClung and Dave Kiil attended on behalf of the Society.

Dave Kiil

MIDSUMMER PARTY IN EDMONTON

Members and friends of the Edmonton Estonian Society celebrated the midsummer solstice (Jaanipäev) on Saturday, June 22 in the beautiful North Saskatchewan River valley close to downtown Edmonton. The event attracted over 50 participants, including a number of visitors from Calgary. The park-like setting and ideal weather conditions provided the perfect venue for socializing. An evening meal, consisting of a succulent BBQ'd pig, homemade sauerkraut and other delicacies, was enjoyed by all. One visitor observed that "the roast pig and the sauerkraut alone were worth the trip from Calgary".

For the second year in a row, we enjoyed hosting Estonian athletes. (Last August, our Society welcomed the Estonian delegation of over 20 athletes, officials and fans during the 2001 World Athletics Championships: The World's). This year, the World University Wrestling Championships were held in Edmonton during the summer solstice and we were delighted that the Estonian team consisting of Valdeko Kalma, President of the Viljandi Wrestling Club, and Ahto Rasko, who represented Estonia in the 66-kg freestyle event, were able to join us. In the bronze medal match, Ahto lost a close decision to a Japanese wrestler.

Our biannual newsletter, AjaKaja, was distributed for the reading enjoyment of Society members. Owing to its readership of multi-generation descendants and mixed marriage families, the newsletter is published mostly in English. Our aim is to inform the readers about Estonian culture and customs as well as current topics relevant to the development of the land of our ancestors as a vibrant member of the community of independent nations. Anne-Marie Hodes, Eda McClung, Karl Vollman and Dave Kiil were instrumental in the production of this issue.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

It's been a privilege and a lot of fun to have been involved in the variety of events and activities of the Edmonton Estonian Society (EES) over the past 15 years. We've convened traditional functions such as the Independence Day Celebrations, the Midsummer Festivals and Christmas Parties. A special event was the visit to Alberta by President Lennart Meri. Two significant and highly successful events, province-wide in both scope and participation, were convened in Stettler and Gilby in 1999 and 2001, respectively, to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the arrival of the first Estonian settlers in Canada as well as their achievements in their adopted country.

We've enjoyed meeting and working with many members of the Edmonton and Alberta Estonian communities. Your interest and enthusiasm in the celebration of our ethnic roots, culture and customs have been exceptional. Collectively, we've rekindled our interest in our heritage and felt pride in our achievements.

The EES paid-up membership approaches 50 but we maintain a mailing list of about 80. Attendance at most events ranges from 40-60 members and friends, which we consider quite high and supportive of our aims. Membership has remained fairly constant in recent years, although we've gained some new participants from central Alberta and Calgary. The number of Estonian-speaking individuals continues to dwindle.

Given this scenario, it seems timely that we consider future directions. While attendance at Society-sponsored events is high, we are not attracting enough volunteers to the EES Executive, to carry out planning for the present level of activity. As with any organization, willingness of our members to contribute their talent and time determines the health of the Society.

We suggest that we address the future of the Society at our upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM) towards the end of January, 2003. It is therefore important that all of you have an opportunity to provide comments and suggestions to guide future directions and activities. Hopefully, you will attend the AGM, join in the discussion, and volunteer your help. You also have an opportunity to give us your feedback by completing the "Member Opinion Survey" being distributed with Ajakaja.

Your comments and suggestions will help us decide what type and what level of activity will best meet the goals of the EES.

The Edmonton Estonian Society is your organization. Hopefully, it can continue to foster an awareness of Estonian culture, customs and traditions in the years to come.

Dave Kiil
Eda McClung

THE (FORMER) EDITOR'S LETTER

Mare Maxwell, now living in Tallinn, was a visitor to Edmonton in April 2003. During her 14 years here, she made many contributions to EES. Mare started our newsletter in 1989 and named it "Ajakaja". Each issue was newsy but also reflected her graphic arts and design talents. Since returning to Tallinn in 1996, Mare has worked with legal translation and language immersion programs. She is the proud and busy mother of a wonderful, almost three-year old daughter, Johanna. It was a pleasure to have Mare visit us again.

Dear Edmontonians:

I had the pleasure of visiting Canada in April 2003. Following a brief stop in Vancouver to visit friends, I flew to Edmonton where I stayed and stayed and stayed with Eda McClung. Finally the ice storms abated, and I flew into Toronto for work and pleasure. Then back to Tallinn where I now live.

The work part of my trip involved being a part of a delegation of Russian-language school representatives from Estonia. Four schools in Estonia will introduce Estonian language immersion to Russian-speaking students in grade six this September. It's called "late immersion" with the idea that by the time these kids graduate from high school, they will also be fluent in Estonian. However, they would not have lost their mother tongue in the process. So we visited a school where late immersion is offered. Hopefully now our educators have a better idea about the path they are embarking on. You are welcome to get more information on Estonian immersion at our [website](#)

Looking back at my Canadian visit, I can say it had many highlights: the first for sure was meeting 'old' friends, in this sense it was like homecoming. I fondly remember my fourteen-year stint in Edmonton. Though my visit was brief, I did have many wonderful reunions. Like seeing Eda again and putting her patience to test as I was unable to leave her home for days due to the ice storm in Toronto. And meeting many friends from the Society at the Fairmont. Thank you Eda and Külliva, for getting us all together. In Toronto I met with Viivi Rita Piil (a friend from EES days) and her family. Again, I somehow made her son Matti wonder if I was going to be sticking around for a long time.

The second part of my trip was education and work related. It made me feel that the program we are supporting will benefit both the kids who are acquiring Estonian language and the Estonian state which acquires more loyal and able citizens.

A bonus was discovering that my daughter Johanna did well during those two weeks, staying with my mom and dad. I survived the separation too. She seemed so much more 'grown up' after two weeks.

And last but not least this little story is about Ajakaja. A newsletter that Eda and Viivi and I started many moons ago. It was much slimmer in those days but we had a lot of fun putting it together and getting it out to you. I congratulate all those that put time and energy into Ajakaja today, who have broadened its scope and really brought together the small Estonian community.

It's like a little ribbon that unites the more active and also the not-so-active. I am glad to see that it has been published with added value for so long. Congratulations and happy reading for many more issues.

EDMONTON ESTONIAN SOCIETY
2003 PAID MEMBERSHIP
(AS OF JUNE 8, 2003)

1. S. Dinning Family
2. T. Paasuke
3. E. Peet
4. A. & S. Pilt
5. V. & A. Reili
6. C. & D. Robertson Family
7. H. Sastok & C. Belsher Family
8. L. Sastok
9. G. & P. Schulz
10. B. & I. Tipman
11. A. Ustina
12. S. Varney
13. O. & G. Nicklom
14. G. & E. Hall
15. A-M. & H. Hodes
16. M. & V. Kaert
17. D. & I. Kerbes
18. E. & S. Fodor
19. H. Gibson Family
20. J. & E. McClung
21. E. McElroy
22. B. Mottus Family
23. M. Paasuke
24. D. & BA. Kiil
25. L. & D. Kiil
26. M. Watson
27. E. Tippie
28. J. Urke

THE ESTONIAN SCHOOL IN THE MEDICINE RIVER VALLEY NEAR GILBY, ALBERTA

In late autumn of 1902, with temperatures in the minus 25 degree F range, three Estonian settlers, Henry Kingsep, Henry Kinna and August Posti, left Sylvan Lake to establish a new Estonian settlement in the Medicine River Valley. The first few days were spent building basic shelters to get them through the fast-approaching winter. Other Estonians arrived during the next few years and a sizeable Estonian community of several dozen families set down roots.

Almost immediately, pioneer families started to discuss the urgent need to provide their children with an education, especially the need to learn English. The issue assumed greater and greater importance as more families moved into the area.

Thus in 1905, Henry Kingsep arranged a meeting at the John Kinna homestead to discuss the issue and to formulate plans for the construction of a school. Participants included A. Posti, Paul Langer, Adam Matteus (Matthews), Paul and Peter Koot, Charlie Raabis, August Pihooja, Tom Rangen, Gabriel Maki, Fritz and Jack Kinna, and A.M. Gilbertson. The enthusiastic group decided to proceed with plans to build a school. A building site was made available by Karl Langer.

Construction materials were hauled in from Red Deer. The school (#1) was built by the Estonians in the Medicine River Valley - hence the name Estonian School - and opened in the fall of 1909. The first teacher was Mr. Martin who used the Eaton's catalogue to teach 17 kids, aged 6-13 years, English. This little schoolhouse as well as the nearby Estonian Hall served as a social gathering place and dance hall for the closely-knit Estonian community until the end of World War II.

The deteriorating condition of the first Estonian School resulted in the construction of a new schoolhouse (#2) and a detached teacherage in 1945.

The entire community got behind the project with over 40 ratepayers, mostly Estonians, volunteering their labour and services. The School served the community until 1954 when Lacombe County decided to centralize education and to close all rural schools. The Estonian School was hauled to a school site in Eckville and was used as a resource room for a number of years. The teacherage found a new home on the Langer homesite.

Note: This brief account of the Estonian School is partly based on Mrs. Nelson's handwritten article, with numerous drawings and student projects, entitled "History of the Estonian School (#1)". The full 121-page article is part of the Alberta Folklore and Local History Collection, University of Alberta Libraries. It can be accessed on the following Internet site at <http://folklore.library.ualberta.ca>

Arnold Mottus deserves our vote of thanks for discovering Mrs. Nelson's account of Estonian School #1 and for bringing it to our attention. Arnold also provided Figure #2.

Allan Posti provided very useful background information about Estonian School #2 built in 1945.

He also supplied the pictures covering the period 1945-1954 and identified several of the students in Miss Leshher's class in 1949-50.

Dave Kiil

ESTONIA 2003

BY JUDY GRAHAM (NEE KERBES)

I am first generation Canadian on my mother's Danish side, and second generation Canadian on my father's Estonian side. My mother was born in Denmark and my father was the first of his family to be born in Canada in Alberta in 1915. My grandparents, aunts and uncles from my father's side were all born in Estonia except one aunt who was born in Russia. For many years I hoped to visit Estonia, meet family and connect with my roots. My dream came true when I was given the opportunity to present at the European Reading Conference in Tallinn in July 2003. I was extremely pleased when my husband Bruce decided he would come with me.

When I traveled to Estonia for the first time, I felt like I was home. How could I feel that way visiting a country I had never visited before? First of all, the Estonian people were friendly and welcoming, whether they were newly acquainted family members, or strangers on the street. Also many are brown-eyed blondes, like myself, a common appearance in Estonia, but with those traits I am an oddity on the west coast of Canada. My husband and I enjoyed the history and culture of the Estonian people, who despite being under many years of occupation have preserved a unique identity. The land reminded me of the prairies in Alberta, where I was born, and the seas, of our beautiful British Columbia coastline, where we sail our boat. Estonia is certainly a warm place, rich with history and culture.

The people of Estonia are the most valuable resource. We only knew a few Estonian phrases, but people everywhere welcomed us, and answered our questions in English! The staff of one youth hostel helped my husband find a place to buy a new camera as ours had broken (the shutter gave out), and the staff of Vana Tom Hostel spent many hours translating Russian and Estonian to English and back again to help us communicate with my relatives. They also stored gifts for us that were delivered in our absence when we were traveling, and had a bed ready for us at 7:00 am when we had just arrived in the train from Russia. They always had a pot of coffee to serve my relatives!

My family, whom we met for the first time (about sixty of them - the tip of the iceberg!!!!) were warm and friendly, sharing hugs, gifts, feasts, (what wonderful Estonian food! !!!) and spirits Liiviman (excuse my spelling ... a keyboard problem), Vana Tallinn, Champagne, and Estonian Vodka! Every day we visited family it was a call for a celebration. They took turns making sure that we saw and experienced as much of the country, history, and culture as we could fit in, and chided us for renting a car! The next time we should buy one!!!! We had many long talks about family history and many facts to add into our family tree. Listening to my Estonian relatives tell the same story that I heard in my childhood about my brave grandfather Peter Kerbes wrestling a bear with his bare hands outside of Tallinn before he immigrated to Canada, made me feel a real connection to this far reaching family.

We began our first full day in Tallinn (July 1) sailing in the Baltic (fulfilling a dream I had) from the Pirita Yacht Club to a small island off the coast called Naissaar. The day began stormy, cool and drizzling, but by noon the sun came out to warm us. We were surprised at how shallow the Baltic was, but the winds provided us a good sail. We raised our Canadian flag to fly with the

Estonian one. Naissaar was a beautiful island, but peppered with historical reminders, a monument from the Danish Queen forbidding anyone from cutting trees, as the island would be difficult to find as it is so flat, clusters of mines, war buildings in disrepair, and a German burial site. I must buy myself a blue and white striped shirt as I was told that is what Estonian sailors always wear at sea!!!!

We traveled the next day to Hiiumaa where we experienced our first Estonian sauna (I had to practice pronouncing that word correctly!), our first swim in the Baltic, and climbed the stairs at Kopu Lighthouse for a fabulous panoramic view. From there we traveled to Saaremaa where we visited the famous Angla windmills, St. Catherine's church Kaali craters, Kuressaare castle and almost hit a wild boar crossing the road as we drove to the early morning ferry. In Pärnu we absolutely loved the beach, and the inviting warm water. The Pärnu Uue Kunsti Museum had a very interesting exhibit of modern Estonian art, and we enjoyed the ambience of the outdoor restaurant pub at the marina where we stayed.

As we visited historical and cultural sites, read information, and listened to personal stories of my relatives and their extended family, we felt a great respect and admiration of the Estonian people. We listened to stories of families forced to move a great distance away, of families split apart with these moves, never hearing from family members again. We heard the story of why contact by letter was stopped to our branch of the family that moved to Canada. The interrogation by officials was too grueling. We heard about men being conscripted into the Russian army, and fighting for a cause against personal beliefs. We visited Tehumardi, the site of an overnight battle in 1944 where 300 Germans and 200 Russians were killed. The only way to tell the enemy, either Russian or German apart on that black moonless night was by the length of their hair. In all these trials, the Estonian people never had a bad or cruel thing to say about the Russian people, only positives. We also learned about Estonia's baby boom in 1992, when couples celebrated independence, and met one of my cousins born in that year.

We returned to Tallinn to attend the Reading Conference and immerse ourselves in more history and culture. I welcomed my Mac computer facilitator for the conference and learned about the Estonian Tiger Project designed to promote technology in the country. We also embraced the culture of Õllesummer, the largest Northern European beer festival, found our favourite beer, Saku (sorry Mom it's not Danish FAXE any more!), danced Estonian folk dances on stage, and listened and danced to a variety of bands on numerous stages. We drank champagne and listened to a band concert on the grounds of Kadriorg Palace, Catherine I Summer Palace, built by Peter the Great, and later went inside for a superb feast that finished with cakes with that fine cottage cheese that melts in your mouth like whipping cream! After dinner we were treated to a private tour of the Foreign Art Museum.

We appreciated the cultural immersion at Rocca al Mare Open Air Museum seeing historical buildings, including one that was similar to one of my grandparents, aunts, and uncles lived in. There we enjoyed sprats served on slices of potato and Liiviman while we watched folk dancing. The evening was full of food, beer, entertainment and more folk dancing. At the National Library (Eesti Rahvusraamatukogu) we listened to choirs and learned the Estonian culture under occupation was kept alive through literacy by song. This reminded us of our relatives relaying their powerful experiences when the people of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia joined hands together to sing for freedom!

In Tallinn too, we visited museums, universities, churches, the Old Town, my relatives' apartments that were built in the time of great industrial growth, and some new malls. We appreciated the old buildings, and the construction boom that seemed to be happening on every street where restoring rather than building anew was the theme. We enjoyed the stories of the wife who blocked the path from the army with boulders, the fellow who was entombed beneath a church entrance so ladies would walk over his burial site, and the modem tale of the million-dollar toilet. We ate delicious medieval food at Olde Hansa and ate Russian food at Navarsky while we listened to my cousins play violin and keyboard. We drank Saku beer at an underground pub while we watched scenes of Whistler on T.V. during the time of the Olympic bid.

My husband and I loved Estonia and the courageous, friendly Estonians. We would love to go back one day, and while at the Reading Conference, we began to consider the possibility of me taking leave of absence and working in my teaching field for a year. One way or another, we hope to visit again, and hope our children will as well.

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Special Services Department Head
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ALBERTA ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

Dave Kiil

While some of the attendees found themselves touring the streets of Red Deer before finding the secluded John Kerry Nature Centre along the Red Deer River, they settled right down to business and approved the formation of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS). The formative meeting was attended by 17 enthusiastic representatives from across the province, united in the belief that their common heritage needs to be preserved for themselves and their descendants.



According to recent Canada Census data there are nearly 2,000 Albertans, ranging from recent immigrants to 6th-generation descendants of the pioneers who arrived here as early as 1899, who claimed to have Estonian roots. The early pioneers in the Stettler, Gilby and Barons areas established and supported numerous societies and activities as they settled in their new homeland; later, the post-WWII immigrants did the same in Calgary and Edmonton.

Three highly successful centennial celebrations were held in Stettler (1999), Gilby (2001) and Barons (2004), demonstrating again that our heritage remains near and dear to our hearts. At the same time, the programs and activities of the Calgary and Edmonton Estonian Societies have become increasingly sporadic with the inevitable thinning of the ranks.

As a consequence, members of the Estonian community in Alberta started thinking about how to best respond to the demonstrated need for some form of organized effort to meet the expectations of an ever-changing demographic of this small ethnic group. Following informal discussion amongst many individuals and groups, a consensus emerged that an Alberta-wide organization, involving participants from many communities across the province, would best provide the leadership and coordination of programs and activities relevant to heritage preservation. While many details remain to be worked out, the following decisions were reached at the Red Deer meeting on November 6, 2004:

- The primary goals of the AEHS are:
 - To increase awareness of and to preserve our Estonian heritage,
 - To sponsor events and activities in response to the needs and expectations of a diverse membership, and
 - To inform members of happenings in the land of their ancestors.
- A Coordinating Council, consisting of at least two representatives from each of the Calgary, Stettler-Red Deer, Gilby-Eckville and Edmonton regions, was established to develop and implement the goals of the new organization. An interim provincial Coordinator was also appointed. It was agreed that an alternate coordinator should be designated to work with the Coordinator to develop an organizational framework and to help with program implementation.
- The Coordinator, the Council and necessary Committees will be responsible for the overall

development and administration of Society business, including major events and activities, finances, membership, bylaws and communications.

- A set of by-laws, followed by a submission for registration as a non-profit organization, will be pursued to enable the Society to apply for grants and other fund-raising activities.
- A website will be developed and maintained to inform members and prospective members of Society news and happenings. A Society logo will be developed for use on letterheads, correspondence, and displays.
- The AEHS will assemble a province-wide mailing list, with mailing addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses. The information will be used solely for the purpose of Society business, and every effort will be made to protect a member's privacy on the Internet.
- The newsletter AjaKaja, previously published by the Edmonton Estonian Society, will become the AEHS newsletter. AjaKaja will be distributed to all paid-up members of the Society.
- Membership dues will be: a) \$25.00/year for families and b) \$20.00/year for individuals. These dues will cover the cost of publication and distribution of AjaKaja, various administrative costs, and general support of Society activities. Membership dues will be reviewed annually.

This is a new organization, put in motion by a group of enthusiastic members of the Alberta Estonian community. Its basic mandate and structure are in place, but full implementation will depend on volunteers to share the workload and to plan and organize activities at provincial and local levels.

We were able to set up an administrative structure at the formative meeting in Red Deer (see the inside cover page of this publication) but much remains to be done before the Society can function fully. The working language of the Society will be largely English, as our primary aim will be to increase awareness of and to promote Estonian heritage amongst members. We hope to scope out a balanced program of traditional and innovative activities and events at provincial and local levels. These might include Midsummer's Eve (Jaanipäev) celebrations, social/cultural evenings, some joint activities with our Baltic and Scandinavian friends, genealogy workshops, hosting of Estonian athletes, diplomats and artists, and special events to attract families and younger members.

Alberta's Estonian community is unique because of a mix of descendants of the early pioneers who settled here during the first two decades of the 20th century and the immigrants who settled here following WWII. Not surprisingly, the descendants of the early pioneers have integrated into the Canadian mosaic and no longer speak Estonian. The more recent immigrants have banded together to preserve their mother tongue, customs and traditions, but their offspring are increasingly being assimilated into Canadian society. Thus the Alberta Estonian "community" is made up of people with multi-generational roots living in major cities, smaller communities and rural areas. Mixed marriages are the norm, and the opportunity and need to speak Estonian has all but disappeared.

Thanks largely to the recent celebrations to honor the early Estonian settlers, interest in things Estonian remains high and appears to be on the increase. The major challenge facing the newly-established Society is to meet the expectations of all descendants with Estonian roots by delivering forward-looking and interesting programs and activities, with Estonian heritage as the focal point.

As your interim provincial Coordinator I look forward to working with the Council, Committees and members interested in helping to preserve our common heritage. More information about Society activities at the provincial and local levels will be communicated within a few months.

In the meantime feel free to contact me (see Inside Cover page) to share information and to suggest how your expectations can best be met.

ESTONIAN ASPECTS OF THE BARONS AREA CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF HERITAGE AND HOMESTEADING

Helgi Leesment

The third centennial celebrating Estonian pioneers and homesteaders took place in Barons, between Claresholm and Lethbridge, in southern Alberta July 30 to August 1, 2004. The first two were the 1999 centennial in Stettler/Linda Hall and the 2001 event in Gilby. The Barons Area Centennial Celebration of Heritage and Homesteading was huge success with nearly 500 registered participants and weather cooperating most of the time. Because the demographics of Estonians is somewhat different in the Barons area than in the Eckville/Gilby and Stettler areas, this festival was organized as a general event for all descendants of area pioneers, with some emphasis on the ethnic Estonian aspect.

The initiative came from co-chair Martha Munz-Gue, descendant of Estonian settlers Jakob and Mari Erdman who settled in the Barons area in 1904. Martha was inspired by the 1999 and 2001 celebrations in Alberta, plus the 140th anniversary of Estonians in Crimea which she attended on the shores of the Black Sea in September, 2001. The other co-chair was Perry Kotkas, another descendant of the same two settlers. The Barons and District Historical Society governed the centennial organizing committee which showed ethnic diversity as well geographic diversity, with members driving from Medicine Hat, Calgary and Canmore as well as nearby places to attend meetings in Barons.

A rousing, yet moving, VIP reception on the Friday evening started the festivities on a highly positive note. An ad-hoc choir, having only a few practices, set the tone as they sang energetic praises to the prairies. The reception recognized the donors and sponsors, for without their cash, service and goods donations, the centennial would not have been self-financing. The donors and honoured guests were local businesses, service and other organizations, government officials, diplomats, private individuals, the Edmonton and Calgary Estonian Societies, the Alberta Estonian Centennial Fund and the Estonian Central Council in Canada. The latter four donated a combined total of \$1000 to the Barons centennial. The diplomats were the Honorary Head Consul for Estonia, Laas Leivat from Toronto and Honorary Consul for Estonia in Vancouver, Harry Jaako. Also present was Avo Kittask, president of the Estonian Central Council in Canada. The private donors list included several Alberta Estonians. Naturally, the members of the centennial organizing committee were also recognized that evening, as was the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation.

Saturday morning breakfast on the grassy grounds of the Barons community centre saw friends and long-lost relatives meeting and greeting with lots of hugs and smiles. This included the Oks and Trummel family, three generations, who had come from Tallinn specifically for this centennial. The opening ceremony featured the awarding of provincial government plaques to five area farms that have been continuously farmed by the same family for at least 100 years.

The early afternoon Games were geared at times to children, adults and a combination of the two. There were tag games, relay games and simple races. The adults got involved with their children, nieces, nephews, grandchildren in the water-balloon toss. The inventive games

leaders, including fourth generation descendants of Estonians, made the games more fun by introducing them to the participants as "ancient Estonian water rites practiced by Estonian Olympic champions" and other such banter which had everyone laughing before the actual contests began. All the children received participant ribbons and their own little soap bubble kit. Adult games were borrowed from previous Stettler Jaanipäev activities; namely the rolling pin toss (women participants only) and the nail pounding contest with its "pound off" to determine the final winner. One family provided horse-drawn hay rides and their very young children operated a lemonade stand.

Displays of arts, crafts, literature, family stories and agricultural implements were spread throughout all the venues in the small village of 200 inhabitants: the curling rink, former school gym, seniors drop-in centre, skating rink, church hall, Legion Hall and community centre. Many displays included Estonian aspects. For example, the agricultural machinery display featured a plow invented during the 1950's by Victor Erdman, an Estonian. The plow works the dry southern Alberta soil in a special way without allowing the constant winds to blow it away. Some family stories were on coloured boards standing on tables, others were artistically arranged on huge areas of wall-space. Many of the names are recognizably Estonian. Now defunct local service club and women's organization activity books were open for perusing. Several craft items consisted of lovingly preserved crocheting, embroidery and knitting done by Estonian grandmothers long since passed away. Harry Jaako, Estonian honorary consul in Vancouver, had brought a box full of booklets and brochures about current Estonia. Most were gone by Sunday afternoon.

Because the early history of the Barons area involves a sizeable Estonian ethnic community, it was clear as of the first Barons centennial organizational committee meeting in January, 2003 that Estonian culture would be featured at some point in Centennial program. That feature consisted of a two-hour "Estonian Program" on Saturday afternoon, organized by Peter Leesment, former president of the Calgary Estonian Society. The grass and raised cement patio by the Barons Community Centre served variously as the stage.

The program began with two speakers. The first speaker dealt specifically with the pioneer and homesteading history of the Barons area with emphasis on the early Estonian families. The second speaker tied Barons and Southern Alberta historical events to developments co-current in Estonia and introduce Estonia of today. Barbara Gullickson, a descendant of Barons area Estonian pioneers Jakob and Mari Erdman, spoke first and the Estonian Honorary Consul Harry Jaako from Vancouver followed. Overheard conversations later heaped much praise on both. Barbara's speech was printed verbatim in English in the August 27 and September 3 issues of Eesti Elu/ Estonian Life newspaper, published in Toronto.



An added element to the Estonian program was hosted by Laas Leivat, Honourary Head Consul for Estonia in Canada, and Avo Kittask, president of the Estonian Central Council in Canada; both of whom had travelled from Toronto specifically for the Barons Centennial. First, Laas Leivat read faxed centennial greetings from the Prime Minister of Estonia. Next these guests jointly awarded two Albertans with a service medal and citation for long-term volunteer work in Estonian communities: Eda McClung of Edmonton and Helgi Leesment of Calgary. The two Torontonians then gave a special flag to four people representing various Alberta Estonian-related communities, on the occasion of the 120th anniversary of the blue-black-white striped Estonian flag. The four joint recipients were: Otto Nicklom of Stettler, Bob Tipman of Calgary, Tom Pääsuke of Canmore and Dave Ain Kiil of Edmonton.



Alar Suurkask, representative of the Vancouver Estonian Society, invited all to the West Coast Estonian cultural festival next summer, July 4-8, 2005 at Harrison Hot Springs, near Vancouver.

Next, Peter's wife Helgi directed a simple walking-type Estonian folkdance, the kind originally intended for a whole village to join in. Folkdancers from Vancouver led over 100 centennial guests around on the grass to live accordion accompaniment by Avo Kittask. During intermission, all had an opportunity to taste Estonian-style meat pockets or "pirukad". Lillian Põhjakas of Lethbridge had generously baked 250 of these typical Estonian food items. For refreshment, there was a choice of the "fortified" or non-fortified drink called "Rolling Estonians". It consisted of 80% cranberry juice and 20% soda water. The fortified variety replaced half of the soda water with vodka.

The musical and visual segment of the program followed. Avo Kittask, an opera soloist, sang two songs accompanying himself on the accordion. Six members of the Estonian folkdance group "Kilplased", had driven over 1000 kilometers from Vancouver to participate in the Barons Centennial. They later commented that at Barons they learned about Estonian pioneers in Canada for the first time. They particularly enjoyed performing for the appreciative Barons audience. Performing for a new audience was a welcome change from the equally appreciative Vancouver Estonian community for whom the dancers have been performing since they were kids, a time span of about 20 years. The three women and three men performed a series of lively and intricate Estonian folkdances, some involving only the women or only the men, a foursome, or a mixed threesome. Most numbers included all six dancing in a gentle breeze and bright sunlight on the green grass. The women danced in bare feet. Some of the dances would have been familiar to the 1904 era Barons region settlers of Estonian heritage. All the dancers wore traditional colourful folk costumes. An idyllic ending to the Estonian program!



In the evening a catered beef dinner was efficiently served in the Community Hall and tent annex, followed by a program of theatre and music. Several members of the Erdman extended

doesn't get any better than that! By all measures, such a conclusion indicates the poignant success of the Barons Area 2004 Centennial Celebration of Heritage and Homesteading.

The organizing committee:

Perry Kotkas, co-chair and managing director

Martha Munz Gue, co-chair program director

Dee Ryrie, treasurer, displays

Betty Ann Turner, director - heritage and displays

Barbara Gullickson, director - marketing

Alan Fraser, director - arrangements

Deanna Fraser, director - social functions

Toomas Pääsuke, director - finance

Helgi Leesment, secretary

Mary Bishop, Barons and District Historical Society liaison

George Andrekson, director - registration

In addition, several dozen other volunteers contributed to the success of the Barons Area 2004 Centennial Celebration of Heritage and Homesteading.



TWO MEMBERS OF THE ALBERTA ESTONIAN COMMUNITY RECOGNIZED FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE



Eda McClung and Helgi Leesment, longtime leaders in the Edmonton and Calgary Estonian Societies, have been recognized by the Estonian Central Committee in Canada for their service to Alberta's Estonian community. Avo Kittask, President of the Estonian Central Committee in Canada and Laas Leivat, Honorary Head Consul for Estonia presented Eda and Helgi with certificates and Canadian-Estonian Service Medals during the Barons Area Centennial Celebration of Heritage and Homesteading on July 30, 2004. Congratulations to Eda and Helgi for their outstanding contributions in preserving our Estonian heritage!



60TH ANNIVERSARY OF ESCAPE FROM ESTONIA

Helgi Leesment

On September 26, 2004, several Calgary Estonians gathered at a restaurant to commemorate a sad and dangerous life-altering experience 60 years ago.

Approximately 100,000 Estonians, fearing for their lives, fled their homeland throughout 1944; the largest numbers during the third week of September. At the time, everyone thought this was a temporary situation and that everything would be straightened out in a few months, then sometime in 1945, all the Estonians would go back home to the politically independent Estonia which had existed since February 24, 1918. That did not happen.

Unknown to much of the world at that time, Russia and Germany under Stalin and Hitler, had signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in 1939 containing secret clauses allocating the three Baltic nations of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to Soviet ownership. Consequently, the Russians occupied the independent state of Estonia in 1940 giving Estonians first-hand experience with Soviet Communist brutality. Tens of thousands of Estonian citizens were deported to Siberia, hundreds dying enroute in cold cattle cars. Others tasted terror within the borders of their own country.

In 1941 Germany declared war on Russia and its army swept through the Baltic States driving out the Russians. Hitler's long-term plans for Estonia also involved occupation by armed forces, servitude and loss of national identity. Thus, Estonia, a country of approximately one million inhabitants at that time, was attacked and occupied during WWII by both sides - the Allies and the Axis.

In 1944 when Germany was losing the war, Soviet forces quickly advanced on Estonia as German forces retreated. Upon hearing of the Red Army's advance and seeing the Germans withdrawing, Estonians came to the horrific realization that, once more, they would become victims of the Russian Soviet Communist regime.

No nation is able to maintain its own defence system while occupied in turn by two overwhelmingly large foreign armed forces within a time span of four years. Estonia's own army had been dissolved by the Soviets in 1940 and its soldiers deported to Siberia. Estonian men were conscripted first into the Russian Red Army, and after 1941, into the German armed forces. This created untenable situations where sometimes Estonian brother was forced to fight against brother, or father against son, in battles they did not want to fight, mostly on foreign territory where neither wanted to be. They, like all other Estonians, just wanted their own nation's independence to survive.

Estonian soldiers did attempt to protect the country from the second Soviet invasion in 1944. In July and August, despite heavy casualties, they held off the Soviet advance in the Blue Mountains and other areas of eastern Estonia. Thanks to these soldiers' willingness to risk their lives against huge odds, tens of thousands of other people were able to escape the country.

By late September 1944, anyone who had played any role against Russians during the earlier occupation, clearly understood that their lives were in danger. They could expect to be arrested, tortured, executed or shipped to slave labour camps by the returning Soviets for such activities as being a police officer, educator, publisher, land-owner, politician, fishing boat owner, news reporter, apartment building manager, girl guide/scout troop leader, writer, businessman, lawyer or leader of any kind.

Thus, Estonians scrambled to board almost any kind of floating vehicle and headed for neutral Sweden. German armed forces permitted refugees aboard their own ships retreating to Germany but tried to stop people from heading toward Sweden - shooting, bombing and arresting those. This meant that escaping Estonians had to fear both the Germans and Russians while trying to find small boats in the dark, hidden in various coves and at small wharves. They also feared air and underwater attacks from both sides while negotiating the stormy Baltic Sea, many without adequate charts.

Most escapees reached the safety of other shores despite a violent autumn storm on September 23 & 24, 1944. There were many close calls due to rocky outcrops, insufficient fuel and floating mines. Doubtless, many perished for those three reasons. Some ships and small fishing boats were bombed or torpedoed. There are no records of who was aboard what, as people negotiated with boat owners for passage, often without either party knowing who the other was.

Estonians who landed in the eastern section of Germany had to escape again a few months later when the Soviets battled their way into what eventually became the state of East Germany.

Understandably, in September 1944, the decision to leave Estonia was made quickly, especially upon hearing rumors of available space on an escape boat. There was no time to plan what to pack or to inform close relatives. Bear in mind, there were no cell phones or computers in the 1940's, and land line telephones were found in only a small percentage of city homes, rarely in the countryside where older family members tended to reside. Sometimes families became separated, parents from children and spouses from each other. In the West, most were able to link up later thanks to help from the Red Cross and other international agencies. When a family member or relative had left Estonia, Soviet policy forbade reunions with family members inside the Soviet Union. Further, Stalin had a policy of forbidding all contact and correspondence with anyone outside the Soviet Union. Thus grandparents in Estonia died in old age without ever knowing whether their children and grandchildren were alive somewhere else or not. The outside contact restriction was partially eased after Stalin's death in 1953. Even after that, with censored correspondence, a whole generation of Estonian grandchildren grew up in Australia, Canada, Sweden, Germany, Argentina, USA, Great Britain and other places without knowing their grandparents. Separated spouses sometimes remarried without knowing for sure whether or not they were widows/widowers, and tried to make a new life.

So, who were some of the Calgarians who had experienced the above catastrophe?

One was a 17-year old girl attending boarding school away from her rural home. As the school officials' understanding of Estonia's desperate plight grew, someone talked the girl into joining them in an impulse escape attempt. She balked at leaving her family behind, especially without being able to contact them. Eventually, in Sweden, the girl discovered that her family also had

escaped, with equal misgivings about leaving her behind. The parents and all children of this family were reunited in Sweden.

Another young girl had been sent to Finland by her mother, for safety, along with her older sister. A bomb just missed the room occupied by the two girls in Helsinki. Her story is told in a separate article within this issue of AjaKaja.

Another person was too young to remember the escape, but much later as adult, she had asked her parents to put the experience in writing. She read out parts of her late parents' story. It was a case of her parents knowing the right people (to be aware of likely ships and available space on them) - the family having risked the hiding of businessmen, various freedom fighters and a mobile printing press in their home; the intended escape ship having been taken over by the Germans for troop transportation; and a superstitious captain who would not sail the alternate ship on a Friday. There was the same violent night storm experienced by all who crossed that sea at that time and much illness onboard the deliberately unlit ship. There was the incredible sense of calm and relief at being generously welcomed by Swedes at a coastal town with electrical lights turned on at night. This was in direct contrast to Tallinn and other Estonian cities and towns, which, for the previous five years, had a black-out imposed to minimize accuracy during night bombing raids.

After escaping to Germany, a seven-year-old boy ended up travelling alone in a divided Germany to see both of his Estonian parents. From the end of WWII in 1945 until 1949, Germany was divided into four Allied military occupation zones: French, British, American and Russian. The boy's father resided in the French zone while his mother lived in the American zone. Food and cigarettes were in short supply. Cigarettes were a kind of substitute currency at that time; they could be bartered for sparsely available goods. One parent was able to provide cigarettes and the other had access to sausages. The young boy regularly smuggled these products past the unsuspecting zone-border guards, thus helping the entire family.

One participant at the Calgary gathering had not been born at the time his parents escaped from Estonia. As it happened, each of his parents escaped during that September on a different ship to Germany where they had to endure a precarious existence until the Allies occupied the country. They were outsiders in a foreign land and had to find work in order to feed themselves. The uncertain existence continued in displaced person camps after the war where the threat of being deported back to Estonia to the harsh existence in Stalin's new regime loomed. Spirits were high despite the grim conditions and food shortages. The war at least was over. A few years after the war ended, both parents migrated on separate ships to Australia seeking new opportunities in life. It is amazing that they met each other for the first time in Australia - two refugees so far and so many years from their homeland.

LAHKUMINE KODUMAALT

by Andreas Pilt
Edmonton, Alberta

1944.a. Jaanuaris oli Sakslastel Idarindel suuri kaotusi. Karta oli Eestimaa taas Venelaste võimu alla langemist. Kodumaa kaitseks otsutas Eesti Ajutine Valitsus formeerida Eestlastest koosneva ja juhitava diviisi- Eesti Leegioni. Selle mehitamiseks kuulutati 1944a. Jaanuaris üldmobilisatsioon, mille alla kuulusin mina. Pidin jätma ome noore perekonnasaatuse hoolde, samuti ka vananevad vanemad kodutalus Järvamaal. Seda oli teinud minu vanem vend Ilmar juba paar aastat varem astudes vabatahtlikuna Piirikaitse r?gementi.



Eesti Leegioni formeerimine toimus Kloogal Punaväpoolt ehitatud barakkides. Ainus võimalus varustuse saamiseks oli Saksamaa kuna Inglismaa ja USA olid liidus ja aitasid venemaad. Kokkuleppe kohaselt võis Leegion võidelda ainult idarindel. Eestlastel oli tänuvõlg 1918a. saadud Inglise abi eest Eesti Vabariigi loomisel.

Märtsi 12-ndal saime nädal puhkust koduste olude korraldamiseks. Rongi ühendus Tallinnaga oli eelmise öö pommirünnaku tõttu katkenud, saime sinna järgmisel hommikul, sõjaväe autol. Rong Märjamaale väljus alles keskööl. Päev kulus tädi- ja tädimehe Lembitu tänaval põlenud majadest päästetud esemete käruga Nõmmel elava sugulase juurde viimiseks. Oli eelvaade sõja koledustele, näha põlevat linna ja tänavatel lebavaid laipu.

Nädal Märjamaal möödus kiirelt kuni käes oli kurb lahkumine naisest Bettist, väikesest tütrest, ja paljudest sõpradest, kes lubasid mu naise-lapse Rootsi aidate kui selleks vajadus.

Tema oli sellest keeldunud nagu ütles kirjas, mille sain alles Saksamaal.

Märtsi keskel saadeti suurtüki raske rügement, mille koosseisu kuulusin, väljaõppele Tsehhoslovakkiasse. Seal saime hobused, 150 mm. kahurid ja varustuse, mille käsitamist tuli õppida. Juunis läksime tagasi Narva rindele, ja tegime kaasa Narva lahingu, kus kaotasime lähiskaitse rühma ja ühe suurtüki. Rinne tõmmati tagasi Vaivara- Sinimägede joonele. Olime eesliini kaevikutes, toiduta viis päeva, mille järele meid välja vahetati. Saime kokku oma rügemendi staapide ja osadega Krivasoo lääneserval. Umbes nädal hiljem tuli käsk minna uuele positsioonile Krivasoo rappa, kuhu pääses vaid põikpalkidest tehtud tee, mis vajus suurtükkide raskuse all ja tekitas tunde nagu roniksime üles märke.

Meie positsioon oli paar korda vaenlase kahuritule all, kuid mürsud langesid kahjutult pehmesse soose. Septembri alul tuli käsk positsioonilt kiirelt taganeda. Suure-Jaanis andsime oma hobustega veetud suurtükid saksa motoriseeritud üksusele. Minul tuli viia patarei voor Memelisse. Oli kuuldusi, et Inglise ja Rootsi Dessandid Pärnu lähedal maandunud ja liitunud admiral Pitka partisanide- ja kodumaale tulnud Soome poiste üksustega. Otsustasime taganemistee viia läbi Pärnu et võimaluse korral nendega liituda. Voor jäi Sindi lähedale.

Ratsutasin väikese grupiga Pärnu maad kuulama. Pärnu linna valitsus ja politsei oli kadunud, Saksa järelkaitse patrullis tänavatel. Palju maju ja suvilaid põlesid.

Kohtasin veoauto täit Märjamaa põgenikke, kes tulid läbi alade mis pidid olema partisanide valduses, ilma mingit tegevust märkamata. Selgus et Inglise ja Rootsi abi on punastelevitatud vale. Kuulsime ka et Tallinn on langenud ja Punavägi suurema osa Eestit vallutanud. Püüdsime saada tagasi voori juurde Sindisse, kuid välispolitsei ei lasknud meid rinde läheduse tõttu. Minu viimane öö kodumaal möödus unetult, mure ja kurbusega Pärnus, kuhu ka jäi minu ratsahobune-truu sober, alates ajast mil sain to omale Tsehhoslovakkias. Järgmisel hommikul saime küüdi Saksa Järelkaitse üksuse veoauto, peale seda kui nad olid õhku lasknud Pärnu suure silla, ja oli vist viimne Saksa üksus Pärnus.

Krivasoos olles tekkisid mu näole rõugete taolised lööved, mis ei paranenud. Velsker ravis neid salviga ja kleepis peale vatitükid. Heinaste juures korjas välispolitsei audodelt sõjaväelasi tee lähedase löömiseks. Mind ja velskerit jäeti veokisse, vist peeti raskelt haavatuks. Lätis saime kokku oma rügemendi osadega. Kiirustati taganemist kuna oli karta kotti jäämist. Meemelis sain rongile grupi kergelt haavatutega kuid ei saanud sellel kuigi kaugele, eespool oli raudtee suurtüki tule all. Katsusime ranna lähedastel heinamaadel edasi pääseda, kuid peatselt oli eespool kuulda lahingut. Puhkasime lagunud heina küünis, kus keegi leidis kasti roostes naelte ja vana kirvega. Tekkis idee küünipalgid kasutada parveks et sellega pääseda üle lahe maakitsusele, mis kulgeb Meemelist Königsbergini. Palkidele naelutasime lauad, lohistasime parve vette ja proovisime madalas vees kandejõudu. Selgus et kandis kõiki, kuid kohta ei võinud keegi muuta, parv võis tasakaalu kaodata. Aerudeks ja madalas vees lükkamiseks kasutasime roovikuid. Laht oli madal ja peegelsile, ja umbes nelja tunniga ületatud.

Mändide all liivasel maakitsusel puhkasime seni kui külm, nälg ja hädaoht hommikupool ööd sundis edasi marssima. Peatselt jõudsimme kogumis punkti kus saime ersatz kohvi ja sooja, vedelat putru. Hiljem viidi meid veoautol Königsbergi lähedale ranna paviljoni, sealt hiljem raudteel Neuhammeri laagrisse, kus Saksamaale saabunud Eesti väeliigid koondati Eesti Diviisi koosseisu, kaasaarvatute isegi lennuvägi.

1945 a. Jaanuaris keskel jõudis rinne meile lähedale. Tuli hakkata jälle jalga laskma. Peatusime mitmes paigas lühimet aega. Saime pisut jalaväe relvi kuid lubatud suurtükke ei näinud. Diviis saadeti rindele Brieg-Opelni liinile. Mind koos kahe lennuväe ohvitseriga saadeti Tsehhoslovakkiasse patarei ülemate kursustele. Ka sealt tuli umbes kuu aja järele põgeneda. Saime välja viimasel rongil, ennem kui kool ümber piirati ja kott sulges. Rong jõudis Dresdeni kohutava pommitamise järgneval hommikul. Linn poles ja oli rusudes, kuid raudtee jaam ja rööpad olid imekombel terved. Välikomandantuurist saime marsikäsud Daani, Hans Christjan Anderseni kodu-linna Odensesse, kus oli olnud diviisi Tagavara Pataljon. Rong möödus Berliinist läänepoolt. Mitmel korral peatus õhurünnakute ohul. Kord purustas luurelennuki kuulipilduja tuli veduri ja mõned vagunid. Olime päeva rongi lähedal põõsastes. Uus vedur saabus pimeduse kattel.

Odenses selgus et pataljon oli ära saadetud Diviisi juurde. Ohvitserid majutati Park Hotelli kuni kapitulatsioonini. Selle järgi paigutati ühte keskkooli, kuhu kogunes pidevalt Eesti diviisi-sõdureid ja lennuväe abiteenistuse mehi- ja naisi.

Olin laagri ülemaks kuni saabus minu õnneks üks major, kellele sain üle anda oma kohustused.

Mul oli kindel kavatsus jääda Daani 1936 a. Olin kaheksa kuud Daanis, koolipoolt mõnutud põllutöö praktikal ja õppisin ka Daani keelt. Kui laager Saksamaale marssis kadusin Koldingi lähedal tsiviil-põgenikkude laagrisse.

Hiljem koguti Eesti, Läti ja Leedu põgenikud ühte laagrisse. Talumehed vajasid tööjõudu, saime kolme poisiga ühte suurtallu talutööliseks, kus töötasime kuni sügis tegi lõpu talutööle.

Laisklesin laagris kuni 1946 a. Jaanuarini, mil võimaldus saada õpilaseks Rahvusvahelisse Rahva Ülikooli, Elingöri. Õppekavas oli pearõhk Ingliskeelele, sotsioloogiale ja erinevatest riikidest päritud õpilastele omavahelise arusaamise, usalduse ja sõprus arendamine et sel teel vältida tuleviku sõdasi, rahvuste-vahelist vihkamist ja vaenu. Ka oli vähesel määral aiandust ja puutööd. Kursuse lõpul pakuti mulle puutöö instruktori kohta millest loobusin, kuni igatsus oli oma kaasmaalaste järele. Läksin Kopenhaageni, kus oli võrdlemisi suur Eesti põgenikkude laager K.B. Hallis. Olin seal järgmise suve Juunikuuni. Oli kartus et põgenikke hakatakse Vene nõudmisel tagasi saatma. Paadimees viis tasu eest mind nelja kaaslasega üle väina Rootsi, kust tulime 1949 a. Kanadasse.

NIGHT CROSSING

Livia Kivisild
Calgary, Alberta

Thousands of Estonians fled their country in September 1944 when the Red Army was once again threatening. However, a large number of Estonians had left earlier during the German Occupation



Estonian boys - my brother among them - had fled to Finland to join the Finnish army in their fight against the Soviet Union. There were other Estonian refugees living in Finland; an Estonian Relief Committee in Helsinki acted as a communication centre for the Estonian troops. Estonians with connections to Sweden had migrated to that country legally. There was an agreement between the Swedish Government and the German occupation forces to allow Swedish citizens, their relatives and descendants to settle in Sweden. In spite of the war, a passenger boat made regular trips between Stockholm and Tallinn to evacuate the Swedes to their neutral homeland. Among the evacuees were many whose ties to Sweden were quite tenuous, but any way to escape the German occupation and the possible horror of a new Soviet invasion was welcome.

I was a teenager, a war time teenager, but still in many ways a child and I also started my journey earlier than most. It was January 1944. One day Mother told me I was leaving for Finland tomorrow. Everything was arranged. I tried to argue that there was this and that I had promised to do, I had to play the piano in my chamber music group and... But Mother was firm. I was leaving. It was arranged. And since I was a girl and could not really go alone, she had arranged for me to go with my brother's friend Vova, who was five years older than I, a university student fleeing from the draft into the German army. He had promised to take care of me, Mother said. Tomorrow came. The 31st of January, 1944. Not a very cold day, but it was snowing. Heavy, wet, coastal snow. Mother hired a horse drawn sleigh complete with bells to take us the 500 meters to Narva Road, where the traveling party was to assemble.

I was dressed for the cold journey: ski pants, two sweaters, winter coat with fur collar, and on my feet, my aunt's trusty Swiss mountain climbing boots, oiled to be water proof. The boots had been given to me, because my feet had grown as had the rest of me, but there had not been any shoe stores open for three years - just no shoes to be bought during the war.

My only piece of luggage was also a family heirloom: grandfather's rucksack. Dark green canvas with leather trim; it came from Switzerland as well. Mother let me take minimal luggage for two reasons. Firstly it was easy to carry. With the rucksack on my back, it left my hands free, which turned out to be a blessing. Secondly I was leaving the country illegally. Should the coast

guard catch us, they might believe my prepared story about being on my way to the coast to visit cousins.

The sleigh stopped. We walked through a gate and found ourselves in the yard of an apartment building. A truck was parked at an angle, and people bundled up as I was, were standing around. There were two children - a boy and a girl perhaps eight or ten years old. They stood silently next to their mother while a man - their father - was arguing. The well dressed man, who turned out to be a judge, wanted the driver of the truck to give him a guarantee that his family would arrive safely. The request was ridiculous. Outboards crossing arms of the sea with ice floes, illegally at night in wartime carry no guarantees. The fisherman was clearly tired of the insistent customer. He turned and said: "Even if the boat did capsize - which is not likely, and your kids did fall in, the water would not turn to pea soup and the fish would live there as before."

With that we were told to get in the back of the truck, lie down and be quiet. I had one last glimpse of Mother standing in the snow. Then the tarpaulin was pulled over us to hide us from view, the truck started and we were off. The drive seemed endless. It was totally dark under the cover and no one dared to even whisper.

Finally the truck came to a stop. The cover was lifted and we disembarked. We were in a farmyard by the sea. There was no moon and no light visible in the house. But I was used to that. Windows were covered during the war. Blackout was very real.

A man stepped out of the shadows, told us to be quiet and to come in. We did. In the big room of the farmhouse, there was a long table, chairs and benches along the walls. So there was space for everyone to sit down. And the house was warm if dark.

We could see two boats pulled ashore. One had an outboard, the other did not. Then the older man who had stepped out of the shadows came into the house. He told us we would be leaving in about ten minutes or as soon as the coast guard patrol was further away. Then he said we should deposit our luggage in the motorless boat and board the outboard. He said the outboard would tow the other boat and we would be more comfortable with no clutter in our boat. I was confused. Mother had said under no circumstances to leave my rucksack anywhere, and my experience with boats made me doubt an outboard could tow another boat heavy with luggage all the way - 80 km - to Finland. So I did what I had to do. I told the man I was taking the rucksack, because I had to take it. Everybody turned to look at me. But it was dark and they couldn't see that I wasn't as sure of myself as I sounded.

Then it was time to go. Dutifully, my fellow passengers deposited their suitcases in the boat and I climbed into the passenger boat with my bag on my back. The motor started, and after about 50 meters, the rope towing the second boat gave way, and we could see men wading into the water and pulling the boat and cargo ashore. So I was the only member of my group setting off with my possessions intact.

Further away from shore, a light wind was blowing, and there were waves. Waves rocked the boat, but fortunately there were no ice floes. So there was no immediate danger. Still, some passengers became seasick. Among them Vova, who was supposed to escort and protect me. Instead, I had to sit next to him and prevent his falling overboard as he leaned over the side of

the boat. In a way it was a good thing: the strenuous effort gave me no time to be afraid or to feel the cold. We were, after all, crossing the Gulf of Finland in an open outboard in the middle of a Nordic winter night.

Then we hit ice floes, but the Finnish islands were already in sight. We came to within 40 or 50 meters of the shore, and then the boat could not take us any further. Suddenly it was cold. It was still dark. With the number of hours we had traveled, it should have been morning, but it was winter and the nights were long. In the shallow waters of the Estonian coast we could have waded into the water, got ourselves wet and cold, and walked ashore. But the Finnish islands were rocky, and the water very close to shore could be quite deep. We had no choice. The boat had to return south and the two fishermen ordered us to jump the floes to the island. The grown-ups were terrified and tried to argue, but I was still indestructible. It was simple. The ice was white, the water black. All that was necessary was to make sure one stepped on the white and not the black. And off we went. No one fell in the water and in a few minutes we were all safely on Finnish soil.

Our exhausted group was met by a Finnish coast guard officer, apparently quite used to travelers like us. He invited us into a cabin on the other side of the tiny island. It was a modest wooden cabin, but it was warm, and we were served hot tea with sugar. It was probably very ordinary tea, but it tasted divine. And many of us hadn't had sugar cubes in years. So we sat on benches along the walls, and some of us on benches along the table, that was like an indoor picnic table. It was intoxicating to be warm, to not move, or sway, or rock. And we had arrived. The danger was over.

FLEEING ESTONIA TO START A NEW LIFE

Ain Dave Kiil

Like thousands of other Estonians, my life as an eight-year-old farm boy changed drastically in September of 1944 when the Russian forces overcame any remaining military resistance in the country and began an unwelcome occupation that lasted some 50 years. My family joined many other boat people who were forced to leave their homes in a hurry.



Manivald Jõgi, a historian, has written about the people in Lümada and Kihelkonna counties who escaped to the West in 1944. (Kaheaastaraamat, 1999-2000, Saaremaa Museum). Many of Saaremaa's coastal villages lost more than 25% of their population; in total, over 800 people escaped from the above two counties. In addition, 127 people were deported to Siberia. Others were shot in Kuressaare Castle.

My family farm was located near the shore of Pilguse Bay on the west coast of Saaremaa, the largest island in the Baltic Sea. My earliest memories include being treated to the best-tasting ice cream following church service at the Lutheran Church in Kihelkonna, hanging on to a bedpost for dear life so I didn't have to go for immunization shots, splashing in the shallow waters of the Bay watching flounder trying to hide in the sand, or searching for four-leaf clover in the meadows surrounding the farm. I was to attend Lümada Elementary School that autumn when my family made the fateful decision to escape the "sickle and hammer" tyranny of the Stalin regime.

Three years earlier, in August of 1941, my 20-year-old brother Kalju was mobilized into the Russian Army just prior to the arrival of the Germans. He was taken by ship and train via Tallinn and Leningrad to Siberia. He never saw his family again, having reportedly been shot in the back while searching for food in a field of peas.

I imagine that my parents didn't agonize too long before deciding to put some distance between the rapidly-advancing Russians and ourselves. The opportunity to leave for Sweden came during harvest time on September 21, my older sister Lehte's birthday! But it didn't turn out as a very happy day for her.

That evening, all of the harvesters were seated around the dinner table in our farmhouse, enjoying the well-deserved food and home-made beer after a long day in the field. During the traditional singing of the "dinner song", my family left through the back door to start the journey to the departure point near Pilguse Bay, a couple of kilometers away.

The road took us by our Holland-type windmill where my mother Leena (nee Kuivjõgi) asked a friend to inform Kalju of our departure in the unlikely event that my brother ever returned home from Siberia.

When my father Edmund, my mother and sister arrived at the departure point near Katri, preparations were well underway for a hasty departure that evening. My younger sister Õie, who was attending Kuressaare Gümnasium (High School) at the time, was expected to join us. The 30-some km trip by bicycle took longer than planned as her bike had a flat tire. Fortunately, a friendly farmer was able to fix the tire and she made it to the waiting boat.

My parents now faced an agonizing decision as one member of our family could not be accommodated on the boat. As a result, my older sister Lehte stayed behind, not knowing if she would ever be able to rejoin us in Sweden.

The boat, filled to capacity with about 20 passengers, including members of the Sepp, Himmist and Kiil families, departed for Gotland at the onset of darkness. During the next day, I remember seeing an airplane in the distance. It did not approach our boat, as it was likely a German reconnaissance aircraft. We reached the coast of Gotland late in the day or early the following morning. In the days that followed, our group was processed through quarantine and housed in what I recall as a large warehouse which served as our home for several weeks.

Our next stop was at a refugee camp (Vinnerby?) on the mainland. I spent the first winter here with my mother, whereas my father and younger sister were housed elsewhere. It was here that I strapped tube skates onto my boots for the first time and tried to skate on the moat ice around a Swedish castle. It was also during that time that my mother, who had been a teacher in her youth, tried to teach me to read and to remember the multiplication and division tables.

Our family was reunited around Christmas as Lehte found us with the help of a refugee newspaper. Apparently two men from a nearby village had returned to Saaremaa a couple of weeks after our departure to take their own families to safety in Sweden. One of the men, Ats Lääs, became aware of my sister's predicament and found room for her in his boat. It was likely one of the last boats to leave the Island.

Our next destination was Landskrona in southern Sweden where we stayed in accommodation near the waterfront, along with other Estonian refugees.

In the summer of 1945, our family settled in Björknäs, a small community about a 20-minute bus ride from Stockholm. I was enrolled in the Stockholm Estonian School and attended the school until we left for Canada during the last week of 1950, arriving in Halifax aboard the refugee ship General Ballou in mid-January.

I've been asked: What would have happened to you if you remained in Saaremaa? One can only speculate. My family may well have been deported to Siberia in the late 1940's or even during the mid-fifties. Death in Siberia would have been a possibility, or a return to Saaremaa. Work on a collective farm and/or mobilization into the Soviet military are other possibilities.

Last summer, sixty years after the fateful journey to Sweden, I visited our departure point on Pilguse Bay not as a barefooted eight-year-old but as a seasoned tourist on the trail of his ancestral roots.

THE STORY OF CARL KERBES AND FAMILY

Judy Graham (nee Kerbes)

Out of the snow, in the warmth of an Estonian-style sauna, my father Carl Kerbes was born on December 22, 1915. Peter and Julia had cause for celebration of the birth of their last child, a first generation Canadian. The Kerbes family was large and each big sister was responsible for taking care of a baby brother, and my aunt Ann (Johanna) was thrilled that Carl would be "her baby". This responsibility created a close bond between the two siblings that lasted their entire lifetime.

He enjoyed the horses and dogs at the farm and often talked about the long trips to the town of Stettler by oxen. They would hitch up a team of oxen to a wagon on Friday night and they would travel all night and spend the day in Stettler on Saturday. Then they would travel back all Saturday night the same way.

My father talked many times about his life on the farm, and how he knew as he was growing up that the farm life was not for him. He sought employment in the city with the Post Office and was in the Civil Service for thirty-three years. His employment in the Post Office eased his way when he volunteered for the army in the mail corps during the Second World War. He was based in Naples, and while he was there hiked to the top of Mount Vesuvius, the volcano that buried Pompeii.

Carl was glad when the war was over and returned home to Canada. He went to live with his sister Ann and husband Dick in Genelle and again worked at the Post Office as a letter carrier. While there he enjoyed the trips to Christina Lake, the dances at the Pavilion, and diving in the water to swim and cool off when the dance was over.

Carl moved to Calgary where again he was a postman, but more renowned as he delivered mail to a radio station and they often invited him to yodel on the radio. He also skied at this time in Banff, where he skied a nine-mile run into town at the end of the day.

Carl loved to dance and chose to go to a dance at the Rendezvous Dance Club, a dance club designed for servicemen, in Calgary in September 1948. This was to be a major event in his life as he met Ruth Nielsen, who was a hostess at the club that night and a good friend of hers, Tina. Carl talked and danced with both ladies, and joined them on their tram ride home, but didn't show his cards, until it was Ruth's turn to get off, and he walked her home. He met her parents, who had immigrated with their family from Denmark. They hit it off immediately and soon were engaged in November 1948. Ironically they grew up very close to each other, as Mom lived outside Stettler. They married at Sharon Lutheran Church on June 11, 1949.



They bought a house in Calgary and a daughter, Judy was born on December 29, 1953. Carl now worked in the railway mail service and traveled by train to Revelstoke. In 1961, Carl had an opportunity for a promotion, but it meant a move to the coast as he would be working out of

Vancouver and traveling by train to Calgary. Carl moved his family to Burnaby in April, 1961.

In Burnaby, Carl became very involved with the Post Office Union and held several executive positions. He continued his dancing passion with Ruth and they began square and round dancing. They also became very active in Faith Lutheran Church.

Carl was a loving, dedicated father who was very involved in his daughter's life. He took her to swimming lessons and later when she was a teenager, shared his love of skiing with her. Arthritis unfortunately left Carl too sore and stiff to ski, but he drove Judy and her friends regularly up the mountain so they could ski, and waited for them to drive them down. Judy's girl friends enjoyed Carl driving, as another friend's father kept chasing the boys away. Carl never did, and often offered them rides as well.

Carl took his family on a yearly vacation to visit family in Alberta and Christina Lake where Ann and Dick had a cabin. There were many enjoyable days of swimming, family, friends, and feasts. The family went on two major vacations. One, Carl drove from Calgary to California with Ruth, Judy, and his in-laws Ida and Chris Nielsen. Another vacation was with Ruth and Judy to Hawaii where Judy celebrated her seventeenth birthday. Later Carl and Ruth made several trips to Hawaii on their own.

On one of the trips to Christina Lake Judy met Bruce Graham playing tackle football in the lake, who she married in December 20, 1974.

Eventually the railway mail service was abolished and Carl worked in two different Burnaby Post Offices. He retired after thirty-three years, and began a new career in the insurance business, first with BCAA, and then with ICBC.

When Carl finally ended his career, he had a passion for him, Ruth, Judy and husband Bruce to have a family cottage. The family decided on Pender Island where they bought a lot with an ocean view and a five minute walk to beaches on the ocean. Planning and building this place was driven by Carl, and the four spent many pleasurable hours working together to realize their dream. A son, Brett, was born to Bruce and Judy during this time in February 1982. Most of the cabin was finished when Carl died on July 1, 1983. Ruth still lives in their home in Burnaby.

Since then two children were born to Bruce and Judy, a son Torben on July 6, 1984, and daughter, Katrin-Liis on July 24, 1986.

Bruce and Judy live in Surrey. Judy is a Special Education teacher, and Bruce works in the sign business. Judy loves to paint watercolors and Bruce to play hockey. Together they sail and ski. Brett attends University of Victoria in the Faculty of Engineering in Computer Science. Torben attends the University of Victoria in the Faculty of Science with a goal of becoming a P.E. teacher. Katrin-Liis is completing Grade 12 this year and plans to become a teacher as well. All three love to play hockey and have refereed; Liis refereed the BC Winter Games this year. All three can ski, but Liis prefers to snowboard. They all love to swim, especially at Christina Lake, their Grandpa's favorite. They too love Pender Island like their Grandpa Carl, and all have summer jobs there.

Judy and Bruce traveled to Estonia and Denmark last summer to meet family and for Judy to

present at the European Conference on Reading in Tallinn. I know Carl would be pleased to have our Canadian family connect with our Estonian family.

ESTONIA PM SATISFIED WITH THE OUTCOME OF EU-RUSSIA SUMMIT

EU Business
November 26, 2004

Estonian Prime Minister Juhan Parts said on Friday that he was satisfied with the outcome of the European Union-Russia summit and expressed hope that a border treaty between Estonia and Russia would be signed soon.

"I am satisfied with the results of the EU-Russia summit because several questions that are important also for Estonia, especially the still unsigned border treaty with Russia, were discussed at the meeting," Parts told AFP in an interview.

"The border treaty between two neighbouring countries should be one of the most basic treaties and because of that it has been very hard for Estonia to understand why Russia delayed signing it for so many years, despite Estonia regaining its independence 13 years ago," he said.

"I am glad Russia has now indicated that the treaty may soon be signed."

"I believe we should also thank our partners from the EU for that because the matter has been raised several times in EU-Russian meetings," Parts said.

The Estonian prime minister also welcomed an EU decision at the summit in the Netherlands on Thursday to start regular consultations with Russia on matters concerning human rights and other basic freedoms.

"I appreciate the decision as it will also give Estonia a chance to develop an open and constructive dialogue on human rights with Russia. It will give us a chance to ask Russia for explanations of human rights matters worrying us, like the situation in Chechnya, cases of extremism and attempts to limit media freedom," he said.

"Despite the fact that Russia may try to politicise minority matters in Latvia and Estonia during these consultations, we have nothing to hide. Our partners know Estonia is a democratic state respecting the rights of all people, including minorities.

"The situation of the Russian-speaking community in Estonia is in line with European norms," Parts added.

Moscow regularly charges both Latvia and Estonia, -- both republics of the Soviet Union until 13 years ago and which have large ethnic Russian and Russian-speaking minorities -- with repressing minority rights.

The two Baltic states maintain that their top priority is consolidating their re-acquired statehood, sometimes through cultural and linguistic steps that may be at odds with Russia.

Russia has so far refused to sign a border treaty with them both.

IN ESTONIA, E-BANKING, E-COMMERCE, E-GOVERNMENT

THOMAS FULLER

International Herald Tribune

September 13, 2004

TALLINN , Estonia

The government promotes this Baltic nation as E-stonia, and it has a point.

There is e-banking: Nearly half of all bank customers in Estonia avoid trips to the teller by managing their money online. There is e-government: Cabinet meetings are almost paperless, with each minister following the agenda on a flat-screen monitor. And there is e-commerce: Ordinary citizens can use mobile phones to pay for parking or a bouquet of flowers, or to transfer money to a friend.

Only 14 years ago, the "E" in Estonia could have stood for East Bloc. Visitors here today can still spot signs of the country's Soviet past in the Communist-style apartment complexes, some of them abandoned and falling apart, and a sprinkling of old Russian cars. But Estonia is hoping that by becoming a laboratory of innovative technology projects, it can erase the legacy of its Communist past.

It is off to a good start. Software well-known elsewhere is written here. Both Kazaa, the file-swapping program that allows users to download music, games or other files, and Skype, the internet phone service, were developed by a group of programmers in Estonia under the guidance of Niklas Zennstrom, a Swedish entrepreneur. "There are definitely a lot of programming projects going on," said Jaan Tallinn, a senior developer for Skype.

Low cost is a factor. Tallinn estimates that programmers in Estonia make an average of E1,000 to E1,300 a month, about \$1,225 to \$1,600. But wage levels are not the only attraction of Estonia's programmers. Zennstrom was recently quoted as saying that "in terms of technical expertise, I have never found anywhere better."

Among Estonia's innovations is its parking system. About 25,000 people use their mobile phones to pay for parking, said Tonu

Grunberg, executive vice president of EMT, Estonia's largest mobile phone company.

A user sends a text message to the phone number of the parking authority, and the fee is added to his or her phone bill. The system was invented here, and EMT is now seeking to export it.

The technology department at Eesti Uhispank, the country's second-largest bank, has taken mobile technology one step further. The bank allows customers to transfer money to each other with their mobile phones, a service intended partly to allow plumbers or electricians to collect

fees directly from customers. The service began this year, and 30,000 people have signed up to use it.

Estonia, with 65 mobile phone subscriptions per 100 people, according to the International Telecommunication Union, has a similar mobile phone penetration to France (69) but is well behind its northern neighbor, Finland (90), yet well ahead of Russia (12).

Government ministers and technology experts in Estonia offer a range of explanations as to why a Baltic country with a population of about 1.3 million has so quickly adopted computing and mobile communications projects. "Estonia is a small country," said the foreign minister, Kristiina Ojuland. "You can do things in a small country fast if you have political will."

Jaan Kaplinski, a poet and former member of Parliament, said Estonia owes much of its progress in Internet adoption and technology to its proximity to Finland. "The two success stories of Eastern Europe are located nearby rich countries," Kaplinski said.

Slovenia, the wealthiest Central European country to enter the European Union in May, is near Austria and Italy, he pointed out.

Estonia, which also entered the EU in May along with nine other countries, is near Helsinki and Sweden and has cultural and business links with both. "There is a sometimes desperate wish to modernize, to put our house in order," Kaplinski said. Information technology "is a very strong symbol of modernity."

Others say Estonia benefits from its dismal climate. "It's dark and cold, so what do you do? Just sit behind your computer and think of great, beautiful stuff," said Tallinn, the Skype programmer, who noted that the same impulse was evident in Finland.

To get young people interested in the Internet, Estonia has put computers in classrooms, established Internet centers in rural areas and placed wireless hot spots in cities and towns across the country. Many other countries have hot spots, which are areas that provide wireless Internet signals, but in Estonia the access is free.

Tallinn, the Skype programmer, compares access to personal computers now with Soviet times. "In the late '80s, you could buy two houses for one PC," he said. "They were ridiculously expensive."

Last year, Estonia reported 33 Internet users for every 100 people, according to the International Telecommunication Union. This ratio is more than Ireland (31), Spain (24), Poland (23), Hungary (16) and Greece (15), but it is less than France (37), Germany (47) or Sweden (57).

To get older workers online, the government teamed up in 2001 with banks and telecommunications companies to offer free lessons on how to use the Internet, a program called Look@world that trained 100,000 people, more than one of every 10 adults in the country.

"It was directed mainly at blue-collar workers and older people," said Jaan Tamm, director of technology at Eesti Uhispank.

The bank also helped pay to install computers and Internet connections in libraries, cultural centers and post offices around the country.

The investments have paid off, Tamm said. More than half of Uhispank's 600,000 customers bank online, and the figure is much higher among what Tamm calls "active" customers: About 80 percent of them use e-banking.

The bank has saved millions of euros by closing half of its branches; it now has 64 left. One sign of Estonia's transformation into a nation of online bankers: It skipped a system of bank checks; residents use a credit card or cash.

As for government, paperless meetings have been a time-saver, said Tex Vertmann, a government technology adviser.

Cabinet meetings used to take a minimum of two hours "and sometimes seven or eight hours," he said.

Now, with each minister following the meeting on his or her flat-screen monitor, the average cabinet meeting lasts 45 minutes, Vertmann said.

But ministers also meet separately - without computers - to hash things out on Thursday afternoons. "The actual debates will take place in that meeting," Vertmann said.

Even in E-stonia, ministers take an eye break from their computer screens.

International Herald Tribune

<http://www.iht.com>

IVO SCHENKENBERG

The "Estonian Hannibal"

A journeyman coin-maker named Ivo Schenkenberg from Tallinn became a hero during the Russo-Livonian War when he recruited a 500-man strong cavalry corps of Estonian farmers and led them in the battles against Ivan the Terrible's forces. Fighting for Tallinn and the King of Sweden, he became an outstanding figure in 16th century Estonian history. Despite his German name, some claim he was of ethnic Estonian descent. 40% of the Tallinn's citizenry were ethnic Estonians, the ruling class of Low-German merchants numbered barely one third of the burghers' total, and the rest were a mix.

In January 1558 Russian troops entered Estonia for a short time, demanding that the Bishopric of Tartu pay a tax to the Tsar or else they would start a war. No money was found for it and the tax was not paid. This set off the war between Russia and Livonia. The central authority of the Livonian Order of Knights had diminished to the point where the Order-master wasn't capable of organizing a defence force to prevent a Russian invasion and 25 years of chaos followed. In addition to the Russian army, Estonia and Livonia were also partly occupied by Polish and Swedish troops. The land was ravaged by fighting, until Sweden gained the upper hand and expelled the other armies. The people of Tallinn lived in one of the best fortified cities in Europe, but didn't think their own town guard could defend it against the massive Russian forces.

Aware of its vulnerability, in 1561 Tallinn voluntarily swore allegiance to the king of Sweden, and thus became the first Swedish foothold in Estonia.

When the Russian army in northern Estonia laid siege on Tallinn, some farmers sought refuge within the city walls. Ivo Schenkenberg formed a guerilla group from them. A bunch of peasants fighting as partisans on horseback were not taken seriously. He was mockingly called "The Estonian Hannibal" and his men became the Hannibal Folks. However, the nickname got a different meaning after they had proven to be a real pain in the neck for the invaders. The "Hannibal men" were well trained, disciplined, and motivated raiders and were more than willing to take revenge for all the damage that Ivan the Terrible did to their homeland. Ivan's favorite tactics were to destroy everything on the way of the march, leaving nothing that could be useful for the enemy. Houses were torched and horses, grain and livestock taken from farmers. Schenkenberg's Hannibal Folks were familiar with the landscape and knew how to make quick surprise attacks on enemy encampments. They proved to be a real problem for the Russians.

Schenkenberg's saga ended tragically. On July 1579 he was wounded in a battle with a much larger enemy force, near Rakvere. He and 60 of his compatriots, including his brother Cristoffer, were taken prisoners. For the enemy this was an important victory. The prisoners were brought to Pihkva (Pskov) and killed in the presence of Ivan the Terrible himself, 430 years ago.

H. Langeste

GOVERNMENT APPROVES SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR ESTONIANS ABROAD

March 25 - The Estonian government approved a program of support for Estonian communities abroad for the 2004-2008 period. The aim of the program is to preserve the identity of Estonians and support their return into Estonia.

The main objective of the program is to establish which Estonian communities abroad are viable and provide them with steady support, a spokesman for the government said. In places where the number of Estonians is in decline the goal of the program is to secure the preservation of historical and cultural records in archives.

The program attaches importance to preservation of real estate owned by Estonian organizations and the state of Estonia.

Eldar Efeadujev, Minister of Ethnic Affairs wrote in a covering letter that the task of the program is to bridge the historical gap between Estonians living in the territories of the former Soviet Union and those in western countries. The minister observed that the Estonians in the East are more in need of direct material aid, but the Estonians in the East and the West alike can help Estonia to achieve its economic, political and cultural goals. A key priority of the program is to support the learning of the Estonian language and the Estonian culture in other countries, as well as the training of teachers of Estonian.

Estonia must conclude agreements with other countries to establish a legal basis for Estonian schools operating there. The state pledges to finance sending visiting teachers to Estonian communities abroad and higher educational institutions in this country are to admit 10 Estonian students from abroad every year in the 2004-2008 period.

The program further calls for supporting the activity of Estonian cultural societies. Their leaders are to be invited to Estonia for supplementary training.

According to the program, Estonians living abroad must be informed about the possibility of obtaining and restoring Estonian citizenship. Estonians abroad who carry an Estonian passport have closer ties with their country, consequently, granting them citizenship must be supported, the program says.

The minister's office estimates the cost of the program in 2004 at 5.7 million kroons (EUR 364,000).

About 160,000 people or roughly 14 percent of Estonians live abroad.

From Estonian Review, March 23-30, 2003

THE ESTONIAN LANGUAGE IS ENCHANTING TO FOREIGNERS

Mall Pesti teaches Estonian at the University of Washington. She is also one of the authors of "E nagu Eesti" (E as in Estonia), an Estonian-language textbook sold in about 45 countries. The textbook provides a straight-forward approach to language learning, including everyday dialogue and a minimum of grammar. Use of children's poems has contributed to the enjoyment of the learning process.

She explains that her course is based on the textbook and the use of the Internet. By following the textbook, pupils learn the dialogue and poems, work through exercises, and compare their work against the answers provided in the textbook. A cassette is part of the course, enabling students to practice their language skills. Assignments and test are also available on the Internet. Students and teacher chat' via the Internet once a week for 45 minutes. The work is in Estonian and leaves very little time for reflection. An essay is required on a weekly basis.

The opportunity to develop an Internet course to teach Estonian was sponsored by the Finnish Ministry of Education. The course is part of the Laurea Technical College in Finland where Internet teaching is an integral part of the curriculum.

Mall Pesti is astounded that there is interest in the Estonian language in every corner of the globe. People

are motivated for different reasons, but Estonia is perceived to be a fairly exotic place and the Estonian language has something that seems to enchant people. Many students have personal ties with Estonia, some have started to research their roots, and others have formed business ties. University students take the course as part of a broader research effort involving Baltic history, economics, politics and culture. They also expect to visit those countries for additional research. Yet others learn Estonian without any particular motivation or reason.

Anyone interested in the Internet course can contact Mall Pesti at pestim@yahoo.com for further information about the course.

Note: The above article is an abstract of an Estonian-language article which appeared in Estonian Life (Eesti Elu) in September, 2004, based on an interview involving Kaire Tensuda of Estonian Life and Mall Pesti.

Prepared by Dave Kiil

JAAN KROSS

Jaan Kross (born 19 February 1920) is the most eminent contemporary Estonian writer.

Born in Tallinn, he attended the University of Tartu, graduated from its School of Law in 1944, and taught there as a lecturer until 1946 (and again as Professor of Artes Liberales in 1998). He was arrested by the Nazis in 1944 and by the Soviets in 1946, who deported him to Siberia, where he remained in the Gulag until 1954. Upon his return to Estonia, then a Soviet Republic, he became a professional writer.

Kross is by far the most translated and nationally as well as internationally best-known Estonian writer. He was nominated several times for the Nobel Prize in Literature and holds several honorary doctorates and international decorations, including the highest Estonian and one of the highest German orders.

Kross' novels (and short stories) are almost universally historical; indeed, he is often credited with a significant rejuvenation of the genre of the Historical Novel. Most of his works take place in Estonia and deal, usually, with the relationship of Estonians and Baltic Germans and Russians as well. Very often, Kross' description of the historical struggle of the Estonians against the Baltic Germans, however, was actually a Metaphor for the contemporary struggle against the Soviet occupation. However, Kross' acclaim internationally (and nationally even after the regaining of Estonian independence) show that his novels also deal with topics beyond such concerns; rather, they deal with questions of mixed identities, loyalty, and belonging.

Generally, *The Czar's Madman* has been considered Kross' best novel; it is also the most translated one. Also well-translated is *Professor Martens' Departure*, which because of its subject matter (academics, expertise, and national loyalty) is very popular in academe and an important "professorial novel". The earlier *Excavations*, dealing with the "defrosting" period after Stalin's death as well as with the Danish conquest of Estonia in the early Middle Ages, and today considered by several critics as his finest, has not been translated into English yet; it is however available in German.

H. Langeste

SHIPWRECKED

By Michael Tarm

Vello Mäss leans across a wood-spoked shipswheel and eagerly scans the Baltic Sea horizon as far as the eye can see-where, he says, tens of thousands of historically important ships, from the Danish coast to Russia, lie below the cold-gray waves waiting to be found.

"There are hundreds of Viking ships out there, hundreds of old trading ships, hundreds of warships," mused the captain cum researcher, dubbed The Baltic Sea Sherlock Holmes in his native Estonia for finding so many such ships himself. "The Baltic's an archaeological paradise." Standing on the bridge of his tiny research boat docked in Tallinn for the winter, the burly, blue-eyed 63-year-old speaks excitedly about the next mystery he hopes to solve this summer: The whereabouts of the passenger ship *Vironia*, torpedoed near Estonia by Nazi planes during World War II.

War and stormy weather have been claiming Baltic seafarers for over 5,000 years, since the waterway became Northern Europe's most prized and heavily plied trading route. Its best known recent victim was the Estonia ferry, which perished in 1994 when towering waves ripped off its bow door; 852 people died.

Clashes between Sweden and Russia cost hundreds of ships and thousands of lives; on just one day, July 3, 1790, Sweden alone lost 30 ships in the Battle of Vyborg against Russian forces. Sea mines laid during both World War I and II claimed thousands.

Up to 100,000 shipwrecks lie today on the Baltic Sea floor, said Stefan Wessman, a marine archeologist at Finland's Maritime Museum. Researchers in the region widely agree on that figure.

"The Baltic Sea has huge potential-and I believe this is recognized by scientists internationally," he said. "There is nothing comparable to it in the world."

It's not just the sheer number of ship wrecks in the Baltic that so enthralls underwater archeologists like Wessman and Mäss. It's that so many are remarkably well-preserved-veritable time capsules certain to expand mankind's understanding of the past.

"It's hard to imagine something telling us more," explained Wessman. "You can get a whole cross-section of a society on one ship. The only equivalent on land I can think of is if you found a whole ancient library buried intact. Ships are also the biggest and most technologically advanced objects of the different ages-not unlike rockets today-so they tell us more about the day's science than even a cathedral might."

Sweden's royal warship *Vasa*, the most celebrated Baltic Sea discovery, was so well preserved after being raised 350 years after it sank in 1628-that minute details were clearly visible, down to smirks on dozens of cherubs and the flashing teeth on carved lions decorating its elaborate exterior.

Cutlery, shoes, muskets, gameboards and hundreds of other items were also found on the *Vasa*, one of the most advanced, decorative warships of its age. (While high-tech for the time, it foundered and sank on its maiden voyage because of apparent miscalculations about the required ballast to keep it stable.)

Archeologists can thank wood-eating shipworms-or, rather, the lack thereof.

The *teredo navalis*-actually a mollusc, not a worm-thrives in high-salt Atlantic and Pacific and can devour whole ships in decades. But this bane to underwater archeology avoids low-salt seas like the Baltic, the largest so called brackish sea in the world.

"If the *Vasa* had sunk in almost any other sea, you might find parts of it that were buried under the seabed-but any wood exposed to the sea would be gone," said Wessman. "All that would be left would be a small pile of things that weren't wood."

"Only the American Great Lakes are roughly similar to the Baltic Sea in this respect," he added. "But they don't have the same long history of the Baltic Sea, which has seen virtually every type of ship sail across it."

The Baltic's cold temperatures and a low-oxygen content also act as preservatives.

Sweden's *Jonkoeping* schooner, sunk by a German submarine in 1916 and salvaged near Finland in 1998, held nearly 5,000 bottles of top-quality French *Gout Americain* champagne, perfectly preserved in the constant 4 C temperatures. Several bottles were later auctioned at London's *Christie's* for 4,000 dollars each.

The Baltic's also a mere 55-meters deep on average, compared to 3,700-meters in the Atlantic, so, once they're found, wrecks are well within reach of even low-tech divers. Deep-sea dives in the major oceans require top-notch, and top-priced gear.

New three-dimensional sonar has also improved chances of finding wrecks-even by accident.

A Swedish submarine crew doing routine scanning last year was shocked to stumble upon an 18th century ship intact and upright-as if set lovingly on the seabed, a carved sea horse presiding majestically at its stern. Human skulls on deck were the only obvious signs of mishap.

But the key factor in opening up new opportunities for archeology in the region, at least for Mäss, has been a political sea change: namely, the demise of the Iron Curtain.

When it still draped across the Baltic Sea, communist Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Poland and East Germany strictly forbid most underwater exploration.

"Getting permission for dives was very, very difficult," recalled Mäss, born the year the Red Army occupied the three Baltic states in 1940. "The Soviets were paranoid about everything-that we might see underwater military equipment, that we might escape to the West."

As a young sailor in the 1960s, he had to wait for 15 years before he was finally allowed to travel to and disembark in a foreign port.

"Soviet officials didn't trust people from the Baltic states," he said.

With no Soviet-era courses, Mäss taught himself the art of underwater archeology-deriving inspiration from films of history's most famed diving innovator, Jacques Cousteau. A decade after Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania regained independence during the 1991 Soviet collapse, he's now one of just a few regional experts in the field, a one-man force in Baltic shipwreck hunting.

Freedom not only opened up access to the Baltic Sea, it has allowed for a vital exchange of information and know-how across it. Sweden, for instance, donated one of those modern, three-dimensional sonars for use on Mäss' ship-a converted fishing trawler called the *Mare*.

Speaking back at his office in Tallinn's Maritime Museum, he keeps excusing himself to answer the phone-as his Nordic counterparts called to ask about his latest discoveries.

"There's a hundred years' worth of work out there," he said, sweeping his hand at stacks of papers on his desk. "Life's short. I've got to give it 100 percent." He estimated that 10,000 ships lie off Estonia's coast waiting for him and others to find.

While their coastlines have proven slightly less treacherous than Estonia's, the seas around Latvia and Lithuania have also claimed their share of ships, including at the mouths of major rivers favored by fearsome Viking dragon boats. Both countries have also carried out more underwater surveys over the past ten years than they had in the previous 50.

Mäss' most recent find, in July, was of Russia's first armored navy ship, the *Russalka*, or *Mermaid* in Russian. Underwater photos of the ship, which sank in a storm en route from Estonia to Finland in 1893, showed it stuck vertically in the soft sea floor like an enormous sword.

The discovery was widely hailed in Estonia, where a 1902 monument to the *Russalka*, a bronze angel tilting a crucifix toward the ship's watery grave, is a popular tourist attraction in Tallinn. Many newlyweds leave bouquets at its granite base to honor the 177 sailors who died.

"One of my first concerns when we found the *Russalka* was whether the cross actually pointed the right way, towards where the ship sank," Mäss said. "I was so relieved to find out it does."

Hungry for still more discoveries, Mäss has thumbed through old newspaper clippings and even quizzed fishermen to glean clues about the sleek-white *Vironia* (photo), attacked by German planes as it ferried Soviet officials fleeing the 1941 wartime invasion of Estonia by the Nazis. Its route was laden with mines.

"Steam rushed out of the boilers with an infernal noise, drowning all other sounds," recalled one witness, Russian naval commander Pjotr Makejev aboard a nearby vessel, in his memoirs. "People jumped overboard. Soon another mine exploded and the *Vironia* went down."

The *Vironia* was in a 90-ship convoy carrying Soviet officers, Communists and their families in a frantic, last-minute escape from Tallinn. But within hours, 30 ships were sunk and 15,000 people died-one of the largest death tolls in a single engagement in history.

Many of the ships in that convoy belonged to pre-war Baltic owners but were commandeered by the Soviets after they annexed the countries. The Estonian-flagged *Vironia*, Latvia's MS *Everita* and Lithuania's *Silguda*-both of which also sank-were among them.

In 1941 alone, 400 mostly Soviet ships went down in battles on the Baltic.

Similar carnage continued throughout the war, including when several refugee ships escaping resurgent Red Army forces in 1944 were torpedoed by Soviet planes and sunk. One that was carrying several thousand Estonian escapees went down near Latvia.

Fishermen told Mäss how their nets kept becoming snagged near where the *Vironia* was believed to have perished-crucial information that will help narrow down its precise location. Mäss used similar leads to find a British naval minesweeper sunk in 1919 as it aided Estonia's battle for independence against Russia.

A prime source for data on older wrecks are Danish customs records from 1490-1856, during which the Danes forced all ships entering the Baltic Sea to pay a toll. The papers, now kept in Denmark's National Archives, include details on destinations and ports of departure.

Among ships identified using the Danish records was Holland's *Vrouw Maria*, which sank off Finland en route to St. Petersburg in 1771. It was listed as carrying artwork for Russian Empress Catherine the Great. It was found in 1999, but hasn't yet been salvaged.

Salvage laws differ in countries around the Baltic Sea, but there are laws in all meant to protect shipwrecks and their contents. All finds over 100-years-old in Finnish waters have been designated state property, according to Wessman.

Sites of other more recent disasters, like the Estonia ferry, are considered grave sanctuaries and, by law and under threat of arrest, are strictly off limits to divers and salvagers.

Mäss said finding something comparable to Sweden's *Vasa*, the dramatic centerpiece of a popular museum in Stockholm, is the fantasy of most divers. His is to find an Estonian-built ship from the Viking era, when Estonians themselves staged raids across the Baltic Sea.

Money shortages mean researchers in all three Baltics are still mostly limited to briefly mapping and filming their discoveries. Some safes aboard World War II ships, like the *Vironia*, could contain historically important, perfectly preserved papers. But Mäss said Estonians don't currently have resources to find them and bring them up.

"We'll have to leave that to future generations," he said.

It's not only ships in the Baltic that are stirring excitement.

Hundreds of Stone Age settlements, overtaken by rising seas, have also been found-especially in Danish waters. And there are hundreds of planes that were shot down or crashed-some under mysterious circumstances during the Cold War.

And then there's all that talk of treasure.

Titillating stories about caches of gold aboard long-lost shipwrecks abound in fishing villages up and down the 10 Baltic Sea coast countries-none of which, adds the kindly but matter-of-fact Mäss, he believes for a second.

In contrast to often gold-laden Spanish ships that plied the route back and forth from the New World, Baltic ships of that age typically hauled far less glamorous cargo-the likes of bricks, salt, furs, grain and herring, explained Mäss.

When he says so, he doesn't show the slightest trace of disappointment that among the rewards he insists he reaps from his work-instant wealth will almost certainly never be among them.

"I've got history on my mind," he said with a short laugh, "not gold."

Source: City Paper, The Baltic States

ALBERTA ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY IS UP AND RUNNING!

Ain Dave Kiil

At a meeting in Red Deer on April 23, 2005, 33 committed members of the fledgling Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS) reviewed recent progress and agreed on a course of action for the future. (A special thanks is extended to Jüri Kraav for preparing and distributing Minutes of all meetings leading to the establishment of the Society).

Helgi Leesment reviewed the need for and next steps to achieve provincial and federal registration. It was agreed that "Alberta Estonian Heritage Society" will be the registered name of the organization. The primary objectives are:

- To provide for the recreation of the members and to promote and afford opportunity for friendly and social activities,
- To promote and preserve Estonian heritage and culture in Alberta,
- To facilitate contact and current awareness among persons with an interest in Estonian heritage and culture in Canada, Estonia, and elsewhere.

Toomas Pääsuke advised that the Society has already attracted 67 paid-up members, with membership dues and contributions totaling \$2325.00.

It was decided that the Society's newsletter AJAKAJA will continue to be published biennially and distributed to paid-up members. Eda McClung will continue as the Publisher, with a Board of Contributors to assist in provision of material. Four regional correspondents, namely Irene Kerbes (Stettler), Jack Pallo (Eckville), Helgi Leesment (Calgary) and Barbara Gullickson (Barons) were named.

A discussion about website development resulted in a decision to proceed. It was agreed that the AEHS website should have a restricted website for members only and a home page accessible to all "surfers". Following Helgi Leesment's proposal, it was agreed that the website design and implementation will be headed up by Bob Kingsep. He will be assisted by Helgi Leesment, Jaan Koosel, Eda McClung, Karl Vollman, Kelly Schuler, and Astrid and Judi Ustina.

Several options were considered for events and activities in the near future. It was agreed that a province-wide event would generate added interest in the Society. Local representatives agreed to confirm the availability of Stettler and Gilby sites for a midsummer "picnic basket" celebration of Jaanipäev.

New Executive

A new executive was elected as follows:

President: Bob Tipman

Vice-President: Helgi Leesment

Treasurer: Toomas Pääsuke
Secretary: Jüri Kraav
Membership: Karl Vollman
Website: Bob Kingsep
AjaKaja: Eda McClung
Communications: Dave Kiil

Directors at Large:

Barons/Medicine Hat: Martha Munz Gue
Gilby: Allan Posti;
Edmonton : Eda McClung

Members at Large:

Arne Matiisen
Liia Herman
Peter Asmus

PS. On a personal note, I would like to express my appreciation for your support and commitment leading to a successful launch of the new Society.

Congratulations to Bob Tipman, President, and the new Executive on their appointments!

Alberta's Estonian community is unique in all of Canada, and the multi-generational makeup and talents of the people involved will no doubt contribute to the celebration of Estonian culture and traditions that will meet our equally diverse expectations.

THE ESTONIANS IN BARONS, ALBERTA - EARLY 1900S

Barbara (Johnson) Gullickson

I am honoured and pleased to be here today.

A little about my family background - My great grandfather, Jacob Erdman, & my grandfather, Gustav Erdman, filed on their homesteads in 1903 & moved here with the family in 1904. As well, my Johnson grandfather homesteaded at Barons in 1904 - and both of my husband's grandfathers homesteaded in 1903 & 1904. So, you see, we have very deep roots in the Barons community.

First, I want to tell a little about the emigration of the families from Estonia to The Crimea, about their life there, and why they moved to North America, first to the United States and then to Alberta. I will talk mostly about their early days here in the Barons area.

A number of Estonians arrived after the World War II and I will talk a little about them.

In the early 1800's, life was very harsh in Estonia for the people; they could not own land, and the rents paid to their landlords were oppressive.

One result of this economic oppression was uprisings in many places. These were severely suppressed by the Russian military. It was at this time, that the Prophet Maltzvet and his followers were waiting for the "White Ship which was to take them away to the Promised Land'.

It never did arrive.

By 1860, there was more freedom of movement - and there was a story going around: the Russian government was giving Free Land to settlers in the South. This was after the Crimean war and some of the Tartars had fled to Turkey so their villages were available.



In 1861, 23 (or 70) families obtained permission from the Russian government to leave Estonia, for free land in The Crimea.

To obtain permission from their landlords to emigrate, each adult between 20 & 40 was required to pay an extra tax, or take 20 lashes. All the adults took the lashes. One man, whose wife was pregnant, took his wife's share & received 40 lashes. The treatment for his lacerated back was regular applications of salt water. This story goes that it took a month for him to recover enough to travel.

He was the only young adult to ride on a wagon. Most walked, some had carts, some had baby carriages, and a few had horses, which pulled the carts. One man had 2 cows. When one got

lame, the shoemaker made shoes for it from the people's shoes.

They traveled 1500 miles (about 2200 Kilometers). The journey took 3 months. It was very difficult - many died along the way, mainly the old and very young. Only a small amount of food could be taken. As they went through the land, the Russian farmers gave them food; bread, sour milk, & cider.

When the Estonians arrived in Crimea, they were disappointed; the fields looked barren & unproductive. They were not, however, discouraged.

This was their land and it meant a new start for them as **Free Land Owners**.

The reasons for the desolation of the land were the Crimean War, and as happens to farmers everywhere, it was a bad year for crops.

Twenty three families settled in a town called Targhan, near Simferopol. These families were strict Lutherans and all the families went to church regularly - except one!

Jacob Erdman was one of the men elected a term as mayor of Targhan. While he was in a position of authority, a Turk stole an Estonian girl, because he could not afford to buy a wife. The Turk was sentenced to 8 years in Siberia. Stealing of girls was quite a common occurrence. If the stolen girl was gone more than 3 days, she stayed with her 'husband'; if less than 3 days, she returned home to her parents.



The Estonians were industrious, ambitious, and productive. They enjoyed their freedom in the new land and became prosperous land owners.

Jacob's orchard in Targhan, Crimea. Man unknown.

As time went on, Jacob's and Mari's sons reached the ages of 16 & 17, finding enough good land for them to farm was a problem. As well, 18 was the age young men were conscripted into the army. Mari, who was very determined, decided that her sons would not go into the Russian army! They would leave! Friends of theirs had moved to South Dakota and told them how good it was in North America, and the decision was made to go there.

Jacob sold their land for \$25,000 in gold. One daughter, Helena, was entrusted to look after the box during the train ride to Estonia and the boat trip to England. She was an impressive lady. Helena was Perry's grandmother. (Perry Kotkas is Managing Director of the Barons 2004 Centennial Celebration of Heritage & Homesteading - and he did a very good job!)

In England, Gustav, the older son, persuaded Jacob to exchange the box of gold for a bank draft. Jacob was very worried - would they every see their money again? When they arrived in New York, Jacob was very relieved when they were able to exchange the piece of paper for money.

The family lived in South Dakota for 1 ½ years, and unhappy with the severe weather conditions - and a bad crop - they decided to look for other land. Some of the other Estonian families were interested in farms with a more favourable climate, as well, and the search was on. Land in Oregon was too expensive.

They heard CHEAP land was available in Alberta. So, in 1903, some of the Estonian families homesteaded here, moving to Barons in 1904.

When they left South Dakota, they traveled by 'Settlers' Train'. Each family had 2 box-cars to accommodate them, their household goods and their livestock. The family lived at one end of one boxcar and the household goods were at the other. In another box-car they had all their cattle and horses. The men took care of the stock at the different stops made by the trains.

After arriving in Lethbridge, they loaded people and goods onto the wagons they had brought with them and went to the river, to the ferry which would take them across the Old Man River. The ferry crossing took one loaded wagon or ten head of stock at one time. There was a cable across the river and the water current took it across. It was slow, but they got to the other side. There was no charge except after 6 p.m., when it cost ten cents a trip.

Arriving at their homesteads, the first thing was to build a sod house, a sod barn and dig a well. In this way the house was built: a walking plow turned the sod, and let it lay in sheets about 10 inches wide and 3 inches thick. It was cut into 18 inch lengths, and these 'blocks' were made into a wall the same way a brick wall is made.

The only lumber used was for framing doors and windows. The roof was built from trees cut from the river bottom; then it was covered with prairie wool (hay) and (they say) this roof never leaked. The first doors and windows were made of gunny sack.

The well served as a fridge. It was cool down there and a pail with milk, butter and the usual perishable food was stored down there.

This is the interior of Jacob's and Mari's home at Barons.

This photo is of their youngest daughter, Natalie, who graduated from the University of Alberta in 1917.

The trials of these pioneers included prairie fires, which had nothing to stop them, wild cattle as there were no fences and they roamed free, and the weather. In the summer, it was very hot, often over 100 degrees Fahrenheit (about 38 C), and the severe winters, which reached less than - 40 degrees Fahrenheit (-40 C). A mystery and a wonder were the Chinook winds. When these came, the temperature could rise 60 degrees in 24 hours.

Jack Kulpas tells of a prairie fire shortly after they homesteaded. Fortunately his father had experienced a prairie fire in South Dakota and knew how to protect his farm. He kept the grass burnt off around the buildings. So when they saw a wall of flames coming toward them, they were ready with all available containers filled with water. The fire was fanned by the wind and the flames were 20 feet high. The fire passed over in a few seconds and the burnt area around the buildings prevented the fire from coming too close to their home, and the sparks which lit the

haystack were quickly put out by the pails of water.

Jack's words, 'A week later the new grass came up green as velvet. The prairie was beautiful.'

Another good result of the fire was that it exposed their winter's supply of fuel - cow chips or buffalo chips, which burned hot and quite slowly. The children were given gunny sacks in which to collect them. The objective was to have enough to keep them warm all winter.

Each homesteader had to 'prove up' his quarter section of land, 160 acres. It was required that 10 acres of land be broken each year for the first 3 years, and that the homesteaders had to live on the land or within 10 miles, for 6 months each year.

When Grandpa Gus hauled wheat to Lethbridge, he would get up at 2 or 3 am, deliver the grain to the elevator, and return home the same day, getting home very late. It was expensive to stay overnight in the city, especially with a 4-horse team. He would bring mail, coal and groceries home.

In the early days, before there were roads or even trails, Grandpa Gus and some others would aim bee-line for Lethbridge. Grandpa said, 'We met the Blackfoot Trail at Black Butte, a little south of what is now Nobleford. There we made a big pile of rocks and put a buffalo skull on top of it, so that on the way back we would know when to turn off the Blackfoot Trail.

Finally we found that the Blackfoot Trail continued past our homestead, only a few miles east. One can still see the mark of it passing through the grounds of the Barons Consolidated School.'

By 1908, there were 20 Estonian families in the Barons area - 77 individuals.

Some names of the Estonian families: Minnik, Kewe, Musten, Kulpas, Krikental, Kotkas, Erdman, Lentsman, Reinstein, Malberg, Meer, Watman, Silbermann, Andrekson.

In 1916, the crops were very good. Weather conditions were just right and even bad farmers could get a crop. Prices for wheat were \$2.00 to \$2.25 a bushel and the yield for wheat ran around 50 bushels to the acre, oats yielded 130 bushels to the acre. The only taxes were for the school, \$2.00/quarter.

So it was at this time that big, new houses were built, new cars were purchased and a good time was had by all.

One of the big houses built in 1917. This is Gus and Madga Erdman's home. Gus is Jacob's and Mari's son.

New equipment was bought for farming; a steam engine and threshing outfit, with cook car, bunk car, sheaf loader, water tanks, bundle racks and wagons.

Gus Erdman's threshing outfit, c. 1917. The Barons elevators are in the background.

All these purchases did not use up all the profit from farming - several poker games were going on. These were pretty wide open with bets up to \$2,000.

Bowling became very popular around this time and Barons had a world class team, taking part in contests in Calgary, Lethbridge and Winnipeg. Barons also had a ball team, and the competition with Carmangay (the neighbouring town) was fierce, including importing of high-priced players.

A ball game, c. 1918, at Steve Pakkila's homestead, north east of Barons.

Good crops brought the gophers: at some time, perhaps around 1917-19, gophers were particularly numerous. Mr. Gow offered the boys 1 cent for each tail. When the boys brought their tails in for payment, Mr. Gow threw them into his stove. Of course, it was summer and there was no fire. The boys collected the tails when Mr. Gow wasn't looking and re-sold them to him.

1933, Jacob's & Mari's 60th Wedding Anniversary. Their house at Barons is in the background. This is a wood frame house, with straw in the walls for insulation. Their son, Robert, was an avid gardener and imported bulbs from Holland and peonies from Japan. The house was moved to a new location some years ago, and is still used as a residence.



Reverend Silak, a Lutheran Minister who lived in Medicine Hat, came a few times a year, performed church services, baptized, married those who were engaged and buried the dead. In the meantime, these were performed by Gus Erdman. His last baptism was Mary Lou Andrekson. Mr. Ira Allen and his wife often would come to the services by Reverend Silak. Although they did not understand the service, which Reverend Silak performed in both Estonian and German, they sat through both renditions. When asked why they came, they said they enjoyed being in a place of God and the singing.

The most was made of the farm products. Sheep's wool was carded, made into quilts, knitted into socks and mittens. The garden fruit and vegetables were canned. 20-gallon crocks of sauerkraut, salt pork, and corned beef were common. The pioneer women also made their own soap.

I haven't mentioned the 'barb-wire' communication system. The barb-wire fences were used as a way to talk with one's neighbour. Sound traveled through the barbed wire, and a can was used as a receiver.

The Estonians gathered often for meals, to exchange ideas (argue), to sing and dance. Anyone who needed help had a neighbour to assist.

Everyone knew everyone for miles and miles around, personally.

The Estonian community placed great emphasis on education, and a large number of their children went on to university to receive Bachelors, Masters and Doctors degrees.

Although the early years were difficult, the Estonians prospered, bought more land and became bigger land-holders. Owning land still seems to be important to us.

The people of Barons worked together as a team, no matter what their ethnic backgrounds were: Estonian, Norwegian, Swede, Chinese, Finnish, German, English, and people from the United States.

After the 2nd World War, a number of Estonians wanted to come to Canada. Some because they believed it was a good place to live, and others because they had escaped from USSR dominated Estonia and needed a safe place to live. A number of them had relatives or friends in Alberta and were able to arrange sponsors.

It seems that all the Estonians who were still in the Barons area sponsored a number of these. Many were professional people: doctors, lawyers, dentists, etc., and others were people who worked in factories and on farms. All of these people were required to work on farms, in sugar beet fields, etc. for, I believe, 2 years. It was expected that during this time, they would learn to speak English, and then to return to their profession.

I would like to name the sponsors and the people sponsored, but I do not know all of them and I do not like to leave out people who should be named.

I remember a cousin of my mother's who was sponsored by Grandfather. She was a ballet dancer. I don't know if she worked in the fields, but she lived at Grandfather's house, and taught dancing to the girls in Barons. She then moved to Edmonton, where she gained fame as a Ballet teacher.

My cousin, Glenda Erdman was telling me of an Estonian who was sponsored by her father, Victor

Erdman. Mr. Liiv didn't speak English and wasn't able to work in Victor's plant, so Victor gave him his grandmother's house to live in, and he became their gardener. Glenda said they had a picture perfect garden, flowers the size of butter plates, vegetables which were spectacular, and he even grew celery, hilling up the soil around them, so they had the white flesh typical of celery. At this time, Glenda's little brother was about 2 years old, and as any 2-year old, was intent on creating havoc in the garden. When David got too close to a precious plant, Mr. Liiv would shake his finger at him and forcefully say, "Aye, yi, yi, yi.

Some of the attractive girls married our Estonian farmers.

It was not easy for these people to come to a new country, to mostly be among strangers, and to not be able to work at their chosen profession.

It comforts me to believe that their lives here are better than they would have been in the Old Country.

Thank you

From the talk Barbara (Johnson) Gullickson presented during the Estonian program at the

Barons 2004 Centennial Celebration of Heritage & Homesteading, July 31, 2004.

Barons was the third settlement of Estonians in Alberta.

2004 Barbara (Johnson) Gullickson

THE 4KS AND FIFTY YEARS OF MUSICAL MEMORIES

My time with the 4Ks was relatively short, and I wasn't party to the early chapters at all. But since my Mom asked me to tell the story ... what could I say?



For those of you who have no idea what I'm even talking about, the 4Ks was an orchestra - though not in the classical sense, where the term usually includes "symphony or "philharmonic and implies dozens of musicians playing oboes and tympani and cellos and piccolos.

Nope. Time was that an orchestra was simply a group of musicians, playing a variety of instruments, providing music for listening and dancing pleasure. And if anything sums up the half century history of the 4Ks ... they made music you could dance to. Which folks all over Central Alberta, especially the Estonians who settled in the Stettler area, did for about fifty years.

My name is Hal Kerbes. From the day I made my debut in the Stettler General Hospital (Good Friday, 1957), the 4Ks had a direct impact on my daily life & my future ... because at any given time in history, a significant number of those Ks were Kerbeses. My family. Through the eyes of a child, I watched Mom & Dad head off to play at those weddings and dances. My sister, Annette, & I became "4Ks ourselves in the '60s. Through countless weddings, parties and New Years' Eves, I learned what it meant to be a musician - how to plan the dancing at a wedding, play popular tunes, staying up **waaaaay** too late, eat New Year's Eve dinner at 5:00 AM. But mostly, I learned how it meant contributing your skills to your community.

It's been twenty years since age and a changing world transformed the 4Ks from popular dance band to fond memory, but that doesn't change five decades of history ... so come back with me to the beginning.

At the dawn of the 20 th century, millions of people left Europe in search of a better life, betting their future on a mystical land called Canada. Thousands of those pioneers came from Estonia, and many of them settled in the newly minted province of Alberta. They cleared the bush on a homestead, built shelter, planted crops, survived that first bitter winter and created a community. It was a typically balmy Alberta day in January of 1910 when my grandparents, Jaan & Anette Kerbes, with their children John, Elizabeth and Rosanta (Rose), stepped off the train in Stettler (the next sibling - Elvine - wisely waited until that April to be born). On a homestead in the Wooded Hills district, not far from the Red Deer River west of Big Valley, this branch of the Kerbes family tree put down its roots and grew; the next child - Albert - arrived in February of 1912. The seven members of the family worked hard, and not much changed until the spring of 1922, when my dad, Elmer Kerbes, was born.

Canada was now well established. Automobiles were becoming common place. First nations families no longer turned up unexpectedly on the homestead; electricity & running water were within reach, and maybe the fact that survival wasn't the first priority any more is why Elmer was encouraged to do something that his people had always valued and enjoyed.

Elmer made music. He sang, and he could coax a tune out of any instrument you put into his hands. Elmer was the kind of musician seen rarely in a generation; a great ear, a mechanical knack for the horn, the ability to charm the crowd with music ... and my dad, along with other members of his family, was at the heart of the community's music.

Before the 4Ks evolved, the Riverside Revelers were breaking musical trails; in the mid 1930's, Albert Kerbes on his C melody sax & drum, Carl Nicklom on a soprano sax and Beth Kerbes on piano played at Whetzel and Fenn Schools. It was fun, and it was a hobby. By that time twenty-something Albert was a farmer, his sister Beth was helping look after the chickens and the house and Elmer was staying with sister Elvine in Castor to finish high school, where he became smitten with the saxophone. And it was evident that he had more than a little musical skill.

It wasn't long before Bert & Elmer Kerbes, their cousin Helen Kerbes and friend and neighbour Charlie Klaus began to play together on a regular basis, and in the late 30s, the 4Ks Orchestra was officially born. In Erskine, Alberta, in December of 1939, an historic event occurred - the marriage of Cora Clark and Stanton Pooley was the first of hundreds of weddings to be celebrated by dancing to the music of the 4Ks.

In those early days, the 4Ks used to practice on Sunday afternoon. Charlie Klaus remembers more than one chilly hike over to Kerbes' farm. It was "only a mile, but making that hike through snow up to his knees sometimes made it seem a lot longer. But then there were those idyllic summers of a time long gone, when the highlight of any week was to go out to Buffalo Lake and dance the to 4Ks. Warm July air, a clear, starlit sky, water lapping softly at the shore ... which happened to be right under the orchestra. Especially if it had been a rainy June. The group also played every two weeks on an open air stage at Content Bridge, and since in those days weddings weren't just on Saturdays, they might play three or four times a week in any one of the dozens of community halls in the region. Elmer would listen to new music, at a nickel a song, on the Wurlitzer - the pay-for play record player that had begun to appear even in small town cafes & restaurants. After hearing it a few times, he'd write the chords and lead line on a napkin and make the music happen at the next dance.

Elmer Kerbes playing two saxophones.

In 1950, a young school teacher, fresh out of Normal School, arrived in the Wooded Hills territory as a temporary replacement. She boarded at a farm in the district, and became acquainted with the youngest member of the family. In 1954, Marguarite Gilday & Elmer Kerbes were married in a double ceremony with Albert Kerbes & Rose Nicklom ...and the 4Ks got a permanent pianist in the bargain.

Youthful exuberance prevailed, and there were many times when Elmer & Bert had to shovel snow while Marguarite drove the car through a drift blocking the road, because they had to play at a dance. Then they'd shovel again to get home, sometimes traveling through fields because

road was impassable. The 4Ks' popularity continued to grow, and for decades they played all across the province, but most of their music was made in central Alberta. Certain occasions - New Years' Eve and Halloween, Sports Days for Elks, Valentines Day for the Royal Purple, Athletic Association Dance, the Ice Carnival - were special dates reserved for Big Valley. But in Erskine, Great Bend, Botha, Stettler, Castor, Rimbey, Red Willow, Rumsey, Trenville, Byemoor, Delburne, on Rochon Sands and the Farmer's Picnic at Buffalo Lake, at Carter's Hall, at graduation dances at Big Valley, Alix, Delburne, Stettler ... the 4Ks were on the stage, making the music that made dreams come true on the dance floor. The 4Ks orchestra became an important component of any wedding celebration. Rituals evolved over the years ... traditions such as having the guests at a wedding dance form a circle around the bride and groom to sing "For they are Jolly Good Fellows which was always followed by presentation of the money collected by passing the hat amongst the guests. Everyone was happy to contribute a dollar to help out the newlyweds, whether toward a honeymoon, or to help with the expenses of their new home.

The most popular venues for a 4Ks dance was always at the heart of the Estonian community ... Linda Hall. It was, and still is, a sturdy, practical facility which been upgraded many times over the years.

The 4Ks' other regular haunt of was Spinler's Hall in Big Valley ... and it was something else altogether. One of the most infamous dance halls in Central Alberta in the middle years of the 20 th century, its main floor was a pool room, where the young men of the district wiled away the hours trying to sink a ball in the corner pocket. But more important to the social life of the region was the second floor dancehall.

Mom remembers New Years' Eve at Spinler's, when lunch was served at midnight at the restaurant up the street; by the time people got back to the hall - sometimes not until 2 am - they were ready to celebrate some more and had the energy to dance all night. But what everyone mostly remembers about Spinler's is its notoriously "springy floor. The building was torn down years ago, but I have vague memories of being a little kid, at the back of the stage during a dance, falling asleep to a rhythmic vibration like a train or a ship ... but it was actually the floor shaking. In later years, poplar logs were propped up in the pool hall to support the dance floor - which made playing pool even more difficult, - one pool player reports that during a dance the pool balls danced on the tables whenever folks were dancing upstairs. My mom says they eventually had to stop playing the bunny hop due to concerns for public safety, and with a coal heater at either end of the hall, she had nightmares about the floor collapsing and the heaters and orchestra ending up on the top of a fiery heap.

The 4Ks was not made up exclusively of Kerbeses. Although Bert and Elmer and their saxophones were always the core of the orchestra, they always needed a drummer. Charlie Klaus, who bought a set of drums for the staggering sum of \$250, was the first, and was followed by Glen Viger, Sharon Nicklom and Dorothy Klaus. Helen (Kerbes) Mulligan was the first pianist, then Archie Kerbes and Lil Prudden took over until 1951, when Marguarite (Gilday) Kerbes joined the family ... and the orchestra. Any dance band worth its salt had a singer, and over the years the 4Ks had Helen Kerbes, Rudy Nicklom, Lillian Gabriel, Hal Kerbes and Annette Kerbes at the microphone. Claude Blair from Delburne played trumpet with the group for a time, and Ross Annable sometimes played guitar.

Still, because Elmer, Marg and Bert were always there, the 4Ks and the Kerbes family became interchangeable over the years, and both the family & the orchestra were very active in the community. They hosted events such as the West Bonspiels and golf tournaments, they provided the sound equipment and announcements for Farmer's Union, Elks, Royal Purple and Legion events; they instigated and provided equipment for log sawing, nail pounding, horse shoes and rolling pin (Queen of 4 AM) contests that were a big part of events such as the Legion Raft Race.

In 1966, another change came with the formation of a Community band in Big Valley. Calgarian Art Dee was the first conductor; Lloyd Harris took the reigns in 1968, and some of the 4Ks shared their talents. Dad took on the new challenge of playing the sousaphone, Mom learned saxophone and that's also when I first took up the trumpet. Annette joined three years later playing the clarinet, and the whole family traveled with this marching band to play in parades in Delia, Rocky Mountain House, Bashaw, Byemore, Stettler and Red Deer. In 1974, the Community Band led the parade for Homecoming, then the Kerbeses quickly changed uniform so that the 4Ks Orchestra could play at the end of the parade. Marguarite Kerbes eventually became the Band Director, and Big Valley's Community Marching band continued to be a source of pride for many years. During that period Mom (Marguarite) also taught piano lessons and classroom music, and of her students during that twenty five years continued their music as teachers or performers, winning top honors at Stettler and Drumheller Music Festivals.

Annette & I came very late to the 4Ks, and in the scope of 50 years of music-making, our time was a relative drop in the bucket. But I still remember looking up at the stars through the unfinished roof of the Big Valley's Jubilee Hall in 1964 as the 4Ks prepared to play. I remember that first New Year's Eve dance I played ... being handed a crisp \$10 bill for playing from 8:00 until about three in the morning. I remember playing "second generation wedding dances, and of course the group played 25 th anniversaries for many folks who'd had the 4Ks at their wedding - in a couple of cases they even played 50 th anniversaries. As the crowds waltzed and schottised and butterflied to their music, the 4Ks saw many a romance blossom on the dance floor ... and maybe one or two that ended there as well.

But time passes. Things change. My sister and I both moved away from the area long ago. Annette studied music for a time in Calgary, but then discovered her interest in things technical and went to NAIT. She has called Edmonton home for many years now; she and her husband, Michael Berry, both work for Dow Chemical. They volunteer for their community and their church and keep very busy getting 8 year old Alexander to gymnastics and music lessons and hockey and tap class.

I've been in Calgary since 1974, and have spent most of the last thirty years working in theatre; my wife (Kathryn) and I have a theatre company, we work in film & TV and on stage and produce interactive mystery dinner theatre. Our eldest daughter, Sarah, just finished her third year in the Drama department at the University of Victoria. Our 14 year old, Hannah, plays violin and studies voice, and was able to go with me to New York this past winter fuelling her conviction that she belongs on Broadway.

And the 4Ks? ... with us kids gone, and with the original members of the group growing older, the charm of loading up a car full of gear and heading out to play a dance till all hours of the

night began to pale. The 4Ks played their last wedding dance - for Alfred and Joyce Klaus - at Linda Hall in 1981; from that time on, their music making became less and less frequent.

Many of original 4Ks are gone now. My dad passed away in 2001 and Uncle Bert has been gone since January of 2004. Mom is now happily ensconced in her condo in Stettler.

The farm where the music of the 4Ks took root is quiet & still; in many places saplings and grass are covering the evidence of a century's labors, and the last piano on the place probably hasn't had a note played in a couple of decades.

But the music of the 4Ks lives on ... every time my nephew, Alexander, plays piano for me, I hear his grandfather's songs. Every time my daughters sing, I'm reminded of the times my sister & I shared the microphone for a duet.

And in that funny way life has of coming full circle ... these days I spend every other summer weekend in Big Valley. Our company produces mysteries & musicals in association with the Alberta Prairie Rail Excursions. For the past couple of years, my daughter Sarah has been a member of the troupe, as we carry on the tradition of making music, entertaining tourists who come for the thrill of an old-fashioned train experience ...

...very much like the one that brought my grandparents to this little corner of the prairie almost a century ago.

Hal Kerbes

JOHN PIHOOJA: A MAN WITH A WANDERLUST

Ralph Pihooja

A young Estonian man has been touring the Chinese city of Peking and has inadvertently wandered into the Forbidden City. He is arrested and taken away for questioning - an interrogation that must have been fruitless since the young man spoke only a few words of Chinese and the Chinese did not speak Estonian. Somehow he made an escape and continued on his adventures while traveling around the world. True story or family legend?

This is the dilemma facing the young man's descendants when attempting to piece together a cohesive timeline of the man's life and adventures. The young man in question, John Pihooja, kept no journal of his travels and only a few faded postcards with almost illegible messages exist from that time. The stories have been preserved through oral retelling; and even though dates and details are sketchy, they still provide a glimpse of the world in the early twentieth century and the life of a restless young man before he settled down to become one of Alberta's early Estonian pioneers.



Born to Peeter and Liiso Pihooja of Võru, Estonia in 1892, Juhan Pihooja was the youngest son in the family of six boys and two girls. At this time Russia controlled Estonia, they taxed the peasants on their small farms, established the Russian language as the official language, and conscripted young Estonian men into the Russian army. One by one upon their 21 st birthday, Juhan's older brothers served time in the Russian army. In 1905 Juhan's eldest brother August emigrated to Canada with his wife and infant daughter to join their friends Henry Kingsep and a small community of Estonian settlers whowere homesteading west of Red Deer, Alberta. This provided the young Juhan with a contact when he later embarked on his travel adventures.

In 1912 19-year-old Juhan and his 26-year-old brother Karl, second youngest son in the family, arrived in the Gilby-Medicine River area of Alberta where their brother August was farming. Postcards from Estonia were sent to Juhan, care of the Gilby Post Office, so we know he was in the area at the time. In today's age of jet planes, freeways and controlled border crossings it is difficult to visualize a time in North America when crossing borders was easy, citizenship wasn't challenged, and travel was by boat, train or horse. But that seems to be the case when tracing the series of postcards sent between John, Karl and their family and friends in this early time.

By May 1913, postcards from Estonia were addressed to John in Red Deer, where he was working in a sawmill. The young man's restless nature was showing, for later that year John received a postcard at a Pender Street address in Vancouver from his friend Eduard Wirro in Coquitlam, B.C. Edward complained of the rainy weather but asked John to look out for a job for him in the city if one came by. John was working in the logging industry then. One of the mills he worked at for was located where Gastown is situated today. Hastings Street was the main skid line for the mules that pulled the logs over greased corduroys. By the next summer John returned to the Gilby-Medicine River area and appeared ready to become a homesteader as he and his friend Carl Huul acquired land in an area known as Risulas (a very desolate and

uninhabited area). A year later John's friend Eduard wrote from Anaconda, Montana where he was working in a copper smelter making \$3.25 in an eight hour shift. This news eventually encouraged John, his brother Karl, and their Estonian friends Carl Huul and Oscar Ossul to join Eduard in Montana. Throughout 1916 they variously worked at the Anaconda smelter and copper mine in Butte. At this time Canada was involved in World War I, but the United States had not yet entered the war so there appeared to be lots of work for the young men. It was very hot and dangerous working in the mine. John recalled how one of the underground walls collapsed and struck the carbide lamp he was carrying. But the Estonian bachelors had a lively social life as their postcards mentioned Butte's many amusements and dancing half the night with pretty girls, and John played in the Butte Orchestra. In 1917 there was a strike at the Butte mine and John returned to Red Deer while his brother moved to Vancouver. By May of the following year, John was in Vancouver but planned to travel by boat with Oscar to Seattle, Washington to meet Karl at the harbor. It is believed that this is when John and Karl embarked on their working tour around the world, although it is possible they may have done some traveling through Finland and Siberia prior to arriving in Alberta in 1912. The only existing postcard from this time, dated September 1920, is to John in Shanghai from Karl in Hong Kong in which Karl urges John to come to Hong Kong quickly as there is a Chinese boat that will be sailing soon.

Without specific dates or the precise chronological order that these travels occurred, we have only an oral history of the early twentieth century trip around the world and personal experiences of John Pihooja. He has told of crossing Russia along the Siberian railway and working from Vladivostok with the summer fishing fleet. He visited Japan where he experienced a high scale earthquake, which he said was like walking on jelly.

In Peking he saw the Forbidden City and in Shanghai he received the urgent postcard from Karl. Why and when they were separated is unknown. Other places he traveled to and worked were Hong Kong, Haiphong, Vietnam, Singapore, Colombia and Ceylon. In Ceylon he worked on the rubber trees and in logging operations where elephants were used to skid the logs. John recalled getting along very well with the twelve-year-old elephant and the mahout (elephant handler).

Postcards in Hong Kong and Ceylon were printed in English and postcards in Haiphong were printed in French. In all John sailed under the British, Norwegian, Swedish, and Japanese flags. From here details are sketchy. We know he survived the treacherous journey around Cape Horn and at sometime the two brothers ended up back in Estonia where in 1922 John married 18-year-old Wanda Schlack, who had fled from Bolshevik Russia.

In July 1922 the two newlyweds left Tallinn, Estonia and sailed on the R.M.S Empress of France to arrive in Quebec, Canada the following month. From there they traveled by C.P.R to Eckville Alberta. Because of the Canadian rules for homesteading and because John had abandoned his early homestead in the Risulas area, John and Wanda had to buy a new farmstead. After staying with Estonian friends in the area, they bought their own land at Wood Lake, northwest of Eckville and became early Alberta farmers. Their only son, Ralph was born in 1923. The farm on the shores of Wood Lake was a scene of many festivities and annual celebrations.

Foremost was the festival of "Jaanipäev in which everyone would drink, dance and sing around

the bonfire. For some weeks before, timber and material was gathered to make a huge pile. Then on June 23rd it was set ablaze. It was said that the flames were visible from as far away as Medicine Hills. The second activity of the summer was the annual Fish Soup Festival. Nets were cast the evening before and the bounty, along with milk, potatoes and onions was prepared in large cauldrons. On one occasion the Raabis family's new Oldsmobile sedan's engine burst into flames. A few ingenious souls lifted the huge cauldron of soup and threw it on the burning motor. That quick action saved the car, however, the aroma lingered on for quite a while. In the winter months the Lake was the scene for many skating parties. John and Wanda opened their home for skaters to warm up and to tend to small scrapes and bruises.

As the farm was midway from Eckville and the homes of many travelers from the northwest, it was a haven for travelers to warm up in the winter and have nourishment. At times John also repaired broken harnesses or fixed loose horseshoes. John and Wanda also were active in the Estonian drama group's annual production in the Estonian Hall, consisting of three act plays which played to a full house. It was sometimes necessary to travel ten to twelve miles in sub-zero temperatures to rehearse in individual homes.

John and Wanda retired from farming in the mid-fifties and moved into the village of Eckville. Purchasing the Eckville Billiard Hall, John became known as a friendly pool hall operator. In 1968 they joined their son Ralph and family in the warmer climes of Oliver, B.C. John's beloved wife died in 1974 after battling cancer for months. John suffered a stroke while living with his family in Penticton, B.C. and passed away in 1976. Both are buried in Oliver, B.C.

Credits: Liz Tardie

RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS: AN ESTONIAN CONTRIBUTION TO CANADIAN CULTURE

Helgi Leesment, Calgary, Alberta

Over the last hundred and some years, several waves of Estonian immigrants have arrived in Canada. Each wave brought a variety of skills and contributions to make Canada what it is today. One of those contributions has been Rhythmic Gymnastics.

The female sport of rhythmic gymnastics started in Europe during the late 1800's and early 1900's. Estonians seemed to take to it naturally.

What is rhythmic gymnastics?

It is a fun way to move to music using hand apparatus such as a ball, hoop, scarf, skipping rope, long ribbon on a stick and other items. The flowing skills are based on natural body movements. A unique feature is that a stretch phase and relax phase are built into many skills, including those using balls, hoops and other hand apparatus. Several levels of coordination are developed in the course of learning this sport: coordination between various parts of the body, coordination between the body and the hand held apparatus, coordination with the music and coordination with other gymnasts in the group. It can be a participation and/or performance activity. Rhythmic gymnastics is practiced at all skill levels from beginner to elite. Because the movements are "natural, rhythmic gymnastics is suitable for all ages from 4 to adults. In other words, it is a life long sport. Often girls who give up rhythmic gymnastics in their teens, return to it as adult gymnasts at a later stage in their lives.

NorGlen Rhythmic Gymnastics Club "Retro Stars, 2004

When a large group gymnastics display was first proposed in Estonia early in the 20 th century, school girls and young women spontaneously joined the rehearsals all over the country in fields and whatever green space was available. This style of physical activity seemed to suit the Estonian soul. Physical education training for teachers and coaches included the types of movement skills used in this non-competitive sport and led to many mass displays in outdoor stadiums. This tradition continues today as part of the famous Song Festival, held every four years in Tallinn.

When politics and war in the 1940's caused over 100,000 Estonians to escape from their homeland, they took their love of rhythmic gymnastics with them. In particular, Ernst Idla established a training centre in Stockholm, Sweden shortly after the war (thousands of Estonians became war refugees in Sweden as it gradually became clear to them that going back to their homeland was not option if they valued their lives). Hundreds of Estonian women and girls of all ages took Ernst Idla's training and participated in Lingiads and other major mass performances in Sweden. One of his daughters continues to operate the Idla Centre in Stockholm today.

Several of his students took Ernst Idla's training extra seriously and began rhythmic gymnastics

clubs elsewhere as they moved away from Stockholm.

One of them is Evelyn Koop who established the Kalev-Estienne School of Rhythmic Gymnastics in Toronto in 1960. Her elite gymnasts have performed at major Ontario-wide functions. They gave a command performance for Queen Elizabeth during her 1968 visit to Canada. Kalev-Estienne in turn has spawned many rhythmic gymnastics coaches who have taken the sport to other parts of Canada where they have gone to live. This club continues as a leader in the field of Canadian non-competitive rhythmic gymnastics.

Evelyn Koop founded the Ontario Rhythmic Gymnastics Federation and the Canadian Rhythmic Gymnastics Federation, being president for a number of years. For several decades, a number of Estonians were prominent on the executive of both organizations as other Canadians began to see the benefits, beauty and challenges of this style of gymnastics, and joined the clubs as well as the executive of these types of organizations.

Another major Estonian-led rhythmic gymnastics club in Toronto was operated by Helene Tiidus until her retirement in the 1970's.

In 1979, Annely Riga arrived in Toronto directly from Estonia and established the Ritmika club, which just celebrated its 25 th anniversary this year. It is also one of the Canadian leaders in this type of sport. Annely has organized a National Gymnastrada and numerous other display events and has served on various Boards.

As the sport of rhythmic gymnastics evolved, a competitive branch was established internationally and gained Olympic Games status in 1984. The first ever winner of an Olympic gold medal in competitive rhythmic gymnastics was Lori Fung of Vancouver, whose main coach was an Estonian, Mall Vesik. Competitive rhythmic is restricted to the use of five International Gymnastics Federation approved apparatus: ball, hoop, ribbon, skipping rope and clubs, and involves extreme flexibility, high leaps and speedy apparatus handling. Standard competition is done individually or in groups of five.

Another student of Ernst Idla's, Leida Leesment, established the non-competitive Malmö Flickorna (Malmö Girls) in southern Sweden. That club is a world leader in the field and receives support from the Swedish government which often asks the elite performing team to represent Sweden as performers and informal ambassadors at international events. The Malmö Flickorna pioneered the technique of using two-balls and three balls while maintaining various body movements. The organization is now operated by Leida's daughter Tiina. Another daughter, Reet, introduced two-ball and three-ball skills to Canadians when she first immigrated to Ontario in the 1960's.

Other clubs, led by Estonians, have flourished for short times in various parts of Canada from Montreal to Vancouver. In many cases, Estonians developed new coaches all over this country by volunteering on provincial federation executives, conducting coaching workshops, providing coaching apprenticeship programs and preparing or contributing to manuals and video-tapes about the sport. Of course, rhythmic gymnastics leaders originating from other countries have also played major roles in developing this sport in Canada, but Estonians were the initiators and were prominent in the 1960's through the 1980's.

In Calgary, Helgi Leesment is currently the Ladies Group coach at the NorGlen Rhythmic Gymnastics Club which she co-founded 25 years ago.

Alberta has several rhythmic gymnastics clubs, both competitive and non-competitive. If anyone is interested in joining one or starting one, contact:

Rhythmic Gymnastics Alberta

11759 Groat Road , 3rd Floor,

Edmonton, Alberta

T5M 3K6

Phone: 780-427-8152: Toll Free in Alberta: 1-800-881-2504

Web Site: www.rgalberta.com

Email: rga@rgalberta.co

CELEBRATING 104 YEARS

Game thrills birthday gal
Juniors' win makes her day
By Todd Saelhof
Calgary Sun

It's one thing to live to the ripe old age of 104, but quite another to get exactly what you want for such a milestone.



Margarete Paasuke was all smiles yesterday for more reasons than just celebrating her birthday with 83 close friends and family at The Manor Village Life Center.

"Mother is particularly happy because the Canadian junior hockey team won," Tom Paasuke said of his mom's wish fulfilled a night earlier by Canada's young stars.

"Oh yes... I was so delighted they beat those Russians," said the birthday gal.

Then came yesterday's celebration especially for Paasuke.

The seniors center's dining room was decorated, and her arrival met with song, a cake, a violinist and speeches.

"It is maybe too much for an old person like me," she said.

Paasuke is a native of Estonia and endured a difficult life that continued even after she immigrated to Montreal in 1948.

"I never dreamed I would live this long after all those unhappy days," said Paasuke, whose 62 year-old son believes caring for others kept her going all these years.

"First of all, I had to live for my sons because my husband died (in 1951) when they were eight and 10."

She also helped her relatives in Estonia when it belonged to the Soviet Union and bought her folks a farm to retire on.

Adhering to a daily regimen of walking at least 500 steps - despite her bad knees - has also helped her longevity.

These days, it's hockey - especially the Canadiens and Flames - that helps her keep going.

todd.saelhof@calgarysun.com

Alberta's Estonian community congratulates Margarete Paasuke on the extra special occasion of her 104th birthday! We share in the joy and celebration of a long life, young at heart.

EESTI ISIKULOO KESKUS

Fred Puss

Arhiivide kasutamise statistika näitab, et kaks kolmandikku arhiivide kasutajatest on sattunud vanade arhivaalide juurde just tänu huvile oma esivanemate vastu. Suguvõsauurimise näol on tegu üha kasvava hobiga kogu maailmas. Iga suguvõsauurija alustab oma kodust - otsib üles perekonnas alal hoitud vanad dokumendid ja fotod ning küsitleb sugulasi. Paljud sellega piirduvadki ja kindlasti on sellegi näol tegu tulevaste põlvede jaoks tänuväär tööga. Aga paratamatult elusolevad inimesed kõike ei tea ja on asju, mida pole kunagi peredes räägitudki. Siis tuleb pöörduda arhiivimaterjalide poole.

Eestis on arhiivimaterjalid üsna hästi säilinud. Mida lähemal tänapäevale, seda rohkem on säilinud materjale. 19. sajand pakub lisaks kirikuraamatutele ja hingeloenditele veel valdade ja kohtute materjale, samuti koolide ja sõjaväega seotud andmeid. Väga rikkalik on materjalide poolest aga 20. sajand, eriti iseseisvusaeg. 1920. ja 1930. aastatest on säilinud tuludeklaratsioone, teenistustoimikuid, koolitunnistusi, fotosid avaldustel ja ankeetidel jne. Tollest ajast on võimalik teada saada, kuidas nägi välja konkreetne linnakorter - millal saabus sinna elekter, kui palju oli korteris ruumi (mitu tuba, mitu akent) ja palju selle eest üüri maksti. Ka nõukogude perioodist on palju huvi pakkuvaid materjale, kuigi oluliselt vähem. 1940. aastatest on tuhandeid mahukaid represseeritute toimikuid, millest avaneb elu kurvem pool. Suur osa selle perioodi materjale on vene keeles.

Kõikide nende arhiivimaterjalide selgeks saamine võtab väga palju aega. Seepärast jääbki enamusel hobi korras uurijatest pärast nime ja sündide-abielseaduse andmete üles leidmist töö sinnapaika. Kuid ka nendesamade sündide ja surmade teabe ülesleidmisega on teinekord raskusi. Olenevalt ajaperioodist võib isiku sünniaja ja -koha teada saamiseks olla vaja alustada hoopis laste surmaaja ja -koha välja selgitamisest. Täpsest ajast hulga olulisem on teada kohta, kus sündmus toimus.

Paljudel amatööruurijatel jääb ka kasutatud allikatest kõik peale nime ja kuupäevade arusaamatuks, kuigi sealsamas leheküljel võib olla kirjas veel märkusi elukoha, ameti, usutunnistuse, mujale elama asumise jm kohta. Iga dokumendi maksimaalseks kasutamiseks tuleb teada täpselt, milleks see koostati (tänapäevaste ajaloo huviliste jaoks ometigi mitte!) ning kuidas sellel olevaid fakte tõlgendada. Samuti tuleb osata vene ja saksa keelt ning gooti käekirja.

Eesti Isikuloo Keskuses töötavad kõrgharidusega ajaloolased, kes on spetsialiseerunud just sellistele küsimustele. Meie asjatundjate abiga võib juba mõne töötunniga leida üllatavalt palju andmeid. Muidugi oleneb see piirkonnast, usutunnistusest (õigeusklike kohta on veidi raskem andmeid saada), perekonna tegevusalast ja teistest asjaoludest. Kui soovite leida andmeid oma esivanemate ja sugulaste kohta, siis Eesti Isikuloo Keskus on Teie teenistuses!

Eesti Isikuloo Keskus

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THE ESTONIAN BIOGRAPHICAL CENTRE

Fred Puss

Two-thirds of all users of archival material are interested in the lives of their own ancestors. Genealogy is a hobby that has become popular all over the world.

Each family historian starts looking for old documents and photos at home that have been preserved, and consults with living relatives to obtain additional information. In many instances, the research ends with the collection and preservation of this material for future generations.

However, the knowledge of family members may be incomplete and some facts may not have been passed on from generation to generation. Then one has to turn to the archives. Estonian archival materials have been preserved quite well. Recent materials are more abundant than ancient records. In the 19th century, in addition to church books and soul revision lists, there are also commune and court records, and materials about school and military matters. The 20th century is very rich with records, especially the independence period. From the 1920s and 1930s we can use tax declarations, service files, school records, photos on applications and questionnaires, etc. It is possible to find out how a certain city apartment looked like back then - how much space it had (numbers of rooms and windows), rental rates, when electricity was introduced, to name a few. The Soviet period provides interesting materials, but on a limited scale. From the 1940s, thousands of files reflect the lives of repressed persons. Many materials from that time are in Russian.

Researching of archival material takes a lot of time. For that reason most amateur researchers quit after getting basic information about names and birth-marriage-death data. Sometimes the search for even such basic information presents a challenge. Depending on the period of interest, it might be necessary to know when and where the children died in order to find out when and where the parents were born. It is much more important to know the place when something happened rather than the exact date.

Many amateur researchers do not take advantage of all the information in the archival documents. Besides names and dates, there might be information about living quarters, professions, religions, or relocations. To fully use the document one has to know why it was created and used (certainly not for present historians!) and how to interpret the facts. Knowledge of Russian, German and Gothic handwriting is most helpful.

The Estonian Biographical Center employs historians with university degrees who specialize in genealogy. With the help of our professionals one can find a considerable amount of information even within a few working hours. Of course, it depends on a region, religion (it is a little more difficult to find information about families of the Russian Orthodox persuasion), profession of the family, and other circumstances. If you wish to find information about your ancestors and relatives, then the Estonian Biographical Center is at your service!

Estonian Biographical Center
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51003 Tartu, Estonia

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Editor's note:Mr. Puss has informed us that he charges an hourly fee of \$14.97 for genealogical research.

TRANSLATIONS

Albertans with Estonian roots include sixth -generation descendants of the early pioneers to very recent arrivals.

Increasingly, descendants are visiting the land of their forefathers and/or making efforts to communicate with their relatives. Most descendants of the early pioneers in Alberta and their older relatives in Estonia are usually proficient in English and Estonian, respectively, but not both. This scenario points to a growing need for translation services.

Most of the requests for translation services involve short letters from relatives and business contacts in Estonia, or translation of correspondence from English to Estonian. In some instances, translations of longer documents from English to Estonian, or vice versa, require a major commitment involving reimbursement for the time expended.

I am wondering if Society members are willing to translate short items from Estonian to English to Estonian, as the situation warrants? Lengthy translations would likely be done on a cost-recovery basis depending on the time involved.

Should you be willing to volunteer your services as a member of a "Translators group, and/or to inform Society members of a "fee-for-service in translating longer documents, please contact me at adkiil@telusplanet.net , or by other means.

Dave Kiil

THE ELDER KERBES BROTHERS - PART 3 (SONS OF PETER KERBES)

Gwen Hall

In 1931 August Kerbes bought land north of Wooded Hills School, near the Red Deer River. While he was building his house and corrals, he lived with Alex and Riina Krisbi who farmed two miles away. There he met their daughter Lilly.

August and Lilly were married in 1933; they had five children: Charlotte (died in a house fire), Gwen, Robert, Richard and Rose.

August and Lilly had to rebuild their house after a disastrous fire. They endured much hardship and had to live off the land. August, who was a skilled hunter, provided a steady supply of deer, rabbit, grouse and wild ducks. In addition, he trapped muskrats and weasels to supplement his farming income.

August enjoyed playing his guitar while visiting friends, and sang songs he learned while working in the U.S.A. In 1942, he and his family moved closer to Wooded Hills School to make it more convenient for the children to attend school. They attended High School in Big Valley.

Gwen received a R.N Degree at the Calgary General Hospital in 1957. She married Bill Snyder the same year and they had three children: Dan, Grace and Jason. She divorced Bill and married Ernie Hall of Gibbons, Alberta in 1970.

They continued farming until 1980 when the couple moved to their current home near Boyle, Alberta. Gwen worked at various hospitals from 1953 to 1988.

Robert was born prematurely on the farm and was kept warm in a shoe box on the door of a wood stove. He farmed in the Stettler area while working part-time on oil rigs. Following his marriage to Carol Holtz in 1966, they had four children: Stanley, Jeffrey, Corina and Lana Mae.

Richard was born at home during a blizzard, with neighbor Pauline Nicklom acting as midwife. He graduated from the University of Alberta with a Zoology degree in 1965 and joined the Canadian Wildlife Service. His studies of wild geese (Snow, Ross, White-fronted, Canada) took him on many expeditions to the northern breeding grounds of these birds. His work with geese enabled him to travel to many countries and resulted in the publication of several books and research papers. His studies serve as a basis for decision-making about the effects of high Snow goose populations on the fragile northern environment.

Rose married Bob Silverthorn in 1967 and they have three children: Randolph, Bartlett and Cindy. Bob taught at NAIT in Edmonton while Rose worked at the Petroleum Club. They have retired to Ohaton, Alberta.

OPINION FROM ESTONIA

DEPENDENCY DISORDERS IN INDEPENDENT ESTONIA

Anti Liiv
Estonian psychiatrist

What about alcohol and illicit drug problems in Estonia in 2005? A brief answer would be: it reflects the cultural history of Estonia (population 1.3 million).

Up to the 20th Century the most important agent of pleasure for Estonian consumers was alcohol. Over the last five centuries the favourite was beer. When at the beginning of the 18 th century some hundred miles from Estonian border a new capital of Russia (St. Petersburg) was built, the new Russian elite consumed so much vodka, that the Baltic (German) lords in local manors understood possible good business to sell many oak barrels of vodka in this enormous market. With this idea of vodka-business the development of modern Estonian market-economy started. However, it pushed the Estonian farmer to also steal more and more vodka for himself. The consumption of alcohol (alcohol production and selling was state monopoly at that time) was quite low in Estonia - at the end of 1930s only 3.0 litres of absolute alcohol per person per year.

The situation changed after WWII. Russian occupation- government in Estonia increased alcohol selling and did it with low prices. Step by step Estonians started to drink more, parallel to the immigration of Russian-speaking workers to Estonia (Russian speaking migration was mainly to big towns in the northern part of Estonia - Narva, Kohtla-Järve, Sillamäe, Paldiski, Tallinn; to the rural areas it was minimal). In 1982 the alcohol consumption was 11.2 litres of absolute alcohol annually/per person. The Estonian state registered 26,000 alcohol dependent persons - about 2% of Estonian population at that time. The consumption of illegal drugs was not worth mentioning - about 0.02% (or ca 260 persons).

Re-independent Estonia in 1990s

When re-independence was established in Estonia (1991), the state monopoly of alcohol production and selling came to an end. The alcohol market became very liberal. Also the background of data-collecting totally changed. According to the new-style data-collecting, the alcohol consumption is approximately 50% lower. But the locals can tell how many new bars and pubs have been opened during last 15 years, how many adults have become hard-drinkers, and how much family violence has risen during the last 10 years. Also, the state register of alcoholics was discontinued, so it is hard to determine how large the alcohol dependent part of the population in Estonia in 2005 actually is.

New phenomenon - large illicit drug consumption in Estonia

In 1990s a new phenomenon in Estonia started, namely illicit drug consumption. It started and is still rising among teenagers and young adults up to 30 years of age. If in 1980 this phenomenon was totally unknown, in 2005 Estonian students opinion is: the smoking of cannabis is very normal, safe and common in Estonian life. Also it is quite common to have the opinion that

cannabis must be legalised in Estonia in the coming years. Probably in 10 years it will be an acute political problem in Estonia. Perhaps 10-20% of students from different schools already have their own experience smoking cannabis. At the same time - it is more common in town schools than in rural schools. It is a common opinion among students of the urban schools, that it is very easy to buy cannabis.

After the cannabis (as gateway) they often consume other illegal drugs.

Estonian-speaking and Russian-speaking people consume different illicit drugs

Attitudes toward consumption of illicit drugs are different among Estonian and Russian speaking parts of the population. The Russian-speaking part is apt to use heroin as the next step, but the Estonian-speaking population uses more amphetamines. Cocaine is also used in Estonia, more among 20 to 35 year-olds "the bold and beautiful people. If we want to compare, the prices of illicit drugs on the Estonian black-market are significantly lower than they are in Canada or USA.

In the northern part of Estonia (Narva, Kohtla-Järve, Sillamäe, Paldiski, Tallinn) the older generation (40-70 years old) of Russian-speaking population often consumes illegal alcohol (it is sometimes expected that up to ¼ to 1/3 of alcohol consumed in Estonia is illegal), which has a local Russian nickname "samagon (moonlight), but for local authorities it is known as an old problem and not as horrible as intravenous heroin consumption.

HIV as complication

It is expected that by 2005 there will be about 13 000 (1% of population) heroin-dependent persons in Estonia, apart from amphetamine and cocaine dependent persons. Also, it is quite common in Estonia that a dependent person is consuming all he/she can pick up (from alcohol and cannabis to heroin). Due to the lack of a state register, nobody knows the real numbers of dependent persons. Information about their social background is not known (what was their social status before they started to use illicit drugs and pick up HIV).

Marriage is collapsing

The situation has also become more difficult because the former role of family is diminishing: official marriage has become unpopular during last 15 years - more and more young couples prefer to live together some years and then change their partner. Even the students of the secondary schools (age 16 to 18) live together and the first sexual activity often starts at the age of 10 to 15. Members of the same age group also have their first experience with illicit drugs, so it is having far-reaching effects on increased HIV risk. At the same time, we cannot forget that, in Estonia, the birth-rate is negative: the Estonian local population is diminishing (-0.35% per year) and in forthcoming years Estonia must probably increase immigration in order to support Estonia's weakening labour force. But this negative immigration (in 2020-2040) will trigger their own new social problems and complications.

To conclude, Estonia has fulfilled her first three most important dreams: re-established independence and, in a short time of development, became a member of EU and NATO. Now it is suffering from a national identity crisis: what will be the next reason to unite the nation? If it is only money, then we pick up lot of social problems as well.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR : Anti Liiv (b. 1946) was born and raised on the island of Saaremaa. He graduated from Tartu University first as a physician, then as a psychologist. He is working as a psychiatrist on the island of Saaremaa and in Tallinn. He has published more than 500 articles, mainly in the area of mental health. He introduced AA in Estonia in 1987, and Parents against Drugs in 1992. Now he is working as psychiatrist in the Anti Liew & Soul Care Foundation.

ON HOW TO FIND YOUR ESTONIAN RELATIVES

Ain Dave Kiil

The lives of tens of thousands of Estonians have been disrupted by invasions, migration, war, deportation, and mobilization. Families have been forcefully uprooted, whereas others chose to leave their ancestral homes to avoid living under foreign rulers. It is therefore little wonder that the descendants of these people are curious about their forefathers.

For me, a nostalgic visit to the family's ancestral farm on Saaremaa in 1992 kindled an interest in my genetic and cultural roots. Until the late 1990s, progress was very slow and limited to information about my immediate family. It was only after I inadvertently found that microfilm records of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church were available through the Mormon Church in Salt Lake City that the scope of my research escalated. This source of information, reinforced with access to Estonian archival documents in Tartu, Tallinn, Kuressaare and Kihelkonna, helped me to assemble a computer-based data base of several thousand relatives.

For budding genealogists, there are two main avenues to pursue. The first approach is described in this issue of AJAKAJA by Fred Puss of the Estonian Biographical Centre (<http://www.isik.ee>, info@isik.ee). Perhaps the main advantage of this approach is that professional genealogists are aware of the available archival materials and therefore able to zero in on relevant information in a short period of time. Handwritten archival records may be in Russian, German, Estonian and even Gothic, and present quite a challenge for the neophyte family historian.

The other approach, whereby you do your own research, is also feasible owing to the wealth of material now available on the Internet. A new website <http://www.eha.ee/saaga/>, launched in May of this year, contains many of the archives of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church and provides access to a wealth of information. The website is in Estonian but will likely have an English version soon. After opening the website, the user will be asked to register by inserting a User Name and a Password.

The archives are listed by the name of the congregation (kogudus) of interest. Once you open the data base for a particular congregation, you have access to listings of family names and groupings, births, names of godparents, deaths, christenings, marriages, and other information. Generally, the church/census information prior to about 1890 is in German, between 1890-1918 in Russian, and in Estonian during the first Estonian Independence period from 1918 to the early 1940s. The same type of information can be ordered on microfilm through the Family History Centers of the Church of the Latter Day Saints. Microfilm readers and computers are available on site.

The following websites (in English) also provide valuable information about Estonian genealogy:

1. Archival Information System (AIS) : <http://ais.ra.ee>;
2. Estonian Genealogical Society and links: www.genealogia.ee/English/english.html

Note: Should there be enough interest, we might consider holding a workshop, or set up a "genealogy support group to assist us in tracing our Estonian ancestors. Feedback is welcome.

My e-mail address is: adkiil@telusplanet.net

MOSCOW SIGNS BORDER AGREEMENT WITH ESTONIA

Vladimir Socor
Jamestown , Friday, May 20, 2005

Russia-Estonia border formally resolved. On May 18 in Moscow, Ministers of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov and Urmas Paet signed a long-awaited agreement on the Russia-Estonia border. The agreement had been initialed in 1996 and reconfirmed in 1999, its content fully approved by the Russian side in all details. However, Russia stonewalled the signing, as it did on the Russia-Latvia agreement. Moscow miscalculated that the absence of border agreements could impede those countries' admission to NATO and the European Union. It also sought changes to Estonia's and Latvia's legislation on language and citizenship as a price for Russia's signature on the border agreements. The situation changed fundamentally with the Baltic states' accession to NATO and the EU in 2004, when the Estonia-Russia and Latvia-Russia borders became part of the EU-Russia border.

Last month, Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs finally consented to sign the border agreement with Latvia as part of a complex set of unacknowledged linkages, involving the Latvian president's attendance at the World War II victory anniversary celebrations in Moscow on May 9 and the EU-Russia summit on May 10. Russia continued stonewalling on the border treaty with Estonia (whose president declined to attend the Moscow celebrations). However, when the Latvian government attached an interpretative declaration to its treaty with Russia on April 29, Moscow reacted by refusing to sign that treaty, and unexpectedly inviting Estonia to sign the border treaty with Russia on May 18.

Moscow's move is triply significant: First, as a bow to the inevitable in terms of Russia-EU relations; second, as an attempt at wedge-drawing between Baltic states, trying to isolate Latvia; and, third, as an indication that Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has become entangled in its own maneuvers, unable to control the dynamic of events.

The U.S. State Department, the EU's Foreign and Security Policy chief Javier Solana, and External Relations Commissioner Bettina Ferrero-Waldner, and other authorities have welcomed the treaty signing, urged speedy ratification by the Russian and Estonian parliaments, and called for the signing of the Russia-Latvia border treaty as well, in the interests of Russia's relations with its Baltic neighbors and the West.

The Estonia-Russia agreement consists of two documents, defining the border on land and in the Narva estuary and Gulf of Finland, respectively. Under the agreement, Russia obtains confirmation of its possession of two areas that were taken from Estonia and attached to the Russian SFSR during the occupation era: the town and environs of Iaanilinn (Ivangorod, opposite Narva) and the district of Petseri (Pechery, now in Pskov region). These areas made up 5% of Estonia's territory prior to the occupation. Partly because of this issue, Moscow ruled out from the border agreement any reference to the 1920 Tartu Peace Treaty, which had recognized Estonia's territorial integrity within the borders that included Iaanilinn and Petseri.

Today's border divides the Setu people, a rural group closely related to Estonians ethnically and linguistically. Estonia is applying to UNESCO to include the Setu cultural heritage on both sides of today's border on the Cultural Heritage List and offering to develop the area's tourism potential. The Estonian government is offering to help Setu residents from the Russian side willing to relocate to the Estonian side of the border.

President Arnold Ruutel, Prime Minister Andrus Ansip, Paet, former president Lennart Meri, and most Estonian party leaders are calling for undelayed parliamentary ratification of the border agreement. Some political leaders, as well as Setu representatives, however, propose the adoption of an interpretative declaration that would refer to the Tartu Peace Treaty. This -- like the 1920 Riga Treaty in Latvia's case -- is a cornerstone of the state's legal continuity and, implicitly, of its territorial integrity as then constituted. It was mainly for these reasons that Moscow ruled out references to these Treaties from the border agreements with Estonia and Latvia. In that situation, Latvia apparently had no choice but to attach its interpretative declaration, in compliance with the Latvian constitution.

In what Moscow apparently deems a goodwill gesture, Lavrov no longer rules out the return of an Estonian state symbol, seized in 1940 and kept in the Kremlin: the presidential necklace and badge, worn by President Konstantin Pats, who died in a Soviet prison. Under Estonian law, presidents hand over that regalia to their successors. Meanwhile, Lavrov explicitly refused on May 18 the return of the renowned collections of Estonia's Tartu University, which were carted off by Russian forces during the First World War. The items were subsequently stored in the Soviet Union and are now in the provincial museum of Voronezh. The Estonians have since 1992 sought the return of those collections.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

In the summer of 1998 I wrote the first Editorial for the newly revived Ajakaja. With the Estonian-Canadian Centennial coming up in 1999 and the planning for the Canada wide centennial celebration in full swing, it seemed a good vehicle for keeping not only Edmonton Estonian Society members but all Alberta Estonians updated on the proposed activities.

The past eight years have brought many changes. The centennial celebrations resulted from a successful collaboration between EES members, Calgary Estonians and pioneer descendants from the Medicine River, Stettler and Barons/ Lethbridge areas. In the intervening years our membership in Edmonton has been shrinking and with the resultant decline in volunteers we have no longer been able to keep up our three annual social events. The enthusiasm generated by the successful collaboration between the descendants of the pioneer families and the first generation Estonian Canadians in the meantime continued to grow. Due to the hard work and planning of too many people to mention by name in this Editorial, The Alberta Estonian Heritage Society was founded in this, Alberta's Centennial, year bringing all groups into one Alberta wide organization.

The work needed to make the Society official will continue over the next year. But the first event has already been planned. Linda Hall has been booked for our Jaanipaev celebration on June 25, 2005 for a family style picnic with "Kerbes theme. An afternoon ceremony raising the Estonian flag will be followed by games that the Kerbes pioneer family was famous for as well as an evening bonfire complete with a traditional sing along. It promises to be a rousing event guaranteed to bring everyone together in the newly formed organization.

Ajakaja too will undergo some changes. This issue will debut a new logo and masthead designed by the talented Mare Maxwell who started the first Ajakaja. Despite moving back to Estonia she has kept up her connection including writing a guest Editorial some years ago. It seems fitting then that a new Editor should take over the newsletter for the new Society.

I have enjoyed participating in the production of Ajakaja and my time as Editor. It has been very satisfying to see the development of our little amateur newsletter to its present attractive format. With new creative and technological changes it can only get better!

One article in particular is of great interest to me in this issue. I was a rhythmic gymnast in Evelyn Koop's Kalev-Estienne group in my teens and I have many fond memories of performing at various Estonian celebrations in Toronto in the 1950s as well as appearances at the Estonian Days in New York City and New Jersey. We were just a small amateur Estonian group at the time. This was before Rhythmic Gymnastics became an Olympic sport and Evelyn became the doyenne of Canadian Rhythmic gymnasts.

I would like to thank all my readers of the past issues of Ajakaja and look forward to exciting and innovative changes in the coming year.

Anne-Marie Hodes

GREETINGS TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE ALBERTA ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

Bob Tipman
President, Alberta Estonian Heritage Society

I first want to thank all those people who worked so hard to create the new Alberta Estonian Heritage Society. The formation of this society is very welcome and needed if we are to continue to maintain our connection with our Estonian roots and culture. It also gives us an opportunity to bring together the descendants of the pioneer families with the first generation Estonian Canadians from all over Alberta into one organization. Over the next year we will complete the work needed to make this organization official and communicate this to the other Estonian organizations and government departments. Also, we will plan events to bring our society together and enjoy our friendship and a little Estonian culture.

Our first social function is a "Jaanipaev" celebration with a family style picnic to be held at Linda Hall near Stettler, Alberta on June 25, 2005. The event begins with an early afternoon ceremony around raising the Estonian flag, followed by the games that the pioneer "Kerbes" family made famous. This includes events such as log sawing, nail pounding, rolling pin throwing (at dummies of course) and horseshoes. In the early evening the traditional bonfire will be lit and, and with the help of songbooks, we will try to recall some of the tunes that our grandparents used to sing. The pioneer descendants will be relying heavily on the more recent Estonian Canadians to remember the tunes and pronounce the words. We are hoping for a large turnout to support our new organization.

Our executive will continue with formal registration of the Society with both Provincial and Federal Governments. This will make both levels of Government formally aware of the existence of the Society and establish a mechanism to access to funding. We will also advise other Estonian heritage organizations across Canada and in Estonia of our existence so we can be a focal point for contact with any distinguished visitors, artists or musicians that may be traveling to Alberta. Everyone who attended Linda Hall for the visit from President Meri in 2000 is aware of how appreciative he was of the exceptional hospitality extended to him by the Stettler Estonian community and from the Leesment and Tiislar families.

I also want to express my appreciation for all the good work that Dave Kiil did to bring this new organization into existence. He had the help of many others, notably Helgi Leesment, Juri Kraav, Eda McClung and Toomas Paasuke. Fortunately, all of these individuals are still on the executive so we have the continuity we need to make a smooth transition into the new organization. Continuing to publish Ajakaja will be important for this new organization to keep members informed and involved in the society. Development of a web site is also planned to help better communicate the work of the executive with our members, and to provide a bulletin board for making announcements. The executive is always looking for new ideas and ways to improve our society and we would welcome any suggestions from our members.

We look forward to seeing you at Linda Hall on June 25.

ESTONIAN CONDUCTOR TO MAKE U.S. DEBUT

Mary Ellyn Hutton
Post Music Writer

Olari Elts will be away from his country on Estonian Independence Day (today), but no Estonian is ever away entirely.

"Never," he said.

"It's the mentality of a small country. If we are not thinking about those things, who is? Wherever I am, my brain vibrations go through Estonia. I think always through Estonia."

Eltis, 33, countryman of Cincinnati Symphony music director Paavo Järvi and one of Europe's most promising young conductors, will make his U.S. debut at CSO concerts this week.

He brings a thought-provoking program with him. Counterbalancing Shostakovich's sardonic Ninth Symphony and the funereal "Black Gondola" by Liszt (as orchestrated by John Adams) will be ballet music from Mozart's "Idomeneo" and Ravel's jazzy Piano Concerto in G. Guest artist is noted Finnish pianist Olli Mustonen in his CSO debut.

Eltis spoke from Riga, where he is music director of the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra. "Paavo has told me a lot about Cincinnati. I am thrilled to meet this marvelous orchestra."

Eltis and Järvi shared the same podium in Tallinn last summer, when both conducted at Estonia's famous Song Festival before a crowd estimated at 100,000 people. Focus of Estonia's "Singing Revolution," the festival is a national event (Estonia regained its freedom after 50 years of Soviet occupation in 1991). "For us as Estonians, one of the top moments is if you can conduct in the song festival," he said.

A native of Tallinn, Eltis won first prize in the Second International Sibelius Competition in Helsinki in 2000. The event launched his international career.

"Before that I had mainly done chamber music with my ensemble. After that, it changed completely."

Eltis is founder/artistic director of the contemporary music ensemble Nüüd (Estonian for "now"). Founded in 1993, the 13-member ensemble is similar to the New York-based Absolute Ensemble led by Paavo Järvi's younger brother Kristjan, but with a more purely classical focus.

The Nüüd Ensemble performs annually at Estonia's new music festival and in venues all over Europe. Their four recordings (to date) include works by Estonian composer Erkki-Sven Tüür, whose music Järvi has performed with the CSO at Music Hall and on tour.

Straw in the wind? Earlier this month, Eltis led the world premiere of Tüür's Symphony No. 5 in Stuttgart, a work for symphony orchestra, big band and electric guitar (Eltis led the Latvian premiere Feb. 18). Guitarist Adrian Belew, a Northern Kentucky native, has been in contact with

Tüür about the work, The Post's Rick Bird reported last week.

"That's definitely a piece the orchestra (CSO) should play. It suits American orchestras very well," Elts said.

The entire program in Riga was for symphony orchestra and big band, he said. In addition to the Tüür, it included German composer Rolf Liebermann's 1954 Concerto for Jazz Band and Symphony Orchestra and Duke Ellington's "Night Creature."

The son of a theater director and a dance teacher, Elts majored in choral conducting at the Estonian Academy of Music. Even then he had his sights set on orchestral conducting.

"It wasn't possible in Estonia officially to study orchestra conducting, and I thought the closest thing I can get is choral conducting. But I took it very seriously. I had my own choir and we won some amateur choir competitions."

After Estonian re-independence -- Feb. 24 celebrates Estonia's first independence, when it threw off two centuries of czarist rule in 1918 -- Elts went to Vienna to study conducting. "Most Estonian conductors studied in Moscow or St. Petersburg (including Järvi's father, Neeme Järvi)."

There were a lot of Finnish connections in Vienna, he said, including connections to Finland's great conducting teacher Jorma Panula. Panula became Elts' mentor and private teacher.

Eltis also studied with Neeme Järvi at Järvi's summer conducting academy in Pärnu, Estonia. "I just adored the Russian school. That was one of the reasons I went to Neeme's master class. I think he has the best technique in the world."

Eltis remembers the years of silence when the Järvi name was not spoken in Estonia. One of the most famous conductors in the Soviet Union, Neeme Järvi emigrated to the U.S. in 1980 to escape official persecution (Paavo was 17 at the time). He had come under censure for programming music unacceptable to the Communist regime, such as Estonian Arvo Pärt's "Credo," a work containing text from the Bible.

"If you look at the official press at the time, they just disappeared," Elts said. "They even took all (Neeme's) recordings from the radio. If somebody played on the radio music he was conducting, then it just wasn't allowed to say who was conducting. You cannot imagine how big was his comeback years later."

Estonia has opened up to the world in a big way since re-independence, Elts said. "Estonians are very open-minded and very much interested in things that are quite innovative (it is one of the most "wired" countries in the world, for instance). There is a passion to do a lot -- to develop Estonia. They're still in a really fast tempo. For somebody to come back now, you see how much it's changed. It changes almost too fast."

Eltis' world is changing, too. Much in demand, he conducts all over Europe and increasingly in Asia. A popular guest conductor in Australia, he will make a big Pacific tour next season, he said.

His wife ("not officially married," he said) and son Rasmus, 5, sometimes travel with him, "but not as much as I want.

"They have a father calendar and if I'm away, they cross every evening until I'm back."

Cincinnati Post, February 24, 2005

A CENTURY LATER, HENNELS STILL WORK THE LAND

Deane and Irene Kebes
Stettler, Alberta

A milestone was celebrated last year by the ancestors of one of the many Estonian families who settled in the Linda Hall area, south of Stettler, Alberta. In August, 2004, the Rudolph Hennel family, who farm southeast of Linda Hall, was given the distinction of being a Century Farm, a farming operation that has stayed in the same family for a monumental 100 years. "Family farms are starting to go by the wayside and to have lived and farmed the same land for a century is a big deal," said David Hennel, Rudolph's grandson.



Early Estonian Settlers — Grandfather Hennel and his wife, and their son William and family.

The Hennel farm had its beginning when Rudolph's grandfather, Kristian, who was born in Estonia, emigrated from Russia to Canada. Kristian came with his wife and oldest son in 1903. They stayed with friends until Kristian obtained his homestead in 1904. By 1908 Kristian had broken 15 acres of land and had 22 cows and four pigs.

Six generations of Hennels have lived on the homestead. Four of the generations were born in Canada and are alive today.

William Hennel, Rudolph's father, joined his brother Joseph and father Kristian in 1909. He and his wife, Ida, and their seven children made the journey from Russia via Ireland. "They had nothing at the time," said Rudolph Hennel "so my father took care of the livestock on board to pay for passage". William and his wife had three more children in Canada. Rudolph, the youngest, was born in 1916. His father died when Rudolph was only nine months old, leaving Ida in charge of the farm. Even though he was the youngest of the siblings, Rudolph took over the farm. "By the time it came to taking over the farm, everyone else had moved on or away," said Rudolph.

Shortly after William and his family arrived, Kristian sold his homestead to William and left for Australia, only to return a few years later.

Rudolph married Doris Mulbach in November, 1945. They lived in an 'old shack; of a place until they moved into their current home in 1953, which is a short distance away from the original homestead. Ida Hennel lived with Rudolph and Doris during the winters, but moved back to her house on the original homestead for the rest of the year. When Ida passed away, the house was used as a granary. It was demolished in the mid 1970s when Rudolph's son, Allan, moved to the original homestead. 100 years after this homestead was established, the family continues to experience the odd reminder from the past. For example, Allan and his wife Rita have discovered old wire baskets and beer jugs on their property. "And rocks! Everything was made of rocks," said Rita. "We were breaking up land for a garden and had to get rid of an old rock

sauna made by Rudolph and his brother John".

The Hennels are very proud of their Estonian heritage. Rudolph can speak the language fluently, and still has an Estonian song book of his mother's. The pride in their origins and profession is part of what has kept the Hennels on their land for over 100 years despite the trials and tribulations they have befallen farmers in the last century. This spirit has survived into the third and fourth generations of Canadian-born Hennels. Rudolph's grandson is named after the Estonian capital - 'Tallinn'.

"I have seen a lot of changes," said Rudolph. "Farming is now a lot different. We started with horses - all they needed was oats to make them happy. It also didn't take as much land to make a living". David says he worries about his son being able to continue farming because of the state agriculture is in. Though he helps his father, David also has to work outside of the farm to supplement the family's income.

Even with doubt as to the future of agriculture, one phrase sums up the family's feelings about making it 100 years - "we're proud!"

Rudolph and Doris, along with their family, have been very active in the Linda Hall community. Rudolph has held many positions within the Linda Hall Men's Society, "Eesti Pdlumeeste Selts", and is still an honorary member today. Sons, Ron and Allen, also held positions within the men's club. Their wives, Jo and Rita, are actively involved with the Linda Ladies Group. Doris is an honorary member of the same group, and was instrumental in forming the English side of the club. Rudolph and Doris' grandson David, and his wife Leslie follow in the same footsteps. Rudolph was always available when work or renovation was needed at the hall of the cemetery. He spent many hours working alone on various projects. Sons, Allan and Ron, and grandson David are also readily available for such tasks. They helped to prepare the hall and its ground for the first celebration of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society in June, 2005.



True to their Estonian heritage, the Hennels were very strong in their belief of the cooperative movement. Doris was secretary of the association for many years.

The Hennel family also served their community in government. Rudolph was a County Councillor from 1965-67. Ron followed this tradition and served as Councillor from 1986- 1995, being Reeve from 1992-95.

Rudolph and Doris say, "It makes our family happy to be able to help with any project for the good of the people and for the benefit of Linda Hall". When called upon, the families of Rudolph and Doris Hennel are reliable and competent in their efforts for the Estonian community and the community at large. The Hennel family are proud of their Estonian heritage and continue to support and work for the benefit of Linda Hall and the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society.

Note: Sadly, since this article was written, Rudolph Hennel passed away at Stettler, Alberta on October 2, 2005. Alberta's Estonian community extends their deepest condolences and their gratitude to the Hennel family for their extraordinary support through the years.

THE EPIC JOURNEY FROM ESTONIA TO CRIMEA - 1861

From information obtained in an interview with Gustav Erdman and his sister, Liisa (Erdman) Silbermann, at Gus's daughter's home at Barons, Alberta, in 1963; from Emigration of Estonians to Crimea by Otto Laaman; and from The Salman Family in Estonia and Crimea by Leongard Salman of Simferopol, Crimea written in March 2005.

This is a typical farm house - the left half of the building was the house, and the right half, the barn. The well was usually in the middle of the yard. There were additional buildings for storage of grains, cattle feed and household goods.



The central and only heated room in the threshing-barn-house was the threshing room with high, smoke stained walls. At harvest time the grain was dried in this room on top of the cross beam to prevent spoilage. (Modern farmers BUY expensive grain drying equipment to achieve the same results!) The unique taste of bread made from this wheat was prized. In one corner of the threshing room was a large limestone oven. Food was prepared for the family on this hearth. During the long, dark winter, the whole family gathered here, sitting on low stools, (below the smoke) to do their tasks; the women spun and knitted, the men repaired harnesses and footwear and made furniture, etc., from wood.

From early spring to autumn, the family life took place outside the dark and smoky threshing-room and food was prepared in the summer kitchen. Animals which were stabled in the barn half in the winter, were in pastures during the spring and summer. Also, during the summer, and after cleaning, the barn area was used as a work shop. It was also used on festive occasions such as weddings, for dancing and partying.

The Erdman Bear Story

As told by my mother, Ellen (Erdman) Johnson, Jakob's granddaughter. The story is about Juri Erdman, Jakob's father.

"Juri went out hunting in the Estonian marshy-land. He spotted a large black bear beside a hillock and shot it with his muzzleload flint-lock gun. The hunter only wounded the bear and he went up to it to complete the kill. However, the bear, not badly hurt, came to meet him. Before Juri could run, he was caught in a bear-hug. Since the gun was useless, he dropped it and it landed on the bear's foot. The bear just grunted.

To save himself Juri shoved his fist into the bear's mouth and struggled mightily to keep it there until the bear choked to death. Juri managed to pull his bleeding arm from the bear's mouth and live to tell the story.

(I thought this was an amazing and unique happening, but then a relative told me that every family had a 'bear story' in their history.)

Until the beginning of the 1800s, Estonians were actually farmer-serfs, whose lot was especially hard under Russian domination. Russia gained Estonia from Sweden in 1721 through the Peace of Uusikaupunki (Nystad), the resolution of the Great Northern War. The Estonian serfs' lives were even more difficult when Russia came under the control of Katherine 11. Slavery had been abolished in Estonia by the Russian government in 1816 and 1819. Their economic situation was actually worse than when they were serfs. As serfs, they had a plot of land from the landlord, on which they could grow some food and have an animal or two. In return, they were required to work for the landlord and take up arms on his behalf when he engaged in military combat. Although the Estonians now were legally 'free', they were not given any land, so they had no way to make a living.

As free men, they had to pay rent to the German landlords, which was more onerous than when they were serfs. Also, the Estonian girls were very attractive and were often used by the overlords for their pleasure.

One result of this economic oppression was that uprisings occurred in many places. These were severely suppressed by the Russian military. Because of the severe poverty of the people many Estonians left the country, so many, in fact, that the German overlords were concerned about having enough people to take care of their crops.

Another consequence was that Estonians tried to find some kind of respite in religious movements. One of these was headed by Juhan Leinburg, uncle of Gustav Malts who became known as 'Prophet Maltsvet'. Many dissatisfied Estonians gathered to await the 'White Ship' which was to take them away to the Promised Land.

It never did arrive. By 1860, the Estonian people had gained more freedom of movement. There was also the possibility of emigrating to the southern provinces of Russia; Samara, Saratov and Crimea. There were rumours circulating among the farmers: the Russian government was giving free land to settlers coming to these provinces. In Crimea, land was available because the Tartars fled to Turkey after the Crimean War, 1853-1856, in which Russia was the victor.

Gustav Malts, his uncle Juhan Leinberg and Mr. Tynisson, who acted as interpreter as he was a former soldier and knew the Russian language, traveled to Crimea to make arrangements. This was not an easy process: travel was difficult and slow, at Perekop the land was 'a salt plain', and officials were only partially helpful and competent. Finally, in Simferopol, villages were assigned and arrangements for immigration completed.

Each male was to receive 12 to 15 'tenths' of state land, each family or couple would receive 100 rubles in silver as a loan, and bread and seeds for a year. In case of crop failures for 3 years, there would be bread and seeds from treasury. The Estonians would gradually pay back the loan. During the first 8 years, they would be released from personal and property taxes, and during the first 3 years, exempt from military duty. It was promised that permission would be forthcoming for building houses and digging wells.

Returning to Estonia, authorization to move to Crimea was granted by the Russian government,

but they still had to get permission to leave from their German overlords. They did not want their 'free' labour to leave, so the requirements were onerous; each adult between 20 and 40 years was required to pay an extra tax - or take 20 lashes. Everyone took the lashes (if they had any money, they would need it) except one man who took 40 lashes, his portion and his wife's, because she was pregnant. The treatment for these dreadful wounds was regular applications of salt water. It was a month before the man was healed enough to travel.

So, in 1861, 23 families were ready to leave. In this group were Jaan and Mari Erdmann with son Jacob, Madly (Erdmann) with husband Otto Sesler and Mari Tint, Jacob Erdman's future wife, with her family. Jacob was 10 years old and Mari was 7. Other Estonians were Siim Erdmann and Siim Salman, who was 7 years old. (I do not have the names of the others.)

Most walked, some had carts, some baby carriages and a few had horses, which pulled the carts. One man had 8 rubles from the sale of his farm - he was rich! Another man had 2 cows. When one got lame, the shoemaker made shoes for it from the people's shoes. Only the very young and the very old rode in the carts. They traveled 2,400 kms (1500 miles), through Vyr, Pskov, Vitebsk, Mogilev and Kiev. The journey took 3 months. It was very hard and many died along the way, especially the old and very young.

No food was taken along. As they went through the land, the Russian people on the farms they passed through gave them food - bread, sour milk and cider.

When the Estonians arrived in Crirnea, they were bitterly disappointed; the fields looked barren and unproductive. They were not, however, discouraged. This was their land and it meant a new start for them as Free Land Owners.

(A family note: I am indirectly related to Prophet Malts through Grandmother Magda Lik Erdman.)

2005 Barbara Johnson Gullickson

JAANIPÄEV IN ALBERTA

On Saturday June 25, 2005, approximately 100 people of Estonian descent gathered at the historic Linda Hall, near Stettler, Alberta to celebrate Jaanipäev, or Midsummer Day. This was the first event organized by the newly formed **Alberta Estonian Heritage Society**. Opening ceremonies got underway with the song "Eesti lipp broadcast via loudspeakers as Otto Nicklom raised the Estonian flag. The location of the three flagpoles just outside the entrance to Linda Hall looked especially attractive as a cement patio had been added a few weeks earlier, thanks to several of the Hennel brothers whose farms are located immediately next to the Hall property. Flowering pots further graced the area. The president of the new Society, Bob Tipman, gave the welcome, reminding all that this event honoured the local Kerbes pioneer family of Estonian descent, as well as the ancient Midsummer traditions of Estonians.

Participants at the Jaanipäev event came from Toronto and Estonia, as well as Edmonton, Calgary, Eckville, Barons and other parts of Alberta. Advance articles in local Stettler and Red Deer newspapers brought additional attendees who otherwise would not have been aware of it. A local radio station and newspaper interviewed and photographed the first part of Jaanipäev. This resulted in a very positive article occupying most of a page in the Red Deer Advocate where the year 2000 visit by former Estonian president L. Meri was prominently discussed.

The registration table was busy. Society members picked up their summer issue of the newsletter *Ajakaja*, made donations toward the restoration of the Estonian cabin at the Stettler outdoor museum, and looked at a display of Kerbes family photos.

Over approximately five decades, the Kerbes family had been a social and musical focus of the central Alberta Estonian community. Among other activities, they formed a very popular band, "The 4K's, hosted many social events and organized various friendly competitions including log-sawing, nail pounding and the "Queen of 4:00 AM contests. Despite a drizzle of rain, these same traditional games got underway with enthusiastic cheering and laughter as part of



Jaanipäev, with several "pound offs and "saw downs needed to determine winners. It all happened under the watchful eye of games director Ferdie Nicklom. By the time the rolling pin contest took place, the rain had increased sufficiently that this event was held partly indoors and partly outdoors. The ladies throwing the rolling pin stood inside a wide doorway, aiming at a stuffed male dummy some 35 feet/over 10 meters away on the grass. The winner of this contest is traditionally crowned by the previous winner of the "Queen of 4:00 AM contest.

This year, Marguarite Kerbes crowned Helgi Leesment. Ron Hennel and Irene Kerbes were the winners of the men's and women's nail pounding contests. The ladies log-sawing contest was won by Evi Valge and her 12 year-old daughter Ella Valge-Saar; the men's log sawing champions are Larry Klaus and Bob Tipman.

As the rain pelted down, Jaanipäev celebrants ate their picnic meals at the tables, snug inside

Linda Hall. The organizers of the Linda Hall event brought two huge, locally baked, blue-black-white cakes, one vanilla, one chocolate, honouring the 4K's Band as well as their ethnic heritage - a wonderful dessert for all. Musical entertainment was provided by Marlene Kuutan of Toronto (formerly Marlene Tipman of the Linda Hall area) and Larry Klaus, also from the Linda Hall area and now living in Edmonton. Evi Valge of Calgary charmed all with her lilting voice, singing Estonian as well as English language songs, accompanied by the band. Other well appreciated soloists were Evelyn Shursen and Roy Klaus.

After dinner, the crowd honoured Rudolph Hennel with applause, recognizing him as the oldest Estonian pioneer descendant still living in the area; his family has farmed the same land for 100 years. Strains of "Happy Birthday honoured long-time member of the Calgary Estonian Society, Arne Matiisen and Hannah Kerbes, 14-year-old member of the "Special K's band.

The "Special K's band played later in the evening. These members are all different generation descendants or spouses of the original Kerbes members of the "4K's Band. The band name reflects the members' last names, either Kerbes or Klaus, thus all starting with the letter "K. This particular day the musicians chose mostly the tunes played and sung by their husband/father/grandfather/great-grandfather. When the notes of the "Perekonna valss sounded, most of the people in the Hall joined in the traditional circle dance. At one point, members of the extended Kerbes family and band gathered in the middle of the Hall; and a circle with crossed arms formed around them - another tradition set by the Kerbes family mostly at weddings where they used to play. There was great sincerity in the voices as everyone honoured this family and their late pioneer members by singing "For they are jolly good fellows.

A rousing sing-song (indoors, minus the bonfire because of driving rain) led by the Kerbes family band, cheerfully rounded out the day's event.

Helgi Leesment and Bob Tipman

A NEW SERIES OF ESTONIAN PUBLICATIONS AND POSTCARDS NOW AVAILABLE

The Publishing House Grenader has just released a couple of beautifully illustrated brochures promoting new books about Estonia's recent history, including a "Birds-Eye View of Estonian History, " Estonia in World War II, "Forgotten War about Estonia's forest brothers (metsavennad), and "Red Terror. The books were written by Mart Laar, former Prime Minister of Estonia and presently a Member of Parliament.

A Grenader brochure

The illustrated books are available in several languages, including English, and are priced between 89-99 krooni (approx \$ 8 Canadian).

A large selection of illustrated books and postcards are also available.

Check out Grenadier's website at <http://www.grenader.ee/> to view their material and to order via the Internet, or contact info@grenader.ee for further information.

Dave Kiil

BALTIC BLUES

Tallinn and Warsaw An unusual problem: labour shortages

Since the collapse of communism, it is jobs not workers that have been in short supply. But that's changing. Employer's in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, where growth rates are over 7%, now complain of labour shortages. Last month Elcoteq, the country's best-known investor, started busing 150 workers from Narva in Estonia's hard-up north-east to work at its big mobile-phone plant in the capital of Tallinn. When it opened in the early 1990s, would-be workers from the city's grim suburbs queued overnight to apply.

One reason is a boom in labour-thirsty business: Latvia's construction industry, for example, jumped 16% in the first half of 2005. Membership of the European Union is bringing foreign investment and outsourcing. That stokes manufacturing. Tourism is soaring, meaning more jobs in restaurants and hotels. And wages are growing by around 10% annually, meaning higher spending power and more jobs in shops.

Officially, unemployment is still around 8% in all three countries. But some of the jobless are not easily employable: "Too old, too drunk or too lazy, says one official unkindly. More importantly, many are working, either illegally at home or elsewhere in the EU. When Latvian teachers recently demonstrated for higher salaries, one placard threatened "see you in Ireland-which, like Britain, has oened its borders to workers from the EU's newest members.

Indeed, in Britain there may be 100,000 workers from the Baltic States (combined population: under 8m).

Poland , with nearly 40m people, reckons that 300,000 of its citizens are working in Britain. Polish building firms are complaining of labour shortages-though unemployment is officially 19%.

One solution is better labour mobility: if money can tempt workers across a continent, it can also shift them around at home. But though higher wages please voters, they worry governments. Central and eastern countries need to nudge inflation still lower if they are to qualify to adopt the euro. Higher labour costs may also threaten competitiveness. A big Lithuanian knitwear firm, Utenos Trikotazas, has shifted production to low-wage Ukraine.

But the most controversial idea is to import extra workers. Poland has tens of thousands of illegal immigrants, chiefly from Ukraine: now the talk is of making it easier for them to work legally. In Latvia, VP Market, a retail chain, wants to hire staff from neighboring Belarus; other firms are thinking along similar lines. That may make business sense, but in the small Baltic States, where many still see Russian migrants as a lasting and unwelcome reminder of Soviet occupation, such notions are regarded with horror.

Source: The Economist, September 24, 2005

ESTONIA FIRST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD TO INTRODUCE INTERNET VOTING

In local government council elections to be held on 16 October 2005, voters in Estonia will be the first in the world to have the choice of voting either from their homes over the internet or in a traditional booth.

In a controversial move, Estonia has changed its election laws to allow its citizens to vote via the internet. If this first try is successful, Estonia will extend e-voting to all other kinds of elections. In the regional elections, 21% of Estonians want to make use of e-voting, but it is not expected to boost the turnout of voters, usually pretty low in these kind of elections in the sparsely-populated country.

Estonia is the only country in Europe where access to the internet is a constitutional right. Sixty per cent of the country's 1.33 million inhabitants have internet-connected computers at their homes. Those who also have an electronic identity card can use it to vote via the internet in the local government council elections.

Estonia's President Arnold Rüütel has opposed the introduction of e-voting, arguing that the original plan favoured internet voters over traditional voters. According to the scheme, e-voters could have changed their votes until the very last minute of the election period while voters in booths could not have done the same. On Mr. Rüütel's pressure, this withdrawal option was dismissed.

The UK has just shelved plans to introduce e-voting due to concerns that the security and confidentiality of the vote could not be guaranteed, the costs were going to be too high and the turnout would not rise. A Commission in Ireland came to similar conclusions.

<http://www.euractiv.com>

ESTONIAN WINTER SPORT HEROES

Helgi Leesment
Calgary, Alberta

The 2006 Winter Olympics are just a few months away in Italy and various winter sport World Cup events are already underway in many parts of the world. Are there any Estonians to watch for?

You bet!

Being a northern country, Estonians have excelled in winter sports. Of course, these activities didn't start out as organized competitions; for centuries they were merely a mode of travel during long, frozen, snowy winters. Estonians have been best at cross-country skiing. When that sport became combined with other disciplines, Estonians gleefully participated in those as well, at times making them champions or top finishers in Nordic Combined (cross-country skiing plus ski-jumping) and Biathlon (cross-country skiing plus shooting with rifles carried on the skier's backs).

You may be unaware that some past major medal winners were Estonian; as they are not listed as such in official standings. Because of Estonia's complicated political history, ethnic Estonian participants in various World Cup and Olympic competitions have competed under the Russian flag (up to 1918), Estonian flag (1918-1939), Soviet Union flag (1940-1990) and Estonian flag again as of 1991, the year the country regained its independence.

The Estonian Olympic medalists are:

- *Olympics 2002, Salt Lake City*
 - Cross-country skiing Andrus Veerpalu, 15 km classic race, gold
 - Cross-country skiing Andrus Veerpalu, 50 km classic race, silver
 - Cross-country skiing Jaak Mäe, 15 km classic, bronze
- *Olympics 1988, Calgary*
 - Nordic combined Allar Levandi, bronze
- *Olympics 1964, Innsbruck*
 - Speed skating Ants Antson gold

Considering the relatively small number of Estonians and the number of international sports medals won by them, this country is an amazing hot-bed of winter sports heroes!

A sampling of Estonian names to watch for in sports news this winter:

Kristina Smigun, age 28, rose to international prominence in cross-country skiing as of 1999. Since then she has won 39 World Cup medals (14 gold, 12 silver, 13 bronze). In World Cup overall season standings, Kristina has rated 10 th in 2001, 5 th in 2004, 4 th in 1999, 2002 and 2005, 2 nd in 2000 and 2003. She has been Estonian women's champion 26 times between 1991 and 2005, plus she has been selected Estonian Athlete of the Year 7 times. At her first World Cup competition of the 2005-2006 season, Kristina Smigun won the Gold Medal.

Andrus Veerpalu, age 34, rose to international prominence in cross-country skiing as of 1999. At the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City, Andrus won a Gold Medal in the 15 km classic style, and a Silver medal in the 50 km classic style competitions. He has won 11 World Cup medals, including 7 Gold, 1 Silver and 3 Bronze. In World Cup overall season standings, Andrus was rated 7 th in 2003 and 2004, 13 th in 2005. He has been Estonian men's champion 20 times between 1990 and 2005, and has been voted Athlete of the Year in 1999, 2001 and 2002. At his first World Cup competition of the 2005-2006 season, Andrus Veerpalu took 6 th place.

Jaak Mae, age 33, rose to international prominence in cross-country skiing as of 2002. At the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake

City, Jaak won a silver medal in the 15 km classical style competition. He also won Silver in a 15 km World Cup race in 2003. He has a total of 5 World Cup medals, two silver and three bronze. In overall World Cup standings, Jaak has rated from 33 rd to 6 th this century. He has been Estonian champion 10 times. At his first World Cup competition of the 2005-2006, Jaak Mäe took 7 th place.

Tiiu Nurmberg, age 23, born in Montreal of Estonian parents. Has been accepted as a competitor on Estonia's Alpine Ski Team for the 2006 Olympic Winter Games at Torino, Italy.

Diana Rennik and Aleksei Saks, ages 20 and 24 respectively, ice-skating competitors in the Pairs category. Placed 16 th at the March 2005 World Championship. Qualified as one of 20 pairs to compete at the 2006 Olympic Winter Games at Torino, Italy.

Jana Rehema The 2005-2006 World Cup cross-country ski season has two stops in Canada, Vernon, BC December 10-11 and Canmore, Alberta December 15-18 (no competitions on the 16 th) . Because the Estonian Ski Federation is putting most of this season's resources towards the February 2006 Olympics in Italy, it is sending only one skier to compete at Canmore. She is 26 year old Jana Rehema who is currently in her last year of the International Affairs degree program at the University of Colorado, on an athletic scholarship. Quips Jana "In order to win this scholarship, I merely had to ski better than the others. She became seriously interested in skiing at age 12; since then has been Estonian women's champion a couple of times. Internationally, she placed 10 th at a World Junior Championships. Her coach in Estonia is Anatoli Smigun, her uncle, who also coaches his daughters (Jana's cousins) Kristina and Katrin Smigun.

Jana will compete at Canmore on Thursday December 15 in the women's 10 km freestyle race and Saturday December 17 in the women's 15 km Classic style race.

Albertans are encouraged to go to Canmore on Dec 15 & 17, pick a spot at the side of the competition trail and cheer the Canadian skiers as well as Jana! If you have any flags, wave them as you cheer the skiers! Specific times for the races will be publicized closer to the competition dates.

Photo courtesy: University of Colorado CUBuffs.com

Estonian Santa wins title in Winter Games

Santa Clauses from all over the world were in Gallivare, Sweden in late November, 2005 for the annual Santa Claus Games. This year's competition included Santa's from seven countries.

More than 50 Santas competed in classic events such as sleigh and reindeer racing, porridge eating, singing, and chimney climbing. Last year's winner from England relinquished his crown to the Santa from Estonia.

The Estonian newspaper Õhtuleht, in its November 23, 2005 edition, reports that Aare Rebban won the gold medal at the recent Santa Claus Games in Gallivare, Sweden . According to the article, the golden Santa started to practice his craft in elementary school. As Santa, he traveled back-and- forth on the local bus line for hours and rewarded poetic passengers by handing out cigarettes and candy to appreciative adult passengers.

Aare participated in the Santa Claus Games for the first time this year. In the sleigh race, he reached the finish line ahead of the reindeer but lost some style points! In another event, the contestants had to climb up to a rooftop chimney . Playing his accordion, he entertained the audience by singing "White Christmas in Swedish for the benefit of the appreciative crowd.

ESTONIAN PIANIST RETURNS TO CALGARY

Helgi Leesment

Marko Martin, who is well known to Canadian-Estonians as an accomplished musician, presented a solo piano concert on September 20 in Calgary, having arrived directly from Tallinn the previous day. His program included Franz Liszt's *Vallée d'Oberman*, *Funérailles* and *Rigoletto:paraphrase du concert*. Following intermission, he played *Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition*. After enthusiastic applause, he treated the audience to Liszt's *Chasse-Neige* for the encore. Evi Valge presented a bouquet of blue roses to Marko on behalf of Calgary Estonian music fans who were present at the concert in surprisingly large numbers considering the relatively small size of this ethnic group in the city. The event was held in the acoustically excellent Rozsa Centre at the University of Calgary

The concert was part of the series titled *Honens Music as a Second Language: Laureate Marathon Weekend*. As has been outlined in articles in previous issues of *Ajakaja*, Marko is a laureate of the year 2000 Honens international piano competition. Albertans have had several opportunities since then to hear this talented pianist. Over the years he has presented concerts at Lethbridge, Edmonton, Banff and Calgary, including a couple of concerts as the featured pianist with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra. Marko also spent time at a Calgary high school, introducing students to various aspects of classical music. It was wonderful to hear Marko Martin once more this year.

The Honens organization has released a CD by Marko - a suitable Christmas gift for classical music fans. The program consists purely of compositions by Franz Liszt, including all of the selections presented at this September concert. Length of disc 69:28, cost \$18.00 plus shipping charges. Available online at www.honens.com, or info@honens.com, or contact:

Honens
888 Tenth Street SW
Calgary, Alberta T2P 2X1
Tollfree tel. 1-800-249-7574
Tel. 403-299-0130,
Fax 403-299-0137

Commentary regarding the disk on the Honens website: *Marko Martin is clearly a young pianist to watch. Laureate of the 2000 Honens International Piano Competition and prize winner at the 1998 Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition, Martin is gaining a reputation for his inspired balance between energy and lyricism, especially in the works of Brahms, Liszt and Schubert. He is equally admired for his interpretation of music of the 20th century.*

Liszt Verdi: *Rigoletto*, *Paraphrase du concert*

1. *Chasse-neige* (from *Douze Etudes d'exécution transcendante*, No. 12)
2. *Vallée d'Obermann* (from *Années de pèlerinage*, First Year: Switzerland, No. 6)
3. *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude* (from *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, No. 3)

4. Funérailles (from Harmonies poétiques et religieuses, No. 7)
5. Après une lecture de Dante - Fantasia quasi sonata (from Années de pèlerinage, Second Year: Italy, No. 7) "Dante Sonata"

"25,000 Sing-2004 Song Festival in Tallinn

Omni Television provides the following information about this 30-minute DVD documentary

Every five years, the small, northern European nation of Estonia hosts the world's largest combined choirs on one stage in a 2-day song festival called "Laulupidu". Laulupidu engages virtually every Estonian-in fact, almost 1/5 of the country shows up and most of the rest watch the live broadcast. It is a celebration of cultural identity with deep historic and political meaning that emotionally connects with every Estonian, whether or not they live in Estonia. This massive ritual of song is unrivalled in the world.

In Toronto, the extra-curricular Estonian School forms a choir of 60 second-generation Canadian youths of Estonian heritage with the hope that they'll become good enough to sing at the 2004 festival. This film follows the kids as they rehearse, get accepted to the festival (with 25,000 singers, you'd think everyone who applies would be accepted- not so!) and travel to Estonia to participate in this massive manifestation of cultural expression. The film allows these youths to anticipate what this trip will mean to them and, upon return, reflect on how it affected their view of their heritage.

Languages: English, Estonian

This DVD is available from:

Omni Television Video Store,
545 Lakeshore Blvd West,
Toronto, Ontario,
M5V 1A3

Price: \$29.90 including taxes and shipping costs.

How to order:

Mail your request with:

Name of documentary: "25,000 Sing,
payment of \$29.90, and your mailing address.

Internet: www.omnitv.ca

Choose "Omni Television Ontario, choose a show and scroll to "Omni Television documentary specials. On next screen, elect the documentary by title and click on "25,000 Sing.

EUROPE'S SPOOKIEST CITY, HALLOWE'EN 2005, TALLINN, ESTONIA

October...and there's a chill in Old Tallinn's foggy air. But it doesn't simply herald winter's onset. Estonia's gloriously gothic capital lays claim to being Europe's spookiest city.

Tallinn comes straight from the pages of the Grimm Brothers' darker fables: dragon-headed gargoyles and squat stone towers with russet-colored caps...needle-thin spires colored black and copper...gilded weathervanes adorned with mythical creatures. Names like Long Leg Street, Goldfoot Tower, Hanging Hill, and the Wall of Hatred all add to the dark magic.

Come twilight, old-fashioned lamps add a delicious menace to the cobbled alleys and stairways. But even in daytime, you feel shadowed by otherworldly footsteps. Skeletons have been found sealed in the walls of more than a few medieval houses. And one street is actually called Vaimu, Estonian for "ghost."

Tallinn's spectral inhabitants include the Stable Tower's phosphorescent bone-man and a drunken monk who haunts the mischievously-named "Maidens' Tower," where medieval prostitutes were imprisoned. The gate tower on Luhike Jalg (Short Leg Street) is apparently haunted by a fire-spitting dog, three monks (one dressed in red), a woman in old-fashioned clothing, and the unquiet spirit of a town executioner.

Don't linger too long on Rataskaevu Street. Passers-by often hear inexplicable noises coming from No. 16 after midnight. This 15th-century inn (now a sushi restaurant) is rumored to be the devil's party place. A cloaked man rented a top-floor room for the night, insisting on complete privacy. Following what sounded like the noise of a hundred people, one luckless servant peeked around the door and saw the devil himself. Look up and you'll see the room--it's the one with the bricked-up window and false painted curtains.

Cornering Rataskaevu and Dunkri streets is the Wheel Well, also known as Cat Well. Tallinn's medieval citizens believed a demon dwelt at the bottom--a hungry demon that needed appeasing with animal sacrifices. Rather than giving it pigs and chickens, they fed it pussy-cats.

A demonic builder constructed St. Olav's church, which at one time boasted the tallest spire in Europe. The story goes that a stranger turned up, saying he would build the church in record time, if paid a huge bag of gold. However, if the townsfolk guessed his name, he would forego payment.

The church got built in the blink of an eye, and someone did indeed guess the stranger's name: Olav. He was up the spire at the time, and hearing his name called, he tumbled to his death. A toad and a serpent crawled out of his mouth--a sure sign of devilry.

In a corner of Toomkirik, the Dome Church, is the tomb of Pontus de la Gardie. A French mercenary, he led Swedish forces during one of their Estonian forays. De la Gardie had a reputation for cruelty: his favorite punishment was skinning prisoners alive. It's said he wanders Tallinn at night...and won't rest until enough unsuspecting strangers have bought the skins from

him.

Are you sure you want to venture out after dark tonight?

Ghost-finder General, International Living Steenie Harvey

Reprinted with permission from www.InternationalLiving.com "The best places in the world for you to live or retire

A virtual holiday in Estonia

Google Earth, an Internet site, provides high-resolution aerial and satellite imagery globally. Recently I downloaded Google Earth and went "sightseeing to various destinations in Estonia, including a look at Tallinn's red rooftops and my ancestral homestead on Saaremaa. It was fascinating.

ADK

NEWBORN GIRL IN PAKISTAN NAMED "ESTONIA"

October 19. Besides treating the injured, medics of an Estonian rescue team working in quake-hit Pakistan have also helped to deliver babies. Her parents named a newborn baby girl who Estonian medics helped to deliver " Estonia.

Meanwhile the chief of the rescue team, Tauno Suurkivi, said the number of victims of the catastrophe is huge and the need for medical aid is growing steadily.

On Sunday medics received almost 1,500 patients and in 200 cases some surgical procedures were needed. This week an ambulance was placed at the disposal of the Estonian field hospital. Patient numbers stayed big in subsequent days, too, and in addition Estonian rescuers drove to a nearby village to clear rubble from collapsed buildings.

Last week the Estonian Rescue Board sent a team of six medics, eight rescuers-logisticians, a liaison officer and a logistics specialist to Pakistan.

The head of the team, Suurkivi, is deputy chief of the rescue service from Western-Viru County. The planned duration of the mission is 12 days. The director general of the Rescue Board, Mati Raidma, went to the crisis area along with the team to start work on the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team. The Estonian

government has allocated more than 1.5 million kroons (EUR 96,000) to cover the costs of the mission. Estonia sent some 50,000 kroons' worth of medicines to Pakistan procured for the Foreign Ministry's budgetary humanitarian relief funds.

From Estonian Review, Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Submitted by Helgi Leesment

GREETINGS TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE ALBERTA ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

When I last wrote in Ajakaja, we were just preparing for the Jaanipäev celebration in Stettler which was held on June 25. The theme for the event was to honor the pioneer Kerbes family who organized many of the local picnics and were very active in the community with the 4K's orchestra. A Kerbes style family picnic featured outdoor events. The men's nail pounding event was won by Ron Hennel and the women's by Irene Kerbes. Evi Valge and her daughter won the women's log sawing event, and Larry Klaus and I won the men's event. It just goes to show that age and experience can beat the young bucks, at least once. The highlight event, where the ladies throw rolling pins at a stuffed dummy, was won by Helgi Leesment. She won the honor of being the "Queen of 4 AM.

The 4K's orchestra gained its name from three Kerbes family members and one Klaus. One of the original members, Charlie Klaus was present, as was Marguarite Kerbes who played with the band for a long time. Recorded music from the 4K's was played during the afternoon, and later, Larry Klaus (nephew of Charlie) and Marlene Kuutan played and Evi Valge and Evelyn Shursen, two very talented singers, sang a few of the old melodies. Later in the evening, Marguarite's son Hal Kerbes and his daughters, along with one other band member put on a most inspiring show of classic Kerbes tunes and a few numbers from their own performances. It was a fun filled afternoon of games, singing and entertainment which was a true tribute to the Kerbes family and the 4K's who led and inspired social activities in the Linda Hall community for over 50 years.

Over 100 people attended the event from Edmonton, Calgary, Eckville, Red Deer, Stettler, Medicine Hat and locations as far away as Toronto, Saskatchewan and even Estonia. There were several good articles written about the event and published in the local newspapers. The Red Deer Advocate published an excellent article that included excerpts of interviews with many of those that attended.

We were all saddened to hear about the passing of Rudolph Hennel on October 2. He was in good spirits at the Jaanipäev celebration, and was looking forward to the article about his family farm to be published in this AjaKaja. He was the last sibling of the 10 Kristjan Hennel children and lived on the homestead that his family has farmed for 100 years. He along with his brother Edward Hennel inspired Marian Collin (nee Hennel) to start recording the Hennel Family tree, which has so far grown from 256 names in 1980 to over 2000 names so far. His sons Ron and Allan Hennel will continue to farm the old homestead, so the farm will still be in the Hennel family for many years to come.

On October 26, the Calgary members of the AEHS executive held an informal meeting on the activities that have taken place since Jaanipäev. Our society is now registered under the Societies Act with both Alberta and the Federal Governments. Most of the discussion was concerned with the development of the AEHS website which is being ably undertaken by Bob Kingsep. A workshop would be held in the next month to introduce AEHS members on how to access and use the website. The workshop would also give Bob an opportunity to solicit ways to

improve the site.

All the AEHS members were all asked to give suggestions on what should be our next year's activity, and where it might be held so we can continue to build on the success we have had so far in our first year of existence.

Tervitust

Bob Tipman, President, AEHS

THE COMPELLING STORY OF GULAG 113: DOCUMENTARY ON DVD

Gulag 113 tells the story of a young Estonian, Eduard Kolga, who was mobilized by the retreating Red Army and transported to a distant Soviet labor camp in Siberia in July, 1941. He survived three punishing years in the labor camp system and, against all odds, escaped to Estonia by slipping through the Soviet lines at the battle of Velikie Luki.

Eduard's grandson Marcus, who produced the documentary, says "that he aimed not only to raise awareness of Stalin's brutality but to humanize the "statistics his totalitarian regime saw simply as a consequence of war. Eduard's journey of some 60 years earlier is retraced from his home in Canada to northern Russia

Marcus Kolga responded to several of my questions about the production. His comments are as follows:

"First and foremost, the film is a tale of one man's survival in conditions that were generally impossible for any human being to remain alive in. The hope for me is that viewers will be able to identify with Eduard and his experience, so as to break down the unfathomable statistics associated with Stalin's death camps.

"The second goal of the film is to raise awareness of Stalin's criminal actions in 1940-45. Few westerners know that between 1940-41 a quarter of the entire population of the Baltic States disappeared as a result of Stalin's program of ethnic cleansing in the Baltic States.

" The people we met with in Russia were incredibly gracious and very open. They were as interested in meeting with Eduard as we were in meeting and speaking with them.

"One of the activists who met with us, Tatjana Melnik, had, in fact, researched the Estonians who had been sent to the Archangel Oblast in 1941 and published an article in the Russian journal "Karta a few years ago!

"Eduard also met with some local Kotlas school children who had, with the help of a \$300 grant from the Ford Foundation, set up a GULAG museum in one of the classrooms in their school. Eduard was quite moved by the 13-14 year olds who showed him artifacts, photos and other items that they had gathered from around the area.

"There were few restrictions if any on access to materials and locations. In the Kotlas region, any potential obstructions were cleared with a small gift to the city's mayor. Any other potential barriers were lifted by one of the local activists, Irina Dubrovina, who is known in the Archangel Oblast as a tough human rights advocate (she and her parents were interned at the camp in Vorkuta in the early 1950s). Her crusades to record and build awareness of Soviet crimes in the region are legendary, as are her ongoing campaigns to improve living conditions for residents of the region.

"The only other trouble we had was obtaining footage from the State Archives in Moscow.

Prices for westerners looking for footage are outlandish and the process for researching the material is an impossible bureaucratic maze. Most of the historic material came from the Estonian State Archives, where my research was facilitated by the incredibly helpful staff and a good collection of historic photos and film from the period.

I'm currently working on a documentary about the 1945 sinking of a German refugee ship -The Wilhelm Gustloff - and the flight of East Prussian refugees to the West. The film focuses on survivors and the present day politics of memory in Germany and here in North America.

Currently I'm negotiating another documentary about Stalin's GULAG system: one that will encompass the entire territory and history of the camps.

Gulag 113 and the upcoming documentary were made possible with 100% funding from OMNI's Independent Producer's Initiative.

Additional information about the production is available at www.realworldpictures.ca.

Dave Kiil

MUSINGS ABOUT MY HOLIDAY IN ESTONIA

Lisa Kiil

As I embarked on my second journey to my dad's homeland last July I had surprisingly sketchy memories of my first visit there in 1992. What I did remember was a very damp place with a lot of dilapidated buildings. There didn't seem to be much going on. People wore Adidas tracksuits. Our chauffeur for much of that five-day trip was a relative of some sort who drove a rusted yellow Lada and smoked foul smelling Russian cigarettes.

The highlight of that initial trip was when my dad located the old homestead where he was born, near Lümäda on the west coast of Saaremaa. Very few improvements had been made to the farmhouse over the years. The current occupants graciously allowed us to look around, though, and presented my dad with a jar of what appeared to be pickled eel, and looked pretty repulsive. Moments later we found the old windmill on their property. Although in disrepair, the stone structure spoke of the history of the family and the country.

I knew that things would have changed in the country in 13 years, and so I went hoping to have some new memories, hopefully of a more lasting variety. And this time, with 13 relatives on the same trip, there was guaranteed to be a few stories told, a few more translators to explain things, and a few more beers consumed.

We arrived in Tallinn exhausted, and made our way to the guesthouse in the Kriistine neighborhood. It was a modern place with pine interior, and freshly tiled washrooms. My cousins Tiit and Andres had already visited the corner *kaubamaja* to stock up on Saku beer. Our first meal was at nearby restaurant. The menu was in a photo album format, which was helpful for my nephew and me, as the non-Estonian speakers in the group that night. The food styling wasn't exactly from the pages of *Canadian Living*, but I chose the pork dish. My plate arrived with several pieces of deliciously moist meat, a few fried potatoes and two slices of cucumber (to ward off scurvy?). The Lonely Planet guide had described Estonian cuisine as "meaty. I had a pretty good idea why, as I came back home craving a tossed salad.

We left for Saaremaa the following morning, taking the short ferry ride after the short car ride to Virtsu. For a Canadian, the distances in Estonia seemed trivial. Our B&B in Kuressaare was also modern and comfortable, although the bathroom was small, and I came close to burning the place down when I tried to use my hair dryer with an adapter. The hosts were particularly friendly, and they chatted up my dad at every opportunity, sometimes practically chasing us out the door to say hello. Their breakfasts were a multi-course extravaganza, but otherwise we spent very little time in their home, and more time traveling the dusty gravel roads of Saaremaa. I'd heard from my dad's more recent trips that Kuressaare had become a bit of a tourist mecca for Finns. It was certainly set up better for tourists than in 1992, when we'd stayed at a clean but run down old sanitarium with toilet facilities down the hall for \$4 a night. The central part of the town was filled with restaurants and gift shops. The marketplace was much the same as it had always been, selling juniper wood souvenirs, hand knit woolen goods, and in season produce. We lucked upon strawberry season, and enjoyed the soft and sweet treats on the lakeside beach at Karujärve one afternoon. However, the town was still in no way what I would call

crowded.

I had my first opportunity to swim in the Baltic Sea this time. This hadn't been possible in the rainy cold of late September 1992. It was a gloriously hot and dry day filled with sightseeing, most of it spent driving around in our red rental car devoid of air conditioning. In late afternoon we found our way to the cottage of my dad's cousins at Atla. Located a few hundred metres from the juniper-laden beach area, we availed ourselves of their log outhouse, built conspicuously up about 15 feet, and with a picturesque view front and back, apparently showing no discrimination for either gender. We hit the beach for a surprisingly warm and salty bath. The slippery rock bottom as we entered the sea was reminiscent of a similar beach in Georgian Bay, where I've spent several wonderful vacations since childhood.

Earlier that day we'd dined at a country restaurant in Lümada, and visited the school where my aunts had attended. It seemed strange to me that the large country school with all the amenities, including computers and other supplies was left wide open without a soul around on a summer day. It was almost as if they were expecting us. After going through the building, we met in the schoolyard and took turns trying out the *kiik* style platform swing.

That evening, we drove back to Pilguse Manor, just up the street from the Kiil family's old farmhouse. The old windmill on the property was now under restoration, and hidden behind scaffolding. After another heavy meal with the entire clan, we walked down to the water again, this time to see the spot where the family had left in a boat one night in 1944. I'm pretty sure they had no idea at that time that it was the beginning of their journey to Canada. Although I was tired from the long days and almost sick to my stomach from over-eating, we dawdled and explored the area, including the huge wood burning sauna, not in use that night. It seemed that the atmosphere that evening was ripe with contentment, as if we were all coming home after a prolonged absence.

The next day we left, for me rather begrudgingly, for the mainland again. The long, sun-filled, warm evenings, tranquil countryside and simplicity of the straw-roofed country homes had me dreaming. Saaremaa seemed a great place to hide out. A short ferry ride later, and we were on our way to a farm outside Pärnu to meet an Estonian beach volleyball player who was to stay at our home in Edmonton only two weeks later during the World Masters Games. Tiina had two blonde-haired, blue-eyed pre-school aged sons with summer-bronzed skin. Her husband took us on a whirlwind tour of the city, about 20 km away, and then she served us a snack of traditional Estonian open-faced sandwiches on rye bread, some with homemade wild boar sausage. She also brought out a large pitcher of *kama*. This thick drink, an old fashioned version of a smoothie, was enjoyed by all of us. It had a unique tangy taste of soured cream and various grains. Our hostess declared it "very healthy in English.

The last few days in Tallinn were full. We ate, went to museums, climbed to Toompea to see the Estonian flag flying atop the medieval fortress tower and visited the Kalev chocolate shop to stock up. When our rental car broke down after circling the downtown Tallinn area delivering copies of Ajakaja we witnessed a more westernized version of customer service when an apologetic young man arrived in less than an hour with a new Toyota Camry. It was larger than the original rental, and possessed the by now highly coveted A/C!

a more deserted area, with a single outdoor café. I am still looking for an old photo to confirm this impression. Now, it was an ocean of people and activity. The perimeter of the area is full of trendy restaurants, and all the streets leading from the area are gift shops selling amber, linens and the usual tacky tourist fare. Gone were the Adidas track suits-thin, pretty women with long, straight blonde hair sold local strawberries, wearing "WelcomeToEstonia t-shirts. Evidently the long, slim legs of the local women are hiding ankles of steel. They all seemed to wear high-heeled shoes, and yet tackled the ancient cobblestones with ease and at a brisk pace.

The trip concluded on another warm summer day. I finished my shopping in the morning; we took a brief tour in the Museum of Occupation, where an old bust of Lenin lay on the concrete floor in the basement of the building, as an unwelcome relic of communist times. That afternoon we headed to the beach one last time. It was jammed with a scantily clad, mostly Russian crowd. The water was so shallow for so long, it seemed we had to walk half a kilometer before it was above waist level. Having been buoyed by uttering my first restaurant order in Estonian when I asked for a glass of water at lunch-time and was understood, I felt confident enough to try the same tactic on the pre-pubescent ice cream vendor on the beach. Unfortunately she was Russian, and didn't seem to understand *kolm*, or at least not my version of it, so I had to revert to English to get my three vanilla cones.

Later that evening we attended a classical musical concert at the old Kadrioru presidential palace. The grounds were lovely, although for some reason many of the grander buildings in Estonia, including Parliament, are pink. After the concert we had a lovely and expensive meal at a nearby restaurant. The interior looked like any of the swanky, fusion type places found in the west, but was not busy for a summer Saturday night.

And so I was loathe leaving the next day, even though it was raining for the first time. Whereas after the 1992 trip I had no real inclination or intention of returning, this time my mind was racing with the possibility of it. Next time, I hope to find the "true Estonia, which I suspect lies somewhere between the damp grayness I remember of 1992, and the sunny hopefulness and sense of belonging I experienced in 2005.

Lisa Kiil is a first-generation Canadian of Estonian descent on her father's side. She lives and works in Edmonton as an accountant.

RUMMU JÜRI

H. Langeste

His proper name was Jüri Rumm (Jüri is pronounced Yury) but he is known as Rummu Jüri because Estonians have the habit of referring to familiar persons in the old folksy way, pronouncing the family name (in genitive case) before the forename. In the old country everybody knows about him but in Canada few know his name, so I would like to introduce Rummu Jüri.

Rummu Jüri was a notorious bandit, the biggest robber and horse thief in 19 th century Estonia. But he was also very popular and storytellers have turned him into a folk hero. His persona has inspired people to write books and stage plays. A beer brewed at Pärnu has his name on the label. One operetta (in 1954) and two Estonian movies have been produced about Rummu Jüri's adventures, the latest having its premiere in 1993. It is said to be an exciting adventure story about plundering, fighting and how the idol escaped from custody - plus some romantic interludes involving a peasant girl and a baron's daughter.

There are few hard facts about Rummu Jüri. But this has not stopped anyone from writing about him. Andres Ehin published a novel in 1980 titled The "Memoirs of Rummu Jüri" though the title comes with the author's own commentary: "freely distorted". Critics say, that historical truth and reality were evidently not the author's objective. Rummu Jüri never kept a diary himself, which could have been used for judging the dependability of the other writings. His reputation spread orally and like rumours, all things said about him, did not necessarily happen exactly as written. But who cares? They created a legend of Rummu Jüri, as though he was the Estonian Robin Hood.

Baltic nobleman Count Alfred von Keyserling mentions him in his memoirs. Keyserling was a prison superintendent in Irkutsk region and they met when Jüri was serving his 15-year sentence in Siberian exile. Jüri waited upon the nobleman during his sauna baths - massaged and whisked him with birch twigs and as a pastime, told stories about his own life. He had said that he took from the rich and gave to the poor. He had been welcome in any cottage and was treated with the best food they had. And women had adored him, girls liked to hang their arms around his neck.

We know that Jüri Rumm was the oldest son of a tenant farmer in Kehtna, born on August 2 nd 1856. For centuries country folks had resented the oppressive land owning Baltic Barons, but after Rummu Jüri was flogged with 15 strokes for petty thievery, that feeling turned into deep hatred. Jüri wanted revenge and turned into an outlaw. One story is that young Jüri was whipped when, as a servant-boy in Kehtna Manor, he snatched a piece of meat from the larder for his poor and ailing father. Another story is that he had stolen wine from Valtu Manor, where he worked as a gardener's helper. He rode away from Valtu with the best riding horse from the stable, leaving a message for the baron: "Good bye sir, you shall not see me again, but I will be back and take your gold and silver". He is said to have returned one night at suppertime and set fire to the barn. After everybody rushed out to the burning barn he emptied the house of valuables, leaving a note: "Jüri kept his word".

Jüri pillaged other bluebloods' mansions too, forcing the nobility to take the persistent housebreaker seriously. When he hit the Sausti Manor house, he openly threatened to do the same thing in every nobleman's home in Estonia. The landowners association posted 100 roubles reward for his capture and the city council of Tallinn added 75 roubles to it. That amount of money was about 6 months wages for skilled tradesmen in St. Petersburg's construction industry. In a newspaper he was nicknamed "Fra Diavola" (the Devil's Brother) after Daniel Auber's opera by that name. He was also considered the Estonian equivalent of "Rinaldo Rinaldini", a fictional character created earlier in the century by the German writer Christian Vulpius. Vulpius' Rinaldo Rinaldini was a noble minded Corsican bandit, who fought against the French overlords, but stole only from those who deserved to be plundered.

This was an accurate characterisation really, because Rummu Jüri was a notorious bandit too, but to most of the common folks he was good hearted and likeable. He did not kill people and only stole from the big estates. He robbed the aristocrats in order to harm them, not because he wanted to get rich. He never touched folks of his own extraction - the tenant farmers and landless peasants. Often he shared his loot with the needy people. Once he had bought a chicken from a poor widow and paid the fantastic sum of 25 roubles for it. For comparison, a seamstress seldom earned more than 100 roubles a year.

Rummu Jüri was caught several times but managed to escape from custody, either on the way to being locked up, or from inside the jailhouse. People helped him to hide from the authorities. Finally his luck ran out when someone betrayed him.

Kehtna Manor

A simpleminded peasant with a loose mouth had said to a buddy in a tavern, that Jüri was at his place. Someone overheard it and told to the police. They captured him for good in 1879, when he was only 23 years old. Jüri Rumm was arrested at his home turf in Kehtna community. No chances were taken. Jüri was handcuffed and tied with ropes to a sleigh. With one man sitting on either side of him they rode him to jail in Tallinn. In the cell he was handcuffed onto a steel bar, thus making it impossible to break out. This way he could not eat by himself and he had to be fed by the guards like a little baby. A picture of Jüri was taken for the records. They took him to the photographer's place with a nine-man escort, one of them a horseman. He was sent to Siberia to spend the next 15 years there.

Soon after his deportation some newspapers published rumours about Rummu Jüri escaping from the railroad car where he was transported, which caused some panic among the Baltic Barons. However, the prisoner was well guarded on the train too, and the rumours proved to be false. The Trans Siberia railway had not been built yet, so the prisoners had to be moved by other means. Quite likely there was a fair amount of walking involved. Years later Rummu Jüri returned to Estonia for a short visit, but then he returned to Siberia voluntarily. Jüri had said that he now enjoyed a good life there.

THE LITTLE TREE THAT STOOD

Riina Kindlam

If you type "first Christmas tree in an internet search engine and start poking around for the various versions of how, where and when the fragrant little evergreen came to be the focus of our attention, you're lucky if you come across the date 1441 and Tallinn. You'll sooner find Riga 1510 (the very first hit in google.ca), Alsace 1521 and Strasbourg 1605.

These are the all presumed dates for the first recorded public display of a decorated Christmas tree - as a Christian symbol, that is. The worshipping of sacred trees was practiced by the Greeks, Romans, Druids, Vikings and most Northern Europeans. You can still visit sacred groves in Estonia today (sing. *hiis*, pl. *hiied*), the ones that have managed to slip past the clutches of ski-hill developers and the like. It was natural for all of these cultures to celebrate nature's turning point of darkness to light that is the winter solstice with evergreens as symbols of the renewing fertility of spring.

The symbol of the tree or similar decorated wooden pyramid shape undoubtedly became most prevalent in Germany. According to legend it was there that St. Boniface (675? - 755 A.D.) the Anglo-Saxon bishop who was sent to Christianize the Germans, came upon a group of pagans ceremoniously gathered around an oak tree. They were most likely worshipping Thor, the Norse god of Thunder. In anger, he cut down the sacred oak and to his amazement a young fir tree sprung up in its place. Through St. Boniface's teachings the fir (evergreen like Christ's everlasting light, with embracing boughs and pointing toward heaven), became a sign of Christ and eventually spread to become a world-wide symbol of Christmas.

Devout Christians in Germany may have started bringing decorated trees into their homes in the 16 th century, but their traditions had travelled along the Hanseatic trade routes to places like Tallinn much earlier.

The first tree was most likely the festive gesture of jovial members of the Brotherhood of the Blackheads (Mustapeade vennaskond), uniting single, young merchants and known to have been established in Tallinn just shy of the year 1400. The Brotherhood was unique in Europe, active only in what is now Estonia and Latvia (with 20 members' houses built in various cities and towns) until the Wismar "branch" was founded in the 17 th century.

Latvian legend has it that Martin Luther, the father of Protestant Reformation himself (1483-1546), was so inspired by twinkling stars seen while walking in a pine forest outside of Riga that he promptly felled the prettiest tree, brought it home and lit candles on its branches to simulate the beautiful sight. That may well be, but there is a more concrete historical account of none other than the men of the Brotherhood of the Blackheads placing a decorated evergreen in the Riga's Town Hall Square (Ratslaukums) in 1510, decorating it with flowers and setting it on fire! The Blackheads were notorious drinkers among other things, so the event was most likely rooted in revelry rather than piety.

And it happened in Tallinn in 1441. So who exactly gets the ad campaign for "Birthplace of the

Christmas tree? Chronicler Balthasar Russow later recorded the custom at length in Estonia: in 1584 he describes the tree erected in the market as the centre of dancing, singing and raucous merriment in a very pagan carnival style. It was of course none other than the impending German culture which later "straightened us and our Christmas traditions out. (A little known fact: composer Richard Wagner wrote one of the world's most popular yuletide songs, *Oh Tannenbaum (Oh Christmas Tree)*, while living in Riga in 1838.

In 1834 Prince Albert of Saxony decorated the first tree in Windsor Castle for his beloved Queen Victoria. German immigrants had taken the tradition overseas with them long before that, but it was initially considered extremely suspect. The first tree lot opened in New York City in 1851 and President Franklin Pierce brought a Christmas tree into the White House for the first time in 1856. Coca-Cola's jolly man in red would now have the perfect backdrop.

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DESTINATION OF THE WEEK: TONY ESTONIA

Sophia Banay
Forbes Magazine
September 30, 2005

The breakup of the former Soviet Union has had benefits around the globe. Tyrannies have been overthrown, markets opened, culture exchanged and borders crossed. While not quite on par with, say, institutionalizing democracy in many parts of the world, one of the fringe benefits of the dissolution of the Eastern bloc is that many of the world's most beautifully preserved medieval cities suddenly became accessible to international tourism.

One of the prime examples is Tallinn's Old Town, which was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997, six years after Estonia gained its independence. In 2004, Estonia's accession into the European Union received public support from the majority of the country, who hoped to welcome a previously untapped travel market. Today, Tallinn is approaching international party-city status on the level of Prague, with Brits on "stag holidays," American and British cruise passengers, real-estate hunting Swedes and Russians and, lately, even EU commissioners dominating the tiny Old Town center.

The Tallinn hotel is the obvious destination for visiting businessmen, diplomats and even international celebrities, like **Sting**, **Prince Charles** and **Duran Duran**. The **Schlössle Hotel**, located at 13 Pühavaimu Street in the historic town center, is the poshest address in the city. In 1363, this complex of buildings was home to a Tallinn Alderman who resided in one lavish property and also owned the adjacent stone storage buildings. Conveniently located between the city harbor and the central market, the property was passed down from merchant to merchant through the centuries. Today, the original medieval base walls still stand on the narrow cobblestone street where they were initially built.

Despite the Schlössle Hotel's quaint appearance, there is nothing old-fashioned about the hotel's room rates, which start at \$370 per night. But from the moment the valet opens the cab door, it is clear that this is a world-class hotel. And considering the level of service that is provided, its rates are thoroughly justified--and are consistent with a comparable hotel in Manhattan or London.

Upon entering, two staff members are present to escort you through the check-in process: One does the actual checking in and procures your key--complete with a leather tag embossed with the room number in gold--and the other guides you to your room, carrying your luggage over the ancient spiral staircase while pointing out the hotel's facilities, which include a sauna in the original 13th-century cellar, a sheltered open-air courtyard and a Great Hall with concave limestone walls and a ceiling that looks like it came straight out of a fairy tale.

The lobby itself is decorated in striking colors: red sofas, limestone walls and dark, wooden furniture. Oriental rugs, handmade in Eastern Estonia, are placed tastefully throughout. The low wooden ceiling, medieval roof supports, green apples in a bowl on the end table and burning fire all add to the sense of elegance and decorum: It feels like the living room of an

extraordinarily wealthy resident of the 13th century--which, in fact, it was.

Guest rooms, of which there are less than 30, are decorated just as lavishly. Each room is unique--some with beamed ceilings, triangular windows or slanted walls. Each room does have a television, as well as Molton Brown toiletries in the bathrooms, heavy white bathrobes and an enormous bed. In-room fax machines and Internet access can be arranged on a case-by-case basis. Otherwise, there is a computer kiosk on-site and free wireless Internet in the lobby.

By far the hotel's best room is the Schlössle Suite, which goes for \$1,080 per night and has its own sauna and Jacuzzi in the bathroom. A dramatic living room, decorated with satin chairs and antique furnishings, sports an 800-year-old medieval roof support, and an ancient crest--the profile of a man--is imprinted on the wall. The usual TV, stereo system and DVD player are included as well, hidden discreetly in an ancient cupboard. The suite is rented about three times per month--usually for board meetings by companies like Netherlands-based **United Motors Europe** and Princeton, N.J.-based **NRG Energy** (nyse: [NRG - news - people](#)), or for [diplomatic conferences](#).

The hotel can support conferences for up to 40 people in the Boardroom, and other conference and banquet facilities are available. Private dinners, served in the Boardroom, the Great Hall or the Schlössle Suite, are catered by the sublime **Stenhus Restaurant**, where a rich European menu of duck and pork paté or roasted scallops in artichoke sauce might distract you from the business at hand.

Life in 13th-century Estonia was not easy. Lithuanian neighbors to the North were frequent aggressors, while Teutonic knights invading from the Germanic states capitalized on the region's weakness and colonized it in its entirety. Harsh Baltic winters made growing crops difficult. Today, Estonia and its capital Tallinn are much more pleasant places to visit, and the Schlössle Hotel makes for an elegant and comfortable home base.

Forbes Fact

In the 13th century, the fortified town of Tallinn was a thriving trading port. Horse-drawn carriages and ships from as far away as Africa converged here. The city was especially critical to the Hanseatic League--a merchant association based in Northern Germany and the Baltics. The prosperity brought to Tallinn through the league is still evident in the distinctive architecture built of limestone, which was a staple Hanseatic building material. Today, Tallinn remains a major economic center for the Baltic region, and real estate, especially in the UNESCO-protected Old Town, is the major industry.

TORONTO ESTONIANS VISIT STETTLER PIONEER SITES

A bus tour of Estonians arrived in Calgary from Toronto on June 28 th and that evening were warmly greeted by Estonian Calgarians, at the Ranchman's Restaurant.

Thank goodness Canada's greatest Honky Tonk and Country Night Club was quiet that evening, otherwise we wouldn't have been able to enjoy speaking with the numerous people who had come to make our first evening away from home a memorable one.

The following day, our group, which consisted of 20 Estonians, 1 Latvian, 1 Dutch and 2 "regular Canadians (the bus driver and the tour guide), headed toward the Badlands, Hoodoos, Drumheller and to visit historic Estonian sites near Stettler.

None of us were prepared for the emphatic, clear, cheerful greeting of "Tere, tere, vana kere given by Evelyn Shursen upon her entry into our bus.

Evelyn proclaimed there and then, that her Estonian vocabulary didn't extend much further than that. Instantly, we all sensed that her pride in her Estonian roots was considerable.

She, along with another lady, was our initial welcoming committee and guide. We were taken to road 56 N, where a plaque printed in English and Estonian, commemorates the pioneer of Estonian heritage.

A short ride took us to Linda Hall, which is a community centre proudly flying our blue, black and white beside Canada's flag. Inside is a roomy versatile kitchen, a stage and plenty of room for dancing and partying (typically Estonian).

As we stepped off the bus, we were greeted by several men and women and were given a County of Stettler, No. 6 lapel pin by Ron Hennel. Last year, the Hennel family celebrated their working homestead's 100 th anniversary.

We then visited the nearby well-cared for Estonian Cemetery that has a small , painted white chapel, which is no longer in use. The gravestones carry surnames like Rahu, Kerbes and several others with birthdates in the late 1800's and death dates starting in the early 1900's.

We then were led to the Community Museum in Stettler. Among donated articles from other times and cultural groups is an authentic Estonian log cabin, contents and all, donated by one of the families. Here, we were served refreshments by yet more Canadians, whose ancestors came as pioneers from Estonia. People who had married into the community were there as well, to make us welcome.

A few older persons spoke Estonian, the younger ones did not but they were all proud of their roots. They still make "jõuluvorst at Christmastime! The ingredients are somewhat different from what we use to day, but nevertheless, they carry on their tradition as well as others, including the celebration of Jaanipäev.

Touring these sites, meeting and talking with these descendants of Estonian great-great grandparents was awesome, enlightening and heartfelt with many emotional moments.

AO

(Text from Estonian Life)

THE BALTIC LIFE: HOT TECHNOLOGY FOR CHILLY STREETS

By MARK LANDLER
New York Times
December 13, 2005

TALLINN , Estonia , Dec. 8 - Visiting the offices of Skype feels like stumbling on to a secret laboratory in a James Bond movie, where mad scientists are hatching plots for world domination.

The two-year-old company, which offers free calls over the Internet, is hidden at the end of an unmarked corridor in a grim Soviet-era academic building on the outskirts of this Baltic port city. By 5 p.m. at this time of year, it is long past sunset, and a raw wind has emptied the streets.

Inside Skype, however, things are crackling - as they are everywhere in Estonia's technology industry. The company has become a hot calling card for Estonia, a northern outpost that joined the European Union only last year but has turned itself into a sort of Silicon Valley on the Baltic Sea.

"We are recognized as the most dynamic country in Europe" in information technology, said Linnar Viik, a computer science professor who has nurtured start-ups and is regarded as something of a guru by Estonia's entrepreneurs. "The question is, How do we sustain that dynamism?"

Foreign investors are swooping into Tallinn's tiny airport in search of the next Skype (rhymes with pipe). The company most often mentioned, Playtech, designs software for online gambling services. It is contemplating an initial public offering that bankers say could raise up to \$1 billion.

Indeed, there is an outlaw mystique to some of Estonia's ventures, drawn here to Europe's eastern frontier. Whether it is online gambling, Internet voice calls or music file-sharing - Skype's founders are also behind the most popular music service, Kazaa - Estonian entrepreneurs are testing the limits of business and law.

And by tapping its scientific legacy from Soviet times and making the best of its vest-pocket size, Estonia is developing an efficient technology industry that generates ingenious products - often dreamed up by a few friends - able to mutate via the Internet into major businesses.

These entrepreneurs grow out of an energetic, youthful society, which has embraced technology as the fastest way to catch up with the West. Eight of 10 Estonians carry cellphones, and even gas stations in Tallinn are equipped with Wi-Fi connections, allowing motorists to visit the Internet after they fill up.

Such ubiquitous connectivity makes Tallinn's location midway between Stockholm and St. Petersburg seem less remote.

Even the short icebound days play a part, people here say, because they shackle software

developers to the warm glow of their computer screens. For the 150 people who work at Skype, Estonia is clearly where the action is.

"What Skype has shown the world is that you can take a great idea, with few resources, and conquer the world," said Sten Tamkivi, the 27-year-old head of software development.

Whether Skype poses a mortal threat to telephone companies, as some enthusiasts suggest, is an open question. But it has become an undisputed technology star - a status cemented in September when eBay, the Internet auction giant, bought the company in a deal worth \$2.5 billion.

More than 70 million people have downloaded Skype's free software from the Internet, Mr. Tamkivi said, and it is adding registered users at a rate of 190,000 a day. On a recent evening, 3.7 million people were logged on to the service, nearly three times the population of this country.

Professor Viik and others relish the attention that Skype has brought Estonia. But he says his country cannot build a long-lasting technology industry on a single hit or even a few hits: Kazaa was hugely popular before it ran into a blizzard of copyright-infringement lawsuits.

Silicon Valley, Mr. Viik noted, is composed of clusters of companies that feed off one another. Skype is a closed company, with proprietary software and owners who are so secretive about their plans that for a time local journalists did not know where its offices were.

The company's two founders are not even Estonian. Niklas Zennstrom is a Swede, and Janus Friis is a Dane. Skype's legal headquarters are in Luxembourg; its sales and marketing office is in London. Although Estonian developers wrote Skype's basic code, only a fraction of the eBay bonanza went into Estonian pockets.

Part of the problem for Estonia's entrepreneurs is the nation's inexperience in capital markets. It regained its independence only in 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Estonia's entrepreneurs do not yet have the Rolodexes of their Scandinavian counterparts. Recently, Tallinn got its first high-tech venture capital firm.

Then, too, there is its small size. Estonia's entire software development industry employs roughly 2,500 people, less than the research and development staff at a major American technology company.

"Let's be frank," said Priit Alamae, the 27-year-old founder of Webmedia, another leading software design firm. "Estonia has 1.3 million people; we have 200 I.T. graduates a year; we do not have the resources to develop our own Microsoft."

The competition for talented recruits is driving up salaries more than 20 percent a year, he said. While Estonia remains cheaper than neighbors like Finland or Sweden, the gap is narrowing rapidly.

In some ways, however, Estonia's labor shortage has contributed to its success. Companies here are extraordinarily efficient. And they tend to focus on niche products or on business

models - like Skype's or Kazaa's - that can expand from a small base by word of mouth.

Skype and Kazaa are powered by so-called peer-to-peer technology, which allows computers to share files or other information on a network without the need for a centralized server to route the data. In Kazaa's case, the files being swapped are songs. In Skype's case, they are voices.

"There is no new technology in Skype," Mr. Viik said. "It is an example of how you put together bits and pieces of technology in a clever way. Estonians are very good at putting together bits and pieces."

Necessity is the mother of invention, but what is it about Estonians that makes them the Baltic's answer to Bill Gates?

"People here are kind of introverted and into technology," said Jaan Tallinn, a tousled-haired man who looks younger than his 33 years and wrote the software code that is the basis of Kazaa and Skype. "We have long, cold winters when there isn't much to do, so it makes sense."

Other people cite history: Estonia's long subjugation by the Soviet Union, and the euphoria that came with freedom.

"It's as if a young country suddenly came into independence with great hopes but few material resources," said Steve Jurvetson, a venture capitalist in Silicon Valley. Mr. Jurvetson, whose family has Estonian roots, has invested in a few start-ups here, most notably Skype.

Estonia owes one thing to its former oppressor. In the 1950's, the Soviets chose the Baltic states as the site for several scientific institutes. Estonia wound up with the Institute of Cybernetics - basically a computer sciences center - that now houses Skype and many other firms.

That scientific legacy remains embedded in society, people say. It is most visible in Estonia's receptiveness to new technology. Internet penetration is estimated by the telecommunications industry to be 49 percent of the population.

Estonians use mobile phones to pay for parking, among other things. Most conduct their banking online, and more than 70 percent file their taxes on the Internet. The state issues a digital identification card, which allows citizens to vote from their laptops.

In a rare disappointment, less than 2 percent of the electorate, or 10,000 people, voted electronically during recent local elections. One hurdle was that voters had to buy a card reader to authenticate their ID's. The government hopes for better numbers for the next election, in March 2007.

Some people contend that Estonia's success is a function of hard work and happy circumstance rather than raw talent.

"I can't say that Estonians are the greatest software programmers," said Allan Martinson, who last June started the first high-tech venture capital fund to be based here. "You can find more talent in Russia."

While entrepreneurs complain about the shortage of skilled workers, more and more young foreigners are ready to trek to this northernmost Baltic nation for a job. Skype employs people from 30 countries; in the halls, one hears plenty of English, and even some Spanish.

Oliver Wihler, 38, a Swiss software developer, moved to Tallinn from London in 1999, drawn by the heady professional atmosphere and by Estonia's parks and forests. Now he and a business partner, Sander Magi, 28, run a company called Aqris, which reformats Java software.

"The commute in London was a drag, and I missed not having any green space," Mr. Wihler said.

Estonia offers plenty of that. But Skype is relying on more than a pleasant lifestyle; it is taking a more traditional approach in its recruitment by offering stock options in eBay. But Mr. Tallinn says that is only part of the company's appeal.

"The other draw," he said, "is that if you want to work for a company that influences the lives of tens of millions of people, and you want to do it in Tallinn, there really isn't any other choice.

ANDREA TAMME: A YOUNG ALBERTA ARTIST

Andrea Tamme is a budding young artist with Estonian roots. She lives in Innisfail.

Andrea produced an "ink and watercolor painting of two youths from Estonian mythology, a girl Dusk (Hämarik) and a boy Dawn (Koit).

The folklore involving Dusk and Dawn is linked to the age-old Estonian fascination with and celebration of Midsummer Eve (Jaanipäev). Bonfires, a walk in the forest to look for a special flower, washing of one's face with dew, and wearing of a wreath made of wildflowers are part of this tradition.

According to one fable, Dusk was assigned the task to look after the setting sun in the evening. In the morning, Dawn was to again "light up the rising sun. During the shortest night of the year the two young lovers, blessed with eternal youth, joined hands and their lips met.

ANDREAS ENDEL PILT

Born March 12, 1915, Järvamaa, Estonia
Died February 27, 2006, Edmonton, Alberta

"Sinu pikaajaline ja jarjekindrecognize the goals and values he el panus eestlusele, eriti Edmontoni eesti kogukonna organitseeritud tegevusele on olnud m ärkamis v äärne. Sinu tahe ja oskus hoida kontakte ja p üsivaid suhteid kaugemate asukohtadega on kindlasti hoogustanud teisi.

Eesti Vabariigi v älisministeerium, saatkond Kanadas, aupeakonsulaat Torontos t änanb Sind selle suure t öö eest.

Laas Leivat Thomas Heinsoo

EV aupeakonsul EV auasekonsul

(Signed message was sent on the occasion of Andreas Pilt's 90 th birthday, March 12, 2005)

The Estonian community of Alberta mourns the loss of a special and distinguished member, Andreas Pilt. He was a founder of the Edmonton Estonian Society and played a key leadership role for many decades. He was instrumental in uniting Estonians across the province to retain ties to their cultural heritage. At the same time, he urged acceptance of change so that all could feel included in Estonian celebrations. He contributed regularly to the newsletter 'AjaKaja'. He was frequently consulted for counsel and encouragement by those who worked to preserve Estonian traditions. Andreas was a gentleman, a true friend and beloved by all who knew him. He is sadly missed and will be remembered. Alberta's Estonian community is grateful for his generous bequest to the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society.

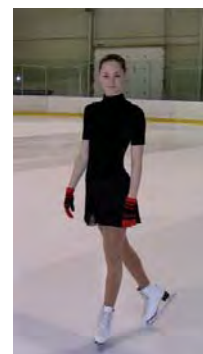
SKATERS FROM ESTONIA HOSTED AT CALGARY

Helgi Leesment

The Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS) hosted a reception for figure skater Jelena Muhhina and coach Irina Kononova from Estonia on Monday March 20.

They were in town for the 2006 World Championships in Calgary. All current AEHS members had received invitations. The reception was attended by 21 people, including the guests of honour. It was a wonderful opportunity for chatting and meeting new people. Some had signed up for AEHS membership but had not yet attended any events, others drove a couple of hundred kilometers and met for the first time people who live close to their home. Each person brought a plate of nibbles or a bottle of wine which was all shared along with the coffee and other items provided by hosts Peter and Helgi Leesment.

Coming directly from a late practice on the competition ice, the seventeen year-old current Estonian women's figure skating champion was charming and gracious, wearing her team uniform. In turn, she was made to feel special by all the attention showered upon her and the many photographs which were taken that evening.



The Alberta Estonian Heritage Society had earlier sent them flowers plus a basket of fresh fruit and chocolate assembled and delivered by Helle Kraav. Both gifts were appreciated by the representatives from Estonia who had a hectic 10-day schedule of practices, competition, meetings and social events organized by the International Skating Union and Skate Canada.

Thanks to local AEHS members, arrangements were made for Jelena and her friend from Latvia and their two coaches to have a private practice on the ice rink at the Westside Recreation Centre. Neither young lady qualified to advance to the Ladies' Short Program, the next level of competition. The more experienced Pairs skaters, Diana Rennik and Aleksei Saks of Estonia, were scheduled to participate after finishing 17 th at the Torino Winter Olympic Games in February but, unfortunately, Diana became ill and so the pair was unable to travel to Calgary.

Jelena's Baltic compatriots, ice-dancers Margarita Drobiazko and Povilas Vanagas of Lithuania finished just out of medal position, coming fourth in their field. At the Gala Performance following the end of the competition, the Lithuanians received a standing ovation from a near sell-out crowd in response to their pirate-themed performance involving a swordfight on ice-skates. All three Baltic nation flags hung from the Saddledome ceiling during the entire competition and were carried by local skaters in a salute at the closing Gala event.



Irina Kononova, who has been a coach for 27 years, tells us there are about 600 figure skaters in Estonia with the sport being in a developing phase and having considerable potential. Among her many students are ice-dancers 17-year-old Grethe Grunberg and 19-year-old Kristian Rand who placed 9th in the recent Junior World Figure Skating Championships.



AEHS member Livia Kivisild brought rock salt to alleviate Jelena's sore throat upon her arrival in Calgary and later took her to the top of the Calgary Tower. There Jelena was fascinated by the view and a temporary dinosaur display. She was also impressed by Calgary's covered walkway system, the cowboy culture and the number of tall buildings.

Jelena Muhhina has now returned to Tallinn and her Lasnamäe High School grade 11 class where she studies Estonian, English and French, with Russian being her native tongue. In addition she dedicates 12 - 18 hours per week to figure skating plus time to travel to various international competitions throughout the skating season.

AEHS members have memories of a cheerful social gathering where they met some new, some familiar members, and enjoyed chatting with a national champion and her coach.

THE OTTO AND OLGA KLAUS STORY

Otto Klaus was born on December 20, 1881 in Vaike Maaria, a small town in central Estonia. He moved with his family to Pranti Mets (located half way between Moscow and Leningrad) and there met Olga Soop. They married in Moscow in 1908. Olga, born September 11, 1884 in Estonia, had lived in Poland before moving to Pranti Mets. Their daughter, Alide (whose name was Canadianized to Aletha when she started school in Canada), was born on Feb. 17, 1909. Ever in search of a better home, the family moved to Simbirsk, Russia when Aletha was a year old. Emile (born in 1913) and Alexander (born in 1915) were born in Simbirsk but only survived until the ages of seven and five years, both dying in 1919. Alfred was born on Nov. 14, 1920.



During the Russian Revolution around 1917, Russians were expropriating other people's land. Otto Klaus was a farmer in Russia. Roving bands of soldier's seized anything they wanted from the unarmed people. A Russian family had been given Otto's house and most of his possessions. As a result, Otto and his family were forced to live in a granary. There was no stove in this building so Olga had to ask the Russian family if she could cook her food in their former home. This was allowed but for a price, of course. Otto feared that the 'Russian Bear' was going to put its paw on Estonia again. His fear of the Russians motivated him to write to his brothers who had settled in Canada, near Stettler, at the turn of the century. Otto wrote to the Klausés, hoping that one of his brothers would get the letter. They responded by inviting Otto and his family to Canada and sent him tickets for the crossing.

They left Simbirsk as part of a prisoner trade arrangement which allowed Estonian citizens to return to their now independent homeland. The twelve cattle cars full of Estonian families who had journeyed to Moscow for their return trip to Estonia had to wait there for two weeks because of the poor condition of the trains and the lack of coal to run them. Eventually they made their way to Estonia. Otto Klaus worked on the railroad while they were in Estonia. In Narva, the northeastern border town, Otto and his family were again detained, searched and relieved of most of their possessions. Their clothes were boiled so no diseases could be brought into Estonia. The few gold items and jewelry that had been hidden in the false bottom of a suitcase that Otto made were used to buy food and pay living expenses in Estonia. Customs officials had not searched this suitcase. Otto had Olga strategically place soiled diapers around the edges in order to deter the search.

In September 1922, Otto and his family left Tapa, Estonia. They journeyed to Riga, Latvia and waited two days before a small boat took them across the Baltic Sea to Liverpool, England. They boarded a ship run by Cunard Lines, crossing the ocean in nine days. Waves came over the ship several times but for the most part the weather was good. They arrived in Quebec City on September 17, 1922. A train took them via Montreal on to Stettler, arriving there four days later.

The Otto Klaus family stayed with brother Ed and his wife Pauline and family for the first winter. The following year, Otto and his family moved to a small shack on property near the Red Deer

River, west of Big Valley. While living with Ed and family, Aletha attended Wooded Hills School. Aletha stayed with Alex and Amanda Klaus and went to school at Aunger. She moved back with her parents once an addition to the house was constructed. She then attended Vimy School. Otto rented additional farmland, raised a few cows and worked for other people during the winters. Open rangeland was still available but it was quickly being settled. Otto purchased land from Montreal Trust Co. for \$10.00 per quarter section (160 acres). This was the amount that had been advertised overseas to attract immigrants to Canada: "HOMESTEADS FOR \$10.00". Freedom of speech and freedom of religion were also part of the advertising that appealed to many newcomers. In 1938, Otto bought land northwest of Big Valley from a Mr. Eaton who lived in the United States. Fred Biggs, the County Secretary, assisted with the communication for the purchase. Otto paid \$2,500 for two quarter sections. On November 14, 1939, after building a house that was modern at the time, the family moved. Alfred attended Vimy School and then continued his education in Big Valley, living in the dormitory for part of the time.

Farm life posed many hardships. People needed to be self-reliant so the family raised chickens, pigs, cattle, wheat, oats, barley, strawberries, vegetables, and small fruit that would survive on the prairies. Thus they could provide their own meat, vegetables, jams, wine, eggs, milk, butter, preserved fruits and other commodities required for daily living. Trips to the nearby town were infrequent as roads were not always passable. The entire family worked extremely hard in order to survive and accumulate property.

Horses were a necessary part of farm life at this time. Otto had six horses that were always in front of the plow, disc or harrows. Another saddle horse was used to get the cows and help at branding time. Three or four families usually got together to do the branding and Olga and Aletha cooked for the entire group. There were always lots of visitors in the Klaus household. Most guests would be served dinner, lunch or breakfast depending on the time of their visit.

Linda Hall was one of the centers for community get-togethers. The Klaus family participated in many Estonian occasions that were held there. Christmas was always celebrated here with performances by members of the community, young and old, and Santa Claus always arrived. In July, Buffalo Lake was the setting for the Farmer's Picnic, where activities for the children were organized, everyone joined in the pot luck lunch and various activities such as ball games, horseshoes and nail pounding contests provided entertainment for all.

Aletha married Ado Tipman in August, 1940. Ado was a school teacher and also of Estonian heritage. The Tipman family had four children: Bob, Marlene, Allan and Thomas. Thomas died at birth. The three Tipman children and their families follow many Estonian traditions. Bob Tipman is President of Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS). Bob and his wife Kathy, have two children: Liisa and James. They all attend and participate in the varied activities of A.E.H.S.

Marlene and her husband Kalev Kuutan, also of Estonian background, live in Toronto. Marlene has been on the Board of Directors for Estonian House in Toronto since 1999.

They have three children: Kersti-Li, Aili and Eon. The children are trilingual, having gone to Estonian School and participated in a French Immersion Program.

Allan and his wife, Marianne, live in Calgary and attend A.E.H.S. functions whenever possible. Ado Tipman passed away in May, 1990 at 85 years. Aletha stayed on the farm for two years but

found the winters too lonely so moved to Stettler where she lived until her sudden passing on July 2, 1999. Two weeks prior, Aletha was pleased to attend the Estonian Centennial Celebration at Linda Hall. It was the largest gathering of Estonians in Alberta.

Alfred Klaus married Irma Nitschke and they raised two children, Ron and Audrey, while farming in the Big Valley area. During this time Alfred and Otto shared farm duties and both lived on the property in separate houses. As Otto's health declined, Alfred assumed full responsibility for the farm.

Otto and Olga Klaus celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary in July, 1958 at the home of Aletha and Ado Tipman. Otto suffered a stroke in 1963 and passed away on January 20, 1965. Olga continued to live on the farm for a few years and then went to live with Aletha and Ado Tipman. She lived with them until she passed away on July 30, 1977, a month and a half prior to her 93rd birthday. She had lived long enough to welcome two great-granddaughters, Keri and Kersti-Li.

In 1969, Alfred sold the farm. He moved to Stettler and went to work for the County of Stettler as an assistant field man. He held this position until his retirement at age 65.

Alfred and Irma's son, Ron and his wife, Carol, have two children, Shannon and Jason. They are often in attendance at Estonian functions at Linda Hall. Audrey and her husband Dan Benjamin have two girls, Keri and Amri (Irma -spelled backwards). They are often in attendance at Estonian functions.

Irma Klaus passed away in July, 1980, following an asthma attack. Alfred later married Joyce Wilson in December, 1981. Alfred and Joyce continue to enjoy their retirement and are members of the A.E.H.S.

The descendants of Otto and Olga Klaus celebrate their Estonian heritage and have passed on many traditions to the next generation.

Prepared by Irene Kerbes from notes compiled by Marlene (Tipman) Kuutan, and Alfred and Joyce Klaus

MART LAAR RECEIVES MILTON FRIEDMAN PRIZE

On April 20, Washington 2006, Mart Laar, the former Prime Minister of Estonia, became the third recipient of the Milton Friedman Prize for Advancing Liberty.

The Friedman Prize is awarded every two years to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the advancement of human freedom. It comes with \$500,000 in prize money. The Cato Institute, which awards the Friedman Prize, is a non-profit public policy research foundation headquartered in, D.C.

The winner of the Friedman Prize is selected by an international selection committee that this year included Anne Applebaum of the *Washington Post*, Fareed Zakaria of *Newsweek International*, Francisco Flores, former President of El Salvador, Fred Smith, Chairman of the Federal Express Corporation, and Rose Friedman.

The previous winners of the Friedman Prize were Peter Bauer, a British economist, for his pioneering work in development economics, and Hernando De Soto, a Peruvian economist, for his work on the importance of property rights in helping the poor to obtain access to capital. The two economists helped to create a theoretical basis for applying the market principles to fight global poverty. They showed that free market, characterized by trade openness, limited state intervention in the economy, and strong emphases on property rights and the rule of law, was the best available mechanism for alleviating global poverty. Mart Laar put those theoretical principles into practice to the benefit of his countrymen.

According to the *Economic Freedom of the World: 2005 Annual Report*, which is published by the Fraser Institute in Canada, Estonia is the ninth economically freest country in the world. Today, many people find it difficult to remember the days of the Soviet Union, when the Estonian economy was completely dominated by the state and marked by endless lines and shortages. Mart Laar replaced the "dead hand" of the government with Adam Smith's "invisible hand." His government eliminated import tariffs (a decision that was partly reversed by Estonia's membership of the European Union) and established a flat income tax. Corporate taxes on reinvested profits fell to zero and a currency board was established to combat inflation. The government also undertook extensive privatization of state companies.

Though Estonia experienced a sharp but short recession that was shared by all transitional economies, by 1995 the economy was roaring again. According to the World Bank, between 1995 and 2004, Estonia's per capita gross domestic product (GDP) grew at a compounded average annual rate of 6.6 percent. During that decade, Estonia's GDP per capita adjusted for purchasing power parity rose from \$6,847 to \$12,773 in constant 2000 dollars, an increase of 86.5 percent. Estonia's sustained, high growth rate was among the region's highest and set the country on course to join the rest of the developed world.

Mart Laar's premiership also marked Estonia's return to democratic rule, which the country enjoyed during a brief period of independence between the two World Wars. It did not have to be that way. In Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko's assumption of power in 1994 marked the

return of that country to a communist dictatorship. Ukraine had to wait 13 years after her declaration of independence in 1991 before becoming democratic, and Russia has slid back into autocracy under the leadership of Vladimir Putin.

Mart Laar's impact was felt beyond the influence he had on the lives of his fellow countrymen. Other post-communist countries learned from Estonia's reforms and imitated them. Estonia's successful adoption of the flat tax led the way for Russia, Slovakia, Ukraine, and others. Estonia's unilateral trade liberalization is a continued inspiration for other countries; including, most recently, Georgia. There are also those who feel that the presence of a market-liberal Estonia in the European Union will lead the EU away from her socialist policies. Though I am not convinced that Estonia's market-liberalism is safe in the EU, let alone that Estonia will be able to change the policy debate in Brussels, I certainly hope that Mart Laar's optimism about the EU's future evolution will be justified.

Mart Laar was a superb choice for the 2006 Friedman Prize. I am very pleased that my employer, the Cato Institute, is able to honor him in that way and I hope that the fire of liberty that Mart Laar and his colleagues set alight in Estonia will continue to spread to the rest of the world.

Marian L. Tupy is assistant director of the Project on Global Economic Liberty at the Cato Institute.

THE CUNNING KEEPER OF A THRESHING BARN

Andrus Kivirähk

The nature of a nation is revealed in its **fairy tales**: they document truths and store them in crystallized form for centuries. Let us have a look at Estonian fairy tales, which nearly always have a barn-keeper and a shrewd man called Ants.

We do not find brave noble heroes fighting dragons and liberating imprisoned princesses from castle towers. There are no kings and powerful wizards, beautiful elves, or legends about everlasting love. The heroes are neither rich nor famous, and will never become king. Nor are they knights swinging their battle-axes on a battlefield. In fact, they never commit heroic deeds. Moreover, they hardly bother to leave their homes!

They sit by the fire, puffing at their pipe or lie down somewhere with their toes pointing towards the sunshine. They can be chums with both the Creator and Satan. Sometimes they meet some evil spirit or other, but they do not reach for their sword or cross. Instead, they have a nice little chat together, but there's always an ulterior motive. They may even enter the service of Lucifer himself, to do nothing particularly useful. Quietly, however, they'll pinch their master's things, and rip off their superior at the first opportunity.

They are also familiar with all kinds of witchcraft, and use it for the sole purpose of amassing wealth and fortune for themselves. To that end, they may conjure forth treasure-bringing goblins, or turn into a whirlwind in the shape of a fly that crawls out of someone's nose; or charge off in a trough to a neighbour's barn for grain. After walking around a grey stone they may turn into werewolves. Once in a while, an enraged neighbour or landlord appears as a whirlwind, to claim the hero's treasure instead! But not to worry - the barn-keeper knows a remedy for that too - he hits the greedy intruder with a rowan branch and cripples him. And life goes on.

Finally, the Prince of Darkness or the Grim Reaper comes to claim his soul. He asks the visitor to take a seat on a tar-covered bench, or pours some hot pitch down his throat. The enemy flees while the barn-keeper or Ants sit in front of the fire and puffing on a pipe as if nothing had happened. Forever after. These fairy tales portray Estonians as a cunning thicket of alders under the high and mighty timber forest.

They're not afraid of either storms or an axe; they are here to stay.

The four articles about "Estonian characteristics form part of a collection entitled "Estonian People published by the Estonian Institute. They are reproduced with the permission of the authors.

ESTONIAN CROSS-COUNTRY SKIERS SMIGUN AND VEERPALU SKI TO GOLD MEDALS IN TORINO.

Dave Kiil

Kristina Smigun and Andrus Veerpalu were both victorious at the Winter Olympics in Italy last winter. Smigun was a double winner in the women's 15 km pursuit and the 10 km classical races, whereas Veerpalu triumphed in the men's 15 km classical race.

Both have had outstanding careers and their achievements in Torino brought renewed international acclaim to Estonia's cross-country skiers. The two skiers, along with wrestler Kristjan Palusalu and cyclist Erika Salumäe, are the only Estonian Olympians who have won two gold medals!

Of the two new Estonian folk heroes, Smigun received most of the media attention in the domestic and international press and on the Internet. Described by reporters as a bubbly and outgoing individual, she admits to living a highly focused and regimented life for at least eleven months of the year. When an acquaintance invited her to go shopping for souvenirs her answer was: "You collect souvenirs, I collect medals. Having participated in four Olympics to date, she is already dreaming of gold in Vancouver in 2010!

Veerpalu is also a highly decorated athlete with a total of three medals (2 golds, 1 silver) in the last two Winter Olympics. He is a devoted family man with three children.

Golden Andrus is reportedly more comfortable on the ski trails than in front of thousands of admiring fans. Asked if he plans to participate in another Olympics, he notes that he'll live from year to year for the time being. He is also quoted as observing that, for a small country like Estonia, his win in Torino is important for all Estonians.

Both athletes received a huge homecoming welcome in Tallinn's Freedom Square. President Rütel, Prime Minister Ansip and other dignitaries were on hand to heap plaudits on the new national heroes and to thank them on behalf of the Estonian people.

President Rütel presented the golden pair with traditional laurel-leaf garlands during the ceremony.

The two athletes will each receive premiums reportedly well over a hundred thousand dollars.

ESTONIAN CHARGE D'AFFAIRES VISITS EDMONTON

Dave Kiil

Argo K  nem  e, the Charge d'Affaires at the Estonian Embassy in Ottawa, spent a couple of days in Edmonton as part of a pre-Christmas 2005 western tour of British Columbia and Alberta. This was his first visit to Edmonton and very much appreciated by the local Estonian community.

Estonian expatriates and descendants of Estonian pioneers who settled in Alberta over a century ago took advantage of the opportunity to meet Mr. K  nem  e and to discuss and resolve issues around such topics as land claims, travel conditions and applications for Estonian passports.

Individuals who have not applied to obtain an Estonian passport may wish to do so in the future. Estonia is now a full-fledged member of the European Union and NATO and an Estonian passport may open many opportunities in the future, especially for the children and grandchildren of parents and grandparents with Estonian citizenship. Anyone with an Estonian passport is, of course, entitled to travel in all member states of the European Union.

A small group of Edmonton Estonians- Eda MacClung, K  lliva Kangur and Ain Dave Kiil- became better acquainted with the Estonian diplomat around a dinner table at historic Hotel Macdonald. The conversation touched on recent happenings in Estonia, the role and responsibility of the Estonian Embassy in Ottawa, and Alberta's unique and widely-dispersed Estonian community. We were impressed with Mr. K  nem  e's hands-on approach in meeting client's needs for information and his interest in the activities of the relatively small Estonian community situated some 3000 km from his office.

Following his stay in Edmonton, Mr. K  nem  e traveled to Canmore, a thriving resort community a few kilometers outside Banff National Park, to cheer for Jana Rehema, a cross-country skier representing Estonia in a World Cup event held there.

TUUR, ESTONIA'S MODERN BACH

Paul Morton, The Baltic Times

TALLINN - Erkki-Sven Tuur is Estonia's second most famous composer. At 46, he's a good deal younger than the country's most famous composer, Arvo Part, the father of "holy minimalism. Born in 1935, Part's influences are centered on Russian classical and Orthodox church music. Tuur has written spiritual pieces as well, but he is very much a product of his generation, which apparently had a little more freedom to enjoy a thousand influences thanks to its late placement in musical history.

In his house in Hiiumaa Island, he absorbed his father's record collection of Bach, Mozart and Beethoven.

Then there was the church. "It's very weird, but my parents were very sincerely religious people. Almost every Estonian had some relatives in the West, so some American gospel choirs and bands [Mahalia Jackson, The Imperials] reached our house.

Later as teenage student in Tallinn, he was introduced by some older friends to the best progressive rock, like King Crimson, Yes and Genesis.

A professor in Tallinn with good contacts in the West played Central European and Scandinavian modernists like Boulez and Xenakis in class. From other sources, Tuur listened to Philip Glass and Steve Reich.

"We couldn't analyze the scores of modern music, there was nothing really new in the music library. So there was a feeling of isolation. Still, we had better chances than the rest of the Soviet Union, so the situation wasn't so dark.

He started composing music in the late '70s. In 1979, he and a few friends formed In Spe, a tremendously popular rock band in 1980s Estonia. He was always bringing in a range of instruments, sometimes the cello, sometimes the violin. Once he used brass instruments. When, by the middle of the decade, he decided he wanted to compose classical music, the transformation, such as it was, had occurred "absolutely naturally.

Though he mentions the most obvious influences here - Gregorian chant, Bach ("the king of music) and Mahler - he has his own style, in which tonal and atonal rhythms play against each other quite smoothly.

One can only take so much. "I don't like to listen to music as background, Tuur says. "I like to concentrate on what I'm listening to or I prefer silence because my own music is playing in my head.

He does listen to music in his car when he drives from Hiiumaa Island, where he lives, to Tallinn, where he keeps an apartment: jazz, rock, Brian Eno, and King Crimson, along with all the usual classical greats and modernists.

Classical stardom

Tuur sat down to talk on a Saturday in Tallinn a few weeks ago, during one of his excursions onto the mainland. He's a tall, thin handsome man, with mildly unruly hair. Though he sat for the entire interview, he was very physical, swaying from side to side when he was trying to illustrate a difficult point. He was dressed head-to-toe, in black, as much hipster rock and roller as classical composer.

There's nothing novel anymore, if there ever was, about classical composers and musicians playing across genres. Too often, the exercises sound like failed experiments, the work of unimaginative provocateurs.

"I like to build up synthesis between these separate 'musical islands,' he says. "When you combine rock and orchestra, the result, too often, is empty crossover and very cheap. I'm interested in synthesizing the very essence of these things.

When Tuur, for example, sets the soft lingering notes of a piano against the falling strings of an electric guitar in "Architectonics V (1991), he is creating a perfectly natural call-and-response. His Symphony No. 5, which premiered in Stuttgart last year, included an orchestra, a jazz big band, and an electric guitar, whose part was completely improvised.

"I'm interested in the interaction between polarities I like to have extremely smooth changes, from one polarity to another.

Though critics have suggested that his work creates a fantasy world through music - one critic said his "Desert Island (1989) was reminiscent of the phantasmagoria of Arnold Böcklin's paintings - he cites less ephemeral influences.

"I am a great fan of contemporary architecture... Sometimes, I draw shapes on paper before I shape my music. These images help me capture the musical form. There's a very tight connection between the visual and the sonic imagination.

Does one building influence one specific piece of music?

"No, it's not so literal. Looking at architecture helps him meld together a musical composition from many different materials. "In architecture, houses are made of wood and concrete, steel and glass. In musical composition, one source for the material could be totally atonal, and another source can be tonal and simple. I try to build a coherent musical work from these elements.

Going back to "Architectonics V, again just to take an example, you can almost hear some undefined structure taking shape. That piano and that electric guitar are building something together. Whether or not it is something you can live in is another question, but it still must be something nice to look at.

On the program

Tuur's two children - a rock guitarist son and a daughter who studied theology and now works

as a translator - are grown up. His daughter recently had a son, and he and his wife, a pianist who he met back in his In Spe days, are now enjoying life as young grandparents. "This is a very interesting time for me.

He has a schedule of commissions that will keep him busy for the next three years.

Tuur is currently in the middle of a piano concerto for the Austrian composer Thomas Larcher and the Frankfurt Radio Orchestra. One small part of it "will have a jazzier approach. It sounds like it was improvised.

Tuur, like everyone else, hated the Soviet system, and though his life as a rock musician in In Spe in the '80s "had the smell of rebellion in it, he was never much of a political activist. He was always doing his work more or less unaffected by great events.

At one point he set rock music, which was permitted, to liturgical texts, which were forbidden. Somehow it passed the censors. "[The Soviet cultural authorities] were so stupid, they figured that if it wasn't set to classical music, it couldn't be religious. He wasn't trying to make a political point when he wrote that piece. Then as now, "it was always art for art's sake for me.

Now he is composing in the shadow of the McDonald's capitalization of Estonian music culture, in which you can hear Britney and all the worst American music in every cafe and restaurant.

"What can you do? You have to find a right way to act against these kinds of cultural movements. All you can do is write something yourself. I just keep writing music, keep adding little bricks to my culture.

CHRISTMAS PARTY IN EDMONTON

Dave Kiil

During the first weekend in December, Edmonton-area members of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society gathered in Betty Ann and Dave Kiil's home to celebrate the onset of the Holiday Season. The entire evening was filled with good cheer and conversations with old and new-found friends. Young and old, from six years to a few years older, enjoyed the camaraderie and a buffet-style spread of delicacies to tempt the most discriminating taste buds.



The latest issue of the Society's newsletter, *Ajakaja*, was picked up at the printer's the day before and it was distributed to those in attendance. Articles about Society members and activities, news about Estonia, and contributions from several correspondents in Estonia and Canada resulted in the largest edition to date.

Estonia's National Song Festival or "Laulupidu" was launched in 1869 and has continued as the centerpiece of the nation's self-expression for independence and her passion for music.

Anyone fortunate enough to witness the spectacle in person usually describes the experience as "overwhelming, impressive, awesome, highly emotional, etc. The showing of "25,000 Sing, a DVD about the 2004 Song Festival in Tallinn, elicited mostly the same comments from the people who viewed the video. Some even speculated about traveling to Tallinn for the next Song Festival in 2009, whereas others expressed interest in obtaining their own DVD of the event.



By all accounts, it was a very successful social event and accommodated the older members of the Society who find it challenging to travel long distances to attend provincial functions.

DESCENDANTS OF PIONEER ESTONIANS WIN WORLD CUP CHAMPIONSHIPS AND OLYMPIC BRONZE

Helgi Leesment

Most readers of this article have careened down neighbourhood slopes on a sled in their childhood. What we didn't know at the time was that when we lay on our back and went downhill feet first, we were doing a recreational version of the sport known as Luge; and when we lay on our stomach and went down head first, we were doing a recreational version of the sport known as Skeleton.



A compilation of phrases taken from the Torino Winter Olympics website describes the sport of skeleton as:

"Lying prone, facing downhill, head tucked down, skimming just a few centimeters above the icy track, hurtling down the run at maximum speeds of 130 kilometers an hour, arms at their sides, guided by courage and the most advanced aerodynamic materials.

Skeleton athletes use the same track as bobsleigh and luge. To move the sled, only the thrust force produced by the athlete and the force of gravity are permitted. Steering is carried out by means of the athlete's body movements.

At competitions, the athletes do two slides of approximately one minute each. The times are added together and the lowest score wins. Wins are a matter of hundredths of seconds ahead of other racers.

The track is a narrow, curved frozen half-pipe, usually about 1400 meters long, down a steep slope. It is very expensive to build and maintain. In Calgary, an entire separate building and several full time staff members are dedicated year-round to producing the right conditions on the competition track.

Why are so few people aware of this sport? Skeleton sliding has had an irregular association with the Olympics, being in the 1928 and 1948 Games as a men only event, starting again as of 2002 as women's and men's events. Also, there are only 14 suitable skeleton racing tracks in the world. One of those is located in Sigulda, Latvia, about one hour's drive from Riga. It was the former Soviet Union's only bobsleigh track. Of all the skeleton race tracks worldwide, it is the only one with the first six curves or corners built on pilings, because there is not enough height on the natural hill in that region. An elevator takes the competitors and sleds to the top.

Two Albertans, cousins Mellisa Hollingsworth-Richards and Ryan Davenport, both of Estonian ancestry have garnered the admiration of their friends and extended families for their

achievements in winning Canadian Championships, World Championship and World Cup medals in Skeleton racing. One also earned a Bronze medal in the recent Torino Winter Olympics. The entire Mottus (Mõttus) family in central Alberta is beaming with joy, as many members of that clan have provided extensive support to the two athletes for over a decade.

Mellisa's rural roots are now into ranching, but they stretch back over 100 years to Rõuge, near Võru in the southeast corner of Estonia.

Mellisa's and Ryan's great-grandfather Gustav Mottus left Estonia at the age of 21 in the year 1910, first arriving in New York, then travelling on to homestead at Risula, west of Eckville in Central Alberta by 1911. A small community of Estonians was already settled in the area, and in 1917 he married Linda, the daughter of the first known Estonian to settle in Canada, Henry (Hendrik) Kingsep and Emilie Saar. Several of Gustav's siblings also came to settle in Alberta but one brother Jaan remained in Rõuge. Contact was maintained with Jaan until WWII when the Soviet Russian occupation of Estonia forced an end to all written and telephone communication with the outside world. Thus for nearly 60 years neither half of the family knew the other's fate. Gustav died in 1977. Eventually, the 1999 Centennial Celebration of Estonians in Canada provided the contacts needed for Gustav's descendants in Canada to find their cousins in Estonia.



Given the speed of emails and easy access to directories via the Internet, it was a mere matter of days until the first email from Jaan's daughter arrived at the home of Arnold Mottus, grandson of Gustav and uncle to Mellisa and Ryan. Arnold states, "It was without a doubt the most exciting letter I have ever received an e-mail was sent immediately to Estonia, and many have since been exchanged, along with photo images, as well as letter mail, and a phone call. We are fortunate that the son-in-law in Estonia has access to a computer and can read and write English. His family lives in Võru, close to where Gustav was born." This story appears on the website <http://www3.telus.net/armottus>.

No doubt there has been much celebration in Võru as well as in Alberta with everyone following Mellisa's many successes, especially during the current Skeleton season, the culmination of ten years of serious dedication to the sport her cousin Ryan Davenport convinced her to try. Among Mellisa's athletic achievements:

- 6 times medallist in Canadian championships, including a Gold in 1996
- Year 2000 silver medallist at the World Championship with 10 th to 5th placements 2003-2005
- World Cup top standing for the 2005-2006 season after placing 3 rd in two races, second in 3 races and first in 2 races, medalling at all of the seven international competitions held in Latvia, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, USA and Canada.
- Bronze medal at the 2006 Winter Olympics at Torino

Part of Mellisa's success is due to the custom-made sled she uses, designed and manufactured by her cousin Ryan Davenport. Ryan first noticed this high-speed sport in a newspaper article in Calgary in 1992 and immediately signed up at the first Canadian Skeleton School for training. Calgary is fortunate in having the legacy of several winter sport facilities, including a world-class skeleton/luge/bobsled racetrack, thanks to hosting the 1988 Winter Olympic Games. The

Canadian Skeleton championships have been held exclusively at Calgary's Canada Olympic Park each year as of 1987. This facility also hosts World Cup or World Championship skeleton competitions almost each year. Starting in the 1992-93 competitive season, Ryan was the undisputed long term Canadian Champion, winning 7 Gold medals until he retired as an athlete at the end of the 1998-99 season. He also won 2 World Championship Gold medals (1996 & 1997) and a bronze in 1995. Unfortunately, skeleton was not an Olympic sport during the time.

Despite his retirement, Ryan is still intimately involved with Skeleton sliding. After severely damaging his sled at a 1994 competition, he tried to fix it. That led to him making a new sled for himself. His teammates were so impressed with the result, they requested him to also custom-make sleds for them. By 1995 he had established Davenport Sleds www.davenportsleds.ca as his full time business.

Skeleton sleds are precision designed. The governing sport body, the International Bobsleigh and Tobogganing Federation (FIBT) has detailed stringent requirements and restrictions as to size, composition of materials, bolting, welding, weight, etc. etc. The Davenport firm custom designs skeleton sleds within all those specifications, further taking into consideration each racer's height and various permitted preferences. The finished product typically costs approximately \$4000. A long way from the creaky wooden sleds we used as kids.

In addition to dedicating much time, effort and money into athletic training, Mellisa spends time on the Rodeo circuit, having grown up on her father's horse ranch in central Alberta. She married saddle bronc rodeo cowboy Billy Richards last June and now lives on a ranch west of Calgary where the Richards family raises horses for the Calgary Stampede and other rodeos. Her husband plus 12 other members of her family and her sponsor were at Torino, Italy in support. The main sponsor, True Energy Trust, gifted the couple a weeklong delayed honeymoon in Mexico immediately after the Olympic Games.

Photo: Peeter Leesment

Mellisa has her sights set on Vancouver/Whistler 2010 and will continue training and racing. Her progress can be tracked on her website

<http://mellisahollingsworth.ca>

The Town of Eckville and Mellisa's extensive family held an appreciation night in her honour at the local Community Centre on March 17, attended by approximately 250 fans. Helen Posti, the mayor of Eckville (population 1200), was among the many who lauded the local Olympic athlete, especially for her constantly positive attitude. Mellisa's emotional account of her training and the Olympic race had many listeners in tears by the time of their standing ovation. Everyone had an opportunity to be photographed with Mellisa, get her autograph and to momentarily hold an actual Olympic medal. Mellisa, in turn, graciously dedicated her time that evening to all the Eckville supporters who have been with her for the ten long years leading up to her Olympic medal.

AN "ACCIDENTAL GENEALOGIST" ON A PERSISTENT JOURNEY TO DISCOVER HIS ESTONIAN FAMILY ROOTS

John Clark

A year ago I had no solid information about my grandparents: where they were from, who their children were, and what they looked like. Today my family history reaches back to the 1700s and I've acquired family photographs from as early as the 1870s.

My interest in my family history was awakened in mid- 2005 when my attention was drawn to a photograph and obituary in the Denver Post - a photo of a man that looked a lot like my own father. A halfpage history of the man's life accompanied the photo of him standing on a mountain trail. Like my father, the man was born and raised in Montana. My dad grew up on Montana ranches and had picked the name Clark from a foster family in Montana who he hoped would adopt him.

The Clarks never did adopt my father. I was already in high school when our true family name was brought up in a conversation between my father and my uncle who was visiting from Alberta. I learned that originally our name was something like Kirkendall and that my father had lived in a home for orphans when he was a boy. My dad told me that his father had raised one family with his first wife and started a second family with my grandmother Mary who died in 1916 when my dad was two years old. Widowed, my grandfather farmed and cared for his five young children. In debt with a failing farm, my grandfather was forced to place my father, his three brothers and his sister into the care of the Montana orphanage.



From Lime to time my grandfather visited and wrote to his children at the orphanage. In vain he battled drought and locusts to bring in a big crop that would get him out of debt. The orphanage joined the list of his unpaid creditors. Since he was unable to contribute to their support, he lost his parental rights and his children became eligible for adoption.

In December 1921 my dad wrote to his father, "It would be very good to see you on Xmas". (I am) "hoping to get an ink pen and pen holder for Christmas." A week before Christmas my father's letter was returned to him "address unknown". My dad and my uncle said that their father had "disappeared" - or "ran out on the family."

I wondered if my grandfather had dodged his bill collectors and started a third family when he "disappeared". If so, the man I noticed in the newspaper photo might be my uncle. I decided to do some research. Among some old family papers I found three documents that were sent to my father in 1968 by his sister with her suggestion to have them translated from German.

I showed the papers to my friends Sandy and his German wife. They translated the "old German" and established that the document was a 1908 Estonian "Character Reference" for

Liso, or Liisa Reimer - probably issued by the parish to support an immigration effort. I didn't know any ancestors or relatives named Liisa, so I wondered why this document had been kept and handed down.

Only Liisa's Character Reference was in German. Sandy thought the other two documents might be Estonian. Through mutual friends I tracked down Helvi, an Estonian refugee, who lives in my neighborhood. Helvi's translation showed the second document to be a letter to my aunt Pauline, signed "your parents in Montana". Helvi thought the letter was originally sent to "Aunt Pauline" with a new Bible. She also recognized that the third document was written in Russian. In searching the Web on "Denver" "Russian"

"Translation" I found that Denver's 50,000 Russian emigrants had their own Cultural Center. Sophia, the Center's librarian, offered to translate the third document while I waited.

My excitement built as Sophia rendered each line into English. The first paragraph showed that she was translating a church document listing the members of the Krikenthal family. It named Gustav Krikenthal and his wife Julie (Paarmann) Krikenthal and their children Pauline, Julia, and Mary - Those were my aunts! AND! two boys that I had never heard of - August and Mihkel who were born in 1892 and 1902. Both were my uncles!

So now I knew the spelling of the family name, that my grandfather was named Gustav, his first wife, Julie, was born in Parnach, and that their children were baptized in Boz Koz. But where were Boz Koz and Parnach?

I searched in vain for Parnach and Boz Koz on Estonian maps. I Googled for Boz Koz - and found nothing. The web only referenced Parnach once. A soldier had written in his memoir that his platoon had camped outside Parnach during the Crimean War. A dead end I assumed, since Crimea was thousands of miles from Estonia.

Because Sophia had struggled a bit with the translation, and the villages or districts were not familiar to her, I was anxious to get a second opinion. Over the next months I actually listened for people that might have a Russian accent. At Office Depot I noticed that Maria, the cashier, sounded Russian. She read my document and said that she thought the towns might be near Moscow.

At my favorite sushi restaurant I interrupted two young Russians on a dinner date. Their big mistake was speaking in Russian within earshot of me! They recognized that the document named other villages or districts in addition to Parnach and Boz Koz, but they had no idea of their location. I continued listening for Russian speaking people who might recognize a town or city from the document.

At my gym I overheard, Alex and Michael conversing in Russian as they were lifting weights. I intercepted them leaving the gym and showed them the document. Standing in the gym's parking lot Alex immediately recognized that the country was Crimea. He knew that hundreds of German colonies had been established in Crimea in the 1800s. He took the document home, translated it, and emailed me the Krim-GR Research Website that identified Gustav's birthplace as Kontschi-Schawa, a German colony founded in Crimea in 1860.

Was I German? It seemed to fit. When asked about his heritage, my father would say he didn't know for sure, maybe Estonian, Finnish, or Swedish. To me the family names sounded more German than Estonian, particularly the names Paarmann, Krikenthal, August, and Gustav. I also seemed to have the German trait for order "everything squared up and always in its place".

I poured over the wealth of information on the "Germans from Russia" websites (GRHS, AHSGR). With folks from both organizations helping, we located Crimean church records from the 1860s for the birth of Gustav and his sister Mina and for the death of his brother Mihkel. Almost every evening that I searched on the Internet I found another piece to the puzzle.

To learn more about German settlements in Montana, I contacted Barbra, with the Chester Branch of the Montana State Genealogical Society. Instead of information on German families that I had expected, Barbra sent me a list of Chester area Estonians. Her research showed that the Krikenthals were part of the Estonian community in the early 1900s.

Now I was confused. Gustav was born in a German colony. I had Julie Reimer's Estonian character reference written in German, and a letter to my aunt Pauline written in Estonian. Barbra suggested I research Lethbridge, since many of the Montana Estonians had come from Canada. I searched the web on combinations of "Krikenthal, " "Alberta, " and "Lethbridge"- and found nothing.

Then I got an idea. Maybe searching the web for some of the other Chester family names might indirectly help. I searched on the family "Keldrauk & Lethbridge" and found a list of surnames referenced for "Wheat Heart of the West; Lethbridge". In the list alphabetically below Keldrauk was "KRIKENTAL, G. " - it had to be Gustav Krikenthal!

I emailed the Lethbridge Alberta Genealogical Society's website to see if there was any more information regarding the person referred to as KRIKENTAL, G. Shirley answered my email:

There wasn't much information in this book and it is as follows:

"Mr. and Mrs. G. Krikental and family of Crimea, with five girls and one boy Gus, came to homestead in the Barons area in 1904 or 1905. Their farm was just east of Ernie Allen's farm, where they first built a sod house. The girls went to Lundy school when it opened, while Gus, being younger, went to Wheatland Centre. All the family went to Chester, Montana in 1910 to homestead, where each adult could get 320 acres."



"I hope that this is of some help to you. "

WOW! It was official and in writing. The book confirmed that these were Estonian families who had emigrated from Crimea - I was Estonian!

I next searched the Barons phone listings for the family names of the Estonian settlers whose lives were described in the Barons history book.

My story continues with my finding the Erdman family, including Martha Munz Gue. Following this contact, Martha sent an email to some Albertans of Estonian extraction:

"Isn't this wonderful! Tom Erdman and I were introduced to John Clark, when, last Saturday, he phoned each of us from Colorado! His father was raised by a foster family so he only recently found his paternal grandparents birth names, and he has discovered that they were of Estonian descent. He learned this fall that he is connected to the Krikenthal family that emigrated from Crimea. They lived about five years in the Barons area and then immigrated to Montana along with many other families of Estonian-Krimean origin. I guess there is quite a settlement in Montana.

He was enthralled by the (Barons area history) book and has read quite a bit online. After reading and reading, he found the only Erdman in the Barons phone listing and talked with Tommy, who suggested he phone me. We had a great chat and have been emailing since. He is keen on learning more about Estonia, Crimea, and family history. He asks some questions that perhaps some of you could provide some help with. Any anecdotes would be of interest."

Through Martha, I met Livia and Helgi who helped me understand my ancestors' journeys from Estonia to Crimea and to Lethbridge. Their translations of key documents from German and Russian accompanied one of their emails to me:

"We spent several hours yesterday deciphering and translating the documents you had sent to us. The difficulty lies in the poor quality of the reproduction, deciphering German Gothic handwriting, and trying to guess the specific circumstances surrounding the original document.
...

We were not entirely successful with your excerpts from the (Crimean) Neusatz parish birth and death records because the headings for various columns are missing.

. . . We persisted and did our best. "

Martha told her cousin Leongard Salman in Crimea about my search and I sent him everything I had learned so far. About a month later I received from Leongard a big envelope full of information including a list of Gustav Krikental's brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, nieces, and nephews in Crimea. Leongard's research showed that Gustav's father Mihkel was born in Aggeri, Estonia in 18 19, and immigrated to Crimea with his wife Mina and their four children. They were part of the "White Ship" Estonian families that walked from Estonia to Crimea between 1861 and 1863.

Having traveled so far so rapidly along my research path, I reflected on the power of serendipity. Why had I been drawn to that newspaper photograph? I felt a connection to the man in the photo who started me on my journey and maybe a little sorry that we turned out not to be related. The man was not Gustav Krikental's son after all. My grandfather had not started a third family - and he had not completely "disappeared".

Wanting to learn more about Kontschi-Schawa where Gustav was born, I called the AHSGR "Germans from Russia" organization and met Margaret who is with its Denver chapter. I told Margaret that my father had said that his brother Louis "might have seen" their father years later

in Chicago. In my mind I pictured my uncle Louis passing an old man sitting on a Chicago park bench and later wondering if the man might have been his father, Gustav.

It took Margaret about 5 minutes to find where Gustav had "disappeared" to.

Knowing the tools of genealogy, Margaret quickly found the Web site for death certificates issued in Cook County, Illinois. Gustav Krikendal died in Blue Island, Illinois in 1938. In the next five minutes Margaret used the Heritage Quest Web site to bring up the 1920 Montana Census and the page showing Gustav as an immigrant from Russia, his native language was Estonian, he was literate, and he had become a US citizen in 1916.

Margaret also gave me some great advice, "As you do your research always think about the story. In your story you should ask, why would Gustav leave his kids? Was he in deep debt with no way to pay? Was he being sued for payments on farm equipment, seed, or building materials?? Why would Gustav have picked Chicago? What reason? Ofen, as parents get older they go to live near their children. Did Gustav have children or other relatives in Chicago? Do you have relatives in Chicago? "

An aunt, I thought, might have lived in Chicago. My dad and his brother had lived in Chicago for a few years around the time of the stock market crash. I needed to find out who my cousins were and get them involved in my project.

I guess like a lot of people, my interest in my family history developed late. My father, all his brothers and sisters, and many of the next generation are already gone - along with their first hand accounts of our family's history. I had started my research using the Internet because I had never maintained contact with any cousins - not even Christmas cards. After a gap of over 50 years, I called my cousins Shirley in Montana and George in Alberta. They told me where to find 10 more cousins that I'd never met. I called each one, introduced myself, and found everyone to be enthusiastic about contributing to the family genealogy project. I also started calling and emailing folks that came onto my radar in Montana, Alberta, and across the USA. My network expanded to include Martha, Helvi, Livia, Helgi and Dave in North America, and Leongard in Crimea and Heldin and Kaii in Estonia. Their help and knowledge allowed me to compress my search into a number of months compared to the multi-year search had I focused only on the Internet, courthouse records, and microfilm research.

I tracked down descendants of the Barons and Chester Estonians including the families Palkman, Erdman, Musten, Sepp, Keldrauk, Bader, Kotkas, Reinson, Laas, Arick, Orraw (Orav), and Yurman (Jiirman). Most of them had already done some research on their Estonian roots, and were of great help. Sally, the granddaughter of Maria Kotkas Sepp, sent me three pages of her grandmother's writings - all specifically about the Krikental family in Barons and Chester between 1905 and 1918. I guess it was because of our common heritage, but I felt welcomed by each family - like I was a long lost cousin. Lots of people went out of their way to help me with my research. Even the folks at Montana courthouses always seem to find more information on the Krikentals than the land, court, or naturalization records I had originally requested.

Among the most satisfying findings came from my cousins who had a handful of old photographs of both my grandparents. I finally knew what they looked like. I recognized my father in Gustav. I thought that my brother, sister and I shared some of my grandmother's

features. My cousin Linda had saved her grandmother Pauline's family photographs from Crimea - some as old as 1875!

Gustav Krikental in Chicago, 1937.

To my surprise. Linda had photos of Gustav from the 1920s in Chicago where he had gone to work in a sugar refinery and later for a cigar company. Then, to my complete astonishment, Linda suggested that we call Pauline Krikental's son Floyd to learn first hand about my grandfather Gustav. We called my cousin Floyd who is 89 years old and was a teenager when Gustav lived in Chicago. Floyd crisply remembered his grandfather Gustav visiting on Sunday mornings. His mother and grandfather would sit at the kitchen table and entertain him by speaking together in "that Estonian language". Floyd also remembered my father from 1929 - "my uncles Eddie and Louie came from Montana to work in Chicago and slept out on our porch."

What a journey! Not just birth, marriage and death records, but photographs, diaries, and living cousins who had their own personal and hand-me-down stories about the Krikental family. And it was amazing to be able to track the family back so far. Back to 1785! Back to the time when Gustav's grandfather Hinrik was a serf and who was the human property of the estate that owned the Kulli farm where Hinrik worked as a watchman. Carefully preserved parish records for the Estonian peasants provided much appreciated knowledge of the Krikental origins.

Heldin, Leongard and Dave, who could read German, Russian, or Estonian, were of particular help in finding the Krikental family in the old Crimean church records on the Odessa Web site and the Estonia parish records from the Saaga Web site. Helvi, Livia Alex, and Helgi translated parish records, my aunt's Estonian notes, and letters from Leongard. This group's efforts led to the discovery of the first use, in 1819, of the name Krikkenntaal.

They found Gustav's mother and her parents, Gustav's grandfather, and my great grandmother. The background for Julie Paarmann, Gustav's wife, and the first person buried in the Baron's cemetery remains obscure. Paarmann families are listed in the parish books in Estonia but we have found no records of any of them emigrating to Parnach, Crimea. We also found Estonian families named Paarmann who lived in Simferopol, Crimea at the turn of the century. We don't yet know if the Simferopol Paarmann's were Julie's. The Paarmann name also shows up in Swiss or German families - both countries had colonies in Crimea. I've ordered the "Simferopol mamages" microfilm from the LDS Family History Center and I'm optimistic that we'll find where Julie Paarmann's parents were from.

Oh, and by the way, I did find out who Liisa Reimer was and why her character reference was kept in the family the last 100 years.

To be continued..

About the author..

John Clark on Mt. Bierstadt, Colorado

John has lived in Colorado his whole life. He has worked in marketing and sales for many Colorado software and technology companies. He's presently developing a business plan for a software company he wants to launch in 2006. John, who is single, enjoys trail running and backpacking through Colorado's mountains. John's email address is: JohnClark-TTI@comcast.net



HISTORY OF LINDA HALL

Irene and Deane Kerbes

Linda Hall was built by Estonian pioneers. They arrived in the area about 1901-1906 to be agricultural farmers and realized they needed knowledge in crop production, harvesting and marketing, as well as government and politics. So they decided to pool their knowledge and form a club. At a general meeting in 1910 under heavy brush at Neithal's home, the Estonian pioneers formed "Linda Eesti Põllumeeste Selts", ("Linda Estonian Farmer's Organization"). John Neithal was elected President, John



Kerbes as secretary, John Oro as treasurer. Thirty-five men became members. It was decided to hold monthly meetings on the second Sunday of each month. The farm homes soon were too small for meetings so a decision was made to build a community hall.

Why was the hall named "Linda"? The name derives from the Estonian epic "Kalevipoeg. Kalev is a mythical super hero and Linda is his wife. She travels everywhere with him and is beloved for her beauty, intellect and culture. There was much discussion by the men's club about the choice of name for the hall. Since "Linda embodied cultural values, her name was chosen for the hall as well as the "Linda Põllumeeste Selts. Kalev's prowess was not forgotten. The Estonian settlement northwest of Big Valley was named " Kalev.

The land for Linda Hall, located eleven miles south and one and half miles east of Settler, was donated by John Kerbes in 1911. To raise money, box lunches were sold at the picnics with a total of \$300 raised this way. In those times, this was a considerable sum and enabled basic building materials to be purchased. Members also donated equal amounts, to be repaid from rental revenues or to remain as a gift.

The first hall was a small rectangular building, positioned lengthwise, west to east. The west entrance door opened directly to the hall proper and the stage. The hall was later lengthened by several feet and the entrance changed to the east. The first building, built entirely by volunteer labour, was a simple roomy structure. It had a grand opening on Jaanipäev, June 1911. In just one year, an idea had been transformed into a community hall.

The furniture consisted of homemade orange colored benches and wooden tables with folding legs. The benches and tables were stored under the stage or in a storage space under the building. There was a wooden book-case filled with books, some from Plum Tree Publishing Co. in Estonia, about farm economics, history, travel, geography, medicine, veterinary science and fiction. Over time this library grew to contain approximately 2000 books which were lent out once a month during meetings. The hall had an upright piano. Lighting was from coal-oil lamps resting on wall brackets high above peoples' heads. A disastrous fire in 1930 destroyed the hall and all of its contents. The books were missed most of all as they had been ordered directly from Estonia after WW I.

Finances for rebuilding the hall came from fire insurance and donations by Society members, each according to financial ability. The new building was rebuilt by volunteer labor and came into use in the early 1930's. The Society sought to have a building with fine acoustics. Despite their efforts, they had to settle for the ceiling as it now is. The basement kitchen also had drawbacks, being too cold and the stove pipes being unable to draw. Eventually a kitchen was built on the outside central part of the south wall.

The Society looked after all activities at the hall for many years. Meetings of the "Linda Põllumeeste Selts" were conducted in Estonian until the early 1950s after which a switch was made to English. The hall had outdoor equipment for physical development with a swing, trapeze, parallel bars, sand and poles for high and long jumping. Distance runners used the adjacent road. The brass band, formed by Tony Fridulin, entertained mostly outdoors while the mixed choir entertained indoors.

The Linda Men's Club planned five or six events each year: a fall masquerade, Christmas, Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day and St. John's Day (Jaanipäev). Family nights were held once a month. These usually began with a "Circle Song" where everyone joined hands in a circle, with a pair in the center, and everyone sang a familiar folksong. During the chorus, the tempo increased and the dancers in the middle picked a new partner and danced a fast polka until everyone in the hall was up, singing and dancing. This was followed by games of skill, a program of educational presentations (by either sex), musical entertainment and a dance. Lunch would be served. The dances always began and ended with a waltz.

Everyone enjoyed square dances called by Joe Tipman, Ed Kerbes and many others. The violin players in the early years included John Kerbes, Martin Neithal, Mike Tipman, John Raho and Dick Hennel. The musicians started playing their instruments while they were still very young. John Kerbes on violin, was accompanied by his six year old son Archie playing the piano. In future years, Archie played the piano and his brother Alec played the violin at many district dances, parties and social gatherings. John Kerbes' younger sons, Ernie and Jim, also played the violin. John's daughter, Helen (Kerbes) Mulligan was the pianist with the original 4K's Orchestra, a group which for decades was the band of choice at Linda Hall.

During summer picnics, there were indoor and outdoor sports, speeches and plays. The society as a group made trips to enjoy nearby rivers and lakes.

The ladies of the Linda Hall district formed a club in 1925, soon after the men-folk had formed "Linda Põllumeeste Selts". The ladies club was called "Linda Naiste Rahvaste Ühisus - translated "Linda Women's Society". Meetings were held in Estonian. Some of the original members from the Linda and Kalev area were: Mrs. Minnie {John} Kerbes, Mrs. Lizzie {John} Saar, Mrs. Minnie (Tony) Fridulin, Mrs. Hilda (Martin) Oro, Mrs. Alide Wartnow, Mrs. Annette (Jaan) Kerbes, Mrs. Annie (Felix) Cusick, Mrs. Pauline (Kristian) Mägi, Mrs. Ida (William) Hennel, Mrs. Marie (Martin) Oliver, Mrs. Leena Klaus, Mrs. Pauline (August) Nicklom, Mrs. Julia (Peter) Kerbes, and many others. For a time the club was associated with the U.F.W.A. Among the members in the 1920's was Mrs. Maria Oliver, Mrs. Elizabeth Saar, Mrs. Anna J. Tipman, Mrs. J. Klaus, Mrs. B. Mägi, Annie Raho and others. This club was dissolved during the 1940s. For a time, some ladies in the district made lunches and catered dances individually. In 1952, some district ladies got together, these being Anna Tipman, Salme Hennel, Dulcie Hennel,

Dorthea Laing and Doris Hennel. They were a quorum of five, and formed the present Linda Hall Ladies Club which conducted business in English. Anna Tipman acted as President, and Dulcie Hennel as secretary. Although minutes were kept of the meetings, unfortunately they have been lost. Doris Hennel remains a honorary member of the ladies' group.

Over the years, the men's and ladies' clubs cooperated in many joint financial ventures. Along with support from government grants, they were able to make improvements and upgrades to Linda Hall. Forced air heating and running water were installed, and the kitchen was updated with a cooler, new flooring and paint. The ladies' club purchased chairs, tables, kitchen equipment, electric stoves etc. A micro-wave was donated to the hall following a school reunion held to remember 'the good old times' enjoyed at Linda Hall.

At club Christmas concerts, children and adults took part in plays, singing and recitations, and of course, there was a visit from Santa. The annual summer picnic is still held around Jaanipäev. The entertainment at the picnic includes horseshoes, log sawing, nail pounding, rolling pin throw, children's games, and a pot luck supper. The ladies buy gifts for member's children who graduate from grades 9 and 12. The Club caters for weddings, funerals, parties and meetings. Each year on the first Sunday of November, they host a fall supper complete with Estonian rye bread. The Ladies Club, Linda Men's Club and the Recreation Board all work together on the fall supper and share the proceeds.

Before a kitchen was built at the hall, the ladies brought cream cans of water for coffee which was boiled on a wood stove in the basement. They made the lunch on a table upstairs. Gas lanterns hung from the high ceiling. A big pot-bellied stove at the back of the hall and a small stove in the ladies room provided heat. In 1953, the Men's Club decided to give the catering to a group of ladies instead of one or two persons, with 20% of the profit to be given to the hall. In 1954 electricity was installed. In 1957 a kitchen was built on the south side of the hall, all with volunteer help. In 1965 a new dance floor was installed in the hall and in 1966 a stoker was installed. In 1974 a well was drilled. In 1977 and 1978, the Hennel brothers, Henry and Harvey, held a threshing bee at their farm to raise money for the hall. The Ladies Club sold lunches at these functions. As a result in 1979, indoor washroom facilities were installed. In the same year, ball diamonds with back stops were completed with ample room for parking and camping. An extension of the kitchen and large walk-in cooler were welcome additions in 1984. Also in 1984, Glen Collins made signage for the hall.

In 1988 an improved heating system was put in place. A playground for children was made on the south side of the hall which included swings, a slide and merry-go-round. Horse-shoe pits were built for grown-ups. An extension was built on the north side of the hall and a built-in vacuum cleaner was installed in 1986. A burning pit was also developed. The renovation included construction of a liquor bar and a carpeted social dining area on the north side of the hall which easily accommodates 150 people. A covered Bar-B-Q annex was added to the north side and the roof changed to cover the whole area.

The original 1911 wooden hall was probably unpainted. The second hall was painted white and aqua. When the roof was changed, new white siding was added. It is quite a different looking hall now it was in the early years. When the Estonian-Canadian Centennial was celebrated at Linda Hall on Jaanipäev, June 1999, two flag poles and a plaque were placed beside the main

door. The plaque commemorates pioneers 'who made this land our home'. In 2005, a small patio was poured near the plaque and a garden seat was placed nearby. This area is accented by chain railing leading to the main steps of Linda Hall.

From the early 1900's to the present, Linda Hall has been the scene of many community events such as agricultural meetings, concerts, Estonian gatherings, dances, weddings, funerals, reunions and many assorted functions. Province-wide Estonian Jaanipäev celebrations have been held here over the years, including the first Jaanipäev of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society in 2005. In 2000, Lennart Meri, President of Estonia, visited Stettler to view its pioneer past and meet Estonian pioneer descendants at a reception at Linda Hall. The past and present members of the Linda Hall Clubs have generously volunteered their time and skills to keep the hall an active and inviting place. Hopefully future members of the clubs will continue traditions set so long ago.

The above information was taken from articles by Anna Tipman, Joe Tipman, Doris Hennel, and from "Eestlased Kanadas (1975). The information was compiled by Irene and Deane Kerbes, February, 2006.

REMEMBERING PRESIDENT LENNART MERI

Ain Dave Kiil

When Estonian President Lennart Meri visited Alberta in July 2000, following the Esto 2000 cultural festival in Toronto, he immediately demonstrated his interest in and understanding of the history of Alberta's Estonian community



Lennart Meri was welcomed at the Calgary airport by a couple of dozen local Estonians. In the spirit of the Calgary Stampede, some wore Western gear. Later, the Calgary hosts accompanied wife Helle and daughter Tuule Meri to the Calgary Stampede grounds for the Rodeo events and a visit to the Indian Village.

Photo: Helgi Leesment

The President, accompanied by his wife and teen-age daughter, endeared himself to all during a visit to Stettler. A tour of the Stettler Museum, with many Estonian displays and artifacts, a roadside stop at the sign dedicated to Alberta's Estonian pioneers, and a visit to the cemetery near Linda Hall, resulted in discussions about the Estonian settlers who came to Alberta directly from Estonia, Russia, northern States, or via the Crimea .

Lennart Meri was not restricted to competence in things cultural and historical; he was also interested in business and natural resources. One of his interests involved the further development of north-eastern Estonia's oil shale industry which bears some resemblance to Alberta's massive oil sands development.

With the generous assistance of Alta Flights, owned by Alberta Estonian Heritage Society members the Robertsons, the president flew to Ft. McMurray to get a first-hand look at the oil sands operations there.

The presidential entourage concluded its western visit by rail from Calgary to Vancouver. Helgi Leesment reports that Lennart Meri later made it clear that he appreciated the friendly informality, yet attention to detail, on his entire Alberta visit.

As the son of a prominent Estonian diplomat, Lennart Meri attended numerous schools in Europe and he became proficient in six languages.

In 1941, Meri's family was deported to Siberia and the young boy spent his early teen-age years far from his birthplace. His first jobs were as a lumberman and a potato-peeler at the age of twelve.

Back in Estonia, Lennart graduated from Tartu University in 1958 with a degree in Languages and History. The government in Moscow didn't allow him to pursue his interest in history so the president-to-be became an actor and playwright.

He was eventually permitted to undertake trips to Siberia and the Far East, a passion he followed for a quarter-century. During the Soviet occupation of Estonia, Mr. Meri pursued his keen interest in small Finno-Ugric populations by extensive travel and study in eastern Russia, including Siberia. By observing first-hand the lives of the Russian people and especially the challenges facing the smaller Finno-Ugric ethnic groups, he gained an appreciation of the aspirations of these isolated groups as well as a profound understanding of Russian culture. He observed first-hand the festering conflicts between the locals and the central regime in Moscow.

As a writer perhaps his best-known work is *Hõbevalge* (Silver White), a book based on his vast knowledge, scientific study and a fertile imagination about the history of ancient Estonia and the Baltic Sea Region, including the mythical Thule region. One of the major themes of the book involves the impact of a meteorite in central Saaremaa some 3,500 years ago and speculation about the long-term effects of this not only on the island's but also the region's population.

By the 1970's, the Soviets allowed Meri to travel outside the Iron Curtain. In the late 1980's, he worked in Finland and in 1990, a year before Estonia's second Declaration of Independence, he became the country's unofficial Minister of Foreign Affairs and quickly established communication links with the Western World. Days after the failed Soviet coup d'etat in 1991, the President-to-be drove around Helsinki with an Estonian flag in his car's windshield and delivered notices about Estonia's independence to foreign embassies.

When he returned to Estonia from Helsinki, he ordered the authorities to take down the Soviet flag at the Tallinn harbor and declared that "I won't walk onto Estonian soil under a Soviet flag. (City Paper).

Meri was President of Estonia from 1992 to 2002. He leaves behind him a reputation as an amiable and cultivated man. As a lifelong student, Meri brought to the position a depth of knowledge and life experience that served him well during his tenure. The correct measure of a public figure sometimes doesn't surface for many years; in Meri's case, his legacy as a father-figure of Estonia's second period of independence and as a widely-recognized figure in world history is not in doubt. As noted in the *Economist*, he put Estonia back on the map of Europe.

During a visit to Estonia in the fall of 1992, a forestry colleague took me to a Russian military installation on the country's north coast. It was still manned by the Russians who refused to leave.

Two years later, Meri met Boris Yeltsin in Moscow in an effort to resolve the issue. Some reports suggest that shattered glass littered the floor under the negotiating table. The long session led to the withdrawal of Russian soldiers from Estonian soil.

Meri is quoted widely in the international press and his utterings are sometimes referred to as "Meriisms. A couple of examples:

Concerning membership in NATO: "Security is like virginity: you're either a virgin or you're not. You either have security or you don't (City Paper)

About Soviet-style behavior in government and society: "Our most dangerous enemy sits between our ears.

Paul Goble, a friend of Lennart Meri, put it well in his article in Estonian Life when he said that "Lennart Meri had an amazing ability to make friends, to reach out to people, be they presidents or the poorest of his countrymen, literary scholars and filmmakers or those who had never read a book in their lives, and those who began with a basic affection for Estonia and those who had a different set of feelings

Michael Tarm of Associated Press recently referred to Meri as Estonia's Mr. Fix-it. This label was partly attributable to the Soviet way to fix a burnt-out light bulb. The Soviets would plan to fix all light switches and then decide to form a committee to organize the work. President Meri carried a screw driver with him as he moved through the Presidential Palace and immediately fixed anything that caught his eye.

During his brief but much-appreciated visit to Alberta, President Meri impressed all of us who had an opportunity to talk with and listen to him. He was well-versed about the Estonian immigrants who settled here more than a century ago. His thirst for knowledge was obvious, as was his message about the importance of being aware of one's roots and the need to preserve Estonian culture. He reached out and made friends, we felt better, and remain thankful that he was in our midst.

The Alberta Estonian Heritage Society has mailed a message of condolence to Mr. Meri's wife and daughter.

We remember Estonian President Lennart Meri (1929-2006).

ELMAR'S LIBRARY: PART TWO

Anti Liiv, Estonian Psychologist

Part One of Elmer's Library was published in Ajakaja-Winter 2005 issue

In Part One we talked about the books read by 50 to 55-year-old Estonian men in their childhood in the 1960s. This time we'll focus on his books of interest in the 1980s. It was a time when it was very cool to have at least 200 to 300 books in an Estonian home. The books were cheap, approximately the price of a couple of bottles of beer.

Perhaps it was a bit strange to have different reference books at home. To understand the importance of some very important books for preserving Estonian identity and culture following WWII, it is helpful to write a few words about encyclopaedias.

The idea to write a National Encyclopaedia in Estonia arose already at the end of the 19 th century. Estonian-speaking authors were few and not ready to tackle such a comprehensive treatise, or perhaps there were not enough readers to justify the effort. Those interested in searching for facts used German sources up to WWI.

The first Estonian Encyclopaedia (Eesti Entsüklopeedia, or **EE-1**) was published between 1932 and 1940 in independent Estonia. This very well written reference book (8 volumes + 1 interim edition) reflected and supported Estonian culture.

Unfortunately Estonia was occupied by the former Soviet Union during WWII. The new rulers were afraid that this book was too dangerous for the socialist system and tried to destroy all copies of the first Encyclopaedia. It became very rare during the post-WWII years.

In the 1960s, EE-1 came to be perceived as being less anti-Soviet. It was found on open shelves in the Library of Tartu University. As most copies of the book were destroyed during the Stalin era it is not known how many have survived to the present time. Nevertheless, EE-1 is and was highly-priced in Estonian second-hand bookshops. Although EE-1 is more than 70 years old, some facts from this old book are still sought after today.

The next Estonian Encyclopaedia was published (Publishing House of Estonian Encyclopaedia) when the Soviet occupational regime became a bit milder in the 1960s. A well-known Estonian politician, Mr. Tunne Kelam, now a member of the European Parliament, worked as one of about 50 editors in the Publishing House from 1965 -1975. Due to political issues, the first volume (65 000 copies!) wasn't published until 1968.

The official name of the book was the Estonian Soviet Encyclopaedia (Eesti Nõukogude Entsüklopeedia), but it became well known in Estonia under the nickname **ENE**, a very nice Estonian girl's name. Eight volumes of ENE plus an addendum were published between 1968 and 1978. This publication was a very important milestone in Estonian culture under Soviet occupation as all the authors were the best Estonian specialists. Some of the authors had taken part in compiling EE-1 before WWII and their unsanctioned involvement was discussed in cafeterias and family parties.

The success of ENE led to the publication of **ENEKE** , an endearing nickname of ENE, for Estonian children. It was published in four volumes (75 000 copies!) between 1982 and 1986 and quickly became a bestseller.

It should be emphasized that both ENE and ENEKE were psychologically important educational tools in Estonia during Soviet occupation. Pressure was also mounting for Estonians to become bilingual in support of the so-called "Soviet nationality. ENE and ENEKE both supported the Estonian identity and also the development of scientific thinking and writing in Estonian.

Following the publication of ENE-1 work started immediately on ENE-2, the first of several editions. It was published in 1985, the same year that Michael Gorbachev restricted alcohol consumption in Estonia.

This time **220,000** copies were ordered (or bought from bookstores), perhaps the highest number of copies of any Estonian-language publication.

The first volume of ENE had the Soviet censorship numbers (IB #4553 and MB-08646). By the late 1980s the winds of change, fanned by the Singing Revolution, resulted in the declaration of Estonian Independence in 1991.

Volume 4 was the last edition of the Estonian Soviet Encyclopaedia (ENE).

Starting with the 5 th volume, the Publishing House decided to restore the old name "Estonian Encyclopaedia-EE. You can trace the development on Elmar's bookshelf - Volumes 1 to 4 is ENE; starting with Volume 5 the name is EE-2. The latest Volume, published in 2000, is EE-14.

It is interesting to note that two separate sets of atlases were also published: the first one in 1989 with Estonia shown as part of the Soviet Union and identified with Soviet censorship #'s: IB 6715 and MB-0813. The declaration of Estonian Independence in 1991 led to a change in the Estonian border and resulted in much debate about how to correct the 1989 border issue because it was perceived as an insult to national pride. These discussions lasted long enough to allow for the preparation of a totally new, high-quality Large World Atlas(Suur Maailma Atlas) in Estonian, the biggest in the history of Estonia. It was published in 2005.

Estonians lived under Soviet occupation for 50 years. This situation is perhaps the reason why some strange competitions and quizzes (Informiin, Mnemoturniir and Kilvad), based on the use of different reference books, captured people's attention. But that's another story.

So the makeup of Elmar's library illustrates how a small nation of one million Estonian-speaking citizens purchased 220,000 copies of the multi-volume National Encyclopaedias and used them to support their cultural identity through the 20 th and the 21 st centuries. If you visit the land of your ancestors in the future, take time to visit a library and look for these volumes.

Editors note: It is noteworthy that Estonians lined up for hours, sometimes overnight, to order their pre-publication copies of the Estonian Encyclopaedia prior to publication. The author waited in line for four hours. From our detached vantage point we can only imagine how the purchase of a book can contribute to a protest action in support of a nation's identity and culture.

BRONZE WON BY CANADIAN MELLISA WITH ESTONIAN ROOTS

Tiit Lääne

Mellisa is a descendant of Canadian Estonian pioneers who journeyed to the promised land at the very beginning of the 20 th Century. She was born, in the Estonian hometown, so to speak, of Eckville.

Five years ago my travels in the province of Alberta took me from Edmonton to Eckville among other places. During a chat with a descendant of a long-ago Estonian emigrant, Arnold Mottus (Mõttus) mentioned that one of his nieces is active in a sliding sport. Specifically in Skeleton. He was obviously speaking about the current Olympic bronze medallist Mellisa.

"I have been waiting for this competition for a year and I thank God that my wish came true, radiated the cheerful athlete of Estonian ancestry after winning her medal.

Mellisa is World Cup Leader

Mellisa's uncle, Arnold Mottus, states that the young lady became interested in skeleton racing because of her cousin Ryan Lee Davenport. He is also of Estonian descent, and now manufactures skeleton sleds. Almost half of the top skeleton athletes worldwide use his product.

Davenport himself was also a successful skeleton athlete, winning a couple of World Cup competitions and having the complete success of top finish at some World Championships.

Mellisa began skeleton racing in 1996. Her initial results wavered up and down. In the year 2000 she surprised everyone by winning a silver medal at the World Championships, but subsequently achievement at that level eluded her.

"I thought that since I am number two in the world, it would only take a little more effort to achieve number one status. But things are not that simple and I underwent a period of lesser achievement, " explained Mellisa to the Canadian press prior to the Torino games.

At the Salt Lake City Games, when Skeleton re-emerged as an Olympic sport for the first time since 1948, Mellisa did not make the cut for the Canadian team. Her determined rise to international heights began during the following season where she aquired sixth place in World Cup standings and won second place at a World Cup race. From that point onwards, Mellisa progressed closer to the medal winners circle.

Her breakthrough into the absolute top occurred during the current Olympic winter season. Prior to the Torino event, Mellisa stood a tense second in World Cup standing to Switzerland's Maya Pedersen, even though she is leading in the World Cup series with 630 points.

She has medalled in each of her seven World Cup events, including two golds.

At Torino she was not considered a serious medal contender because she had not medalled at any World Championships. However, according to the Canadian media, Mellisa was one of their greater sledding-type medal hopes, and they were not disappointed.



Mellisa Hollingsworth-Richard's Estonian roots extend right to two of the legendary original pioneers, being Hendrik Kingsep and Gustav Möttus. Mellisa is aware of her ancestry, thanks to the family tree compiled by Arnold Mottus.

Tiit Lääne translation of Eesti Päevaleht article, February 24, 2006

Photo: Leesment

Arnold Mottus and Mellisa with her Olympic Bronze medal Torino OM (23. veebruar 2006)
Eesti Päevaleht

Pronksi võitis Eesti juurtega kanadalanna Mellisa

Kanada ajakirjanduse sõnul oli Mellisa Hollingsworth-Richards üks nende kindlamatest medalisoosikutest, ja nad ei pidanud pettuma

Mellisa on Kanada eestlastest pioneeride, kes rändasid töötatud maale 20. sajandi algul, järeltulija. Sündinud nii-öelda eestlaste kodulinnas, väikeses Eckville'is.

Viis aastat tagasi Alberta provintsis ringi liikudes viis minu tee Edmontonist ka Eckville'i. Kohtumistel kunagiste Eestist väljarännanute järeltulijatega mainis Arnold Mottus (Möttus), et üks tema õetütarest tegeleb kelgutamisega. Täpsemalt skeletoniga. Ta pidaski silmas nüüd olümpiamedali võitnud Mellisat.

"Olen aasta aega ainult seda võistlust oodanud ning tänan jumalat, et see läks nii, nagu soovisin, rõõmustas Eesti päritolu sportlane pärast medalivõitu. MK-sarja liider ei pidanud olümpiapronksi pettumuseks, vaid võiduks.

Mellisa on MK-sarja liider

Mellisa onu Arnold Mottuse sõnul tekitas neius huvi skeletonisõidu vastu tema tädipoeg Ryan Lee Davenport. Samuti Eesti päritolu mees, kes nüüd valmistab skeletonikelkusi. Peaaegu pooled ala tipptegijatest sõidavad tema tehtud sõiduvahenditel.

Davenport oli ka ise edukas skeletonisõitja, võites paar MK-võistluste etappi ja esines edukalt MM-il.

Mellisa alustas skeletoniga 1996. aastal. Edu vaheldus ebaeduga. 2000. aastal üllatas ta kõiki

MM-võistluste hõbemedaliga, kuid edasine enam nii edukalt ei kulgenud.

"Arvasin, et kui olen juba maailma teine, siis pole palju puudu jäänud esimesest kohast. Aga kõik ei ole nii lihtne ja arengus tuli tagasilöökk, rääkis Mellisa enne Torino olümpiat Kanada pressile.

Salt Lake City mängudel, kui skeleton taas pärast 1948. aastat olümpiakavva jõudis, Mellisa Kanada koondisse ei mahtunud. Tema veenev tõus rahvusvahelisse klassi algas järgmisel hooajal, mil ta jõudis maailma karikasarjas esikuuikusse ja oli ühel etapil teine. Sealt alates nihkus Mellisa juba medalivõitjatele lähemale.

Läbimurre absoluutsesse tippu toimus aga tänavusel olümpiatalvel. Torino startide eel oli Mellisa Hollingsworth-Richards soosikute pingereas siiski šveitslanna Maya Pedersen järel teisel positsioonil, kuigi juhib MK-sarja 630 punktiga.

Kõigil seni peetud seitsmel etapil on Mellisa kuulunud esikolmikusse ning saavutanud kaks etapivõitu.

Torinos ei peetud teda suurfavoriidiks ehk seetõttu, et tiitlivõistlustel polnud ta seni medalikolmikusse jõudnud. Kanada ajakirjanduse sõnul oli siiski Mellisa üks nende kindlamatest medalisoosikutest, ja nad ei pidanud pettuma.

Mellisa Hollingsworth-Richardsi eestluse juured ulatuvad kahe legendaarsema sisserändajani, kelleks olid Hendrik Kingsep ja Gustav Möttus. Oma päritolust on teadlik ka Mellisa, tänu Arnold Mottuse koostatud sugupuule.

Tiit Lääne

DEDICATION OF NEW WING AT RED DEER AND DISTRICT MUSEUM, 1984: SPOTLIGHT ON MEDICINE VALLEY ESTONIANS

This article was prepared by Nurmi Simm, President of the Edmonton Estonian Society and distributed to Estonian newspapers in Toronto. The dedication of the Museum's new Pioneer's Gallery was an important occasion, especially for Alberta's Estonian community. Under the leadership of Dr. Rita Matiisen, an impressive display of Estonian folk costumes, descriptive materials, and artifacts was assembled and unveiled during the official dedication of the Pioneer's Gallery. This exhibit was on display for 15 years and represented public recognition of Medicine Valleys' Estonian heritage

On Sunday, May 27, 1984, Estonians from Red Deer, Edmonton, Calgary, and other communities gathered in Red Deer to participate in the Official Opening of the Pioneer's Gallery of the Red Deer and District Museum. On prominent display in the new wing is a collection of Estonian national costumes and historic artifacts. This permanent exhibit commemorates the Estonian pioneers who settled in the Medicine Valley of central Alberta near the turn of the 20th century.

The speaker's platform at the opening included a number of local dignitaries, among them the Mayor of Red Deer and the provincial MLA for Red Deer. Also present was the Honorable Mr. John Munro, the Minister of Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. An overflow crowd of 600 people attended the launching.

The Estonian exhibit was made possible by the support of the Medicine Valley Estonian Society, and organized by Dr. Rita Matiisen of Red Deer. She is also a member of the Red Deer and District Museum Society. With the assistance of the local Estonian community, the folk costumes and artifacts of the early pioneers were assembled for the exhibit. The display items are the final contribution to the community at large by the now disbanded Medicine Valley Estonian Society. The display preserves the memory and achievements of early Estonian pioneers who first settled this area.



The display features three mannequins in festive national costumes. Although the majority of the Medicine Valley settlers came from Võrumaa region of Estonia, the costumes were chosen to depict a variety of regions: Vaivara (Virumaa), Mustjala (Saaremaa) and Tõstamaa (Pärnumaa). The costumes and some articles were hand-made by Toronto craftspeople under the coordination of Mrs. Lilla Tombak. Authentic artifacts include a 1884 family Bible, a hand-made school bench from the Estonian School, built in 1909-1910 in Medicine Valley area, and a handmade silver brooch. A modern replica of Estonian hope chest, richly carved with traditional folk designs, by Galina Kodu of Calgary, was also prominently featured. A number of smaller items



rounded out the display. The exhibit backdrop included an original woollen Estonian flag, photographs from Estonia, and a map showing the location of Estonia in Europe. The map of original Estonian homesteads in Medicine Valley, displayed on the left side of the exhibit, was researched and drawn by the late Voldemar Matiisen, Rita's husband.

The establishment of this permanent display of Estonian culture is an important event for the people of Alberta and Canada, and especially for Canadians of Estonian descent. Preservation of the Estonian heritage in this Museum recognizes the prominent part played by Estonian pioneers and immigrants in Alberta. The prominence once enjoyed by Estonians in this part of the country has diminished, but their contributions have helped to lay a sound foundation for our future.

Following the official ceremony and reception, about 50 Estonians and friends gathered at the Red Deer home of Dr. Rita Matiisen. A gala note was added to the gathering because it marked a slightly belated celebration of Rita's 75 th birthday. The gathering gave Estonians from many parts of Alberta an opportunity to meet and mingle, and to celebrate the success of the exhibit. It was the unanimous conviction of those present that Dr. Matiisen deserves much credit for her leadership to preserve Alberta's Estonian cultural heritage. (In November 1984, Dr. Matiisen received the Alberta Achievement Award in recognition of Community Service).



The Estonian display lasted for 15 years and was visited by tens of thousands of Albertans and Canadians. The research carried out by the Matiisen's also provided considerable local history material for the major 1975 publication 'Estonians in Canada'. This publication serves as an excellent resource for our "History of Alberta Estonians DVD and website projects.

The article and pictures were made available by Eda McClung from her family collection.

THE STORY OF THE SEARCH FOR FREEDOM BY THE ESTONIANS OF ALBA FARM: PART 2

*from Estonia to Crimea, Russia: from Crimea to Pierre, South Dakota, USA, and finally, to
Barons, Alberta, Canada*

Story Teller: Barbara Johnson Gullickson 2005 Barbara Johnson Gullickson

Part 1 told of their difficult life in Estonia as serfs of German overlords, reasons for leaving and the arduous three-month journey to Crimea - walking all the way! Among the families leaving were my Great-grandparents - Jakob Erdman, ten years old and Mari Tint was seven. This segment is about their life in Targhan, Crimea.



From information obtained in an interview with Gustav Erdman and his sister, Liisa (Erdman) Silbermann, at Barons, Alberta, in 1963.

The Good Life in Crimea

The land was desolate when the Estonian families arrived in Crimea in 1861, for two reasons. The Crimean War was just over-the reason for FREE land there-and it had been a poor year for crops. The immigrants found deserted homes, grist mills, and other dwellings, which they fixed up and made livable. Twenty-three families settled in a village called *Targhan*, a shortened version of *Ootzgoitargan* which means, in Turkish, *Three Wells of the Old Chief*. The village was quite close to Simferopol. They were strict Lutherans and all the families went to church regularly-except one!

There were several nationalities living in Crimea-Germans, Russians, Estonians, and Turks. Each village was of only one nationality, and there was no intermingling of school, marriage, business, religion, or social life.

A school teacher, in addition to graduation from four years at a teachers' seminary, was the preacher, leader of the band and choir, and officiated at funerals. Pupils had to be able to read and write before starting school. The average beginning age was nine years old, and there were six years of schooling; the term was from September to April. Subjects taught were bible study, catechism, reading, writing, Russian and Estonian grammar, and singing. All lessons were in Russian, except Estonian grammar. All the Erdman children went to school: Natalie, the youngest, only one year. My grandfather, Gustav, started two months late each year because he had to help with the harvest, but he easily caught up.

At the time of the interview, Grandpa Gus and Great Aunt Liisa could still speak and understand Russian.

In the village, men were elected to two-year terms as mayor and two men were appointed to help him with his duties. Jakob was mayor at least twice. He was also the Justice of the Peace for many years. He was a juror on a case where a Turk stole a girl from the village. He could not afford to buy a wife and so stole one of the Estonian girls. He was sentenced to 8 years in Siberia. Stealing girls for wives, seemingly, was a common occurrence. Generally, if the stolen girl was gone more than three days, she stayed with her 'husband' and if less than three days, she was returned to her parents.

Crimea was a fertile land: crops were winter wheat, oats, rye, barley, melons, cucumbers, corn, apricots, peaches, pears, cherries, and grapes. Each farmer had an orchard but no garden, except for melons and cucumbers. Jakob had three quarter sections of land. He also had sheep, pigs, eight to ten horses, six oxen, six cows, chickens, ducks, geese and two dogs-one to guard the horses from thieves.

The houses were built of stone with tile roofs. They had earthen clay floors covered with fine sand. The floor was swept regularly and a new one made when the old one wore out. Most houses were one story with two bedrooms. They had cotton sheeting, home-made blankets, home-made woolens, hand sewing machines, looms, and spinning wheels. They bought thread in the city. They had straw bags for mattresses; these were changed each spring. Their furniture was wood, some made by the village cabinet maker. The tailor made the men's suits of material made at home. Firemen made work shoes. Good shoes were bought in the city.

Clothes were washed in a large tub, rubbed on the bottom, then boiled. The stove was built of bricks with an iron plate on top. A thirty-gallon kettle was on it for wash water. There was a separate brick oven (as high as the ceiling) with the opening in the kitchen and the body in the other room for heat. This oven burned straw for fuel - a large basket held the straw.

There was an outside underground cellar for storage of vegetables. All kinds of meats were pickled twice a year and stored in the cellar. Before the meat could be used, it had to be soaked in water overnight to get rid of the salt. The usual kind of cakes that were baked were those with layers of fruit. Bread was baked, but few pies were made.

Sweet milk was used only for tea and coffee; clabbered (sour) milk was drunk and used on cereal. Chicory was added to coffee and ground in the coffee grinder. Sugar was bought in 40-pound chunks. Dried fish, called taran, were bought in a string of 50 fish.

Breakfast consisted of tea made in a samovar over a charcoal fire, coffee, anchovies, boiled potatoes, cold ham, and fried, boiled, or scrambled eggs. Dinner was usually soup (boiled meat with vegetables), stew, melons, beans, cabbage, sauerkraut, and pickled cucumbers with no vinegar.

Light was provided by a coal-oil lamp. Liisa's job was cleaning the chimney before lighting it. She said it was "a bad job."

In the evening, the children sat at desks writing and drawing. Sometimes they danced the waltz, gallop, and polka to harmonica music. Weddings were festive occasions. A clerk of the court (Justice of the Peace) signed papers, which were taken to the minister who performed the ceremony. The celebration lasted three days, with dancing, eating, and drinking. They drank

wine and home-made beer before and after meals, on holidays, and at weddings.

Beer was made by germinating barley in a wet sack, drying it in the oven, chopping it in a mill, making it into bread, baking it, then putting it in a large wooden barrel filled with hot water with hops. It was left there for a while, then put into wooden casks and drunk as soon as it was cool. To make cider, which was drunk by children also, the large wooden barrel was filled with water. This liquid was kept until sour (it was the colour of weak tea) and then drunk.

The boys wore knickers until they were twelve, and then they wore long pants. The men wore shirts with high collars, buttoned on the side. Dress shirts were white and worn with a tie.

Girls' hair was curled in rags. The young girls wore braids, the older girls wore buns. The men shaved-Jakob used a jackknife. Punishment was usually a scolding. However, Gus and his brother, Robert, were switched on their bare feet for running out in the snow without shoes on. They got up at four o'clock in the summer and six o'clock in the winter.

Transportation was usually in horse-drawn wagons. Most people had shiny wagons. Trains were used in very rainy weather.

A lady dentist filled and pulled teeth, and made false teeth. Municipal hospitals were nice. Targhan had a woman doctor who had graduated from a university in Austria. There was free medical care. Babies were born at home with the neighbour's wife's help.

There was a weekly Estonian paper and a monthly Russian one.

The Estonians were industrious, ambitious and productive. They enjoyed their freedom in the new land and became prosperous land owners.

Jakob's Orchard at Targhan, Crimea, c.1895

100 YEARS OF SHELTERING FAMILIES

*Recollections of Living in the Homestead House
of Jakob and Mari Erdman on a Farm near Barons, Alberta.*

By Glenda Erdman Barnhart, and Carole Erdman Grant, their great-granddaughters.

This home was built in 1906 by Jakob Erdman, his family and their neighbours. Carole said, 'When we removed the old wall paper and coverings we found the names of ALL the people who worked on building the house and the date, 1906. I only wish we had made a note of who they all were because other names besides family were written there. We carefully covered them up with the new surface.'

The house was made of wood with straw for insulation and sheathed with shiplap painted white. Glenda and Carole said that it was cool in the summer and warm in the winter. This New House replaced the sod house, built in 1904 on the homestead, which was where they first lived.

This pleasant farmhouse was built far back from the road, with the front door facing south. The north back door was protected from the weather by a large porch with the entry on the east. The washing machine and various tubs were in the porch, as were outer wear coats, boots, etc.

Entering the large kitchen with a walk-in pantry on the left, I remember a rectangular table, with a bench, a cast-iron coal stove near the middle, against the east wall and a sink with a small pump to bring water from the well (which I think had to be primed often by a large pump). Under the sink drain there was a bucket that was always (in my young mind) in danger of overflowing. Beside the sink was a low shelf on which the drinking water pail stood, with a communal dipper beside it.

I don't remember the other kitchen furniture, but there was a trap door in the floor with a recessed ring handle and this led to a dirt basement where I remember seeing rows of canned fruit in glass jars on wooden shelves. I am guessing that potatoes, carrots and other root vegetables were also kept there. This basement had a nice 'dry dirt' smell which I liked.

There was a smelly kerosene lamp hanging from the ceiling in the kitchen, which was later replaced, much to our delight, with a low wattage electric light bulb when a wind charger was built above the well. There was a wainscoting of narrow tongue-and-groove panels, and the ceiling was also tongue-and-groove, to the despair of my mother as dust constantly sifted down from the attic. Ellen and Roy Johnson's children (our cousins) came to stay with us once, maybe for more than a week, and I can remember us all lined up at the table at breakfast eating our porridge, when an unhappy Gerry plopped his bowl of porridge on Laurie's head, causing a great commotion.

A door on the south wall led to an entry hall which was large enough to have space for two wicker planters holding pots of red geraniums, which I disliked because of the strong odor to my sensitive nose. I was in my fifties before I liked geraniums. There was a telephone in the hall for our party line. Our telephone number was easy - 1111 and other parties on the line had 3 shorts or a long and a short and a long, etc. to call the folks on our party line. To call the operator to

reach other party lines, a button was pressed and at the same time, the handle turned. I used to think I would like to be a Telephone Operator so I would know what all was going on! Later on, I thought working in the village Beauty Parlour would get the same results.

The south front door had a screen door (as did the back door) in the summer and a storm door in the winter. A door on the west wall led to a large bedroom with two south-facing windows and it was in this room that my earliest memory comes to mind. My hurried mother was trying to comb out the tangles in my curly hair and I was crying because it hurt. My great-grandmother was sitting in a large chair by a small table on which was a pitcher and a bowl. She dipped her comb in the water and gently combed out my hair - I remember her kindness.

In the south-east corner of the room there was a large bed; I think it was brass or metal, and I remember hearing that Great-grandpa had died in his sleep in that bed. I remember that Great-grandma also died in her sleep in that bed. The room was sunny and pleasant, and I am sure it had wallpaper on the walls.

A small coal stove in the northwest corner warmed the room. A few years ago I visited Denny Johnson who now owns that house and he said they found 13 layers of wallpaper on the walls.

From the entry hall, there was a door on the east wall leading to the beautiful, large living room, heated by a tall, chrome trimmed parlour coal-burning stove sitting on a metal pad. It had isinglass windows which reflected the colour and shapes of the flames inside. My favourite spot was right in front of it where it was nice and warm. I played there with my doll until my brother took it apart to see what made the eyes open and close. Many tears were shed over that unhappy incident. Putting together the Meccano pieces was great fun, also playing Pick-up-Sticks.

A draped doorway to a large bedroom was to the right of the parlour stove, and in the photo of Great-aunt Natalie's graduation from the University of Alberta, a lovely ornate oak rocking chair with a curved moulded seat was on the other side of the door. In the middle of the room was an unforgettable Stickley-style oak library desk and chair. There was linoleum on the floor, over a wood floor painted brown.

All the tall narrow double-hung windows had lace panels for curtains. In the fall storm windows were put on, to be taken off again when the warmth of spring arrived. These were stored out in some outbuilding until needed again in the winter months.

Mondays were unforgettable as that was Washday, which took precedence over all other activities. The big copper boiler was brought in, filled with water and when it was boiling, washed diapers, handkerchiefs and underwear were boiled. The washing machine had a hand-cranked wringer. Cornstarch was cooked on the stove and Mrs. Stewart's Bluing was always added to the white clothes in the last rinse and everything was hung out on the clothesline, winter and summer. Baby Carole used to grab a chunk of cornstarch and eat it while hiding under the table.

Tuesday was my favourite day as I loved the fragrance of line-dried clothes being ironed. Sad irons with switchable handles were on the range; tablecloths, pillowcases and clothes were ironed, but bedsheets were not ironed - no time for that in this busy household! I got to help

folding the flat things.

Saturday was cleaning day; floors were scrubbed, waxed and polished; furniture was dusted especially thoroughly; and I think often a chicken was killed and cleaned for Sunday's midday dinner. We always ate 'supper' in the evenings, eating the left-overs from the noon dinner, the big meal of the day. At night the round tin tub was brought in, put in front of the cast-iron kitchen coal stove, and it was Bath-time. The youngest, Carole, was bathed first, and she always tried to run away after being dried off. Then on up the line, and after we three children were clean, we were put to bed, with the girls hair curled with rags, clean pyjamas, and a heated cloth-wrapped brick already warming the bed in cold weather. We were tucked in under our feather comforters or wool blankets, a wiggly Carole and I sharing the same bed, which made me long for my own bed!

Grandma Magda Erdman (Jakob & Mari's daughter-in-law) was a good seamstress and made each of us a pieced quilt. Because Alvin was the first grandchild, he got a 'crazy-quilt', made of scraps of velvet, corduroy and wool and scraps of satin. We girls liked it because it felt so good to touch the variety of pieces. My quilt was a soft green background with five-pointed stars made from old dresses.

Outside the house, the yard had been pretty well left to grow on its own, but from the planting arrangements, the flowering shrubs, the row of cottonwoods, the hedges of caraganas, and the occasional tulip which showed up in the spring, it was evident that some excellent planning had gone into that yard. Robert Erdman, son of Jakob and Mari, was a passionate gardener, and imported bulbs from Holland and peonies from Japan.

While he was alive, it was a showpiece, with a clay tennis court on the west side of the yard, and many kinds of flowering bushes, a circle of caraganas formed a magical place to play or have a picnic in the summer. None of his many varieties of irises had survived in the front of the house, but near the well and wind charger, he had made an intersection path, lined with gooseberries, chokecherries, etc. In the summer, my mother sent us out into the yard to find the eggs that the chickens had laid under the bushes, and that was always fun - until, as she cracked open an egg to cook, a REALLY rotten smell filled the kitchen. That egg had been hidden out there too long!

A pig was in an area outside the yard and fed all the table scraps. Other garbage and broken dishes, etc. were dumped down the outhouse pit in the back yard. There was a big woodpile and a barrel of tar which we thought made good chewing gum. In one storage shed I spent many hours winding up the old gramophone and listening to cylinder records of Enrico Caruso and other music.

Of course there was a big garden, as we grew vegetables, berries and crab apples that could be preserved and fed us most of the winter.

We always had a cow and at least one horse, kept in the barn, which was in the very back of the yard towards the fields. Also in the 'back forty' were parked the old-fashioned farm wagons, one of which was a huge horizontal barrel for hauling water. There was also old machinery and a beautiful cutter sleigh with wool mohair seats. Too bad it wasn't treasured and kept somewhere safe. But it was during the depression and Second World War and there was no

thought given to useless things.

In 1944 my father had the house jacked up and moved a mile or so away onto a piece of farmland that was situated on the power line. We must have had good crops, because suddenly we had bright electric lights, a real bathroom carved out of the big bedroom and it had a flush toilet, sink and bathtub. We got an electric refrigerator, stove and washing machine, iron, mangle for quicker ironing and central heating from a furnace in the full cement basement. It was amazing! We went from living as they had in the mid 1800s to having all the conveniences of the modern world.

Glenda standing in the front door, c. 1945

There are many still vivid memories of those days, and one year I made a tiny model of the house and part of the yard for a Barons Historical Day and Estonian and Family Reunion in 2004. These thoughts, and many more, are all there in my memory.

Carole's story:

My earliest recollections of the Jacob & Mari farm house are close to those of Glenda's except that I don't remember the house before it was renovated to have a large kitchen and dining room as it is now. I do remember when my parents renovated it in the early 50's and put drywall on the walls. In the living room beside the doorway to the right as you go into it there is a wonderful secret behind the drywall, the names of all who helped build the house, and the date. I think there were wonderful treasures in the attic as well, but I was never allowed up there.

Glenda talks about the oak library table and the Arts & Crafts chairs that are in a photo or two. These pieces of family furniture are currently in my daughter Kelly's possession. The table is her office desk in her business in Calgary and the chairs are in her living room.

I also have some paintings that were in the house. Two are done with pastels and one is oil. I know nothing about them except that I remember seeing them early in my life. I still have that sewn patchwork quilt top that Grandma Magda made for me that Glenda mentioned. I think my love of fabrics and textures all go back to the quilt of many fabrics that Glenda also mentions - I was 3 years old and I distinctly remember running my fingers over the chunky corduroys, delicate fine silks, rough and scratchy Harris tweeds, and various other pieces. I can still feel them when I remember them!

Quite a few years ago Glenda remembered where the earliest toilet pit was on Great Grandfather Jacob's farm so we decided to dig through the earth in it. We knew that in the early days the toilet pit was the garbage dump and broken china and other unwanted things were dropped in the hole. We found many pieces of china, many bottles, enamel containers that were damaged and several car license plates dated 1917 and 1919. These items are also at Kelly's house. Through the course of generations living on that farmstead (we called it 'the old place'), there were several locations for the old toilet pits and no doubt there are still many unearthed treasures. There was a rumour that someone had lost a diamond ring down one of these during Jakob and Mari's life time but who knows, maybe they are just rumours, for we did not find it!

Editor's note:

This house remains on the land where Victor Erdman (Glenda and Carole's father) moved it in 1944. It is still being used as a residence today. At this time, Dennis Johnson (a great grandson of Jakob and Mari's) owns this property, as well as the quarter homesteaded by Jakob Erdman in 1903.

2006 Barbara Gullickson

THE KRIKENTAL'S START OVER

John Clark
Christmas 1905, Barons, Alberta

Gustav Krikental had the holiday spirit and felt a little rich. He put a whole dollar into the Christmas treat fund at the Erdman's 1905 Christmas party.

Maybe Gustav or his wife, Julie, felt they should make a large party contribution since all their young children would be at the party. Pauline, 15, was the oldest of the three Krikental girls. Mihkel, who was three years old, was the younger of the two boys. Like most people at the party, all the Krikental children had been born in Crimea. In 1903 the whole family made the long journey from the Estonian settlement, Kontshi-Savva, in the Crimean steppes to the plains of Barons, Alberta.

Their last two years had been filled with hard work. With help from their neighbors they had built a sod house, planted the land, and prepared provisions for the harsh winter months. Now the Krikentals were firmly settled in the new Estonian farming community.

Many years later, Maria Kotkas (Sepp), a school friend of the Krikental girls, recalled events of the previous spring.

"It was the first time the preacher came from Medicine Hat and stayed a week. He baptized Hellene Lentman's baby, the first born to that bunch of Estonians. Krikenthal's family had the biggest sod house with a porch built on the front.

So the Palkman's (Mihkel Palkman and Lena Musten) wedding was at Krikenthal's house. They were the first ones to get married in the new place. Lena was dressed in white with a veil and artificial orange blossoms. At that time brides wore orange blossoms, artificial and other silk flowers. The young men would buy their best girls or just girls the artificial flowers. I remember there were more than five young men and all the young girls wore their hair up with flowers in it. At the wedding there was a big dinner and after dinner good things like apples and candy for everyone"

Gustav's neighbors, and his father before him, had made a similar decision almost fifty years earlier to travel to a new land to start a new life. Before immigrating to Crimea, the Kotkas, Sepp, Erdman, Palkman and Krikental families had worked on the neighboring estates in Järvamaa County, Estonia. In Estonia, all the families belonged to the Järva-Madise parish so the Krikental's had known their Crimean-Estonian neighbors for generations. A generation later, in Crimea, they also befriended Lena Musten and her parents, Julia and Karel. The Mustens had only recently come from Estonia to farm in Crimea

Now Gustav's decision to start over in Alberta seemed to have been a good one. Months before the Christmas party, the Krikentals had harvested and sold their first full crop. Now that it was winter the pace was a bit slower. Everyone in the family was excited about the pending arrival of the first Krikental to be born in America? Julie Krikental was due to deliver right after the holidays.

So Gustav, Julie and their kids, joined with their neighbors at the Erdman house to celebrate the holiday season. The Musten, Kewe, Malberg, Kotkas, and Kulpas families were there. The Reinsons, who had immigrated with the Krikentals, were also present, as were the Minniks, Lentmans, Meers, and Watmans. The children were delighted with the decorations, the stories, games, and particularly the songs?the joy of singing seemed to be an inherited Estonian trait. Gustav and Julie looked forward to the new year which they hoped would bring continued good fortune for the growing Krikental family and the close-knit Estonian community. Both had learned to appreciate any good fortune that came their way.

The New Year brought the cold. Mid-January had blinding snow. With the worst weather each family was isolated and on their own. Venturing very far out-of-doors could be bone chilling and even life threatening. The Krikental homestead was far from their neighbors and even farther from town. It was not the best time to be in labor, but Julie's baby couldn't wait. The baby came into the world without any help from a doctor or midwife. Afterward, Julie's family did what they could, but Julie grew weaker and died the same day.

Maria Kotkas (Sepp) recalled, *"the first week after the New Year, 1906, Mrs. Krikenthal had a baby. They had no help and she died leaving three girls, a boy and the new baby. At that time no one wanted someone else's baby. Everyone had their own. Grandma Erdman took the nameless baby and called her Margarete and took care of her. They already had five children of their own and four that had died.....When Mrs. Krickendal died Grandpa Erdman said that we needed a cemetery. So he gave maybe an acre of his land for the cemetery. When the preacher came again he blessed the ground. A lot of people are buried there even Grandpa and Grandma Erdman. At that time it did not cost money to be born or to die."*

Gustav, at age 37 was now a widower in a new land with a farm to work and five young children to provide for. Once again he needed to find the strength to start over.

Starting over in a new land seems to have been, from the very beginning, a part of the Krikental family's genetic makeup.

According to an analysis of Krikental DNA by the National Geographic- IBM Genographic Project, the first known common Krikental ancestor was a male descendent of "Eurasian Adam, who lived some 31,000 to 79,000 years ago in Africa. All male Krikental ancestors can be genetically identified by their haplogroup N, a lineage defined by a genetic marker called LLY22GV and an ancient chromosome marker called M168.

This DNA marker showed that Gustav Krikental's forefathers were part of the second great human migration out of Africa?a migration of hunters who, as the ice age receded, followed the expanding grasslands and abundant game to the Middle East. Descendants of this group hunted herds of buffalo, antelope, and woolly mammoths through Iran to the steppes of Central Asia.

One group of hunters pursued the herds eastward, along the Eurasian steppe, until blocked by the mountains of south central Asia. It was probably in Siberia that a new genetic marker (LLY22G) arose in part of this population. This is the haplogroup N marker which is found in Russia, Siberia, northern Finland, Scandinavia, and Northeastern Europe. Members of haplogroup N include the reindeer-herding Saami people of northern Scandinavia and Russia.

Today it can be used to trace the last several thousand year's migrations of Uralic-speaking peoples including the Finns and Estonians.

Skipping forward a couple hundred generations, we find the modern Krikental ancestors were still Uralic-speaking but worked at farming rather than herding reindeer. The first mention of the Krikental ancestors is found in the Järva-Madise parish records. Births, deaths, and marriages for the serfs who were owned by the Järvamaa county estates were recorded in detail. The parish, located south of Albu Manor, served eight districts: Albu, Ageri, Ahula, Kaalepi, Kurisoo, Orgmetsa, Seidla and pastorage. Parish records show the birth of the first known Krikental ancestor, Kulli Hinrik in 1784. Since serfs were not allowed to have surnames Hinrik was known also by the assumed name *Kulli* which maybe was the name of a farm.

Kulli Hinrik was born into a family of serfs. Throughout his life the German estate landlords, who were his owners and masters, interpreted and enforced the law. They could treat serfs like slaves and floggings were common. Children of serfs could be taken from their parents and sold. Landholders who got into financial trouble were even known to sell wives and husbands separately to neighbor estates.

When Hinrik was 16, the Czar ruled that although serfs were the property of the estate, families must be sold as a unit.

When Hinrik was 28 he married Kai, who was born in 1790 in the Albu estate district. Kai and Hinrik stayed in Ageri just south east of Albu and raised two daughters, Mai and Kai, and a son Mihkel. In 1835 their daughter, Mai, married a soldier named Jaan, the son of blacksmith Seppa Hallika Jagob. Kulli Mihkel, Gustav Krikental's father, was born in 1819.

Between 1816 and 1819 the serfs were formally emancipated, so Kulli Mihkel was technically born a freeman. Freedom brought few changes to daily life since the Czars continued to pass laws that, alternatively expanded, then restricted individual rights. Also each estate owner still interpreted the law?usually for the benefit of the estate. Former serfs could not own land and often remained bound to an estate by obligations owed to the land owners. Gradually peasants got the rights to change their rural dwelling place, sell their labor to any estate, and take a surname.

As freemen, Mihkel and his father Hinrik may have left the Kulli farm for other work?parish records list Henrik's occupation as watchman, which at that time was a prestigious occupation. Maybe because of unpleasant memories of the Kulli farm or maybe just because they could, the name Kulli was dropped in favor of a new surname recorded with the Ageri estate as *Grekenthal*, *Grekental*, and *Krekental*. If the name *Grekenthal* originated from German it can be translated as "the people from the green valley. If the name *Krekental* originated from Estonian it might have been "Germanized to Grekenthal. Many Estonians wanted to take uncommon, even unique names. The name Krekental is unique and may have been created from whole cloth since all Krekentals are Mihkel's descendants. For the next 50 years the form Grekenthal was used for legal and civil records. The family probably used the Estonian form, Krekental, in everyday life.

In 1842 Mihkel married Mina Kirspu in Ageri?the same year Mihkel's mother, Kai, died at age 52. Judge Herr Gustav Ferdinand Hermann von Baggehuffwundt, the owner of the Ageri estate,

witnessed Mihkel and Mina's November wedding. This was the only peasant wedding where his attendance was recorded. His one-time-only presence let's us speculate that Mihkel's father may have been a watchman assigned to the Manor house campus where he was personally known.

Mina's family surname was registered with the Ageri estate as both *Kirschbaum* and *Kirsbaum*. Only Mina's brother, Jacob used the German version, *Kirschbaum*. Mina and the rest of the family used the Estonian version, Kirsipuu. The Kirschbaum and Palkmann families were registered with *both* the Albu and Ageri estates. Included among the hundreds of peasants registered with the Albu Estate were the Erdmann, Kotkas, Kleesmann, Otraw, Salman, Palkmann, Pedow, Reinson, Salman, Sepp, and Valkman families.

Six years after his own wedding, Mihkel Grekenthal witnessed Mina's sister Anno's marriage to Jaan Pilwe. In the years following both weddings, the Järvamaa county peasants grew bolder, wiser, and more rebellious. When the peasants exercised their rights as freemen, landowners would sometimes call in the soldiers to keep the peasants "in their place."

The Grekenthals and their neighbors resented their treatment by the estate owners and yearned for a better life for their families. In the years between 1856 and 1863 Czar Alexander II granted Estonian serfs more rights to education, ownership of land, and the freedom to move within and outside the country. In 1861 he freed all Russian serfs.

These rights helped embolden to action the Järvamaa county peasants. They learned that the Czar would give them their own farms in Crimea. The Tartars were exiled to Turkey following the recently concluded Crimean War. Now Tartar farms were vacant and the Russian government needed settlers to come to Crimea and work the land. The Czar promised free land, free seed, and freedom from the military draft. This was welcome news for Mihkel and Mina since the family now had just one daughter, Mai, and five sons: Jakob, Gottlieb, Mihkel, Jaan, and Jurri.

Many of the Järvamaa county peasant families were related through blood and marriage so plans for immigration to Crimea spread easily through the community. When the estate owners learned of the plans they grew fearful of losing their low cost work force and tried to block immigration efforts. Albu Manor overseers called in the soldiers to battle with the peasants in what is still remembered as a blood bath.

Mihkel Grekenthal was among a bold group of Järvamaa county peasants who signed and sent a letter to the Czar to complain that their landlords would not provide the release papers that would allow them to immigrate to Crimea.

A dream of starting life over in a new land, completely free from the whims of estate owners grew among those who had endured oppression and whippings at the Albu and Ageri estates. Long delays in obtaining passports were the rule. Eventually, three Kotkas families, the Palkmans, the Grekenthal family, and Mina Grekenthal's sister Anno and her husband Jaan Pilwe (all registered with the Ageri Estate), were among those obtaining passports.

Gradually most families who applied were granted passports and the freedom to attempt the back-breaking 1,600 mile journey south to the "warm new land of Crimea.

Notes regarding names

Spelling of family names has generally been taken from source materials. Many surnames went through many changes between their original selection in Estonia and their use in Crimea, Canada, and the USA.

The Krikental family name was recorded as "Grekenenthal on Crimean immigration, birth and death records. The name had changed to "Krikenthal on papers supporting immigration to Canada and later the USA.

In American homestead, legal, and death records the name was recorded as Kirkendahl, Krikendahl, Krikendal, Krickendahl, and, Krickentol.

Interestingly, about 1905 both Gustav and his cousins that remained in Crimea all seemed to favor the spelling "Krikental.

For this article, the family name is spelled as it was historically: Grekenenthal for Estonian and Crimean family history and Krikental for American family history.

Also from the Kulli farm (or place), Kulli Jagob's children took the surname Orraw (Orav). Kulli Jürri, vabadik got the surname Waht (Vaht). And Kulli Otto registered the surname Kesker.

Thanks to Helgi Leesment, and Dave Kiil for research, fact checking, and editing

ESTONIAN CHAPEL IN ALBERTA: 100 YEARS OLD

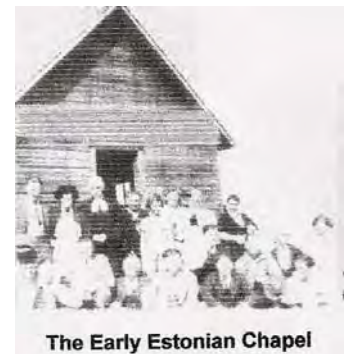
Irene Kerbes

In 1905, when the railroad was completed to Stettler, Alberta, there was a group of Estonian people of the Lutheran Faith living in the area south of Stettler. At a meeting of the local people, Pastor John Sillak, an Estonian Lutheran, came from Medicine Hat, Alberta to address the gathering. He explained that the Government would give two acres of land for a cemetery, probably taxable. If the people would decide to build a Church, then the Government would give them ten acres, and no taxes. The Estonian group, being devout Lutherans, wanted a sanctuary to worship in and a sacred place to bury their deceased. Taking Sillak's advice; the group pursued the ten acres of land.



The Estonian Cemetery and Chapel were established in April, 1906, located on

S.E. ¼ -28-37-19, about a mile east of present day Linda Hall. The Gov't gave a grant of ten acres from this quarter to the Evangelical Lutheran Church-"Puha Johannese Lutheriusu Kogudus "Holy John Lutheran Congregation- the Church had its beginning. People gathered in the home of Joseph Hennel for the purpose of organizing in the faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. John Sillak, who had a P.H.D. in Philosophy and spoke several languages; addressed the assembly as to which foundation it was to be organized. John Sillak traveled over an enormous area, serving scattered Estonians and other Baltic immigrants from California to Manitoba.



The land was acquired from Christian Hennel in 1906. It is believed that Hans Asberg was the main carpenter when a simple all lumber structure was built by local Estonian volunteers and a cemetery was also created. The Chapel is a simple wooden building on the knoll over-looking the landscape. On the east and west walls are four-foot square windows, a door on the south end; and a cross on the top of the peak.

In the interior there are plain wooden pews, and an altar painted gold. Pastor Sillak held services here. He baptized the children and buried the deceased. When Pastor Sillak was unable to serve the Congregation, Gustav Nicklom, who served as a Vesper in Estonia, conducted the necessary service

The first caretaker of burials in 1906 was Hans Asberg, as he was the only one who could speak English. In 1909, this job was taken over by Gustav Nicklom until 1915. The post was open until 1930, when Martin Hennel filled in until 1932. At this time Joseph Tipman Jr. became Secretary-Treasurer and he kept the burial records until his death in 2000. Jay Tipman then kept the records until he left the area. He gave all of the records to Vern Raho.

According to statistics, there were three burials in 1907, these being the first of many to be buried in the Estonian Cemetery. Unfortunately, Rev. Sillak decided that two certain persons did not follow the teachings of the Lutheran faith so these people were buried outside of the Cemetery. At a later date, the Gov't granted another acre of land; thereby adding the two graves to the Cemetery.

The founders of the St. John Lutheran Congregation were: Rev. John Sillak, Naden Silverman, Hans Asberg, Kristian Magi, John Kerbes, Martin Oliver (Ebruik), Alex Saar, Christian Hennel, Anders Negols, Joseph Hennel, Hans Johanson, John Kolga, Otto Renglas, Mrs. Magnus Tipman and Mrs. Joseph Tipman Sr. The idea was to get ten acres of land from the Federal Gov't for \$10.00 fee. The Gov't was to notify John Sillak, the Pastor, as the land was, and then an inspector would be ordered to inspect it. The Estonians complied with all regulations and a Patent was issued to the Estonian Group and in 1910 the Gov't forwarded the patent to the Pastor. The Pastor was ill with rheumatism so he proposed to send the Patent over to Hans Asberg, secretary of the Trustees, because the chairman, Hans Johanson, had passed away on Sept.29,1910. Hans Asberg would not accept the Patent because he didn't want the Congregation to think that he would get the land for his own use. Pastor Sillak accepted the Patent and brought it to the gathering at a regular business meeting, Jan. 4-1910- in Docendo School-it was 50 degrees below zero!

A meeting was held at Joseph Hennel's in 1911. The elected chairman was Joseph Tipman Sr. and the Secretary was Hans Asberg. The assembled people were asked to contribute to raise the \$10.00 fee. Those who did contribute were: John Sillak, Martin Silverman, Hans Asberg, Christian Magi, John Kerbes, Martin Oliver, Alexander Saar, Christian Hennel, Anders Negols, Joseph Hennel, John Kolga, Otto and Jacob Renglas, Mrs. Magnus Tipman and Mrs. Joseph Tipman.

The Creed Read: "He who wants to be a member of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran , St John's Congregation must accept these creeds unconditionally and believe what they say. The title was given in the names of Joseph Tipman Sr. Cristian Hennel and William Hennel- and that this land is the property of the Congregation and must remain with the Congregation forever.

The local people helped to maintain the cemetery and gave generously of their time and money to build a fence around the Cemetery and to care for their Church. Those who helped had the eternal right to bury their deceased in the Cemetery. It was written and dated Dec.10,1929.

"Whosoever troubles us after this meeting of the 10 th day of 1929, by trying to rob from us, the Church and with the Church and the Cemetery; these persons are not allowed to bury no corpses in our Cemetery.

Signed by: Joseph Hennel
Christian Hennel
William Klaus
Pastor John Sillak

Secretary Joseph Tipman Sr., Christian Hennel and William Hennel were the first Trustees and kept the records. Others to follow in this capacity were Gustav Nicklom, George Klaus Sr., Joseph Hennel, Joe Tipman Jr., Martin Hennel, Rudolph Hennel, Alfred Klaus, Otto Nicklom and

many others.

There was a time when the Chapel and Cemetery fell into an unkempt state. The Gov't contacted the Linda Hall Men's Club and informed them - if the area was not improved, the Gov't would relocate the remains to another cemetery. The Men's Club contacted the local Estonian families and organized a clean-up bee in June of 1967. The people came with equipment and lots of energy and began the restoration. The Chapel was moved to its present site, closer to the burial ground. The Chapel received new windows, a new door and a paint job. A new fence, several gates and a sign were eventually erected. Trees and a hedge of lilacs were planted. Rose Kerbes (Albert), grand-daughter of Gustav Nicklom, stamped the iron crosses which were placed in rows to signify the many unmarked graves.

In 1996, a trust fund was set up for the perpetual care and maintenance of the Chapel and grounds.

In 1997, a new roof and siding were put on the Chapel. This was done to preserve the original structure from the weather. The interior is as it was in 1906.

In the roadside Cemetery, beneath rows of iron crosses and many beautiful headstones, lie approximately one hundred Estonian Pioneer family members providing mute testimony to the early Estonian presence in the area. But the struggles and great contributions of the Pioneer Estonians are alive in the memories of their children and grand-children; and should become part of the awareness of all Albertans seeking to understand the many cultures which have come together to make today's Alberta.

"May they rest in Peace and not be forgotten

Information has been taken from The Estonian Cemetery Records and articles by Joe Tipman, Jr.

Compiled by Irene Kerbes 2006

President George W. Bush visited the Estonian capital Tallinn on November 28, 2006 enroute to the NATO Conference in Riga, Latvia. He is the first US President to visit Estonia.

According to the White House press release President Bush, during the joint press conference with Estonian President Ilves, stated that "we talked about how our nations can cooperate to achieve common objectives and promote common values, values such as human dignity and human rights and the freedom to speak and worship the way one sees fit.

Bush stated that he considers Estonia "a strong friend and ally of the US. He also said that Estonians understand the "need to resist tyranny and realize their dreams of living in a free society.

Several news agencies reported that President Bush was particularly impressed with Estonia's tax system: "they've got a tax system here that is transparent, open and simple. He was presented with two gifts: a glass sculpture and a Skype wireless phone that can be used to make calls over the Internet.

COMING OF AGE: TARTU, AUGUST 2006

Steve Appleton

I am honoured to be asked to share my experiences while in Estonia serving as a Senior Lecturer for the Baltic Defence College. I have been fulfilling this duty for the past three years where I instruct in the subjects of international strategy and strategic studies. The fact that a NATO sponsored Defence College was located in Tartu, Estonia was originally a surprise to me, not being familiar with its exact location. Three years later, I can say that the selection of Estonia was visionary, and the selection of Tartu, as I shall relate below, was magnificent.

The road trip to Tartu, after arriving in Tallinn via London, Dubai, and originally Kabul, Afghanistan, reminded me of two places where I previously resided. Firstly, the landscape, green and rich with agriculture, could have been a snapshot of anywhere in Canada. Looking about I saw the beauty of a countryside full of life and activity. Estonia also reminded me of Germany; the development of the road system, infrastructure, and traffic signs, spoke to me as if I was once again traveling along the infamous Autobahn in Germany back in the 1980s.

This mental picture of Estonia was an interesting mélange of images. Both images, very powerful in their own right, yet calming, beautiful, and highly impressive when brought together.

As we arrived in Tartu, the familiar sites of cobblestone streets, parks, and Toome Hill emerged. The combination of old Gothic buildings and new highrises spoke of the emergence of a city and people that were moving forward into the 21st Century, whilst recognizing and appreciating the uniqueness of their heritage. Tartu is a university town; the University of Tartu is well recognized in this region of the world as a leading institution in education, from medicine to astronomy, from KJ Peterson to FR Faehlmann.

The city also features both a new city centre and an old town. Believed to have been established in the 13th Century, the Old Town within Tartu features such historic jewels as the St. John's Church with its terracotta decorations, the Town Hall, and the trapezoid-shaped marketplace. The new city centre was, in part, built after the Second World War, when almost 50% of the buildings in Tartu were destroyed. Today, the new city centre features the Tartu Art Building, the Vanemuine Theatre, the popular Wilde pub, and the Emajõe Business Centre. In the daytime, the streets are full of vibrant, healthy looking Estonians, youthful in appearance, and surprisingly familiar with the English language.

In my opinion, the most impressive feature of the Town Hall is the monument built in 1998 of a young couple kissing. Situated in the midst of a circular water fountain, this monument captures the spirit and youthfulness of Tartu, if not all of Estonia. To view the couple is to think of the future and the opportunities that exist for those willing to strive forward. I am told that a competition is held every year to see how long participating couples can maintain the exact pose of the sculpture. The event is reportedly hugely popular with all Estonians.

This does not surprise me. It is evident to a visitor, such as me, that all Estonians have embraced the theme of the passionate monument: the desire to move forward and create

opportunity in a new era.

About the Author:

Steve was raised in Red Deer, Alberta and is the eldest son of Don and Yvonne Appleton. He has spent 27 years in the Canadian Army, serving in Germany, Bosnia, Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan. He retired in March 2005 as a Colonel.

Since then, Steve has served as a Project Manager for the International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan, for NATO, and he is presently serving with the UN as the Head of the road construction effort for that country.

Steve holds degrees in civil engineering, an MBA, and a Masters degree in strategic studies.

He has been married for 23 years and has two daughters. The older daughter is 19 years of age and in third year at the University of Calgary. The younger daughter is 16 years of age and in Grade 11 in Calgary.

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

The first issue of AjaKaja appeared in November 1991. It was a single, two-sided sheet that described various activities of the Edmonton Estonian Society such as Jaanipaev celebrations and the first of many sauerkraut bees. However, its most significant news was that Estonia was once again independent! The past fifteen years have brought many changes to AjaKaja and these mirror the extraordinary changes for Estonia and amongst those in the Alberta Estonian community.

The centennial celebrations highlighted the lives and legacy of Estonian pioneers. They also raised awareness that Alberta is the only Canadian province to have 100 years of Estonian settlement. More evidence of the Alberta Advantage! The centenaries also showcased a wealth of historical photos, letters and artifacts. All these told the story of starting anew.

In this, the 25th issue of AjaKaja, an invitation is extended to 'get involved and share your story'. Whether pioneer, settler, immigrant or other, Alberta Estonians have a story to tell. AEHS is hoping to complete a DVD to showcase a centennial collection of the people, issues and events that built our community and province. The scope of the DVD project will be determined by funding; however, the prospects are promising.

A premiere of the DVD is planned for Jaanipaev 2007. All are invited to attend this event and spend a family weekend in the recreational heartland of Alberta. AEHS has accepted an invitation from the West Coast Estonian Festival to do a multimedia presentation, including this DVD, in Los Angeles in August, 2007. This is a perfect opportunity to showcase our history. This issue of AjaKaja features some Estonian pioneer communities in Alberta and western U.S.

Estonia continues to receive abundant world coverage across a broad spectrum of topics, such as politics, sports, tourism and computerization. AjaKaja has reprinted many of these since they present Estonia in the context of the world stage. Unfortunately, copyright laws make it prohibitive to continue to do this. Editorial staff is grateful to our many contributors who send articles and suggestions. The newsletter reflects the interests, views and contributions of our readers.

On behalf of AEHS, may the joy of the Christmas season be with you throughout the coming year.

THE NATIONAL ESTONIAN FOUNDATION OF CANADA: A VISION FOR AN ESTONIAN FUTURE IN CANADA

THE FUTURE OF THE CANADIAN ESTONIAN COMMUNITY DEPENDS ON ALL OF US.

The National Estonian Foundation of Canada (NEFC) has made significant changes to become a catalyst institution linking Canadians of Estonian descent in a network that affirms, inspires and supports their achievements and aspirations.

Together, with the community and its leaders, we are revitalizing and connecting the Estonian Canadian community across Canada to achieve even greater success.

With your help, the National Estonian Foundation of Canada and its member agencies will continue to work with dedication to achieve meaningful results in keeping our community strong and ensure our heritage for our future generations.

There's only one way we can achieve all of this... together.

The National Estonian Foundation of Canada is a registered charitable organization, which has been serving Estonians in Canada for more than three decades. The organization continues to expand in its support of Estonian youth, educational, cultural and community programs. Our goal is to strengthen our institutions and community participation through financial support and counsel.

A professional volunteer Board of Trustees of leading community members governs all NEFC decision-making. The Board oversees how donor money is used, shapes our strategic vision and plan, and monitors organizational performance.

If you have a solid idea for an activity or project that you would like to lead in your local Estonian community, then please contact the NEFC by telephone at 416-465-5600 or info@estonianfoundation.ca to find out if you qualify for sponsorship.

NEW PRESIDENT FOR ESTONIA

The election of Swedish-born diplomat Toomas Hendrik Ilves as president of Estonia means that all three Baltic States are now led by former exiles from Soviet power.

"It's a response to political corruption and scandals. These outsiders are free from that, and bring a fresh transparency and honesty to politics, Andres Kasekamp, professor of Baltic politics at Tartu University, told Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa.

All three Baltic States were occupied and annexed by the Soviet Union in 1944-45. Many Baltic citizens fled to the west rather than live under communism but maintained contact with their homelands until the collapse of the USSR in 1991.

Returning exiles have played an important role in the development of Baltic society since independence, influencing local journalism, economics, arts and entertainment, as well as politics. Some have been criticized for not understanding the Soviet past, however.

Toomas Ilves, 52, was born in Stockholm to exiles from Soviet-dominated Estonia, which the Red Army conquered in 1944-45. Like so many Baltic refugees, his parents later moved to the United States, and Ilves was educated at Columbia University, studying psychology.

In the 1980s he began working for the US-funded Radio Free Europe, becoming head of its Estonian desk in 1988. He returned to Estonia after the fall of communism and, in 1993, was appointed ambassador to the United States, Canada and Mexico, becoming foreign minister in 1996.

Elizabeth II made the first-ever visit by a British monarch to the Baltic States in October. There, she praised the Baltic people for their strength in the face of oppression, and their determination to regain independence. "I have seen three very different countries but have seen one feature that you all share. It is that indomitable spirit, which was able to keep alive the flame of independence, despite all attempts to extinguish it, during the very worst of times, the queen said here Thursday at a state dinner.

"It is this spirit which has driven forward the rapid political, economic, and social change in all your countries, change which is not something to be measured simply by statistics, but in the freedom, peace and prosperity which all your peoples now enjoy.

Thousands of people packed into Tallinn's medieval City Hall Square to give Britain's Queen Elizabeth II a musical send-off from the Baltic states with an open-air concert called "Estonia Sings.

LEP 2007 LOS ANGELES XXVIII LÄÄNERANNIKU EESTI PÄEVAD

Greetings,

The West Coast Estonian Days are beckoning again next year.

It is with pleasure that I invite you to the 28th West Coast Estonian Days to be held in Los Angeles next summer. The festival will take place from August 9 through **12**, 2007. It is not too early to plan your next summer's vacation and we sure hope that your destination will be our four day festival in Los Angeles, California. Come one, come all. Meet old friends and make new ones. The presentations at the festival will be bi-lingual for all to enjoy.

The event will be held at the magnificent Millennium Biltmore Hotel, located in downtown Los Angeles. Special event room rate of \$149 for single and double occupancy will be offered. Children can be accommodated on rollaway beds.

We have worked hard to prepare a content filled, interesting program for the festival. The program, in part, is geared to showcase Estonian arts and culture. This has always been one of the purposes why the festivals are held: we, Estonian Americans / Canadians, do not want to forget our cultural heritage.

But there is more. There will be a two part, two day seminar on recent Estonian history, encompassing the years 1940 to 1991, a tragic period in the country's history that has affected the lives of nearly all Estonians. We will have a lecture by a brilliant mind on European genetics and linguistics. It may answer the age old question of where did the Estonians and their language originate from. Is the origin in the east or in the west? Come and find out. The Alberta Estonian Heritage Society will have a multi-media presentation on Estonian pioneers and their descendants in the heartland of Canada. Here I would like to interject an invitation to all Estonian pioneer descendants wherever they may be, to join the festival. There will be a festival ball and a picnic with fun and games. For the sports minded, there will be a golf tournament and a morning 5K jog (maybe two). For the insomniacs, you can idle the time away in the late-night 'secret' festival pub. These are only some of the highlights of the four day program.

Come and enjoy beautiful Southern California with its pleasant sun-filled climate, its sandy beaches, nearby mountains and deserts. Let's not forget the world class city of Los Angeles itself, worthy many a visit here. But please, let's stay with the festival while it lasts. I will venture to say that you will not regret it.

Until we meet at the XXVIII West Coast Estonian Days in Los Angeles

Juri Tint, President 2005-2007

Estonian. League of the West Coast

JOHANNES "JOHN KERBES - EARLY SETTLER

Johannes (John) Kerbes was the fourth son born to Liisu and Mihkel Kerbes on November 7, 1880, in Tver, Russia. The family were serfs in Estonia, and with the hope of owning land, they moved to Russia. There they were given four acres of land and a cow. This was a private deal with the landowner, a Mr. Brunt. The men had to work for him in the forest until the debt was paid off.



When the young men reached 25 years of age; they had to serve in the Czar's army for seven years. The Russians needed manpower in their conflict against Japan between 1903 and 1905. To avoid conscription into the Russian military, Johannes Kerbes and Alec Liiv came to Canada in 1903.

The Estonians were promised certain benefits in return for their relocation to Russia, such as not having to serve in the military, not having to pay taxes for a certain period of time, and having freedom of religion. These turned out to be LIES!

John Kerbes left Estonia at the age of 23 in 1903. He travelled by ship from Liverpool, England, and arrived in Halifax, N.S., on September 25, 1903. The ship had a total of 752 passengers: 47 in cabins and 705 in steerage, for. After John arrived in Halifax; his only suitcase was stolen, leaving him with nothing. He managed to work his way west to the Red Deer, Alberta, area and on to Sylvan Lake. Eventually he settled in the Linda Hall district and worked on tobacco farms, apple orchards, and whatever jobs he could get. In 1904, John filed on a homestead at N.W.1/4-20-37-19-W4th Meridian for a \$10.00 fee and ownership of 160 acres of land. When he homesteaded, it was easier to walk to Red Deer than to take a team of oxen, when he needed supplies and his mail. In the absence of roads, the return trip would last four days. He would camp by a slough and cook some oatmeal for himself. In later years, he went to Blumeneau Store, 16 km north of his homestead, for mail and supplies.

In 1909, John married Sophia Wartnow; whom he had met near Sylvan Lake. Sophia, born in January 1891 on the family's homestead south of Stettler, was the daughter of Michael Wartnow and Elizabeth Kask. John and Sophia resided on John's homestead and had four children:

Julia (1910-1987) married Dick Hennel
Alexander (1912-1966) married Hazel Galleberg
Archie (1914-2003) married Rosella Viger
Hilda (1916) married Chummy Dancocks

In 1910, the Estonian community decided to build a community hall, Linda Hall. John Kerbes donated an acre of land for the site at N.W. ¼-20-37-19-W4th. John was the Secretary of the "Linda Eesti Põllumeeste Selts or "Linda Estonian Farmers Organization. He was a member of the Docendo School Board for many years. When the Kerbes children attended Docendo

School, the Kerbes family lived on the Liiv place.

In 1910, Johannes' brother Jaan, his wife Annette, and their three children, as well as Liisu Kerbes immigrated from Estonia, and they all lived with John and Sophia and family in the two-room house. In 1911, another brother, Peter, wife Julia, and eight children also immigrated, and the entire clan lived together for six weeks. Jaan and Peter's families later homesteaded west of Big Valley, also known by the locals as Kalev.

Sophia died of cancer on August 2, 1918, in Calgary General Hospital. She left a letter to her daughter, Julia (aged 8) instructing her to look after Archie, Alec, and Hilda and to keep them clean. Sophia was buried in the Estonian cemetery near Linda Hall. Following the funeral, John Kerbes sat by the door of the old log house with his violin wrapped in one of Sophia's blouses.

In 1920, John married Sophia's sister, Minnie, in Stettler, and they lived on the homestead until 1927. Minnie and John had five children:

Helen (b.1922) married Pat Mulligan

Ernie was born in 1925 on the homestead. He married Irene Sivacoe

Marjorie (b. 1927) married Bill Olive

Geneva (b. 1929) married Don Parker

Jim (b. 1930) married Helen Mulhbach

In 1927, Ernie's family moved to their current farm site at S.E.1/4-13-37-20-W4th. They built an Estonian sauna of logs. When the bathhouse began to deteriorate, a lumber sauna was erected. The sauna was enjoyed by many people for a lot of years. The Kerbes children attended Spring Lake School.

John and Minnie worked very hard and raised their family of nine children in a home filled with music, song, Estonian culture, and customs. John taught the four boys to play the violin. Ernie says "Archie was the best violin player in the family. Archie learned to play the violin, guitar, and piano and was able to take a few lessons, and mastered piano-accordion. In the early years, John, Archie, and Alec played at local dances and functions, including their supper! Helen played the piano and sang. She competed in Music Festivals and was the pianist and singer with her cousins "The 4K's-for many years. Helen resides in Penticton, B.C., and enjoys entertaining seniors in Lodges and at various functions.

Oscar and Annie (Wartnow) Raho were married in 1932. Archie Kerbes on the piano, and Ed Raho on the violin, played for their wedding dance at Spring Lake School.

Archie Kerbes also played the piano with his cousins' band, the 4K's at different times.

Ernie and Jim Kerbes play the violin by ear and are always called upon at family gatherings and parties to entertain. This tradition is carried on by Ernie and Jim's grand-children, Nathan Kerbes and Stephanie Marshal.

To quote Ernie Kerbes "There was always a piano or a violin being played in John and Minnie Kerbes' home, and lots of singing in Estonian and English. Along with the music and singing, there was dancing by young and old! Grandchildren of John and Minnie recall many happy times visiting, singing, dancing, and of course enjoying the homemade headcheese and rye

bread that Minnie always served at celebrations.

Ernie Kerbes married Irene Sivacoe in 1953, and they lived in the farmyard with John and Minnie; raising a family of five children. John Kerbes did not learn to drive a vehicle. In 1959, John and Minnie retired to Stettler, where Minnie was employed at the Stettler Municipal Hospital. John passed away May 8, 1963, and was buried on May 10, 1963, in Lakeview Cemetery in Stettler. Minnie moved back to the farm in 1966 and later into a mobile home in Big Valley, to be near her daughter, Marjorie Oliver. Minnie Kerbes passed away on October 30, 1977, in Stettler and was also buried in Lakeview Cemetery.

Like all pioneer families, the Kerbes' endured many hardships, but with lots of hard work, determination, and tenacity, they were able to fulfill the hope and dream of being free and to own their own piece of land. John and Minnie left a legacy of Estonian culture and customs to their large family who celebrate the traditions with the gift of music.

Information was provided by Ernie Kerbes, Jim Kerbes, Shirley Raynard, and Lorraine Gerlitz.

Compiled by Irene and Deane Kerbes, 2006.

HISTORY SOCIETY OF ALBERTA HONORARY

Lifetime Membership Awarded to Ralph Erdman

Nominated by the Lethbridge Historical Society

Ralph Erdman has worked hard on behalf of the Lethbridge Historical Society for the past 25 years. From the time he joined the Society in 1981, he was a Councillor on the Executive until 1994. He joined the Book Committee in 1981 and took over book sales at that time, continuing tirelessly in that position until he retired in 1998 at the age of 84. Besides ensuring that the Society's publications were available in local vendor outlets, he travelled to various outlets in the south, taking the Society's new and old publications to venues such as Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump and the Fort Macleod Museum.

Ralph Erdman was born in 1913 at Barons, Alberta, to Gustav and Magda Erdman. He attended school in Barons and, in 1930, graduated from the Claresholm School of Agriculture. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture degree from the University of Alberta in 1936, and a Master of science degree in 1938. In the early part of his career, he used his knowledge working on soil surveys for the University of Alberta, and as a soil specialist at the Lethbridge Research Station. In 1949, he returned to farming in the Barons district, where he became interested in exhibiting grain. His efforts brought him the 1961 World Wheat Championship at the Toronto Royal Winter Fair. Ralph married Karen Suitso in 1950, and they have one daughter, Katheryn Anne Beveridge, and two grandchildren.

Photo: Ralph Erdman receives Honorary Lifetime Membership plaque from Mrs. Jeane Johnstone.

Ralph has received several awards in recognition of his work. In 1990, he received the Alex Johnston Award of Merit from the Lethbridge Historical Society. He also received the Historical Society of Alberta Millennium Award in February 2000.

Ralph Erdman is a man of many interests, including photography, archeology, and banding mountain bluebirds. He is one of the world's best kept secrets and richly deserves this Honorary Lifetime Membership.

ESTONIAN PIONEERS IN ALBERTA: COMMUNITY HALLS AND CEMETERIES

Dave Kiil

In the late 1800s and the first decades of the 20th century Estonian pioneers settled west of the Great Lakes on both sides of the 49th parallel in the U.S. and Canada, including Alberta, Montana, North and South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Availability of large blocks of land was the primary attraction. Important Estonian agricultural communities were established in Bloomville, Wisconsin; Fort Pierre, South Dakota; Daglum, North Dakota; Chester, Montana; and Stettler, Medicine Valley, and Barons, Alberta.

The settlements varied in size from about a dozen families to several hundred. Initially, the settlers concentrated on providing shelter for their families, acquiring domestic animals, and clearing land for agriculture. As the pioneer settlers became established, various forms of social and economic organizations were established in support of their lifestyles. Communes or collective organizations were formed, sometimes driven by the political leanings of the community leaders. Agricultural societies, loan and savings co-operatives, men's and women's clubs, sports teams and bands, and, perhaps most importantly, community halls, churches, and cemeteries were established in the bigger communities.



In the U.S., the Fort Pierre, South Dakota, Estonian agricultural colony became established in 1894, followed by a Lutheran congregation in 1897. Apparently the congregation existed without a Church. A small settlement was established in 1902 near Daglum, North Dakota. In Wisconsin, the Schley Estonian Church was built in 1914. An Estonian community became established in Chester, Montana, by 1910 and included Estonians who left Barons in southern Alberta.

The following pictures provide an introduction to the community halls, a school, a chapel, and cemeteries established by Estonian pioneers in Alberta during the first decades of the 1900s. Linda Hall and the chapel/cemetery, the Gilby Kalmu and Barons cemeteries continue to serve the needs of local communities.



DISCOVER YOUR ROOTS THROUGH MUSIC

Helgi Leesment

Astrid Simmermon, an enthusiastic music director, would like to start an AEHS choir or quartet or octet or something in between. It will be based in Calgary but special arrangements can be made for interested Albertans elsewhere. Anneli White has agreed to be accompanist. The group will aim to perform at Jaanipäev next June.

As of January 2007, we will have a place for weekday evening practices.

Astrid grew up in a musical family in London, Ontario, and moved to Calgary in 1991. Astrid has five older sisters and one younger brother about whom she comments "we all sang at school, in the community (Western Fair), in Church and at Estonian functions for all our preschool, elementary and secondary school years. Astrid comes by her musical talents naturally, having taken piano, singing and conducting courses in addition to being self-taught. She has composed music and produced one cassette tape of Christmas Music (keyboard and vocals) and is working on a CD currently called "Ma Pole Eland Seal/I have not lived there"-all Estonian music and arrangements of popular Estonian folk songs (keyboard and vocals).

She and her husband Dave Simmermon have three children. So far, the oldest, 9-year old Victoria, is also showing musical talent, singing with her mother in Estonian despite not speaking the language at all. Adds Astrid "I arrange music as well for choirs, soloists and children's singing groups. In addition she has sung in different choirs and conducted various children's and adult choirs.

Astrid has a dream/vision of Alberta Estonians reaching out across the province and discovering our roots and relations with one another through music.

CALGARY ESTONIAN SOCIETY: A LOOK BACK

Helgi Leesment

Former executive and long-time members of the Calgary Estonian Society gathered on May 18, 2006, to formally recognize the cessation of this organization. A previous phone-in and mail-in vote had resulted in the unanimous decision to disband this society and encourage all to become active in the recently established Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS). It was also unanimously affirmed that all of the Society's funds be transferred to the Alberta-wide organization. This will be done when the current bank term-deposit matures later this year.

By joining the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society, Calgary Estonians have come full circle. Originally there existed the Lõuna Alberta Eesti Selts / Southern Alberta Estonian Society. The Calgary Estonian Society developed first as a branch of that society, becoming a separate entity at a formative meeting on June 17, 1950. Now, in the 21 st Century, its former members have again become part of a provincial level organization.



The activities of roughly the first thirty years of the Calgary Estonian Society revolved mostly around weekly and annual events blended with private social functions

Weekly social gatherings of Estonian pioneers and their descendants took place at the downtown YWCA during the 1950's, gradually joined by a generation of Second World War refugees who arrived in Canada via Germany, Sweden, Australia and elsewhere. A folk dance group functioned for a couple of years until the director moved out of town.

Typical annual events comprised commemoration / celebration of the February 24 th Independence Day, Jaanipäev (midsummer solstice), religious services when funds were available to bring in a Lutheran minister from elsewhere in Canada, Christmas gatherings with mini-concerts and Santa Claus, displays of national costumes and handicrafts at local international fairs as well as selling traditional ethnic foods and home-made cranberry juice (years before it became available in stores) at these events, plus hosting all nationalities of new Canadians at their Citizenship ceremonies in Federal Government facilities.



In general, socially, it was and continues to be customary to hold major private gatherings of local Estonians for christenings, confirmations and significant birthdays.

In the late 1980's through early 1990's, an Estonian language school functioned bi-weekly as the city happened to have enough children of suitable age whose parents wanted them to learn something of the Estonian culture and language.

The association's recent history has been somewhat undefined, becoming officially dormant for approximately ten years as there was difficulty finding new executive officers. However, even during that time, various events were spontaneously organized by individual members of the Calgary Estonian community, frequently in response to news of visitors from Estonia. For some occasions the Society temporarily returned into active mode.

At the May 18 gathering, previous executive members spoke of memorable occasions, some solemn, others causing much laughter. Various members added their comments making for lively conversation. All agreed that apart from the original formation of the Society in 1950, the most pivotal events occurred in the years just prior to and following 1991, the year Estonia regained its independence. These were heady times with visits by a basketball team from Estonia, various other sports competitors, a rock band, a large boys choir accompanied by a chamber orchestra, a television documentary crew, several musicians including symphony orchestra



conductors, plus various additional Estonians including the democratically elected president of the independent Estonia-guests whose presence in Alberta would have been unthinkable during earlier years of Soviet rule with its political and travel restrictions on its citizens. Children of the Calgary Estonian supplementary school and adults participated in meeting such guests. Among local events, Calgarians, as well as all Albertans, now have business meetings with the staff from the Estonian embassy in Ottawa, another previously unthinkable concept.

This year's May gathering especially recalled another Calgary happening, the well-organized Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian communities' joint celebration of the 1991 regained independence of all three Baltic nations. This was an especially important event because a large segment of the Calgary Estonian Society were political refugees or the children of political refugees who escaped from Estonia in 1944, fearing for their lives. Their fervent wish since that time was for the country to become independent again, an admittedly hopeless ideal for most of the 51 years since the country was first occupied by Russian, then German and later Russian forces again. Thus, the 1991 actualization of the independence dream was a very emotional experience.

Suddenly, this nation had to establish a government, economic bases, laws, social policies and all of the other things taken for granted by long established independent countries. It quickly became possible to easily visit relatives, carry out historical and genealogical research, do unrestricted sightseeing and establish new contacts. This nation was now a "normal country within the international community. Suddenly, certain goals of the Calgary Estonian Society altered drastically. These changes, coupled with the general aging of its members and the formation of the AEHS, resulted in the termination decision carried out in 2006, 56 years after the inception of the Calgary Estonian Society.



The Calgary Estonian community comprises a blend of descendants of early 20 th century pioneers plus various waves of later arrivals including political refugees in the 1950's, career related arrivals attracted by or transferred here to Alberta's vibrant energy industry as well as very recent immigrants from Estonia.

All former members of the Calgary Estonian Society wish the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society success and happiness in maintaining aspects of Estonian culture and traditions.

AEHS LEGACY PROJECT - HISTORY OF ALBERTA ESTONIANS

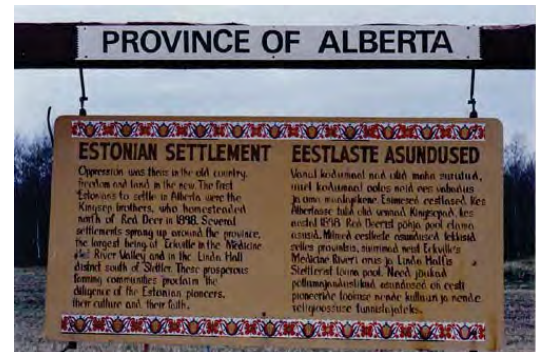
Dave Kiil

The majority of all Alberta Estonians arrived here during the half-century starting in 1899. Many of the early pioneers came directly from Estonia, whereas others left their homes in Nurmekunde and Crimea. The hopelessness of serfdom, pressure to be conscripted into the Russian military, the onset of the Russian Revolution, and much later, the forceful occupation of Estonia by Russia during WWII were the main reasons behind the influx of hundreds of Estonians to Alberta.



The story of Alberta Estonians is certainly unique in Canada and, in fact, all of North America. Estonian pioneers established agricultural communities in several mid-western and western States, including Wisconsin, North and South Dakota, and Montana, during the 1890s and early 1900s, but only the pioneers who settled in Alberta established and maintained several relatively large communities. Most post-WWII immigrants settled in Calgary and Edmonton, but also in some smaller communities. In some instances, they were sponsored by existing Estonian communities to fulfill immigration requirements and later moved to larger cities where job and career opportunities were greater.

Understandably, the makeup of the main Estonian communities such as Medicine Valley and Sylvan Lake, Stettler and Big Valley, Barons, and Peace River has changed since WWII, but there is nevertheless a sense of continuity in the province's Estonian presence.



The memory of Estonian pioneer communities in Alberta was marked by major centennial celebrations in Stettler in 1999, in Medicine Valley-Gilby-Eckville in 2001, and in Barons in 2004. These events attracted about 1,000 participants and served to highlight the life and times of the pioneers as well as later arrivals. The enthusiasm generated by these celebrations, reinforced periodically by other events here and in Estonia, provided the motivation for a new project, the "History of Alberta Estonians.



The project was triggered by an invitation from the organizers of the West Coast Estonian Days to be held in Los Angeles in August, 2007, for us to present the story about Alberta Estonians.

We accepted the invitation to present a 1 ½-hr program at this major event and decided to develop a multi-media presentation, with a documentary-type DVD highlighting the history of Alberta Estonians and a Reader's Theatre program with live actors. Introductory and closing comments, including a Question and Answer session, would round out the program.

Collection of materials, including photos, video footage, oral interviews, articles, storyboards from previous celebrations of our heritage, and other objects is progressing nicely. Guidelines for the collection of materials were mailed to all Society members and others with an interest in their heritage.

Readers with family history materials are encouraged to contact Dave Kiil (Edmonton) or Helgi Leesment (Calgary) to assemble the broadest possible range of materials for the DVD and the proposed website. Subject to available funding, we visualize the development of an Estonian website to proceed in collaboration with the Heritage Community Foundation, the custodian of The Alberta On-line Encyclopedia and www.albertasource.ca.

At the time of writing, one of our grant applications has been approved and we expect to be informed about the outcome of two other grant applications before Christmas.

Late News Flash!

The National Estonian Foundation of Canada has approved the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society's application for funding in support of our plans to produce a DVD about the "History of Alberta Estonians". A total of \$17,200 will be available for this major project.

Information about the Foundations objectives and programs is provided elsewhere in AjaKaja. We gratefully acknowledge this very generous support of our project and encourage our members to consider the benefits of helping to connect the entire Estonian Canadian community.

Aitäh!

Additional funding is pending.

THE LEGACY OF ALBERTA ESTONIANS PROJECT - A PROGRESS REPORT

David Kiil

We continue to make excellent progress on this important initiative. The response to the request for materials, especially photos, stories, music, and videos, has been beyond expectations. More than 2,000 images and four loose-leaf binders of articles have been assembled from various sources and provide ample material for the DVD as well as the Alberta On-line Encyclopedia website.

In the Winter 2006 issue of AjaKaja we were pleased to announce a grant in the amount of \$17,200 from the National Estonian Foundation of Canada. Since then, we have received a second grant in the amount of \$50,070 from Alberta's Community Initiatives Program. These funds provide us with the necessary means to complete the DVD for presentation at the West Coast Estonian Days in Los Angeles in August.

Polar Bear Entertainment Inc is proceeding with the production of the DVD. Selection of suitable images and movie footage is ongoing, as are oral interviews across the province. Our new President Bob Kingsep's journey to Estonia for a family reunion was filmed and provided some wonderful footage for the project. We've also obtained old photo from several Estonian and Canadian museums/archives to illustrate living conditions in Estonia in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries.

The storyline for the video presentation continues to evolve. It begins with an overview of living conditions in Estonia during the second half of the 19th century. Serfdom had been abolished but the Estonian peasants generally were unable to acquire land from the Baltic-German landowners.

Thousand decided to emigrate to Crimea and various locations east of Estonia, where land was available. The last decade of the 20th century resulted in an influx of Estonians from various parts of Russian, including Estonian, to North America where freedom and free land were offered as a reward for settlement.

The 30-minute documentary will highlight the first wave of Estonian settlers a century ago, the establishment of several unique Estonian settlements in Alberta, and the social and economic forces that helped preserve Estonian culture and traditions over the past 100 years.

The premiere of the 'Their Legacy, Our Heritage: Alberta Estonians' documentary will be at Lincoln Hall on June 16, 2007, and will give those in attendance at this Jaainipäev celebration a first look at the production. Final filming will be done at the celebration and included in the DVD for presentation at the West Coast Estonian Days in Los Angeles in August.

We anticipate that the DVD will be available to Society members and other interested individuals and organizations following the Los Angeles event.

The development of the dedicated Estonian website is also underway by the Heritage Community Foundation and will be featured on their Albertasource.ca.

Initial work involves the design of a dynamic and interactive website to meet project objectives. We anticipate that much of the materials submitted by members of our Society will be accommodated on this website. We hope to have a live prototype website ready for the West Coast Estonian Days in Los Angeles in August 2007, followed by production of all phases of this educational and research tools about the history of Alberta Estonians.

The completion of the full Estonian website is not expected until 2008. In the meantime, we anticipate significant progress by this fall, including a fully-functional prototype of an Estonian website on Alberta On-line Encyclopedia.

The design and production of the website will rely heavily on the impressive track record of the Heritage Community Foundation, show-casing Alberta's historical, natural, cultural, scientific and technical heritage. The Estonian website will thus be a multi-media encyclopedia capturing the history of Alberta's Estonian community past, present, and future, as needed.

A SPECIAL EVENING IN OLD TOWN TALLINN

They came from the four corners of the world to eat, to drink, to reminisce, and to be merry! Most had Alberta Estonian pioneer or post-WWII immigrant roots, but friends from other parts of Canada and Estonia also found their way to the quaint Golden Piglet Inn in Old Town Tallinn. The presence of three Estonian ladies from Australia, Hong Kong, and Turkey only added to this special occasion. It was a reminder that Ernest Hemingway was on to something when he suggested that one can find an Estonian in every seaport of the world.

Before the conclusion of this extraordinary evening, Bob Kingsep, the newly-appointed President of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society, presided over the first-ever Board meeting outside Alberta.



The evening was a resounding success, as old and new friends mingled and enjoyed traditional Estonian foods. All of us are richer for the experience!

KINGSEP DESCENDANTS SET FOOT ON HOME SOIL AFTER 108 YEARS

Bob Kingsep

The idea was preposterous, the timing was bad and the list of family contacts almost 30 years out of date. But there we were, huddled around a sketchy map of Estonia trying to find a place called Voru, or however it is spelled in Estonian. Our daughter Tobi had just convinced my wife Annette that she should accompany me on a quick trip to Estonia to locate the boyhood farmstead of my grandfather Hendrik Kingsep and his brother Kristjan, the first two Estonian settlers to register homesteads in Alberta. The primary motivation and the immediacy of the trip were to provide a story line for the AEHS DVD presentation in Los Angeles in August 2007.

The trip was made more intriguing by the possibility of finding out more information on Horma Ott (Kingsep). Horma Ott was the father of the Kingsep brothers and had come to Canada to visit his sons. His visit ended tragically as pneumonia, aggravated by the severe cold of an Alberta winter, took his life. As neighborhood school chums, Garry Raabis, Allan Posti, Howard Posti and I used to explore the old original Gilby cemetery with its overgrowth of poplar trees and deteriorating grave markings. The overturned headstone of Horma Ott Kangsep was a mystery relative of mine. At least we boys presumed so, even though his surname was misspelled.

Somehow Annette and I (well, OK it was mostly Annette) managed to get the framework of a trip to Estonia in place. A key component was a response to an e-mail from Einar Lukkonen from Tallinn. Einar had e-mailed a copy of the Kingsep/Saar family tree to my cousin Arnold Mottus. The tree was more complete than any family records we had in Canada. Einar's wife was related to the Saar's (Hendrik Kingsep's wife Emily was a Saar) and from there we got the first positive contacts with descendants from the original Kingsep farmstead. In short order I was exchanging e-mails with Mariko from Võru in her excellent English. Horma, we learned, was the estate near Võru from which Ott came. Then, as only last minute Estonians can, my cousin June (Lapp) Kinsella from Melbourne, Australia accepted my late invitation and would be meeting us in Tallinn! A few days later it got even better. The phone rang and it was Tobi calling from Hong Kong. "Guess what dad, I'll meet up with you in London!"

Eda McClung, Arne Matiisen and Arne's daughter Janet had committed some of their time to this Estonian venture and made the trip to Võru a few hours ahead of us. We were depending on Eda and Arne's Estonian /English translation to help us overcome the language barrier and Janet's journalism skills to help record the event. The anticipation of those last few minutes as we parked the car at the meeting place in Võru found us chattering with nervous excitement. Then it was happening, eye to eye, hand in hand, we were meeting Evar Saar, a direct descendant of Horma Ott, his wife Mariko, my miracle contact, and their five-year-old daughter Hipp, soon to be the star of the show.

We followed Evar into the picturesque countryside, constantly commencing on the similarity to central Alberta. Twenty minutes later we maneuvered up the twisting lane to the farmstead. There beside a rock memorial to Horma Ott, the Estonian flag waving, stood our patient hosts,

their faces glowing. These were my cousins, holding fresh flowers, waiting for us. This was for us! We stepped out of the car to cheers and welcomes in both English and Estonian. One hundred and eight years without contact on home soil had come to an end. The beginning of a wonderful family relationship had just begun!

THE QUEST FOR A NEW LIFE IN THE NEW WORLD: PART 3

Story Teller: Barbara Johnson Gullickson

Jakob was the only child of Jaan and Mari Erdman. This family was one of the group who left Estonia in 1861 to go to Crimea to obtain FREE LAND! Shortly after they arrived in Targhan, Jaan and Mari ate some bad meat and died. There was also a possibility that they died from the plague.

Jakob was raised by his aunt Madly and her husband, Otto Sesler. Jakob and his cousin, Simm Erdman, found Otto to be a hard taskmaster, demanding long hours of hard work; 'to pay for their keep' he said. They worked 7 long years for their uncle.

With much hard work and dedication, Jakob prospered, and on May 1, 1873, he and Mary Tint were married. Mari and her parents were among the families who made the trek from Estonia. Jakob and Mari enjoyed their life, gained the respect of their countrymen, and were prolific, bringing 9 children into the world.

When Gustav and Robert were reaching the age 18 years, Mari determined that a change had to be made. In Russia, at that time, there was enforced military service for all men of that age, and Mari was not going to have her sons take the risk of being killed in the army!

Also, there was not enough good land near Targhan for the sons.

Mari and Jakob had received letters from friends who had moved to South Dakota, telling them of the good land and good crops there. Mari, who was more spirited than Jakob, decided they would go to South Dakota - the whole family! However, one daughter, Emilia, her husband, Jaan Salman, stayed in Crimea.



Early in 1901, Jakob sold their land - for \$25,000 in gold (is the story) - and they were ready to leave. The gold was kept in a metal box, which was in the care of daughter, Helena, Mrs. Johannes Watman (later Mrs. Jaan Kotkas). Helena was a healthy and strong woman. ('They say' Helena had the gold

sewn in the hem of her cloak!) They took a train to Estonia and a boat to England. In England, Gustav

persuaded his father to exchange the gold for a bank draft. Jakob was very worried and was quite sure they would never see the money again. However, at New York the bank draft was exchanged for money again and all was well.

They arrived in New York July 4, 1901, amid all the Fourth of July celebrations, and Natalie, the youngest thought all the festivity was for the arrival of their ship.

The family took a train to Fort Pierre, South Dakota, where they lived for a year and a half.

Gustav, Liisa, Charlotte, Robert, Natalie (Erdmans) and Gus Kulpas went to school here till they moved to the Barons district.

Unhappy with poor crop conditions in South Dakota and the severe weather, Jakob, his son Gustav, friends John Kiwi, Mr. Lentsman, son-in-law Anton Kulpas, and others traveled to Oregon, looking for land more like Crimea. However, the land was too expensive, but they heard of good land in Alberta available and cheap.

It must have been a good year in 1903. The land looked lush and green; grass was up to the horses bellies. The Estonians were pleased and filed on homesteads.

In 1904, Jakob and Mari moved to the Barons district to live on the homestead land Jakob had filed on in 1903 - SE-17-12-23 W4. Liisa, Robert, Charlotte and Natalie lived with them. Liisa and Charlotte soon obtained jobs in Lethbridge as live-in maids for \$15.00 a month! Helena, Miina and Anton Kulpas, and Gustav had filed on their own quarters of land, and lived on them to 'prove them up' as required by the government.

Jakob and Mari built a sod house and barn the first year. Sod made good insulation, keeping the house cool in the summer and warm in the winter.



Later, in 1906, a wood house was built, with straw in the walls for insulation. Glenda and Carole Erdman (great grandchildren of Jakob and Mari) lived there as children and they said this house, also, was warm in winter and cool in summer. (Their story follows *100 Years of Sheltering Families*.)

In 1905, Jakob gifted 2 acres of land (SE corner of SE quarter of 8-12-23-W4) to the Estonians for a burial ground. All plots were free to Estonians. This is where Jakob and Mari, Gustav and Magda, and others of our family are buried. Since this now is not an 'active' cemetery, family members who have passed away in the last 15 or so years and who wanted to be in this cemetery, have had their ashes buried or scattered here.

Jakob transferred this property to the Village of Barons in 1923 and it was used by the community until internment records were lost.

Jakob and Mari and their family prospered and acquired more land.

When Miina Kulpas became ill, she and her husband, Anton, and the younger children moved to

Oregon, believing the milder weather would be beneficial for her health. Jakob and Mari moved, too, to be close to her.

When Miina died in 1928, Jakob and Mari returned to Barons. Gustav, Charlotte, Ellen, Ralph and Oscar drove to Salem to bring their parents back to Alberta. (I don't know who took the photo!)



Jakob was heavy-set, short, a quick thinker and very clever mathematically. He was good-natured, friendly, cheerful and kind. He did not drink or smoke, lead church services and read sermons.

He died in 1934 and is buried in the Barons Cemetery.

Mari lived some years longer and was the Erdman family matriarch. She was stout, hard working, very pleasant, a good talker and a strong woman (the 'boss' of the family). She enjoyed handiwork, such as crocheting and knitting. During World War 1, she knit 100 pair of socks for the soldiers and received a medal for her achievement. In Crimea, she would sleep on the cold floor of the kitchen to prevent her from over-sleeping - she had to get up *early* to make bread.

She died in 1939 and is buried in the Barons Cemetery.

AN ESTONIAN MISSIONARY: THE STORY OF REVEREND JOHN SILLAK

Dave Kiil and Maret Watson

A missionary is someone sent out by his church to preach and teach. In 1891, John (Jaan) Sillak received a call from the Iowa Synod of the Lutheran Church to serve as Pastor Missionary for Estonians, Latvians (Letts), Germans and Russians in North America.



He and his wife Anna (nee Loorberg) arrived in New York the following year. John Sillak was ordained on July 7, 1901 in Springfield, Illinois. A few months earlier, Rev. Sillak had been contacted by the German and Lettish St. Peter's congregations at Josephsburg in Assiniboia (now Alberta) to become their Pastor. He and his wife embarked on their westward journey and, by 1902, Rev. Sillak was serving ten Preaching Stations in western Canada. He served the Josephsburg congregation for about 18 months before moving to Medicine Hat in 1903. The Crimea Estonians would arrive the following year.

Born in Dorpat (Tartu), Estonia, in 1864, John Sillak was educated in Estonian, Russian, and German universities, and later pursued language studies in England. In London, he was offered a position as professor of Greek, Hebrew and Latin at a college in central India. After considering the offer with his wife Anna, he decided to refuse it.

An interesting sidelight involving Anna's family includes her inheritance of an old and rare Giuseppe Guarnerius Del Gesu, Cremona 1741 violin from the Tusman family. The violin originally belonged to a Dr. Karrell, a personal physician to Czar Nicholas I (1825-1856), who in turn presented it to his godson Johannes Tusman, a theological student in St. Petersburg, Russia and later, at St. Chrischana, near Basil, Switzerland. This much-travelled violin also accompanied Tusman to Africa, Jerusalem and Brazil before finally returning to Estonia in 1884. The violin continued its journey with the Sillak family to North America, and was purported to still being played during the time of Rev. Sillak's service in Alberta.

By all accounts, Rev. Sillak pursued his work in true missionary style. Members of his family remember his patience and his dignity, and he always appeared to have a secret smile. Grand niece Maret recalls that Grace was always said before dinner:

Reverend Sillak had a profound belief in God and he continued to champion his cause with single-minded passion the way he understood it in his day and age.

Sillak covered a huge region from Manitoba in the east, to the Dakotas and Montana to the south, Oregon and Washington States to the west, and Edmonton to the north. The three major

Estonian communities in Alberta-Barons, Stettler and Medicine Valley-were part of his "constituency. Stories abound about him singing at the top of his lungs while travelling across the prairies with horse and buggy on his way to hold services.

A group of settlers in the Stettler-Big Valley area were Lutherans and they asked Reverend Sillak to join them at a gathering to discuss the formation of a congregation. As a result of the meeting, a chapel and cemetery were established in 1906, about one mile east of the well-known Linda Hall. It was known as the St. John's Lutheran Congregation. Reverend Sillak also presided at functions in the Barons area.

Reverend Sillak was tireless in his efforts to serve the needs of Alberta's Estonians during the first several decades of the 1900s. He held strong views about what it meant to be a Christian. Confirmed Lutherans benefited from his services as a congregational Pastor.



John Sillak was a renowned linguist, reportedly speaking as many as 17 languages fluently. His language skills enabled him to translate the Lutheran Confessions into Estonian and Latvian.

This major work earned him the degree of "Doctor of Philosophy from the Canadian Lutheran College. Other translations include Luther's Small Catechism and the Augsburg Confession. This major work was written meticulously in his own hand writing on some 3,000 sheets of paper. His accomplishments are recognized in several issues of Canadian Lutheran magazine.

In 1936, Reverend Sillak also completed an unpublished major work entitled *"History of the Christianizing of Estonia and Latvia, from 1157-1936, or "A religious and political essay about the former Baltic Provinces of the Russian Empire.* It is based on an incredible amount of research, and champions the tenets of the Lutheran Church.

The neatly handwritten tome makes for interesting reading. The author was obviously well read and a meticulous researcher. He had planned to send the manuscript to a Pastor Baueurle in Arensburg (Kuressaare) on Saaremaa, but was advised not to do so because of risk of damage during the Atlantic crossing in the late 1930s.

Rev. Sillak was elected Life Member to the Canadian Lutheran College on June 1, 1946.



Rev. Sillak passed away in Medicine Hat in 1953. Sillak Street is named after him in the city, commemorating him as one of our early pioneers and respected citizens.

This article is based on materials made available by Maret Watson, grand niece of Reverend John Sillak.

ECONOMIST SLAMS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT ON ESTONIA

The Economist magazine has criticized a recent Amnesty International report, describing it as unfair and unbalanced.

Last week, Amnesty International presented a report on linguistic minorities in Estonia entitled "Discrimination must end, which stated non-Estonian-speaking people had no guarantees of education in Estonia and could not equally compete on the labor market. Estonian authorities rejected the accusations presented in the report, noting that the report is largely based on outdated or biased information.

The Economist largely corroborated these views, saying the report echoes Kremlin propaganda in a way that Estonians find sinister and offensive. But most puzzling of all, it is a bizarre use of Amnesty's limited resources. Just a short drive from Estonia, in Belarus and in Russia, there are real human rights abuses, including two classic Amnesty themes: misuse of psychiatry against dissidents, and multiple prisoners of conscience. Yet the coverage of these issues on Amnesty website is feeble, dated, or non-existent.

The Economist finds Amnesty to have become just another left-wing pressure group. It points out that Amnesty International used to be an impartial and apolitical outfit focused on the issue of political prisoners. It recalls Amnesty's campaign on behalf of Soviet prisoners of conscience, such as Jüri Kukk, an Estonian chemistry professor, in the 1980s.

The Economist says that during the Soviet occupation Moscow promoted mass integration into Estonia and the collapse of the evil empire left Estonia with hundreds of thousands of resentful, stranded ex-colonists, citizens of a country that no longer existed.

"Some countries might have deported them. That was the remedy adopted in much of Eastern Europe after the Second World War. Germans and Hungarians-regardless of their citizenship or politics-were sent "home in conditions of great brutality.

"Instead, Estonia, like Latvia next door, decided to give these uninvited guests a free choice. They could go back to Russia. They could stay but adopt Russian citizenship. They could take local citizenship (assuming they were prepared to learn the language). Or they could stay on as non-citizens, able to work but not to vote, the leader went on.

"Put like that, it may sound fair. But initially it prompted howls of protest against "discrimination, not only from Russia but from Western human-rights bodies.

"The Estonians didn't flinch. A "zero option-giving citizenship to all comers-would be a disaster, they argued, ending any chance of restoring the Estonian language in public life, and of recreating a strong, confident national identity.

"They were right. More than 100,000 of the Soviet-era migrants have learnt Estonian and gained citizenship. In 1992, 32% of the population had no citizenship. Now the figure is 10%.

The Economist recalled how a correspondent tried to buy postage stamps in Tallinn using halting Estonian and was told by the clerk, in Russian, "govorite po chelovecheski" (speak a human language).

"That was real discrimination. Estonians are unable to use their own language in their capital city. Now that's changed too.

"Reasonable people can disagree about the details of the language law, about the right level of subsidies for language courses, and about the rules for gaining citizenship. Nowhere's perfect. But Estonia's system is visibly working. It is extraordinarily hard to term it a burning issue for international human-rights organization, The Economist said.

Reproduced from Estonian Review, December 20, 2006.

Estonian Review is available over the Internet: <http://www.vm.ee>, or type in "Estonian Review

THE COMPOSER ARVO PÄRT IS AWARDED THE LÉONIE SONNING MUSIC PRIZE 2008

With music rich in spiritual overtones, Arvo Pärt is one of the most original voices of our time in the international world of music. On Thursday, 22 May 2008, Arvo Pärt will receive the Léonie Sonning Music Prize of DKK 600,000 at a concert with the Danish National Symphony Orchestra/DR and the Danish National Choir/DR directed by Tõnu Kaljuste.

In addition to music by Bach, three recent works by Arvo Pärt will be performed at the prize concert: *Trisagion* for strings (1992/1994), *L'Abbé Agathon* for eight cellos and soprano (2004) and *In principio* for chorus and orchestra (2003).

In connection with Arvo Pärt receiving the Léonie Sonning Music Prize 2008, Paul Hillier will conduct a concert with Ars Nova and Athelas Sinfonietta. The concert will take place on 20 May at Garrison Church in Copenhagen. The programme consists exclusively of works by Pärt, i.a. *Miserere* (1989) and *Spiegel in Spiegel* (1978).

Arvo Pärt was born in Estonia in 1935 and was educated at the academy of music in Tallinn. Despite his childhood and youth in the Soviet Union, Pärt was inspired in the 1960's by western modern music and experimented with both serialism and collage technique. After intense studies of medieval times and Renaissance music, Arvo Pärt found his own style characterised by beauty and simplicity, which may be experienced in i.a. *Fratres*, *Summa* and *Tabula Rasa* (all from 1977). Since then, a number of great works have followed such as *Te Deum* (1984) and *Miserere*, in which a strong religiousness originating in the Orthodox Church becomes distinct. In recent years, the classic symphony orchestra has been playing a more significant role in Arvo Pärt's music. An example is *Lamentate* (2002) for piano and orchestra, which was performed by the Danish National Symphony Orchestra/DR in connection with Arvo Pärt's latest visit to Denmark in 2005.

Tranquillity is often a part of Arvo Pärt's music. In one of his rare interviews, he has said that: "Tranquillity is always more complete than music. One just has to learn to listen for tranquillity. The world is full of tranquillity. There is so much in the air that we are not noticing at all. We do not see any angles here, but they are here. They are next to me. Generally, people do not notice. They do not want to listen to what tranquillity is.

With the award of the Léonie Sonning Music Prize, Arvo Pärt joins the list of composers having received the prize. Igor Stravinskij was the first winner in 1959.

Subsequent winners are, inter alia, Benjamin Britten, Dmitrij Sjostakovij, Olivier Messian, Per Norgard and György Kurtag.

The Leonie Sonning Music Prize is awarded every year to one of the leading musicians or composers of the world at a concert in Denmark. The prize winner of this year is the harpsichordist and conductor Lars Ulrik Mortensen, who will receive the prize at a concert at the Royal Danish Theatre on Saturday, 2 June.

The board of directors of the Leonie Sonning Music Prize, who will be awarding the prize, consists of Amalie Mailing, Lars Grunth, Esben Tange, Michael Schonwandt and Steen Frederiksen.

Steen Frederiksen,
Chairman of the Music Foundation Copenhagen, 27 February 2007

The above Press Release is used with the permission of the Music Foundation.

ASSORTED NEWS ARTICLES

Estonians heeding a worldwide energy-saving appeal turned out their lights and other electrical devices for five minutes on 1 February, 2007.

The initiative saved a quantity of electricity corresponding to consumption by a town with a population of 20,000.

"Chief of shift at the electricity system control centre saw from the display screen that consumption dropped by 20 megawatts, a specialist with the control centre explained. "At 8:55 p.m it was 1,295 megawatts and within a few dozen seconds it dropped to 1, 275 megawatts. In his words, consumption decreased by the amount of power used by Viljandi, a town with a population of 20,000 in southern Estonia. "Five Minutes of Respite for the Planet was an initiative of the French Environmental group L'Alliance pour la Planete. The 'Blackout' that lasted from 8:55 to 9 p.m. local time on 1 February was designed to draw attention to the great powers' reluctance to rein in the ever-growing energy demand.

Estonian Foreign Ministry News, Estonian Review, Volume 17, No. 5, January 31-February 6, 2007.

Nearly 30,000 Estonian nationals Living Abroad-Registry Data

As many as 29,765 citizens of Estonia had registered themselves as residents of some other country as of Feb. 1 this year.

Residents of Finland accounted for the largest number, or 16,535. Residents of Russia numbered 3,213, residents of Sweden numbered 2,403 and residents of Canada, 1,598.

There were also large communities of Estonian citizens in Germany (1,426), the United States (1,396), Australia (618) and the United Kingdom (606). The number of Estonian citizens living in Latvia was 447.

At the beginning of February 2006, 17,752 Estonian nationals were living abroad, including 5,087 in Finland, 2,937 in Russia and 2,354 in Sweden.

The sudden increase in the number of Estonians living abroad is partially attributable to the fact that the Estonian Interior Ministry at the end of last year transferred into the Finnish registry the names of 8,500 Estonian nationals who had registered themselves as permanent residents of Finland

Estonian Foreign Ministry, Estonian Review, Volume 17, No 5, February 6, 2007.

Port of Tallinn to Receive more than 280 Cruise Ships

Organizers of cruise trips have booked more than 280 cruise ship visits to harbors of Tallinn

Sadam (Port of Tallinn). For the forthcoming cruise season.

Tallinna Sadam public relations manager Sven Ratasepp said that there should be 278 visits to the Tallinn City harbor bringing about 300,000 passengers to Tallinn. Ships of four different cruise lines should call at the port of Tallinn's Saaremaa harbor on six occasions. According to plans the first coastal cruise ship will visit Tallinn on April 17 and the first traditional cruise ship on May 1.

Last year the Port of Tallinn received 299 cruise ships with more than 300,000 passengers.

Reproduced from Estonian Review, Volume 17, No. 10, March 10-17, 2007.

A UTAH AMERICAN ADOPTS ESTONIAN CULTURE AS HER LIFE'S WORK

Helgi Leesment

She knits. Yes. Professionally. Sometimes in weird places. As a matter fact, her favourite unconventional knitting place is a beach on Hiiumaa Island in western Estonia. She has worked as a designer and consultant for yarn companies, operates a mail-order knitting store Wooly West, and writes for magazines. She is currently the knitting contributor to *PieceWork Magazine*. She is a very capable and sought after seminar instructor in the USA, Canada and Europe. Her topics usually focus on Estonian knitting but sometimes she teaches a three-day course on Estonian culture in general. She has become so enamoured of Estonia that she states: "I am interested in knitting history My passion is Estonia; the knitting, the landscape, the traditions. I am trying to learn all I possibly can about this interesting country. The result is, all over North America and elsewhere, Estonian style mittens, gloves, socks and Haapsalu shawls are now being knitted. She has even taught a course on Estonian knitting to Estonian students in Estonia at the well known Tartu University Viljandi Cultural Academy.



Who is she? Her name is Nancy Bush and her home is Salt Lake City, Utah. Nancy has no ancestral connection with Estonia. She does not speak Estonian but is now familiar with knitting terminology and, when travelling in Estonia, always finds kind assistants who translate, introduce her to others and take her to interesting places. Sitting and watching a knitter in Estonia, even when neither one speaks the other's language,

Nancy finds a kind of dialogue, a connection. Nancy claims that she is now emotionally tied to Estonian people, convinced that she has an obligation to protect Estonian culture and traditions.

How does it happen that an American in the State of Utah has become an expert on a branch of Estonian culture? Nancy's interest arose one day at the Salt Lake City public library when she chanced upon a copy of *Eesti Rahvarõivad XIX sajandist ja XX sajandi algult Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus, Tallinn 1957 = Estonian Folk Costumes from the 19 th Century and Beginning of the 20 th Century, Estonian Government Press, Tallinn 1957*. Looking at this publication awoke in Nancy her main goal - to deal with Estonian knitting for the rest of her life. Estonian knitting has great variety in both patterns and colour use, also in the types of items knit, and makes regular

use of techniques that are rare in the rest of the world. All of this is brought forth by Nancy in her book *Folk Knitting in Estonia: a garland of symbolism, tradition and technique Interweave Press, 1999* of which over 7000 copies have been sold. She has also authored three other books.

An internet commentary on Nancy Bush's *Folk Knitting in Estonia*:

" Margene sent me the book *Folk Knitting in Estonia*. I had no idea about the Estonians. How did I go this long without knowing how Estonians knit? It's gripping I tell you, gripping The

Estonians are not knitting like me. I have nothing in common with them. They are doing a whole other thing. (Well, they were. I'm doing it now too...) Check it out. I learned a new decrease, a new cast on, a new braid and a whole new stitch. I swear it. After 30 years of pretty darned adventurous knitting, I learned 4 things that I had never even entertained the concept of. Oh Nancy, you have given me so much.

I learned the Kihnu Troi and Double Start Cast On. Just say that to yourself for a while I'm telling you, Nancy Bush has been trekking around Estonia, learning knitting stuff and writing it down in a way that makes it accessible and interesting to a knitter in Toronto who thought she knew it all. Nancy Bush is a blow to the ego and I like it. (Posted by Stephanie Pearl-McPhee All Hail Nancy www.yarnharlot.ca Nov 22, 2004.)

Now Nancy Bush is preparing for her next knitting book, specifically about Haapsalu shawls. She is asking for help from Estonians who knit or have knitted Haapsalu shawls and those who have specialized knowledge on this topic. Nancy would like to hear from anyone who might have letters, notes on knitting, photos, drawings/diagrams or other materials which would add to her knowledge and which she may use in her forthcoming book.

Nancy 's knowledge about Estonian knitting and Haapsalu shawls is already awesome. So, what else is she searching for? She is looking for patterns, specific knitting techniques, and gems about the history of Haapsalu shawls, everyday stuff that one may remember about their mother or other family members. Also, how Haapsalu shawls were made, specifically, how the edges were made. She has many questions that only another knitter would know how to answer. She is also looking for permission from the knitters and/or others, to use the patterns in her book and courses.

Contact information appears at the end of this article.

Truly, the introduction in the book *Folk Knitting in Estonia* is one of the best brief English language overviews about the country. The author goes on to use photographs and descriptions of folk customs selected from the collections at the Estonian National Museum in Tartu. The latter smooth the way toward the clearly presented directions for knitting gloves, mittens and socks. Some of the illustrations are garnished by aptly selected Estonian folk art pieces or foods.

Comments one knitter on the internet: ... We all owe Nancy Bush a big 'thank you' for gifting us with the pictures and patterns of Estonian socks and mittens -- socks and mittens, I might add, which are heart-stoppingly exquisite in their design and achingly beautiful in the love that has gone into making them. This is a knitting tradition that is as alive to the song nature sings us as it is to the beauty and meaning of Estonian culture and tradition. Wonderful, wonderful stuff!" (Posted on www.knittersbookshelf.com/?s=Estonian).

On the Internet there is a half hour program, the middle of which features a 12 minute interview with Nancy Bush about Estonia and her forthcoming book: <http://www.cast-on.com/?p=44>, lower on the page choose "Download episode 24".

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Nancy Bush books are available in Canada at Indigo and Chapters bookstores, knitting and craft stores & elsewhere; on the Internet at

[http://www.interweavestore.com/store/Search.aspx?SearchTerms=Nancy%20Bush.](http://www.interweavestore.com/store/Search.aspx?SearchTerms=Nancy%20Bush)

AUGUST WILLIAM HOLTSWELL (OLTSVEL?)

Born in Crimea, 25 July, 1897 Died in Calgary, 13 June, 1967 (age 70)

August was born in Crimea. At the age of 20 in the year 1917, due to conditions in his homeland, he walked out of Crimea through Rumania, Bulgaria, and Poland to Estonia. Estonia had gained its independence by that time. He stayed in Estonia for a few years. There he met his future wife, Helmi.

August then went to Canada, settling in Calgary in about 1923. He had several jobs and finally became manager of an office furniture manufacturing company called KP Nielson Furniture Factory. He kept this job until he retired.

During the mid 1930's Walter Silberman (Silverton) worked with Mr. Holtswell at the factory. Mae Silverton was born in Calgary at that time. Lea Weiler Silverton was Walter's bride. They married in Tallinn in 1933 and when they came to Canada to live, they found work at Mr. Holtswell's factory for only one or two years.

Helmi came alone from Estonia in 1928 and the Holtswells were married here. At first they lived in a small apartment near the main library. In 1953, Mr Enzo Magi encouraged the Holtswells and another Estonian family to build new houses near the Elbow River - and to be neighbors to the Magis. So three Estonian families lived next door to each other in a very nice part of Calgary.

The Holtswells were very sociable. They attended Estonian get-togethers here. August enjoyed painting and artwork as a hobby. The couple had no children.

After August died, Helmi married Peter Kalev who was from the Eckville, Alberta, group of Estonians. She outlived August by over 30 years. She died in 1999 at the age of 90.

Note: Mr Enzo Magi and his wife Mimo came from Estonia after WWII. Mr. Magi worked on many of the big office buildings in Calgary as an architect. His son is a doctor here. Enzo kindly supplied this information about the Holtswells.

JAANIPÄEV 2007 IN ALBERTA

Helgi Leesment

We came through the downpour, played traditional outdoors games between rain showers, feasted indoors on very tender rotisserie pork roast, reaffirmed our Estonian heritage and impressed the guest politicians. "We" are the descendants of Estonian pioneers and more recent immigrants who gathered on Saturday June 16, 2007 at Lincoln Hall, a countryside community centre, nestled in between farms a short distance from Gull Lake in central Alberta. About 200 counting lots of kids. A heartwarming crowd!

During opening ceremonies, newly elected Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS) President Bob Kingsep reviewed the reasons why the society exists and why third, fourth, fifth, sixth generation descendants of Estonians are retaining some of their inherited traditions and visiting the land of their forefathers. We were treated to a rousing rendition of "O Canada" by trio Evelyn Shursen, Roy Klaus, and Letty Wyzykoski, accompanied on the piano by Helve Sastok. A reader's theatre production about one pioneer family, the Erdmans, told the story of determination (a euphemism for Estonian stubbornness??) and resourcefulness that enabled the immigrants of over 100 years ago to not only survive but to thrive in very difficult conditions in Canada. The play was written by Lillian Munz and featured her cousin Barbara Gullickson in the role of "Mari", with sister Martha Munz Gue as Commentator. All three are descendants of Crimea (Ukraine), South Dakota (USA) and Barons (Alberta) pioneers Jakob and Mari Erdman. Dave Kiil played a convincing Jakob despite not being a member of the 150 strong Erdman clan.

The AEHS paid homage to a fifth generation descendant of Canadian Estonian pioneers, Mellisa Hollingsworth-Richards, who won the 2006 World Cup overall championship and Olympic bronze medal in the winter sport of Skeleton. As Mellisa was unable to attend because of previous commitments to her sponsors, the gifts were accepted by her aunt Jean Maki on her behalf. Jean read out a gracious note of acceptance written by Mellisa.

Each of the three local guest politicians turned out to have some previous Estonian contact, a tribute to the gentle influence Estonians have had in the regions around Lincoln Hall, where the Jaanipäev event was held. Red Deer city mayor Morris Flewwelling, regional MLA Ray Prins and Lacombe County Reeve Teny Engen all had words of praise and encouragement for this ethnic group to maintain their traditions as they are an important part of the fabric of Canadian citizenship and make a worthwhile contribution locally.

Otto Nickolm directed the "Queen of 4:00 AM" contest, won by Kathy Tipman who best aimed the rolling pin at a stuffed figure. Ron Hennel was in charge of the log-sawing and nail pounding contests. Winners were: men's log sawing - Bob Tipman and Bob Kingsep (they claim no collusion or influence peddling despite being the former and Current AEHS presidents), women's log sawing Lisa and Diana Kiil, men's nail pounding - Les Peters and women's nail pounding - Letty Wyzykoski. All children participating in races and other special games received fun prizes kindly provided by Lori Sparrow. Leila Stanich organized these games, assisted by June and Bob Ekelund.

As a brief aside, sometimes the Estonian-related memories are based on the simplest situations: June Kerbes-Ekelund mentioned at Jaanipäev that one of her favourite memories is of her grandmother singing Estonian songs while picking potatoes on their farm. She also recalls reading that those Estonians who were deported to Russia also did a lot of singing, maintaining that if they had not been able to sing, they felt they would have perished.

Tables at Lincoln Hall displayed a range of charming Estonian and local area-related lottery prizes which were awarded during the evening. The major prize, a Deluxe Grand Occasion Weekend at the Fairmont Hotel Macdonald in Edmonton, was won by Peeter and Helgi Leesment. All prizes were donated and are gratefully acknowledged.

The Alberta Estonian Heritage Society must have burned out many internet wires over the previous few months with intense discussion establishing the design of its pin and logo. The end result is a classy pin featuring an "A" for "Alberta" with blue, black and white rectangles superimposed. These were a popular sales item at Jaanipäev, as were new memberships to the Society. Another outstanding issue of AjaKaja (edited by Dave Kiil and Eda McClung), the organization's twice-yearly publication, was also available at the various tables ably manned by Lori Sparrow, Anne Cowick, Annette Kingsep, Toomas Pääsuke and Eda McClung.

In addition to the catered pork, potatoes, beans and salad, some guests had responded to a voluntary call for traditional bread and sauerkraut. As a result, several kinds of wonderful Estonian rye bread were available alongside the homemade sauerkraut. Prior to the meal, lay minister Barbara Gullickson said a thoughtful and meaningful grace with a heritage and family roots theme.

Being a musical nation, the descendants of Estonian pioneers have maintained that skill, and so the local Garry Raabis band provided evening musical entertainment and dance music.

Many of these and other activities were filmed by Polar Bear Entertainment Inc who had the contract to produce a half-hour video telling the story of early Estonian pioneers in the Alberta region. The firm showed a sneak preview of the part already completed, a segment dealing with the Kingsep family trip to Võru, Estonia in May of this year, where they were reunited with other members of their family for the first time in 108 years. Everyone was impressed. All were wiping tears of joy at the end. This production is a tribute to the coordination provided by Dave Kiil and all those who have submitted images and stories. The almost completed video was later debuted at the Los Angeles West Coast Estonian Days festival in August.

A volunteer clean-up crew had the job done in one hour next morning at Lincoln Hall, including guests from Ontario.

Thanks are due to Eda McClung, her team, the AEHS board and other volunteers for another well run AEHS Jaanipäev event!

ALBERTA'S ESTONIANS: DVD COMPLETED

Dave Kiil

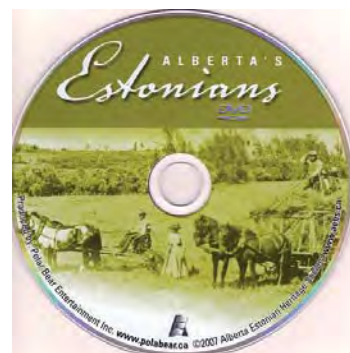
Editor's note: At the AEHS Annual Meeting in June 2006 we received an invitation from the organizers of the West Coast Estonian Days in Los Angeles to make a presentation about the history of Alberta's Estonians. The invitation was accepted.

Our plans called for a 1 1/2 hr presentation, consisting of a live Reader's Theatre presentation about the Erdman family's epic journey from Estonia to Crimea and later to North America, and a 30-minute DVD about the history of Alberta's Estonians. (The early stages of the production process are described in 'A Progress Report' in the Summer 2007 Issue (Volume 26) of AjaKaja.

As coordinator of the DVD project, my assignment was to develop a storyline for the film and to move the production process forward by contacting members of the Society and other information sources, such as museums, archives and libraries in Alberta, Canada and Estonia to obtain pictures, video footage and literature describing Alberta's Estonian pioneers and WWII immigrants. The response from members was overwhelmingly positive, and the problem was one of managing the data base rather than worrying about having enough material.



The pre-production work progressed on several fronts: development of a storyline to guide the production, the collection of materials from a variety of sources, interviews with potential producers and, perhaps most importantly, applications for funding support. This was partly resolved before Christmas when our grant application to the National Estonian Foundation of Canada was approved. Several agonizing months passed before a second application to the Community Initiatives Program of the Alberta Government was approved in March of 2007.



With sufficient funds on hand for a 30-minute professional production, the film's storyline was developed to capture pioneer families as well as the influx of WWII immigrants and their contributions. An important step was to engage Polar Bear Entertainment Inc. of Edmonton as producers of the film.

Bob Kingsep's visit to Estonia after an absence of 108 years was an emotional highlight for him and his relatives (see story in Summer 2007 AjaKaja, Volume 26) and others involved in this exciting venture. The partially-completed film was initially shown during our Jaanipäev celebration at Lincoln Hall and was well received.

The producers were present at the midsummer celebration to conduct interviews and to shoot additional footage for use in completing the film.

Visits to Barons, Stettler, and the Medicine Valley area and interviews with pioneer descendants in various locations provided ample video footage to go with the impressive collection of

historical pictures from pioneer descendants and other archival sources.

The production team included Deborah Forst and Rick Bremness, the principals of Polar Bear Entertainment, scriptwriter Jim Warner and narrator Garnet Anthony.

The film premiered in Los Angeles and received very favorable comments. Final editing, including changes to the script, images, and addition of credits were completed in August.

Following the LA event, our efforts were focused on the design of an attractive trap sheet (a cover sheet for a DVD case), including an illustrated synopsis of the film's storyline.

Shortly following the successful presentation in Los Angeles, a copy of the documentary film was sent to the organizers of the Estonian Documentary Film Festival in Toronto. It was reviewed by a jury and accepted for screening during the festival in mid-October.

Our DVD was shown to a capacity audience at the Munk Centre on the University of Toronto Campus.

Copies of the DVD are now available for sale by local distributors in Alberta, by mail order worldwide, and at the Estore in Toronto.

Recently the Alberta premiere of the DVD took place on November 16-18 in Calgary, Red Deer and Edmonton, with the Charge d' Affaires, Mr. Rasmus Lumi, from the Estonian Embassy in Ottawa as the Guest of Honor. The screenings at these three locations were also very successful and generated sales.

Following several showings of the film in North America, a consensus has emerged that the presentation accurately captures the history of Alberta's Estonians from the early days of the pioneers to present-day events and activities of Alberta's Estonian community.

It is well to mention a couple of spin-off benefits. Owing to the length of the film, only a small proportion of the collected materials, such as pictures and literature, could be used. This wealth of historical information is being preserved as a 'digital archive' and will be stored at the Red Deer and District Archives for use by future generations.

Secondly, the first stage of a new website, Alberta's Estonian Heritage has been completed. Planning is underway to enhance the Albertasource.ca website by including additional materials not already used in the DVD and the first phase of the Alberta's Estonian Heritage website.

The DVD is the result of wonderful teamwork throughout. Many pioneer descendants and members of the AEHS Executive, especially Bob Kingsep and Helgi Leesment, were supportive throughout. Eda McClung was directly involved in all aspects of the production and deserves to be singled out for many excellent suggestions and her wealth of knowledge about the history of Alberta's Estonians.

DVD DEBUT A HOLLYWOOD REALITY SHOW!

AEHS members cast in survivor series
Bob Kingsep

Just back and unpacked from our attendance of the West Coast Estonian Days (a bi-annual festivity) in Los Angeles, California. Our primary mission was, as you know, to present the play 'Thrice Pioneers' written by Lillian Munz and the Premiere our DVD '*Alberta's Estonians*'.

In summary our presentations were VERY well received and we all went home feeling proud and pleased with all the efforts of all of the AEHS members who gave their support to our mission.

No story would be a story if there were not some element of intrigue. With that in mind, the following is our story.

Our contingent was represented by Dave Kiil, Helgi and Peter Leesment, Martha and David Munz Gue, Helle and Jüri Kraav, Bob Tipman, Peter and Jeanette Asmus, Annette and myself. Dr. Giuliana Songster, LA resident and a descendant of the Alberta Erdmans, joined the group. Martha also displayed her paintings that in my (partially color blind) opinion were either the best or one of the best displays in the Gallery! That family was further represented via artworks by Martha's sister Lillian Munz and their late mother Helmi.

From the DVD side, we went prepared for any possible contingency. Three DVD's on three separate flights. Two copies of the script, one in checked baggage, one in carry on. An extra laptop just in case the DVD player and sound equipment we requested on three separate occasions was not available or nonfunctional.

On the Thursday before our Friday presentation I located the man in charge of the organization of our segment of the festival to ensure our requested equipment was in place and available. He assured me it was and introduced me to the technical man they had hired from an outside source to insure all the sound and visual requirements necessary for all of the singers, speakers, and dancers had been arranged. The technician listened to my specifics and although he could not demonstrate it because of the continuous changes necessary for the variety of sound requirements by the different groups, he assured me it would be in place.

The events were very tightly stacked, with at most, 15-minute intervals between them. This year, more than previous years, there were requests to have more bilingual (Estonian and English) content in the presentations. Whether it was the inability to account for the extra time involved with delivering lectures in two languages or just the good old Estonian habit of perpetual dialogue, the events preceding ours were WAY over their time limits and the pressure to 'get on with it' was probably at it's height when our turn finally transpired.

The technician went to work the moment the last speaker stepped away from the podium and began re-arranging the equipment to our requirements. I was impressed with the mass of complex sound equipment on the site and I presented him with the DVD when it appeared he had completed his re-arranging. He looked at the DVD with a bit of a surprise and said, "Oh, we

don't have a DVD player. Do you happen to have a laptop?" My heart went into a pace I didn't know it had, and the background music of 'Jaws' was becoming increasingly audible as I fumbled to unpack and boot up my laptop. Somewhere nearby I sensed Murphy was grinning.

The clock was running, Jüri Tint, the head organizer was pacing, I was sweating, the technical guy's long hair was buried deep in his box of cables and my laptop just decided it was time to do a virus scan. This was not looking good.

Finally my computer was up. The technician whipped over to plug the main output cable into my computer muttering something, which included the phrase '... this cable has been giving us trouble... ' With some extra cable wiggling the video was displaying, but there was no sound.

Dave, Martha and Helgi have now been ready and waiting to begin the play for at least five minutes. Finally, with a bypass of the sound output, we get video and sound! What a relief! Now we can have the DVD ready to go the second the play is finished. On with the show! The play went splendidly, Helgi's narration was as professional as it gets. Martha, a veteran of the play led the way and Dave was his cool self. The audience listened, understood and appreciated. Our story was unfolding and the applause bolstered our confidence!

Now, on with the DVD. I walked over to the laptop, glancing at the screen. I felt a hint of concern that the projector had gone into standby. Raising the laptop screen, I realized that it too had taken the opportunity to go to sleep. While neither of these states should be a problem, there was something ominous in the air. Pressing the shift key on the laptop will wake it up. The signal from the laptop will wake up the projector, and away we go. I pressed the shift key.

Nothing. I pressed it again. Nothing. I waited five seconds. Again nothing. The audience is beginning to chat. Again. Nothing. I had a desperate move left. A quick tap of the 'off' button will bring it up, but one has to be careful not to hold it too long or the computer re-boots. I try it. ... and see my world falling apart as the laptop goes into a reboot... .. and now worse... another virus scan! Seconds are now minutes....and three minutes later we have the laptop up and the projector back in standby. It won't wake up! The technician has gone to another venue.

Various people with experience with projectors lend their assistance....but it just won't work. Finally I had to make the inevitable announcement..."We apologize folks, but we are going to have to find another time slot, and "play it then"

Our group and Jüri Tint are gathered around the laptop. People are filing out. "Well" Jüri sighed, "There is no other time slot available. I'm sorry, but you won't be able to show it. Sometimes these things just happen. Again I'm sorry, but there is nothing else I can do."

The unimaginable was just happening!! Fortunately, this had carried on long enough that the denial period had faded away and the anger process was just coming up to stride! Helgi's hands were forming into a neck size grip! Helle had darts coming from here eyes that would have killed Superman! In as controlled a voice as I could muster, I looked up from the laptop, gazed directly at Jüri, and said "You don't understand, this is a forty thousand dollar professional investment produced just for this festival! It has to be seen!"

"Oh..... ah ...ahhh ... let me see what I can do tomorrow at noon. There is a half hour

break.....we'll do it then. And I'll make sure they have a DVD player. We'll do it then.... if that's OK with you people."

Peter Asmus, unnerved by the circumstances, decided that a quick trip to the Macy's store a few blocks away and the purchase of a DVD player was a small price to pay for a good nights sleep. Paranoia is contagious.

Saturday came. Dave Kiil checked out the room and talked to the technician. They now had a DVD player and they had tested it.

Twelve o'clock, and almost on time. The prospects are even better as the audience is larger than it was Friday! The technician moves mikes, runs cables, adjusts the projector and hits the play button. We hold our collective breaths..... and onto the screen comes the image of the ship.....we are running at last! I raised my hand in victory and the patient and appreciative audience breaks into applause. (Most of the attendees have heard of our plight). The applause is so loud, I'm having trouble hearing the audio. [look back at the technician and see he is moving the volume knobs up. The applause dies down to reveal the impossible.....NO SOUND!!! How can this be?

After five to ten minutes of restarts, adjustments and cable replacements there is still no sound!! Our contingent is in utter and complete disbelief as the previous day's disaster begins all over again! One young lady from the audience slips up to the projector and wiggles one of the cables.....static.....a promise....and a clue to the technician as to what might be wrong! He recables and the sound comes on!

A reset of the player.some static.... and FINALLYwe have a visual and audible presentation! Finally!

The applause, and the questions and comments at the end of it all, were as much or more than we could have asked for! It was a success! Many people came to us and said how much they enjoyed it. A lady from New York wants it to play to her students. A lady from Toronto said it made her proud to say she was Canadian. Many want to know how to buy it.

A gentleman who was born and raised in New York but now works in Tallinn and does production work said it is as good a presentation as there is. The story, editing and presentation were first class. He insists that it needs to be shown on Estonian TV because most Estonians don't have any idea what happened to their relatives who went to North America, and this DVD tells the story.

My only consolation for the near disaster was that it was proof that we 21st century pioneer descendants still have the genes it takes to make something happen. Perhaps our predecessors up there invoked this. If we were going to talk the talk, we'd better be able to walk the walk!

Helgi gave an AEHS pin to the young lady who wiggled the right cable. Peter Asmus returned the DVD player to Macy's for a refund.

I am personally so very appreciative of the support I received during that period of frustration.

We had a fantastic group who worked very well together and pulled it off! No doubt the tension relief we felt at the ball later that evening made the event even more enjoyable, and the success of our venture tasted that much sweeter.

Congratulations to every one! This is just the beginning of another great AEHS accomplishment!

And that's the story to date!

Whew!

'ALBERTA'S ESTONIANS'

SHOWN AT THE ESTONIAN DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL IN TORONTO

Eda McClung and Dave Kiil

Following a successful international launch of our DVD at the West Coast Estonian Daystin Los Angeles in August, our film was submitted to the Toronto Estonian Documentary Film Festival. It was accepted as part of the week-long festival program now in its third year. This year's edition of the Festival was attended by about 1,500 people.

With Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves as its Honorary Patron, the Festival presented some 19 films during its run from October 19-26. Three of the films, including Alberta 's Estonians, were in English; all of the others were in Estonian with English sub-titles.

Somewhat surprisingly, our film was the sole Canadian entry in the Festival. The screening was in front of an overflow crowd in the Munk Centre for International Studies at the University of Toronto.

Ellen Valter, the festival's organizer and the evening's moderator, introduced the AEHS's entry in the festival's lineup. The successful screening was punctuated by lengthy applause and followed by a discussion about the production and Alberta's Estonian community. The questions and comments ranged from production aspects of the DVD, to socio-political attitudes and organizations of the pioneers, and the present-day viability of the Estonian community in Alberta.

The audience rated 'Alberta 's Estonians' 4.1 on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest), resulting in a tie for fourth place out of a total of 19 films shown during the week-long Estdocs Festival!

The documentary film was made possible by many members of the AEHS who contributed thousands of images, video clips, literature and moral support during the 18-month production phase. A post-screening interview in Estonian for the Estonian Life (Eesti Elu) website completed a busy evening.

The feedback from the audience at the Saturday and Sunday evening screenings and reception, respectively, was heartening. Terms like 'a well-designed story', 'inspiring', 'a very professional production', 'impressive', 'commendable', 'fabulous', 'wonderful musical selections', 'survival of the Estonian spirit' and 'this production needs to be shown on Estonian TV', captured the audience's response.

The highlight of the Festival was a reception and Canadian premiere of The Singing Revolution on Sunday evening, a full-length movie depicting the dramatic and inspiring account of Estonia's path to independence in 1991. The event was attended by over 450 people in the impressive theater at the Ontario Science Centre.

An extended standing ovation was testimony to its impact on the audience. The film will be shown at public venues in Los Angeles and New York City in December, and will likely be

available in DVD format in spring, 2008. This film is a must-see!

Former Prime Minister of Estonia, Mart Laar was present at the screening and responded to questions from the audience. The Singing Revolution won the 2007 Estdocs Jury Award.

ALBERTA'S ESTONIANS DVD PREMIERES IN ALBERTA CHARGE D'AFFAIRES R. LUMI IS GUEST OF HONOUR

Helgi Leesment

Rasmus Lumi, Charge d'Affaires for Estonia in Canada, visited Alberta from Ottawa November 16-18, on a tour organized by the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society. He was the guest of honour at each of the three Alberta premieres of the documentary film Alberta 's Estonians. Because the members of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society are widely spread throughout the province, it was most practical to hold a separate premiere of the film in each of three geographical regions: Calgary, Red Deer and Edmonton. Thus, Rasmus Lumi had a grand opportunity to meet, among others, many descendants of Estonian pioneers, a first for him, and to learn about their background from watching the highly acclaimed documentary DVD Alberta 's Estonians. In turn Albertans were honoured to meet Rasmus Lumi and to host him as the official Estonian government representative at this unique tri-partite event.



Polar Bear Entertainment Inc. was initiated into the AEHS documentary project in early Spring 2007 for their professional film production expertise. As the staff had no previous knowledge of Estonian history or culture, a considerable amount of AEHS time was required to ensure accuracy. All together, one and a half years of steady volunteer effort brought the DVD to a timely conclusion in September 2007. Thanks are due to many, including two main funding agencies (National Estonian Foundation of Canada and the Community Initiatives Program of the Alberta Government) plus hundreds of hours of effort, travel and vigilance mainly by Dave Kiil, assisted by Eda McClung, Bob Kingsep, Helgi Leesment and several others.

This 30 minute, professionally produced DVD was first shown at the 2007 West Coast Estonian Days festival in Los Angeles in August where it was highly acclaimed by North Americans as well as by visitors from Estonia. Next it formed part of the 2007 EstDocs Estonian Documentary Film Festival in Toronto in October. It was the only Canadian made film at that event.

In Alberta, the first segment of the tri-partite premiere celebration of the DVD Alberta's Estonians was held in Calgary on November 16. The emphasis in AEHS President Bob Kingsep's opening address was on the reasons the pioneers departed their homes in Estonia and Crimea over 100 years ago and their struggles in finding suitable land for homesteading - land which allowed for their extended family members and friends to settle nearby. He also drew attention to the physically demanding labour initially required of the men in order to enable their families to survive the cold winters and short summer growing seasons. Rasmus Lumi was given two AEHS pins - for him and his wife who stayed behind in Ottawa.



Jüri & Helle Kraav, Bob & Annette Kingsep and Peter and Helgi Leesment hosted the Calgary function.

The second segment of the DVD's tri-partite premiere took place at the Red Deer Museum + Art Gallery on Saturday afternoon November 17 in Central Alberta. Among those present were Michael Dawe, City of Red Deer archivist and Morris Flewwelling, Mayor of the City of Red Deer. Evelyn Shursen presented each with a copy of the DVD as gifts from the AEHS.

Loree LeToumeau, a descendant of the second Kingsep family to settle in Canada, presented a verbal tableau of the life of the pioneer Estonian women. The Estonian Charge d'Affaires gave Jack Pallo a framed letter from the AEHS recognizing his family's contribution to the storyline in the documentary. It was Jack's late mother Selma Pallo who wrote diaries and accounts, parts of which are read by current family members on the DVD.



The organizers concluded that "Mr Lumi was a great person to chat with, he's a man with a vision, his sights are set high and well! most certainly hear more about this young man in future years." Arnold Mottus, Anne Cowick and Liia Heiman hosted the Red Deer event.

On the third day, November 18, Rasmus Lumi, along with the event, reached the provincial capital. It was another successful gathering and reconnected many Edmonton- area Estonians. This DVD premiere was dedicated to the post WW II immigrants who brought renewed energy to existing Estonian communities, forming long lasting Estonian societies in Edmonton and Calgary. Bob Kingsep asked Eda McClung to speak on the recognition of "immigrants who carried the torch while the rest of us were too busy growing up to realize the gift that we had been given."

Mr. Lumi was presented with a gift copy of the DVD despite the fact that he had just seen it four times within the last four days. In his remarks, he noted that he knew of no other Estonian group who has made a professional documentation of its own history. He paid tribute to AEHS for this significant accomplishment and said he had enjoyed meeting in person many of those who appeared on the DVD. Eda McClung and Dave Kiil hosted the Edmonton event.

Over 70 people attended the three-part Alberta event. At each location there were opportunities to chat with other attendees about the professionally produced film while nibbling on elegant finger foods or sipping a glass of wine. Tables were exquisitely decorated with Estonian themes in honour of both the official Estonian government representative's presence and the series of significant historical premieres. Guests discovered connections with each other of which they were previously unaware. This is a most welcome development and a reason for the creation of the Alberta Estonian



Heritage Society. Rasmus Lumi obliged all those who needed his consular expertise. As part of his presentation at each location, Mr. Lumi informed the listeners about recent happenings in Estonia and a range of consular services available to them and their families. He also brought a

variety of literature as hand-outs.

This tri-partite Alberta event was a marriage of enthusiasm, pride, determination, efficient planning, professionalism, hard work and some luck, united with the presence of an interested official representative of the government of Estonia. All in all - a highly successful unique three-day celebration, in the spirit of traditional Estonian weddings of yore which, as everyone knows, properly lasted three days.

MELLISA HOLLINGSWORTH - RICHARDS RECEIVES RECOGNITION AND GIFT FROM AEHS

2006 World Cup Champion and 2006 Olympic Winter Games bronze medalist in the sport of Skeleton, Mellisa Hollingsworth-Richards received recognition and a donation towards her further sports training fund from the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society at the Jaanipäev celebration on June 16, 2007. Mellisa was unable to be present in person because of prior commitments to her sponsors, however, her aunt Jean Maki gratefully accepted the award on her behalf and read out a message of thanks from Mellisa. The June 2007 photo, sent as a form of thanks for the AEHS gesture, shows Mellisa with her mother Angela, both rightfully proud of her Olympic medal.

Another proud family member, Mellisa's uncle Arnold Mottus writes:

"As most of you may already know, Angela is Mellisa's mother and my youngest sister by almost 20 years to the day. Starting from Emile and Henry Kingsep, Mellisa's roots descend downwards with their daughter Linda Kingsep who married Gustav Mottus. Their son Rudolph Mottus married Myrtle Solberg and born to them was their youngest daughter Angela Mottus (later adopted by Bill Patapoff , Myrtle's second husband, as Rudolph was deceased). Angela married Darcy Hollingsworth and their first born was Mellisa Rhean Hollingsworth. This makes Mellisa a 5th generation descendant of Henry and Emile.

ALBERTA'S ESTONIAN HERITAGE: A NEW WEBSITE NOW ONLINE ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB!!

Dave Kiil

As production on the ' Alberta's Estonians' documentary film got underway in 2006, we also proceeded with the so-called Alberta Estonian website project. The project involves the design and production of **Alberta's Estonian Heritage** website as part of the **AlbertaOnline Encyclopedia**. The website makes the history, culture, traditions and achievements of Alberta's Estonian community accessible via the World Wide Web.

Using documents, digitized images and other materials collected since the AEHS accepted an invitation to participate at the West Coast Estonian Days in Los Angeles, we partnered with the Heritage Community Foundation (HCF) to develop a storyline for the website. Five major thematic elements emerged: History, People, Communities, Cultural Life, and Multimedia Resources.

These were further subdivided to allow for greater in-depth presentation of material. The website presents a more comprehensive overview of Alberta's Estonian community-past and present-than was possible in the 30-minute documentary film.

The website (Phase I) was designed and produced by the staff of the HCF with funds from the Community Initiatives Program of the Alberta Government. Following initial completion and review of the site in late July, additional material was incorporated into the prototype website. Extensive review and editing of the site was carried out to provide a comprehensive treatment of the subject matter. It should be noted that the design and content of the present site was limited by the availability of funds; as such, it is a work in progress and will be further enhanced in the near future.

The stories and pictures used in the production of **Alberta's Estonian Heritage** website were almost entirely contributed by members of the AEHS, their families and friends. Collectively, we now possess a large data base, or a 'digital archive', for use by anyone interested in the history of Alberta's Estonians. Thank you for the support and encouragement in helping to launch **Alberta's Estonian Heritage** website at www.Albertasource.ca.

Grant application approved!!

November 27, 2007: We have just been informed that our grant application to the New Horizons for Seniors Program has been approved. These funds will enable us to develop a more comprehensive Albertasource.ca website, utilizing materials submitted by members and friends of the AEHS.

ESTONIAN STUDENTS HELP CRIMEAN ESTONIAN DESCENDANTS

Translator's note: As many Albertans are descendants of Crimean Estonians, they may read the following item with interest. Beregovoye, mentioned in the article, was the location of the September 2001 cultural and historical festival marking the 140 th anniversary of Estonians in Crimea. That event was attended by three Albertans whose forefathers were members of an Estonian group that walked over 2000 km from their homeland in 1861 to establish new lives in Crimea. Most of the Estonian villages created in the 1860's were located within a 100 km range of Beregovoye.

A group of 30 Tallinn high school students spent the summer of 2007 in Beregovoye on a working holiday providing labor assistance to descendants of Estonians who settled by the Black Sea in the south-west region of Crimea 146 years ago. These young people had to work in somewhat extreme circumstances as daytime temperatures hovered constantly around 40 C during their stay. However, this did not deter them from the task at hand. According to their leaders, they faithfully cut brush overgrowth, sawed logs, harvested tomatoes, tended fields and repaired agricultural implements. On days off, they visited tourist sites including Eupatoria, Sevastopol, Yalta and various caves on the Crimean peninsula. The students found their lack of familiarity with the Russian language to be somewhat of a hindrance; however, by combining bits of various other languages they had studied at school, they managed to converse with the locals.

Several of these students had taken part in the same type of event in past summers, leaving Crimeans with a very good impression of their professional attitude. Thus this year's reception of the Estonian visitors was again excellent, as previously, especially as copious amounts of work were assiduously accomplished by the dedicated Estonian youth.

Article translated and reprinted, with permission, from the Toronto Estonian newspaper Eesti Elu, August 31, 2007. Photo credits: Martha Munz Gue

Helgi Leesment

THE KERBES'S CONNECT WITH THEIR ROOTS

Interest was high and with a little persuasion from Margaret (Kerbes) Pelto, Deane and Irene Kerbes, Margaret (Kerbes) Pelto and Eldon Kerbes embarked on their Estonia adventure on June 06, 2007. The main reason for going to Estonia was to meet and to visit with as many of their Estonian relatives as possible. We had made contact with a couple of relatives prior, but were not prepared for the many that we were about to meet.

Margarita Anstol, great granddaughter of Liisu Kerbes and Rein Anstol, was the first contact we made. Margarita came to our hotel in Piritä and became our Tallinn tour guide for a few days. Margarita contacted more relatives, namely her sister, Elena Anstol, Roosie (Kerbes) Klein, Matina (Elfride) Azarenko and her daughter Natasha. We attended a concert in Old Town with these relatives and we were met with big smiles, hugs and gracious words in English, Estonian and Russian. Margarita and Elena are accomplished musicians playing the Cello and Piano resp. At a Sunday concert at Kadriorg Palace we met Margarita's daughter Julia, an accomplished flute player and Linda, an artist and, her family.



We contacted Heldin Allik in Rapla and we made plans to visit after we toured Kose. In Kose we found St. Nicholas' Church of Kose, the place where some of the early records of the Kerbes family were found. In 1795 the list of parishioners of Habaya Estate lists Peter Ristinna, wife Madli and family with a note saying "Sold to Habaya Estate - the whole family. In 1795 the list of parishioners of Habaya Estate lists Peter Ristinna, wife Madli and family with a note saying "bought from Vitherpalu. Habaya is in Kose Parish south east of Tallinn and was owned by Germans with the name zur Muhlen.

Kose Church records showed that Peter of Kowakore Farm passed away January 13, 1806. Peter only had one son, Mihkel, born in 1792. After his father's death Mihkel did not stay at Kowakore Farm and his next location was on Kuuisiku Farm, which is also a part of Habaya Estate. Mihkel was known by the name "Kernpea (Warthead) or as Mihkel Peterson (Peter's son), he was a farm worker. Mihkel married Madli (as per Kose Church records), who was Keri Jurris' daughter, the goat herder of Kirivalla village. Mihkel and Madli had four children: May, Madli, Ewa and Ann - no sons were born.

In 1827 the Habaya Estate was split and the second manor became known as Saumetsa. Edward zur Muhlen's father passed away July 2, 1826. As a result of this Edward zur Muhlen inherited Saumetsa Estate of 1829, May 18. There is Madli "Kerp (nickname) Mihkel's daughter and she is a maid.

By the 1830's the peasants were given or had chosen a family name, this was desired by the Russians in order to have a more accurate record of people.

Family Names - The 8 th revision for Habaya and Saumetsa Estates shows:

- Habaya - Mihkel and family were given the Kerbes name - reg. #44 on April 1, 1835.
- Saumetsa - Madli was given the Kerbes name - reg. #9 on April 26, 1835

It is noted, Mihkel was given the name before his daughter Madli. In the revision of 1850 and 1858 maid Madli Kerbes is listed with two illegitimate sons, Mihkel and Thomas Kerbes. The owner of Saumetsa Estate, Edward zur Muhlen died December 31, 1858. In 1861 Madli Kerbes and her sons moved from Saumetsa Estate to the rural district of Harmi, which is still in Kose Parish. In 1874 the list of families of the district of Harmi lists the following:

Kerbes: Mihkel - 1834

Wife: Lissu - age 39 - born 1835 December 17

Children: Ann - 1860, October 28

Peter - 1864, August 05

Thomas - 1867, August 18

Liisu - 1870, January 11

Mari - 1872, May 15

Jaan - 1875, March 1

Johannes - 1880, October 25

1874 - Revision: Kerbes Thomas - 1846, October 12

Wife: Mari - 25 years old

Children:

Sons: Mihkel - 1869, March 28

Jurri - 1867, April 4 - died 1877

Daughter - Mari - 1 year old

Madli Kerbes is not mentioned here, she has likely passed away and she would be 63 years. She was born in 1811.

This revision states that the family records have been transferred to Jamburg town (present day Kingissepp) in Russia.

Kose Church records showed that wedding bands were announced for Mihkel Kerbes and Lissu Walli in both St. Nicholas Church of Kose and in Jurru Church. Bans were posted on Nov. 22 and 29 th and Dec. 06, 1859. They were married in St. Nicholas Church of Kose on Dec. 13, 1859. Mihkel was 25 years old and Lissu was 24.

The four Kerbes,' in 2007 were very solemn and in awe as we spent time in St. Nicholas Church. It was a very emotional and moving experience to be in the place where our ancestors worshipped and in the areas where they were serfs.

We were able to find many of the old Manors on the Estates in the Harmi District and we experienced a great feeling of connection to our ancestors of nearly 150 years ago.

Heldin Allik, of Rapla made connections with Robert Kerbes in Haapsalu, Robert Kerbes is the only person in Estonia bearing the Kerbes name, and all other descendants were girls. Robert does not speak English, but with his grandson Denis translating we were able to easily communicate. We met Roberts' wife, Maria and his family at their summer home. Maria and

daughters, Tanja and Anzelia had prepared a typical Estonian feast for us complete with wine, cognac and fruit juice for the driver.

Farewell to Robert at the ferry as we sail away to Hiiumaa and more family, Krista and Tarmu Kutt and also Paul and Klaara Sunter. Paul and Klaara did not speak any English. Krista, their daughter was the translator during our visit. Paul is a grandson of Thomas Kerbes and Marie Hennel. Once again we were welcomed in to their homes with big smiles, hugs and graciousness.

In Kurressaare, Saaremaa we met Silvi and Raul Volderman. Silvi is Roos (Kerbes) Kliens' daughter and great granddaughter of Thomas Kerbes and Marie Hennel. The Estonian Kerbes welcome was again evident and we experienced more connections with our family.

Armed with maps, directions and our high interest we sought to find Vitherpalu and also the "Singing Sands, near the north shore of Estonia. We traveled through the regular heavy forest and found Vitherpalu Manor House. Vitherpalu was the place where the first known fore father, Peter Ristinna, was. Once again we had that feeling of connection with an ancestor of over 150 years ago. Vitherpalu Manor is a beautiful Convention and Conference Center. We were given a tour of the facility and we walked on the original staircase of long ago.

"The Singing Sands - The Singing Sands is a beach near Vitherpalu. We drove through many forests and finally after receiving directions from locals and then by following a Swede through more forest, farm yards and villages we came to the beach with the sand so fine. We walked on the sand and found that the vibrations of our footsteps caused a squeaking sound, thus "The Singing Sands.

We celebrated Jannipaev, Mid Summers Eve, at Rocca la Mare with relatives, Linda Anstol and her family. We participated in the various events and the folk dancing as well as enjoyed the Estonian cuisine of sauerkraut, braised potatoes and sausage along with the Saku Beer!!

June 24 saw us celebrating with Natasha Azarenko as it was her 50 th birthday. We met still more relatives who also made us feel welcome and we joined in the merriment. We met Leida (Anstol) Smirnov and her family. Leida is a granddaughter of Liisu Kerbes and Rein Anstol. We spent the last evening of our Estonian adventure with Leida and her family at Puunni, Estonia. The family had prepared another Estonian feast and we toasted the Kerbes families in Canada and Estonia.

Our Estonian adventure was absolutely wonderful, from start to finish, and beyond. The families of Kerbes' that we met were happy, smiling people and made us feel happy too. We established family ties and now armed with e-mail addresses we hope to continue the connection and hope the generations ahead will do the same.

The four Canadian Kerbes' returned home with great memories of wonderful times spent with new found family members and also have a greater sense of understanding of their Estonian heritage and culture. We also are very grateful that Peter, Julia and family made the decision in 1911 to come to Canada.

ANOTHER ESTONIAN INNOVATION: KIIKING!

Dave Kiil

As a youngster on the island of Saaremaa, I remember watching older kids gathering by the village swing (kiik) to show off their prowess trying to turn 360 degree revolutions. A few of years ago, during a visit to my childhood playground, our family group tried out a large wooden platform swing in the Village of Lümada. We didn't do any 360s but everyone, especially the younger and braver souls, enjoyed the experience.

While the venerable wooden swing is still around it now has a spin-off in the so-called changeable metal swing. An Estonian, Ado Kose, is credited with the development of the trapeze-like version in 1997. This means that the length of the shaft can be increased; however, the longer the shaft, the harder it is to accomplish a full rotation.

During competitions, the swinger attempts to complete a 360-degree rotation while fastened to the shafts of the swing for safety reasons. The men's world record is 7.02 metres, (the shaft is 7.02 metres long!) whereas the women's record is 5.91 metres. Both are held by Estonians and have been accepted as Guinness World Records.

AEHS RECOGNIZES 2006 OLYMPIC BRONZE-MEDAL PERFORMANCE OF MELLISA HOLLINGSWORTH-RICHARDS

Editor's note: During the 2007 Jaanipäev celebration at Lincoln Hall, Bob Kingsep recognized Mellisa's achievements on behalf of the Society. Mellisa is the 2006 women's world cup champion in Skeleton and the 2006 Olympic Winter Games Bronze medalist.

Mellisa, please accept this token on behalf of the AEHS as recognition of your achievements as a world-class high performance athlete.



Estonians tend to strive for perfection and, as such, we can appreciate your commitments to being the best. Naturally we presume your Estonian Pioneer Heritage plays a role in your success!

We congratulate you on your accomplishments and assure you that our hearts will be with you on every high-speed split-second run you take on the World Cup circuit and the road to Vancouver 2010!

***All the best
Bob Kingsep
President, AEHS***

Mellisa was unable to be present in person because of prior commitments to her sponsors; however, her aunt Jean Maki gratefully accepted the award on her behalf and read out a message of thanks from Mellisa:

Thank you for the special recognition. I am a 5th generation Estonian on my mother's side. It took me 10 years to accomplish my dream of standing on the Olympic podium. There were many trying times where I could have very easily given up, but I continued to strive for excellence and stay determined. I'm sure my ancestors could identify these struggles as they ventured into the unknown promised land of Canada. I'm so grateful to my ancestors that I was given the opportunity to grow up and live in this wonderful country.

In 3 years time, I can't imagine anything more exciting than to compete at home with family and friends all supporting and encouraging me to do my best, which could possibly be standing on top of the podium at the Vancouver Olympics in 2010.

Thank you for your support

***Sincerely,
Mellisa Hollingsworth-Richards***

Note: Skeleton involves racing a sled down an icy track. Unlike luge, skeleton sleds are ridden in the prone position, face first, on the stomach.

Late news flash!

November 29, 2007. At the season-opening Skeleton World Cup event in Calgary, Mellisa Hollingsworth-Richards won a silver medal!! We wish Mellisa continued success on the World Cup circuit in the months and years ahead as she prepares for the 2010 Olympics.

Compiled by Dave Kiil

A BALTIC TIME WARP-MUHU ISLAND

Estonians like to brag that theirs is the most wired country in the world. They can pay for parking, taxis and many purchases in shops by dialing a number on their mobile phones. Trains and intercity buses are equipped with wireless Internet.

But here in Muhu Island, just two hours from the capital, Tallinn, you could easily think you were in another country. Many of the wood and stone houses, which date as far back as the 17 th century, have roofs made from wooden reeds harvested at the shoreline. Some elderly residents still have outhouses.

The juxtaposition between Tallinn and Muhu Island illustrates a great advantage of travelling in the Baltics. This trio of tiny countries- Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia-achieved independence from the Soviet Union 16 years ago and towns untouched by progress are only now starting to open up. In one day, you can go back centuries in time, from a capital city with international restaurants and the latest technology to villages that reflect another era.

These villages aren't unchanged because they've been preserved as showpieces for tourists. They were left to stagnate for decades under Soviet occupation. The 2,000 inhabitants of Muhu Island, for instance, are mostly fishermen and farmers, just as they've always been.

The last Russian troops didn't leave Estonia until 1994, and the animosity between Estonians and Russians still hasn't faded. Only last month, when the democratic Estonian government relocated a Soviet war memorial from the centre of Tallinn to a cemetery, ethnic Russians rioted on the streets. In Russia, government officials called for a boycott of Estonian goods and some rail and road links to Estonia were briefly cut off.

Estonians still shudder at the memories of Soviet occupation. "I remember a time when people were fighting for washing powder in a store, says Kristiina Ojamaa, destination marketing consultant for the Estonian Tourist Board. "There were lines for bread, lines for eggs, lines for everything. We couldn't celebrate Christmas because KBG agents were standing outside the churches making note of who went in.

When the Soviets left, the economies of the Baltic countries were in shambles. By the 1990s, with tourism around the world booming, governments decided that the wisest approach was to restore the old buildings and not to demolish them.

Figures speak dramatically of what happened to tourism: In the 50 years of Soviet occupation, Estonia drew two million tourists over that whole period. Now, more than two million come every year. Each summer, more than 300 cruise ships call at Tallinn alone.

Development capital has poured into Tallinn and high-tech companies such as Skype, which was founded in Estonia, have helped give the country the nickname e-Stonia. Estonians attribute their country's technology advances to a president who was an Internet fanatic, and to the fact that the economy was so destroyed during Soviet times that it had to be rebuilt from scratch, skipping decades to jump into the computer age.

Recent landmarks in Estonia include what could be the world's first election, this March, allowing voting over the Internet, and a "virtual government and parliament, where meetings and votes are conducted via the Internet.

There are still challenges, however. Thirty percent of Estonia's 1.3 million people are ethnic Russians and, as the recent rioting over the removal of the Soviet-era statue showed, the loyalties of them still lie toward Moscow rather than Tallinn. Outside Tallinn, the government is still trying to rebuild the Country's infrastructure from the days of Soviet occupation.

Muhu Island provides a prime example of the development lag in rural areas. In the Soviet era, tourists weren't even allowed on the island unless they had gotten permission from Soviet authorities, since the island housed a military base. Today, although the buildings of a 19th century manor have been converted into a lovely hotel called Pädaste Manor, it only has 12 rooms and can only be reached by driving three miles down a bumpy dirt road. On the rest of the island there are a few houses that have been turned into bed and breakfasts.

In short, Muhu Island is a tourist's paradise - it's particularly attractive because so few tourists get here. The 20,000 foreigners who come to Muhu each year are mostly from Finland, which lies just across the water from Estonia, and from the neighboring Baltic countries.

The island is flat, the traffic sparse, and the terrain a scenic mix of forests and old houses. The loudest noise I heard was the sound of birds chirping.

This is dramatic contrast to Tallinn, which has come a long way from Soviet times. The cobblestone streets of the Old Town, some of them forbidden to cars, are crowded with people, both locals and tourists, jammed into many restaurants, bars and boutique shops that have sprung up.

With Finland just across the Baltic Sea, the Estonians' shared Nordic roots are reflected in their blond hair and tall stature. English is widely spoken and although Estonians are friendly enough when you start a conversation, they're so reclusive otherwise that they make the Finnish, who have a reputation for reclusiveness, seem gregarious.

One night, at a restaurant with a largely Estonian menu, I found a perfect tom yum goong, the Thai spicy shrimp soup. When I asked the waiter how this came to be, he looked at me, startled. Rather than try to answer my question, he turned his eyes to the ground and shuffled away.

Stan Sessler
Hello Estonia blog
June 21, 2007

Tallinn, a vacation hotspot

According to an article in the 2007 issue, Number 34, of the popular German newsmagazine *Der Spiegel*, Tallinn is rated among the six most popular cities of Europe along with Amsterdam, Barcelona, Dublin, Copenhagen and Hamburg. The author Erich Follath visited the city to see an artificial old-town but was pleasantly surprised by the boomtown atmosphere among the genuine medieval buildings. He was especially impressed by Estonia's Internet- savvy populace

and contemporary art.

WITHOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF TARTU THERE WOULD BE NO ESTONIAN STATE

According to President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, without the University of Tartu Estonians would not have become a cultural nation and would not have been able to create their own state in 1918.

In a speech given at the ceremony marking the 375th anniversary of the foundation of the University of Tartu, President Ilves called upon the University of Tartu to pursue the ideal of a universitas, an environment that provides a universal education. "It would be erroneous to think that universitas only means a wide choice of courses. What a university offers is not important. What is important is the kind of education the students receive, said President Ilves.

Drawing a parallel with the concept of paideia known from ancient Greece, which only considered people that were educated in every possible way to be perfect, President Ilves referred to the excellent education received by the founders of the nation at the University of Tartu. "If we had not had our intelligentsia at the end of the 19 th century - our own doctors, journalists, clerics, and lawyers - we would not have been ripe to create our own state in 1918, said the Estonian Head of State.

Above: From Estonian Review, October 3, 2007

Right: From Estonian Review, October 10, 2007

ESTONIA IN THE FRONT RANKS IN WORLDWIDE PRESS FREEDOM INDEX, 2007

Estonia is sharing third place with Slovakia in an index measuring the level of press freedom in 169 countries throughout the world that was published by the Paris-based Reporters Without Borders. At the top of the 2007 index are Iceland and Norway. Only European countries made it into the top 10. Estonia's northern neighbour Finland shared 5 th place together with Belgium and Sweden. Latvia placed 12 th and Lithuania 23 rd. Russia is on the 144 th place among 169 countries.

Anna Politkovskaya's murder in October 2006, the failure to punish those responsible for murdering journalists, and the still glaring lack of diversity in the media especially the broadcast media, weighed heavily in the evaluation of press freedom in Russia, the report said. Last three places are held respectively by Eritrea, North Korea and Turkmenistan. Outside Europe no region of the world has been spared censorship or violence towards journalists, Reporters Without Borders said.

The index reflects the degree of freedom that journalists and news organizations enjoy in each country, and the efforts made by the authorities to respect and ensure respect for this freedom. Reporters Without Borders prepared a questionnaire with criteria that assess the state of press freedom in each country. It includes every kind of violation directly affecting journalists and also the degree of impunity enjoyed by those responsible for press freedom violations.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tere!

Sometimes everything just goes your way. To be sharing the dedication, energy and comradery of an organization that appears to be hitting its stride is a real pleasure and a testament to the success of my predecessors! I would like to express our appreciation to Bob Tipman for his stewardship over the last two years.



A very successful Jaanipäev 2007, participation and membership in the West Coast Estonian Days in Los Angeles, our addition to the Heritage Community Foundation website, the DVD production and another great edition of AjaKaja. We have had quite a year so far, and it's not over yet! All of this has helped define who we are. This is my spin on it.

I am not the first person to be elected to the position of President nor am I the first person to be elected as President of an Estonian organization, but I am probably the first President of an Estonian organization in Canada who does not speak Estonian! That in itself is a message.

Our pioneer ancestors, who established the first permanent Estonian settlements in Canada, established social organizations to help ease their transition into the new world. In a land dominated by the English language, some of the stress of pioneer life was eased by the opportunity to socialize in their mother tongue.

After the pioneer era, World War II forced many Estonians to leave their homeland. Those who came to Canada naturally sought out Estonian organizations for support. Existing Estonian pioneer organizations and newly-established ones were logical groups to join. As the pioneers aged and their numbers diminished, the newer immigrants replaced them. The transition from the older pioneers to new enthusiastic members maintained several strong Estonian associations in Alberta for many years.

In the early days of the Pioneer Estonian Societies, members took advantage of opportunities in their new homeland, and the most important element in that quest was education. The early pioneers promoted integration and built schools with English instruction. Not surprisingly, the young Estonian children quickly adapted to English. For the newly educated children of the pioneers, English became their primary language while Estonian was left at home.

As the pioneer descendants moved away from the homesteads to the major centers they found new interests, met new friends and married into non-Estonian families. Some years later, the children of the WWII immigrants followed a familiar pattern as here too the Estonian language was losing ground. With an ageing membership, Estonian society numbers diminished and, at the beginning of the 21st century, all but one Alberta society had disbanded. The AEHS is the result of a convergence of past society members throughout Alberta and a rethink in direction.

The emergence of the AEHS is what I would call a 'third generation' transition. It is the recognition that a small minority culture will inevitably lose its ability to function as a group if it persists in operating in the original language. I suppose it's difficult for any group, which has significant numbers of first or second-generation members, to imagine how quickly and subtly integration changes the balance. Canada recognizes two official languages, and while most people applaud the benefits of multilingualism, generations of cultural blending extract a toll on minority languages and traditions. We have an ever-increasing number of Estonian descendants and we must continually search for ways to attract these new generations. Without inclusion, our valuable cultural ties will be lost. Not unlike the pioneers, we must adjust to changing environments. We have fifth and sixth-generation pioneer descendants attending our functions now. That is really quite remarkable!

While we were making our DVD, we recognized at the onset that our ancestors were our starting point. Once into it, we realized that our Alberta story would not have come to fruition without the enthusiastic involvement and progressive thinking of the later immigrants. Further to that, it required some re-writes within the script to make the point that with our multi-generational background and the emergence of the AEHS, we have made a transition from 'Estonians living in Canada' to 'Canadians with a proud Estonian heritage'.

So, what is the future of small cultural organizations like ours? The pioneers are gone. Their descendants have assimilated and don't need it. Estonia's independence has and will continue to minimize immigration and the small number of new Estonians to our province will not be significant.

Why continue? Cultural curiosity. The urge we have to understand our roots. The word "HERITAGE" becomes significant. With the common use of the web and easy travel, our heritage provides us with contacts to our living roots. Many of us have made the journey back. The reconnection is educational, personal, and very rewarding!

And if the conversation at your next social function should need a little boost, let it slip that you are of Estonian descent. That will invariably get some response! Our pioneer heritage is a success story and our Baltic cousins are citizens of 'the little country that could'. Grist for 'the rest of the story'! Distinctions we can be proud of.

So, let's celebrate our ancestors! Let's recognize the uniqueness we have inherited. Let's appreciate our fellowship here and abroad. Let's learn a few more phrases of Estonian. Let's cheer the spirit that keeps our community alive!

Tervitades,

Bob Kingsep

AEHS MEMBERSHIP LIST, 2007

1. Annist, Alar&Pille, Okotoks
2. Ansley, Imbi, Andrea A, Gary and Cooper, SV Birchc1iff
3. Asmus, Peter&Jeanette, Calgary
4. Brennen, Virgiquia, Stettler
5. Brewer, Elsie, White Rock, BC
6. Clark, Johd, Denver, CO
7. Costello, Wilma, Calgary
8. Cowick, Anne-Liis, Red Deer
9. De-Elespp, Ricardo and Külliva, Ardrossan
10. Derksen, Linda, Colin, Jack and Jamie, Edmonton
11. Dinning, Shirley and Leonard, Edmonton
12. Doherty, Linda K, Big Sandy
13. Ekelund, Bob and June, Rocky Mountain House
14. Engler, Faye, St. Albert
15. Erdman, Anne E
16. Erdman, Evelyn, Calgary
17. Erdman, Oscar and Sally, Calgary
18. Gagne, Lyann, Red Deer
19. Gibson, Howard and Diana, Calgary
20. Grant, Carole, Calgary
21. Gullickson, Barbara, Barons
22. Hall, Emie and Gwen, Boyle
23. Helenurm, Kalju and Margot, Calgary
24. Hennel, David, Leslie, Tallin and Emmit, Stettler
25. Hennel, Leah, Calgary
26. Hennel, Lome, Calgary
27. Hennel, Rodney, Stettler
28. Hennel, Ron W.F, Stettler
29. Herman, Derrill&Liia, Innisfail
30. Holukoff, Bob, Calgary
31. Kass, Mark, Calgary
32. Kaert, Mati&Linda, Edmonton
33. Kalev, Walter&Tiiu, Eckville
34. Kalvee, Willy G, Calgary
35. Kerbes, Corina, Stettler
36. Kerbes, Deane and Irene, Stettler
37. Kerbes, Kenneth and Hazel, Calgary
38. Kerbes, Marguarite, Stettler
39. Kerbes, Richard (Dick), Saskatoon
40. Kiil, Dave and Betty Ann, Edmonton
41. Kiil, Glenn, Ingrid, Ranek, Kalev, Edmonton
42. Kiil, Lisa and Diana, Edmonton
43. Kingsep, Bob and Anette, Redwood Meadows
44. Kivisild, Livia, Calgary

45. Klaus, Larry&Kathy, Sherwood Park
46. Koosel, Ted&Marian, Canmore
47. Koper, Donna, Cochrane
48. Kotkas, Perry and Karen, Calgary
49. Kraav, Jüri and Helle, Calgary
50. Kuester, Matt F, Edmonton,
51. Langeste, Heirnut and Airi, Edmonton
52. Leesment, Peeter&Helgi, Calgary
53. Leew, Alexander and Eva, Calgary
54. Leilop, Aino, St. Albert
55. LeToumeau, Loree, Eckville
56. Luik, c/o Renate, Avo, Edmonton
57. Madill, Wallace and Anita, Calgary
58. Magi, Enzo and Maimu, Calgary
59. Maki, Jean, Eckville
60. Maki, Steven,
61. Maisoneuve, Tamara, Cochrane
62. Matiisen, Ame and Carolyn, Calgary
63. Matiisen, Janet, Calgary
64. McClung, Eda, Edmonton
65. McElroy, Elve and W.L, Camrose
66. Metsar, Gerli, Calgary
67. Mottus, Arnold and Vera, Catherine, Red Deer
68. Mottus, Brian, Gwen and Mark, Stony Plain
69. Mottus, Catherine,
70. Mottus, Vera
71. Munz, Lillian, Calgary
72. Munz Gue, Martha, David, Lisa, Anita and Brian, Medicine Hat
73. Nemeth, Anton and Anthony, Calgary
74. Nick10m, Otto and Gladys, Stettler
75. Pääsuke, Rein and Jan, Calgary
76. Pääsuke, Toomas, Canmore
77. Pallo, Jack Henry, Red Deer
78. Pastewka, Astrid, Calgary
79. Payson, Paul and Tiina, Edmonton
80. Peet, Ethel, Edmonton
81. Peet, Linda, Edmonton,
82. Peltö, John and Margaret, Sherwood Park
83. Pihooja, Ralph and Nella Collins, Edmonton
84. Pilt, Shirley, Edmonton
85. Põhjakas, Kaljo and Lilian, Lethbridge
86. Poldas, Alar and Ann, Calgary
87. Poldas, Karin, Calgary
88. Posti, Allan, Maria and Ryan, Eckville
89. Raabis, Garry and Judy, Red Deer
90. Rafuse, Quinton,
91. Raynard, Bob and Shirley, Stettler

92. Robertson, David, Christine, Brendan and Kari, Leduc
93. Ruus, Ivar and Lea, Calgary
94. Saar, Lembit and Iris, Calgary
95. Sandre, Ülo, Calgary
96. Sastok, Helve, Calgary
97. Sastok, Laine, Edmonton
98. Schuler, Kelly, Calgary
99. Schafer, Nancy, Blue Island
100. Shorten, Evelyn, Stettler
101. Simmermon, Astrid, Victoria, Jaxon, Mart, Calgary
102. Sparrow, Lori, Eckville
103. Stanich, Robert and Leila, Calgary
104. Szady, Caroline, Calgary
105. Szady, Linda, Edmonton
106. Tiislar, Enn and Pärja, Canmore
107. Timma, Olev, Calgary
108. Tipman, Bob and Kathy, Calgary
109. Urke, Jan, Edmonton
110. Ustina, Astrid, Edmonton
111. Ustina, Judy, Edmonton
112. Vamey, Sharon, Edmonton
113. Wartnow, Floyd C, Delta, British Columbia
114. Watson, Maret, Spruce Grove
115. White, Anneli, Calgary
116. White, David
117. White, Jeff
118. White, Josh
119. Zach, Inge, Calgary
120. Zielinski, Michel and Kristine, Spruce Grove
121. Zoumer, Anne, Calgary

ESTONIA'S NEXT SONG AND DANCE FESTIVAL

The next major Estonian Song and Dance Festival will take place in 2009. Some Albertans are already planning to attend with their extended families. Note that all performances take place at outdoor venues within the city of Tallinn. Rain capes, cushions and sun protection are recommended.

The Song Festival Stage, 2004. Old town Tallinn Souvenir shop.

Thursday July 2	10:00 am to 10:00 pm	Raekoja Plats/Old Town Hall Square	Folk music and dance groups perform on a temporary stage among the many outdoor cafes and restaurants.
Friday July 3	7:00 pm to 9:00 pm	Kalevi Stadium	Folkdance performance - approximately 5000 dancers and gymnasts
Saturday July 4	11:00 am to 1:00 pm	Kalevi Stadium	Folkdance performance - repeat program
	2:00 pm to 7:00 pm	downtown Tallinn to Song Festival Grounds	Parade of dozens of choirs, folk dance groups and various special guests
	7:00 pm to 9:00 pm	Song Festival Grounds	Song Festival Program I
Sunday July 5	11:00 am to 1:00 pm	Kalevi Stadium	Folkdance performance - repeat program
	2:00 pm to 7:00 pm	Song Festival Grounds	Song Festival Program II (different content)

Submitted by Helgi Lessment.

AEHS RECEIVES A GIFT FROM BOB TIPMAN

Dear AEHS Executive:

I would like to congratulate all members of the AEHS Executive for all the hard work and commitment to making the AEHS so successful in the projects which were undertaken over the last two years since our inception. The first Jaanipäev at Linda Hall vcelebrating the legacy of the 4K's, the DVD project and this year's Jaanipäev at Lincoln Hall were outstanding successes. It was a honor to be your first President and witness the energy that the AEHS Executive put into making all these projects as successful as they became. Bob Kingsep will have a rewarding time working with all of you into the next series of projects.

As a parting gift to the AEHS, I would like to make a donation of \$1,000 to the Society to cover any outstanding expenses that have risen. What funds are left over are intended to be enjoyed by the members attending Executive meetings and cover the costs of such extraneous items as lunches and wine which will help inspire even more exciting projects.

Tervitust
Bob Tipman
October 27, 2007

A reply from Bob Kingsep

Dear Bob,

From the first days we had the opportunity to plan and rehears our duties as co-masters of ceremony at the Alberta Estonian Centennial celebration in 1999, I was struck by your sincere and energetic commitment to the Estonian community. Your tenure as the first President of the AEHS further strengthened my appreciation for your spirited dedication to the success of the society.

On behalf of the AEHS I am expressing our appreciation for your contribution in time and energy, and further recognize your significant monetary donation. This will help ensure the completion of our current projects, and ease the way into future endeavours.

Since we have determined that the DVD project is paying its way, my suggestion is to budget this donation for executive meetings.

We need to be prudent in how we use it, but I think it is reasonable to provide a modest supplement to executive/board meeting costs.

I see merit in this direction. Without organization and planning, nothing else happens. The more sociable and amenable the environment for meetings, the easier it is to continue. We do have the tools to make communication over distances easier and we will continue to use them, but we are, after all, humans. Humans are social, and our organization is a reflection of a long-standing human community.

We look forward to your continued involvement with the Society, and many more opportunities to break bread, toast our accomplishments, and share our friendship.

Sincerely
Bob Kingsep

AJAKAJA INTRODUCES A NEW SHOWCASE OF ALBERTA'S CONTEMPORARY ESTONIANS

Music, Julia Saar

In 2000 mezzosoprano Julia Saar won the Silver Medal for Grade 7 Voice exams, achieving the highest mark with the Royal Conservatory of Music in Alberta that year. She achieved a number of first place standings in various solo voice categories at the Calgary Kiwanis Festival over the years. In 2008 she was awarded first place standing in the Solo Opera Aria category in competition. As of 2008, Julia continues to study voice at the Mount Royal Conservatory of Music while in her third year of Chemical Engineering at the University of Calgary.



Julia's grandparents were born in Estonia but had to escape from their homeland when it came under attack for the third time at the end of WWII. The grandparents first met each other in Australia and later immigrated to Canada where they participated in the Toronto area Estonian community until moving to Calgary near the beginning of the 21st Century. Julia attended Calgary's Estonian supplementary school where her father volunteered as a guest teacher occasionally. Although Julia does not speak Estonian, she has learned to sing in that language. Guests at the 1999 Stettler Centennial were treated to a duet, sung in Estonian by Julia and a friend.

Jeffrey White

Jeffrey White became a permanent member of the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra (CPO) in the bass section in 2006. He has a Bachelor of Music degree from Indiana University. He chose Estonian as an optional course while studying music there. In addition he studied at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. Jeff was a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Canada 2000-2003 and played on a temporary basis with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra in 2003 after which he spent a year as head of the bass section at the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra before returning to the CPO.



Jeff's mother is of Estonian extraction and ensured that both Jeff and his younger brother Josh attended Calgary's Estonian Supplementary School. Jeff was invited to play several solos at a musical interdenominational church service as part of the 1997 West Coast Estonian Days festival in Vancouver. He also played to very appreciative audiences at several functions of the Calgary Estonian Society both during and after the years he attended the supplementary school.

Jan Urke

Jan Urke started his musical studies on the piano with respected Toronto Estonian piano teacher, Talvi Jaldre. He also spent five years studying the violin in the Toronto school system. Upon starting high school at North Toronto Collegiate, he decided to take up the double bass. He is a graduate of the University of Toronto with a Bachelor of Music Degree in Performance.



Further studies were taken at the Banff Centre for the Arts with Stuart Knussen. Jan's career started by freelancing with the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, the National Ballet Orchestra, the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. He moved to Edmonton in 1980, where he has been Principal Double Bass of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra to the present day. He has appeared as a soloist with the Edmonton Symphony and Pro Coro Canada and freelanced extensively in Edmonton.

Jan is visiting Assistant Professor of Double Bass at the Music Department of the University of Alberta. He has also served as resource artist with the Banff Centre for the Arts.

Sandra Erdman

Sandra Erdman was born in Lethbridge, Alberta on February 3, 1947. She attended school in Barons, but for grades 11 and 12 she attended Mount Royal College in Calgary. Mount Royal College gave Sandra an opportunity to develop her musical talents with the guidance of Mrs. Egbert, the school's piano teacher.

In Grade 11, Sandra was awarded the 1963 Kiwanis Grand Award for her exceptional piano skills. The following year she graduated as the valedictorian of her high school class. During her time spent as a student in Barons, Sandra was an active member of Christian Girl in Training and often played the organ for the local church

Aside from winning numerous awards in piano she received a scholarship from the Banff School of Fine Arts. In 1970 she graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Toronto. Two years later Sandra obtained a Master of Music degree from the University of Alberta. In 1972 she studied the harpsichord in Siena, Italy and then travelled to Antwerp, Belgium to pursue her music studies further.

Upon her return to Canada, Sandra taught music in Edmonton for two years before she accepted a job at the Lethbridge Public Library in the Audio-visual Department. She currently lives in Lethbridge.

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Artist Biography 2008

Helve Sastok is a creative and innovative published and performed composer, educator and pianist who can perform and teach at an advanced and specialized level. She is highly adaptable and able to share and instill a passion and love for music of all styles in others.

Sastok also works as a clinician, adjudicator, the composer and graphic artist of a series of children's piano books, and is the sole proprietor of Music Everywhere! She currently lives and works in Calgary.

Sastok has a Master of Music and a Bachelor of Music degree (with distinction) in composition as well as two piano performance diplomas. She is an Associate Composer of the Canadian Music Center, a member of the Canadian League of Composers, and the Association of Canadian Women Composers. Since 1994, Sastok has been involved as a composer and educator with The Artist in Schools Residency Program throughout Alberta. She has worked as an Artist for the Learning Through The Arts program since 2007. Workshops given in various centers on composition, improvisation, piano pedagogy, Canadian music and twentieth century music have been well received.



Sastok's compositions have been performed across Canada and in Europe. Two of her pieces have been released on CD: 'Duologue' on Brief Confessions (1997), and 'Elegy' on Glossa (1999). Her electro-acoustic composition 'Sailing the High 'C' is being released on CD in 2008. Her piano trio, 'Misty Mountain Morning' was performed in a New Works Calgary concert in March, 2008.

Rein Sastok wins Scholarship!

On March 15, 2008, one day before his 18th birthday, Rein Sastok attended the Outstanding Speech Performers Showcase in Calgary. At the Showcase, he received the Dorothy W. Gregory Speech Arts Scholarship and its accompanying plaque. Rein is also a back-up contestant for the Speech Arts provincial Festival.

In his thank you letter to the Calgary Kiwanis Musical Festival, Rein indicated that he plans on using the \$1,000 Gregory Scholarship to further his university education. He will be attending the University of Calgary, where he'll study Linguistics, whilst pursuing both Performance and Teachers Speech Arts with his Speech teacher, Susan Duska. Ultimately, Rein plans to teach Speech Arts or to become a Speech Pathologist.

Well done, Rein, and continued success in the future!

Music

Mellisa Hollingsworth visits Ghana

Fifth-generation descendant of Estonian pioneers Mellisa Hollingsworth was a member of a Canadian Right to Play Athlete Ambassadors group visiting Ghana in April, 2008. Other members of the delegation, all outstanding winter athletes, included Clara Hughes (long track speed skating), Emily Brydon (alpine skiing) and Steve Omischl (freestyle skiing-aerials).

Reader's will recall that Mellisa won a Bronze Medal in Skeleton at the 2006 Winter Olympics in Italy.

Right To Play is an athlete-driven international humanitarian organization that uses sport and play programs to improve health, develop life skills, and foster peace for children and communities in the most disadvantaged areas of the world. The purpose of the trip was to address a number of key educational challenges in Ghana, including school retention, quality of learning resources, and effective HIV and AIDS preventive education.

Following her return from Ghana Mellisa made the following observation: "Right To Play provides an extremely powerful mechanism that gives people the learning tools to make a difference in their lives and their community. This was an extremely emotional and inspiring experience, and I am looking forward to join my fellow Olympians at Silvertip Resort (Canmore) so we can continue to make a significant difference for children in the areas of the world where Right To Play operates."

Matthew Smith

A recent article in the Estonian newspaper Eesti Päevaleht featured a story about Matthew Smith, a descendant of Estonian grandparents Hans (deceased) and Livia Kivisild of Calgary.

Matthew was born in Montreal and now lives in California. He has met the B-level qualification for the 2008 Olympics and, having acquired Estonian citizenship, may represent Estonia in Beijing. His specialty is the 100-metre breaststroke event, with a qualifying time of 1.03.29 minutes. Estonia's representative will be decided by mid-July.

Matthew has visited Estonia with his parents and grandparents but his Estonian vocabulary is quite limited. According to the article, he feels that his grandmother Livia would be very proud should he qualify for the Olympics. It would also be an opportunity to remember his recently-deceased grandfather Hans.

I REMEMBER

Jack A. Kulpas, Calgary, 1970

Jack Kulpas was born in 1901 in Pierre, South Dakota. The Erdman and Kulpas families moved to Barons in 1904. He owned the Ford Garage in Champion from 1928-1938 before moving to Lethbridge to work for Pyramid Motors. Jack and his wife Phyllis moved to Calgary in the mid-50s and retired in 1969. He died in 1981.

In 1904 and '05, the Barons district, which at that time was called Blayney, was homesteaded by the United Nations. There were Norwegians, Swedes, Finns, Estonians, Germans, 2 Swiss bachelors, and at least 1 Englishman. To my knowledge, there were 3 families from Eastern Canada and about 3 families who called themselves American.

This created a language problem as there were many who could only speak their native tongue, but in about 3 years almost everyone was able to swear in about 4 languages and speak a few words in 3.

The ability to swear in several languages helped a lot and you could get rid of frustrations much faster, but it sometimes could be embarrassing.

Just lately I was in a corner store which was operated by a very nice young Chinese lady whom I know very well. The price of some article had gone up and I swore at it in Chinese. I didn't know what the words meant, but I thought they were on the mild side, as I had heard Chinese use them often.

She said, "You must not say that." So I asked her what it meant and she replied, "Oh, it's velly bad." It must have been very bad because she always spoke perfect English and never substituted 'l' for 'f'.

It was very necessary for people to be able to converse with one another for several reasons. The nearest doctor was 30 miles away, and with no cars or phones, we had to depend on Mr. Books and do-it-yourself doctors. However, there was very little sickness; probably due to the fact that people ate good food, drank pure water, had plenty of exercise, and kept regular hours.

I only know of one death in the first 5 years. He was a middle aged bachelor, and when we went to the funeral services held at his house, mother spotted a pile of cans and exclaimed, "No wonder he died. Look at all the tin cans!" Mother never owned a can opener and never served us anything out of a can.

There were babies born, and quite often my Grandma was asked to bring one of them into the world. In one case, neither of the parents-to-be could speak English and Grandma could only speak Estonian. I don't know what nationality they were, so we'll call them Swedes for short. There was no one around who could speak both Swedish and Estonian, so Grandma had to have 2 interpreters: one of my aunts translated from Estonian to English and another girl translated from English to Swedish - and vice-versa. Everything went fine and the new baby and mother came through as healthy as could be.

No one could rely on their own resources and no one tried except the Englishman who, at first, had a holier-than-thou attitude, until necessity broke down the barrier.

One day, he came over and asked Dad. if he were going to Claresholm soon. Dad said he wasn't and asked why. The Englishman said he had bought a set of 'arness for the 'orse, but the collar didn't fit the 'orse's neck and he wanted to take it back and exchange it for the right one. Dad got curious and said he'd like to go over and see if he could do something about it.

The Englishman reluctantly accepted the favour, and Dad went with him. Dad asked him to put the collar on, which he did, but he put it on upside down. That way it didn't fit anything. Dad showed him how to harness a horse. The Englishman insisted that in England they put the buckle on the bottom, but Dad figured that he had never seen a horse until he came to Canada. The Englishman didn't take to pioneering and left after the first winter.

There was a Lutheran minister, who came occasionally from Medicine Hat, Reverend Sillak, who could speak about every language going. He always held his sermons at Erdman's. On one occasion, he preached a sermon in Estonian at 11:00 o'clock and immediately afterwards, he held one in German.

Mr. & Mrs. Allen, who couldn't speak a word in either language, sat through both sermons. When asked why, he said he liked to spend his Sunday in a house where God lived and he liked to hear the choir sing.

As far as the sermon went, he didn't miss anything anyway, as the minister always preached in the same pattern. He would read a line from the Bible, and then repeat it over and over for an hour. Every time he repeated it, he raised his voice a little and hit the pulpit a little harder. Toward the end of the sermon, he would be actually roaring and pounding the pulpit.

The law also moved in and we now had an R.C.M.P. and a magistrate. Some of the sentences handed out by the early magistrates were rather amusing. There was one case in a neighbouring town where a proprietor of a Chinese restaurant was charged with bootlegging. The court found him guilty and fined him \$200. Louie said, "It's too much, Mr. A , and I won't pay it". So Mr. A - said, after some consideration, "I still find you guilty but reduce the fine to \$100." Louie said, "A hundred dollars is still too much and I won't pay!" So the magistrate asked him what he considered a fair fine, and Louie said, "I'll pay \$50 cash and that is all."

So the magistrate said, "After duly considering all aspects of the case and the extenuating circumstances, I find you guilty and fine you \$50!" I don't know what happened, but that was the last case Mr. A - tried. I guess he was too much of a horse trader to suit the establishment.

In the spring, things began to happen. Dad seeded his cultivated plot into wheat, potatoes, and all kinds of vegetables. Kirkendahls moved in and built their home across the road from us. And the best part was that they had a son, just my age, a playmate for me. August had 2 sisters and Lentsmans, who built just west of us, had 3 girls about the same age. We soon made friends and got together almost every day.

There were 7 of us, ranging from 5 to 7 years of age. Our favourite playground was at the small lake which was on Mr. Allen's place about a half mile from our respective homes. It was here,

one day, that we got our first sex lesson. We watched a horse and a mare who had picked this lake for their mating spot and we got an idea for a new game. We called it 'playing horse'. Now horses didn't wear clothes so the first thing to do was strip. So we went around on all fours, ate hay and drank slough water. Then occasionally we would chase the mares and climb on their backs, but after that we were lost because we didn't know what to do.

When I first saw August's sister in the nude, I thought she had been in a terrible accident and I asked August about it. He knew all about these things having had 2 sisters, and he explained that girls were made that way.

The very next day, this pastime came to an abrupt end. One of my peeping-Tom aunts decided to come and see what we were doing, and literally caught us with our pants down. She ordered us to dress ourselves and sent the girls home, and hinted that our parents were going to be told all about it Sunday after church.

The next day was Sunday, and as usual, the community met at Erdman's. The men always gathered outside and the women stayed in and drank tea. The children were put out to play.

August and I knew our horse game would be discussed so we stayed close to an open window and sure enough, my mean old aunt brought up the subject. Much of it was whispered and we could only make out that they were talking about us. Then they laughed and laughed, and then laughed some more. We were quite relieved, but not for long. 'My parents did not say anything to me about it, but the next morning I was told to go and see Grandma Erdman (Mari Erdman).

Grandma was the three star general in our family war department. I had only attended her Kangaroo court martial once before and the procedure was the same this time. First you had to sit in a chair while she got ready for the trial. In about what seemed to be an hour, she would appear carrying her large bible. Then she would sit directly in front of you, thumb through her bible and give you a stern look occasionally. Finally, after you got so uncomfortable that you were ready to cry, she would start her lecture. She always read appropriate passages from her big book, and ended by a veiled threat of fire and brimstone, forever here after. I was always allowed 2 words, namely "Yes, Grandma," or "I'm sorry." I would be too embarrassed to visit her for a week or so, but then the thought of her home-made fresh bread and donuts, etc. would win out and some afternoon I would wander over. She always treated me like nothing had happened and was her own friendly self again. The other kids got off easy: some got spanked and the girls were grounded indefinitely. This episode broke up our little gang and August and I began to pal together.

August and I wondered around and looked for wildlife. There was quite a variety; badgers, skunks, porcupines, gophers, rabbits, etc. I got too close to a porcupine once and discovered that the quills hurt more when they were being pulled out than they did going in. Bob (Robert) Erdman showed us how to make and use snares and immediately we started to snare every thing that went into a hole.

One day we saw a pretty black animal with a white stripe and a bushy tail. We thought that maybe we could catch him and take him home and make a pet out of it. We chased it until it disappeared into the badger hole. This hole wasn't very deep and we could hear him scratching just a little ways down. We decided to drown him out. I set my snare and August went for a pail

of water.

August came back, set his own snare, also, and poured the water in. This monster came out immediately and sprayed both of us with something that smelled just awful. The house became out of bounds for me and after taking a bath (outside) and burying my clothes, I was instructed to get the saddle blanket and sleep in the haystack. August got the same treatment. After the first night, August joined me in the haystack and things didn't go too badly. I guess it was at least a week before I was allowed in the house again.

I had my sixth birthday about this time, and when the weather got cold enough to curtail outdoor activities, the Establishment decided I should start my education. As there was no school and no known prospects of one, there was only one answer. Mother became the school marm with the first lessons being reading and writing in Estonian. As soon as August's parents heard about this, they asked my mother if August could join me. We learned fast and soon mother decided to have us read while she did the chores, so we were put to reading the Bible; for 2 reasons. One was because that was the only Estonian book we had and the other reason was that we needed the religious education as someday we would be confirmed into the Lutheran Church. I eventually read the Bible from cover to cover.

Dad became our English professor and Mother became a student. We also added arithmetic and geography. The education carried on for 2 years and then Wheatland Centre School was opened up. I must have had good teaching because I covered 3 grades in the first year, and started my second year in grade 4.

When I first started school, I ran into trouble. I had to walk 2 and half miles to school and there was a family of 5 kids who lived about a mile from the school who used the same road I had to take for the last mile. They decided it was fun to beat me up on my way home. I used to get out of school as fast as I could and get out of range, but they usually caught me, roughed me up and then went home. Then August started school and I told him what was going on and we mapped out our plan of action. We were on our way home when those same 2 kids took after us. We ran our best for a ways, just to draw them a safe distance from their big brothers, and then let them catch us. We turned and gave them a real good beating. I guess they hadn't realized that the odds had changed. We were never bothered after that.

At school, there was a little fat girl who sat in the desk in front of me. She had a habit of throwing her head back and her long straggly, unkept hair would fall on my desk, depositing white specks and sometimes little ugly grey varmints who slowly crawled about until I swept them off.

I didn't know what they were, but finally my head became itchy and my mother noticed me continually scratching. She investigated and I was pronounced lousy. The treatment was combing with a fine tooth comb and frequent washing. This was not successful in getting rid of the lice and mother started shampooing my hair with kerosene. This worked, but nearly burnt my scalp off. The culprit and her sister were finally found out and expelled from school. That summer they moved away, so we never saw them again.

Sometime later, August and I followed a load of lumber on our way home, when a package of what we thought was candy fell off the top of the wagon. The label said MacDonalds Cut Plug

and there were 6 bars of it, which we started to eat immediately. This was chewing tobacco and a regular user would take an occasional chew, chew it to a pulp and spit it out. It had quite a sweet molasses taste with a tang to it. We managed 2 bars apiece before we became deathly sick. I managed to make it home, laid down in front of the house, vomited, and thought I was going to die. To make matters worse, I didn't tell my mother the cause of my sickness at first, but when I became sure I was going to die, I broke down and told her. This eased her mind somewhat and by next morning, I was back to normal. Mother said it was God's way of punishing me for not returning the tobacco to the man when I saw it fall off the wagon. I was wondering how the other kids got away with some of the bad things they did and I came to the conclusion that God had a full time job watching me and the only time He caught anyone else was when He was moonlighting.

Along with the rest of the community, we were evolving out of the dark ages. We were now cooking with wood and coal. Kerosene lamps took the place of home-made candles, and we had added some modern appliances such as a deluxe wash board that had a neat little gadget on it where Mother could keep her home-made bar of laundry soap. Dad bought a half section from the Hudson's Bay Co. for \$8.00 per acre. This was adjacent to the east side of the homestead. It was on this property that we built our new house.

Our new house was as good as any in the neighbourhood: 2-story, 3-bedroom, with a full basement. The living room and kitchen were very large rooms. Everybody built big living rooms, as we and everyone else had a lot of company in those days. No radio, no cinema, no telephone, or TV; people got acquainted with their neighbours. Sing-along singing was a favourite pastime.

Bill Alexander built a barn with full-sized hayloft and started holding barn dances on Friday nights and sometimes oftener. On those occasions, everybody went and the music was supplied from the local amateur talent. There was always an abundance of this, which varied in quality, but was always loud. There was an assortment of instruments; violins, a banjo, a couple of trumpets and a few which I had never seen before and haven't seen since. Even our washboard was put to use. There were always such small instruments as harmonicas and Jews harps and some of the boys were very good on these. There was one man who was a first class square dance caller.

Then one night, when the whole community was gathered for the usual barn dance, Bill Alexander proudly displayed the eighth wonder of the world.

It was a little box with a handle on the side and a great big horn on it. He inserted a black tube on top of it and turned the handle for a while. While everyone listened in awed silence, the thing started emitting sounds that sounded like it was trying to say something about his master's voice, and then went into screeching sort of a tune that faintly resembled the current hits of the times. First it sounded like Pop Goes the Weasel, and then finished up with Pony Boy. The phonograph wasn't loud enough for dancing, and anyway, who wanted to dance when there was this novelty to listen to.

We were very busy that summer. We moved into the new house. Then one day, about 10 men with their families came over and fenced in about 10 acres and built a hen house. These work bees happened quite often in the early days. They made an outing out of it. The women cooked

up a real feast and the keg of beer always helped.

The next step was to dig a well. Dad was the big chief of all water witchers. He used a forked willow branch and I never saw him fail. He could tell you where and how deep the water was and, in most cases, the volume.

He couldn't find water close to the house. He estimated the underground stream which he located about 100 yards from the house to be 60' to 70' below the surface, but about 3/4 mile from the house, he found a place where he estimated the water to be about 20' down., so we started to dig there. One good thing about digging on the prairie was that the sub-soil was clay and there was no danger of cave-ins.

After 3 days of work, we hit water at 18', and it came within 10 feet of the top. And it was good water. The only thing wrong was that it was too far from the house.

We didn't have to use the well for a fridge any more because Dad built a dumb waiter, which took care of such things as butter, milk, etc. We also boasted a new kitchen range with a high warming oven and everything. The dirt basement was as good as a root cellar, and vegetables of all sorts kept from one crop to the next, and we always had a barrel of dill pickles. Dill included cukes, cauliflowers, green tomatoes, and small carrots. Peas, beans, and beets were preserved in jars, as were saskatoons and chokecherry jam. There was lots of sauerkraut. We ate well in those days, as we had our own milk, eggs, meat, etc.

The next stupendous event was the advent of the telephone. At first there were only 5 on this party line. Everybody had their own signal; ours was 2 long rings. There was no reason for these signals because it didn't matter what the signal was, everybody ran for the phone and listened in anyway.

Note: "The Kulpas family (except Jack) changed their name to NewDay. Mom (Ellen Johnson) thought it was in 1901, when they came to North America, but Betty says in her story that it was in 1929 when Anton became a citizen of the United States."

Barbara Gullickson

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2006 CANADA CENSUS: ALBERTANS WITH ESTONIAN ETHNICITY

Tables 1 and 2 were assembled from information published by Statistics Canada and are based on a 20% sample of all private households. The replies are based on the question: "What were the ethnic or cultural origins of this person's ancestors?" A single ethnic origin response occurs when a respondent provides one ethnic origin only. A multiple ethnic origin response occurs when a respondent provides two or more ethnic origins.

Location	Total	Single	Multiple
Calgary	750	115	630
Edmonton	500	115	390
Red Deer	110	10	100
Stettler Country	100	15	100
Lacombe County	60	10	50
Lethbridge	60	30	30
St. Albert	50	0	35
Canmore	35	15	20
Others	495	50	460
Totals	2160	360	1800

Note: Of the total population of 2160, 17% of Alberta Estonians claimed single ethnicity in the 2006 Canada Census. A total of 470 of 2160 Albertans with Estonian ethnicity , or 22%, are younger than 15.

Location	Total	1st Generation	2nd Generation	3rd Generation & higher
Calgary	580	75	225	285
Edmonton	430	110	165	155
Red Deer	100	15	10	80
Lethbridge	45	20	15	15
Others	535	45	545	340
Totals	1,690	265	545	875

Approximately two-thirds of the respondents reside in the communities/areas listed in Tables 1 and 2

Data compiled by Dave Kiil

MEMBERSHIP LIST, NOVEMBER 2008

1. Annist, Pille, Alar, Sven - Nanaimo, British Columbia
2. Ansley, Imbi, Andrea A, Gary & I, SV Birchcliff
3. Asmus, Peter, Jeanette - Calgary
4. Brennen, Virginia-Stettler
5. Brewer, Elsie-White Rock, British Columbia
6. Clark, John - Denver, Colorado
7. Collin, Marion, Glen, Cameron, Gary, Julia - Airdrie
8. Costello, Wilma - Calgary
9. Cowick, Anne-Liis - Red Deer
10. Cowick, Kathleen - Calgary
11. Derksen, Linda, Colin, Jack, Jamie - Edmonton
12. Dinning, Shirley, Leonard - Edmonton
13. Doherty, Linda K - Big Sandy, Tennessee
14. Engler, Faye - St. Albert
15. Erdman, Evelyn - Calgary
16. Erdman, Ken & Kelly Ann - Calgary
17. Erdman, Oscar & Sally - Calgary
18. Fodor, Steve & Evelin - Calgary
19. Graham, Judy, Bruce- Surrey, British Columbia
20. Gullickson, Barbara - Barons
21. Hall, Gwen, Ernest - Boyle
22. Helenurm, Kalju, Margot - Calgary
23. Hennel, Lorne - Calgary
24. Hennel, Rodney, Elizabeth - Stettler
25. Hennel, Ron W.F & Jolena - Stettler
26. Herman, Liia, Derrill, Liisa & Alex Tamme - Innisfail
27. Holukoff, Bob - Calgary
28. Jaako, Harry-Vancouver, British Columbia
29. Kaert, Mati & Linda- Edmonton
30. Kalev, Tiiu - Eckville
31. Kalvee, Willy G- Calgary
32. Kerbes, Deane, Irene - Stettler
33. Kerbes, Marguerite - Stettler
34. Kerbes, Richard - Saskatoon
35. Kiil, Dave, Betty Ann - Edmonton
36. Kiil, Glenn, Ingrid, Ranek, Kalev - Edmonton
37. Kiil, Lisa, Diana - Edmonton
38. Kingsep, Bob, Annette & Tobi Telford - Redwood Meadows
39. Kivisild, Livia - Calgary
40. Klaus, Alfred, Joyce - Stettler
41. Klaus, Larry, Kathy - Sherwood Park
42. Klaus, Roy - Stettler
43. Koper, Donna - Cochrane
44. Kraav, Jüri, Helle - Calgary

45. Kuester, Matt F- Edmonton
46. Langeste, Helmut, Airi - Edmonton
47. Leesment, Helgi, Peeter - Calgary
48. Leilop, Aino - St. Albert
49. Letourneau, Loree - Eckville
50. Luik, c/o Renate, Avo - Edmonton
51. Lumi, Rasmus - Ottawa
52. Maddison, Anneliese - Edmonton
53. Madill, Anita, Wallace - Calgary
54. Magi, Enzo, Maimu - Calgary
55. Maki, Jean & Joe- Eckville
56. McClung, Eda - Edmonton
57. McElroy, Elve & W.L-- Camrose
58. Metsar, Gerli - Calgary
59. Mottus, Arnold, Vera, Catherine - Red Deer
60. Munz, Lillian - Calgary
61. Munz Gue, Martha, David, Lisa, Anita - Medicine Hat
62. Nicklom, Otto, Gladys - Stettler
63. Paasuke, Elizabeth - Edmonton
64. Paasuke, Rein, Jan - Calgary
65. Paasuke, Toomas - Canmore
66. Pallas, Andi, Liz - Calmar
67. Pallo, Jack Henry - Red Deer
68. Pastewka, Astrid - Calgary
69. Payson, Tiina, Paul - Edmonton
70. Peet, Ethel - Edmonton
71. Peet, Linda - Edmonton
72. Pelto, Margaret, John- Sherwood Park
73. Pihooja, Ralph, Nella Collins - Edmonton
74. Pilt, Shirley - Edmonton
75. Põhjakas, Kaljo, Lillian - Lethbridge
76. Poldas, Karin - Calgary
77. Posti, Allan, Maria, Ryan - Eckville
78. Ruus, Ivar, Lea - Calgary
79. Ruusauk, Siim, Lamour - Sherwood Park
80. Saar, Lembit & Iris - Calgary
81. Saar, Rein, Patricia - Calgary
82. Sandre, Ülo - Calgary
83. Sastok, Laine - Edmonton
84. Schuler, Kelly - Calgary
85. Shafer, Nancy-Blue Island, Illinois
86. Shongrunden, Astrid - Penticton, British Columbia
87. Shursen, Evelyn - Stettler
88. Sparrow, Lori - Eckville
89. Stanich, Robert, Leila-Calgary
90. Szady, Caroline, Linda-Edmonton
91. Tiislar, Enn, Pärja - Canmore

92. Timma, Olev - Calgary
93. Tipman, Bob, Kathy-Calgary
94. Urke, Jan - Edmonton
95. Ustina, Astrid - Edmonton
96. Ustina, Judy K - Edmonton
97. Varney, Sharon-Edmonton
98. Ward, Allan,E, Geraldine - Surrey, British Columbia
99. Wartnow, Floyd C- Delta, British Columbia
100. Zach, Inge - Calgary
101. Zielinski, Kristine, Michel - Spruce Grove
102. Zoumer, Anne - Calgary

ALBERTA ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 2008

Helgi Leesment

Alberta Estonian Heritage Society held its annual general meeting on May 3, 2008 at the Snell Auditorium of the Red Deer Public Library. It had been preceded by the official launch ceremony of the *Alberta's Estonian Heritage* website.



President Bob Kingsep's understated humorous style kept the meeting going at a speedy pace. The majority of the past Board agreed to retain their positions. Peter Asmus replaces Anne Cowick as Membership Convener. The AEHS thanks Anne for two years of volunteer service in the position she inherited at a time when the membership list grew complicated and was starting the conversion to a different software program. The current Board members list appears on the inside front cover of this issue of AjaKaja.

Members heard the review of an intensely busy past year: An AEHS logo and pin were adopted. Major funding had been obtained from three sources to result in a professionally produced half-hour documentary film and a quality historical website, thanks to financing applications skillfully submitted by Dave Kiil. Treasurer Toomas Pääsuke made sense of the complicated finances, duly audited by Enn and Pärja Tiislar. The AEHS responded to an invitation by the West Coast Estonian Days committee in Los Angeles with the debut of the documentary DVD *Alberta's Estonians* and a Readers' Theatre production highlighting the pioneering tales of an Alberta family. Both were well received by the Estonian crowd in California. The DVD received excellent reviews at the EstDocs film festival in Toronto.



The Alberta debuts were hosted in turn by Calgary, Red Deer and Edmonton AEHS groups with Estonian Chargé d'Affaires Rasmus Lumi in honorary attendance at each. Jaanipäev attracted a wide range of ages to Lincoln Hall. The first two Board meetings under new President Bob Kingsep were held in Tallinn (May 7, 2007) and Los Angeles (August 10, 2007), finally reverting to Alberta in the Fall - secretary Jüri Kraav dutifully attended and recorded all. Future plans include Jaanipäev celebration at Linda Hall in 2009, with the organizing committee already making arrangements.

To the sincere applause of AEHS members, Dave Kiil and Eda McClung were each awarded an AEHS "Oscar" as a token of recognition for their outstanding volunteer work in coordinating the two historical projects: the well-acclaimed documentary film and the newly-launched major website featuring Alberta's Estonians. All members of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society were thanked for their input of family photos and biographies for these two projects. Without that interest and effort, neither project would have come to be.

AEHS members are rightfully proud of their organization's achievements in the brief three years since its inception.

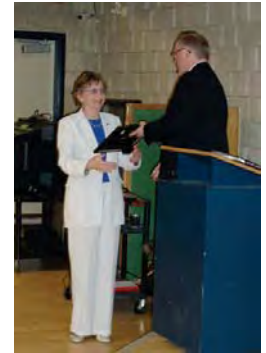


Photo credits on this page: Helgi Leesment, Martha Munz Gue

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tere!

I found the article from National Post on Toomas Hendrik Ilves, to be fascinating! Born in Sweden to Estonian exile parents he was educated in the U.S. and worked in Canada. Influenced by Canadian Estonian politics, he moved to Estonia to become involved with Estonia's new freedom and went on to become Estonia's president. Prior to his presidency, Toomas Ilves promoted technology in Estonia. As a result, Estonia is now on the cutting edge of computer technology in education, banking, legislation and voting.



The similarity of President Ilves background to the biography of many of Alberta's Estonians unfolds so typically within our community that it almost slips by as normal. Therein, I suggest, excluding the politics, lays the source of many of our societies' positive attributes. Add the word 'inclusive' and the secret to our success is revealed.

Within the AEHS we have created a social network covering Alberta and beyond, expanded the scope of our membership, established two web sites, produced a quality DVD, enjoyed numerous well-organized events and marked the calendar for more.

It is exciting to see members working towards improving our organization. The minutes of the last two AGM's now reside on site, and further relevant information will follow. Our membership database is being up-graded, we have a process on the AEHS website for membership application and renewals, and new projects continually come foreword.

Our AGM and the official launch of our AlbertaSource Estonian historical website was our key event since the last issue of AjaKaja. It went very well and provided an opportunity to show our accomplishments to the media and government representatives. It was also a logical time to express our appreciation to those agencies that contributed funds, and to thank our members who worked hard to organize and compile a vast amount of information. That was the completion of phase two and, as I write this, Dave Kiil's email arrived announcing he has submitted an application for phase three! Be sure to check out this informative web site. (abestonians.AlbertaSource.ca).

The producers of AjaKaja continue to do an excellent job and once again we have to acknowledge our good fortune. This issue of AjaKaja contains the beginning of a series of articles featuring our younger Estonian members. It is a great idea and it should bolster the interest of our younger members in the AEHS. I am looking foreword to it and I have no doubt that it will raise the level of pride in this organization even further.

Good reading to all, and I hope to see you during our summer activities. Not sure what and where? Go to aehs.ca regularly and see what's happening.

Tervitades,

ALBERTA'S ESTONIAN HERITAGE - WEBSITE

Helgi Leesment

The Alberta Estonian website is available on the internet.

It focuses on Alberta Estonian history and is part of the *AlbertaSource* / *Alberta Online Encyclopedia* complex - an online learning resource - sitting among the websites of Alberta Italians, First Nations people, University of Alberta centennial, the Francophone community, etc. Written in a straightforward, simple style, this website is intended for use by school children as well as adults. Students looking for Estonian-related topics for school assignments may wish to look at the stories, brief biographies, accounts and photos offered. People looking to complete blanks in their family genealogy or those wanting to reconnect with long lost relatives may also find helpful information at this website. All of the information and photos are organized under the headings: History, People, Communities, Cultural Life, and Multimedia Resources (such as photos and video clips). The Search feature enables the finding of specific names and topics. The SiteMap is an excellent detailed guide to the contents.



Created in partnership with AlbertaSource.ca, part of Heritage Community Foundation, and major input from the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS), the site was ceremoniously launched on May 3, 2008 at the Snell Auditorium of the Public Library in Red Deer, generously hosted by the Heritage Community Foundation. A preliminary version of *Alberta's Estonian Heritage* website has been available since the Fall of 2007; however it has been substantially expanded and updated since then. The site was made possible by grants from Alberta's Community Initiatives Program and Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program.

The session was graced by a small display of Estonian national costumes, selected by Valerie Miller, Collections Coordinator of the Red Deer Museum + Art Gallery, and brought to the launch location by Melanie Berndt who ably guarded the heritage items, providing background information as asked. The girl's outfit had been commissioned from Toronto by Dr. Rita Matiisen and the Museum in the 1980's. The other items are treasures from area Estonian families.

At the May 3 official launch of the Alberta's Estonian Heritage Website, Master of Ceremonies Dr. Adriana Davies, editor-in-chief of AlbertaSource.ca, introduced Bob Kingsep, president of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society. Both Dr. Davies and Bob Kingsep spoke of the importance of the recognition of the Estonian community within Alberta's ethnic groups and especially the value of family histories.



Among the honoured guests invited by Dr. Adriana Davies were Cal Dallas - MLA for Red Deer South; Sonia Bitar - Citizenship Judge for Northern Alberta with Souheil, and speakers Mary Ann Jablonski - Minister of Seniors and Community Supports, Red Deer North; Blaine Calkins - Member of Parliament - Ponoka-Wetaskiwin and Morris Flewwelling, CM, Mayor of Red Deer, Chair of Heritage Community Foundation and his wife Hazel. The speakers brought greetings from the Province of Alberta, the Government of Canada and the host city Red Deer.



As a thank you to the honoured guests, Bob Kingsep presented each one with a copy of the *Alberta's Estonians* DVD. The National Estonian Foundation of Canada (Eesti Sihtkapital Kanadas), with partial funding from the Community Initiatives Program, funded this half-hour documentary which was released last year.

Dave Kiil, communications director for the AEHS heading the historical projects, thanked the many people who gave of their time and family records in order to create this substantial Estonian heritage website.

Despite Dave's modesty, all present were well aware of the tremendous volunteer work done by him organizing and documenting mountains of submitted materials for the Heritage Community Foundation who in turn edited these and created the Estonian website. In recognition, AEHS president Bob Kingsep awarded Dave Kiil a framed certificate of thanks. Dave's colleagues Eda McClung and Helgi Leesment also received similar framed citations detailing their particular contributions to the project.

The May 3rd launch event was made even more interesting by the concurrent demonstration of the website during the verbal presentations. Clifford Barnett, senior programmer of the Heritage Community Foundation, clicked on appropriate webpages illustrating families, individuals, places and other aspects as these were mentioned by the various speakers. The photos and stories showed on a large screen beside the podium, making for an interesting multi-tasking multi-media afternoon followed by a light lunch and opportunity to chat.

The news media was also present and interviews were held before and after the launch ceremony. The event was recorded in the Red Deer Advocate and briefly shown on television.

CALGARY ESTONIANS CELEBRATE ESTONIA'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

Helgi Leesment

On Sunday morning February 24, 2008, twenty-nine Calgarians gathered beside the huge fireplace at Nick's Restaurant to commemorate the 90 th anniversary of Estonian Independence and to enjoy a pleasant brunch.



Helgi Leesment welcomed all to the informal event. Bob Kingsep, President of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society and grandson of the first known Estonian pioneer in Canada (arrived in 1899), spoke appreciatingly from the point of view of someone who is of Estonian heritage but has not suffered political persecution, political terrorism nor the need to suddenly leave one's life behind and venture reluctantly into the unknown as has been the case with many of those present. Peeter Leesment presented the Estonian language speech honoring this special anniversary. Facing the Canadian and Estonian flags on either side of the fireplace, the entire group sang the national anthem of Canada. Written lyrics were provided in both languages, so that people not familiar with the Estonian language joined in the singing of the Estonian anthem.



The event was also a successful social occasion, resulting in many people exchanging contact information upon their departure after the brunch.

FILM REVEALS HOW ESTONIANS SANG TO ACHIEVE FREEDOM

Kate Blain

"What role can singing play when a nation is faced with annihilation by its neighbours? According to filmmakers James and Maureen Tusty, singing saved the country of Estonia from extinction. The above question begins their new documentary about the history of that Baltic nation, titled "The Singing Revolution."

The film has opened to positive reviews at independent theatres in both New York City and Los Angeles. Reviewer Matt Zoller Seitz of the New York Times advised readers to "Imagine the scene in 'Casablanca' in which French patrons sang 'La Marseillaise' in defiance of the Germans, then multiply its power by a factor of thousands, and you've only begun to imagine the force of "The Singing Revolution."

Inspiration

The Tustys have been making commercials, educational programs and corporate films since 1981 through their company, Mountain View Productions. "The Singing Revolution is their first documentary.

The subject matter inspired them because of their own history: Mr. Tusty's father, a Lutheran minister, immigrated to the U.S. from Estonia in 1924. Through that connection, the couple got the chance to teach summer filmmaking courses in Estonia in 1999 and 2001-during which they learned the tumultuous story of Estonia's fight for independence.

Folk singing is an intrinsic part of Estonia's history; Mrs. Tusty, a native of Wynantskill who was raised in St. Jude's parish there, asserted that the tradition even pre-dates the country's introduction to Christianity.

Song festivals have been such popular events that Estonians from the 19 th century onward would practice songs all winter, then gather by the tens of thousands to sing together at the festivals.

Silenced songs

One such festival, "Laulupidu, was founded in 1869, drawing upwards of 30,000 singers at a time to the stage. Held every five years, the festival-and Estonia-flourished until 1939.

Then Adolph Hitler and Joseph Stalin signed the Molotov/Rippentrop Pact, dividing Eastern Europe into "spheres of influence. Soon, the Soviets marched into Estonia, executing thousands of Estonians and sending 10,000 more to slave labor camps in Siberia.

The Nazis took their turn in 1941, occupying Estonia for several years and imposing their own brand of suffering until they were ousted by Stalin once more.

Communist rule

Under the renewed Soviet rule, anything originally Estonian was destroyed-even the country's flag was banned.

Soviet propaganda infiltrated even the song festivals, where traditional folk songs were replaced by songs honouring Stalin and Lenin. But, in 1969, a new song slipped by the censors: " Land of my Fathers, Land that I Love, by composer Gustav Ernesaks.

It was the 100 th anniversary of the major song festival, and 30,000 people sang it together as a protest of the Soviets, drowning out all attempts to stop them.

"Land of my Fathers became Estonia's unofficial national anthem-and the theme song of a revolution that would eventually lead to the country's independence in 1991.

Getting word out

The rest of the story awaits movie-goers, who can sign up at the film's website to ask that it be shown in their areas. Mrs. Tusty noted that theatre owners take such lists seriously in choosing which films to screen.

Having spent several years making the film, she said, the coming year will be focussed on distribution.

The Tustys filmed the modern footage for "The Singing Revolution in 2004 during two trips to Estonia, one of them during the song festival. Having heard the personal stories of those whose families lived through the Soviet and Nazi occupations during previous visits, the couple had made it a goal to spread the story beyond the Baltic nation's borders.

Repression

"During Soviet times, people weren't allowed to express their religion. You couldn't even have a Christmas tree, said Mrs. Tusty.

Although Estonia's true history was taught at home, she continued, children were also taught never to share what they had learned with others. At school, children might be convinced to repeat things their parents had said, resulting in their parent's arrest for anti-Soviet remarks.

The Tusty's own daughter, Skyler, was born during the years in which they were editing the film footage. Looking at the sleeping infant as she worked. Mrs. Tusty said she was appalled at the "evilness [of] using children in that way.

Courage

On the other hand, the couple were inspired by the courage of Estonians who continued to sing forbidden songs as a step toward independence.

The same population came together to form political alliances-some radical groups, others middle-of-the-road-that created a new government for Estonia and overthrew the occupiers.

Mrs. Tusty still seems amazed as she describes the country's history: "They did it. They took the actions, and they stood in the fields, not knowing what was going to happen-100,000 people in a field, singing illegal songs.

Estonia today

Mrs. Tusty said that, when she and her husband have attended screenings and offered to answer questions afterward, movie-goers have much to ask about Estonia. Most of all, people want to know what the country is like today.

"Estonia is a vibrant and dynamic country now. Its nickname is "the Baltic Tiger, Mrs. Tusty declared. "It's a beautiful place to visit. The people are embracing their freedom.

She added that seeing faith of those who fought Soviet oppression caused her and her husband to evaluate their own faith.

"I would sit across from someone, interviewing them about being deported to Siberia, she recalled. "The opportunity to even meet these people and be given this perspective made me think, "What do I believe? What would I have clung to? Would I even have survived?

"These people held onto their core and never, ever lost sight of that. It forces you to look at your own faith and recommit.

(Mrs. Tusty hopes "The Singing Revolution will be screened in Albany in the spring. When it finishes its theatrical run, the movie will be available for purchase on DVD. Learn more at www.singingrevolution.com. Mountain View Productions website is <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0954008/>).

Reproduced, with permission, from the Editor, The Evangelist, The Official Publication of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany.

Editor's Note: At the time of writing, The Singing Revolution was scheduled for screening at the Princess Theatre in Edmonton and the Globe Theatre in Calgary, June 20-26, 2008.

Photo credit: Estonian Song Festival website

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ALBERTA ESTONIAN TENNIS CHAMPION GERT LUKK

Helgi Leesment

The summer of 2008 marks 50 years since Estonian Gert (Gerhard) Lukk earned the 1958 title of Alberta men's singles tennis champion. This is likely the highest level achieved by any Estonian tennis player in Canada. He was also the Alberta provincial men's doubles champion four times: in 1958, 1960, 1962 and 1963, with different partners.

Gert's tennis career began in Estonia when his parents gave him a tennis racquet for his tenth birthday. It was a tradition in the Lukk family that all the children receive a tennis racquet on their tenth birthday. Pre-teen Gert's great admiration for the famous Kristjan Lasn, eight-time tennis champion of Estonia in 1939, motivated him to pursue tennis seriously even at a young age.



The dangers and disruptions of WWII propelled Gert to Germany, then briefly to England before immigrating to Canada in 1948. Despite hardships, he enrolled in the engineering physics program at the University of Toronto where he was able to play tennis again after a gap of seven years. There, in singles matches he played against Calgarian Ken Lawson, and in doubles matches played with him as partner. Gert took the intercollegiate men's singles in 1951 and 1953. In 1952 Ken Lawson earned that title. Also in 1953 the two became the intercollegiate doubles champions. As fate would have it, eventually both worked in Calgary where that same tennis rivalry/partnership continued for many years.

Beyond university, Gert captured the South Western Ontario singles and doubles titles in 1951. Gert Lukk and Ken Lawson defeated the Canadian Davis Cup doubles pair of Jim Macken and Jerry La Fortune to win the 1962 Alberta provincial men's doubles championship. Nevertheless, Gert counts the win over his brother George in the 1951 South Western Ontario final as one of the highlights of his tennis career; and he was pleased to win the doubles title with brother George.

Gert's early career as a geophysicist/seismologist at various oil fields prevented him from wielding the racquet on a regular basis for several years. However, upon settling into Calgary, he became a long term Calgary city champion, winning first place five years in a row 1959 to 1964. He and his wife Greta won many local mixed doubles tournaments in addition to his victories in men's doubles. They were members of both the Calgary Tennis Club and Glencoe Club tennis teams.



In the mid 1960's the couple moved to Australia, partly to benefit from the longer tennis season afforded by the favourable climate there as Calgary had no indoor tennis facilities at that time.

Naturally, tennis match wins continued as a major part of the couple's lives in the Southern Hemisphere. Retiring after a long geophysics/seismologist career in Australia, Gert and Greta Lukk now reside in Calgary.

VARIOUS NEWS ARTICLES

Public WiFi-covered areas number 1151 in Estonia.

There are currently 1,151 WiFi wireless Internet-covered areas meant for public use in Estonia, data available from the wifi.ee portal shows. Harju County, which includes the capital Tallinn, has 418 wifi-covered areas cleared as public by the portal, 365 of which are situated in Tallinn.

The first public WiFi-covered area was opened in Estonia in May 2001. WiFi (Wireless Fidelity) is the only standard of wireless data communication that has integrated into the Linux., Windows and Apple operating systems.

Editors note: as of May 10, 2008, there are 1162 wifi portals in Estonia.

From Estonian Review Dec. 9, 2007.

NATO creates cyber-defense team

Largely because of unprecedented cyberattacks on Estonia during the Spring of 2007, NATO has now created a Cyber Defense Management Authority in order to help the 26 member states during future cyber attacks. Further, NATO has established a cybercenter of excellence in Estonia as another part of its cybersecurity program.

Submitted by Helgi Leesment

Estonian Ambassador to Canada Presents Credentials

Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to Canada Väino Reinert presented his credentials to Governor General of Canada Michaëlle Jean on Wednesday, 21 May, 2008.

The Ambassadors office is located in Washington, DC and his geographical areas of responsibility extend to the United States, Canada and Mexico. Over the past few years, Albertans have met in turn the three Estonian Charge d'Affaires based in Ottawa: Sulev Roostar, Argo Küünemäe and Rasmus Lumi. The position of Charge d'Affaires in Canada reports to the Estonian Ambassador in the United States, currently the newly-appointed Väino Reinart.

In discussion following the credentials presentation ceremony, Reinart and Jean discussed the state of Estonia-Canada bilateral relations, including opportunities for co-operation within international organizations, as well as European Union-Canada relations.

Governor General Jean and Ambassador Reinert acknowledged that Estonia-Canada relations have been good throughout history. Over the years Canada became home for many Estonians that were forced to leave Estonia following World War II. Canada and Estonia participate in many joint international operations, including in the southern part of Afghanistan.

Before assuming his position in Washington, Reinart was Estonia's Ambassador to the European Union.

SAAGA: HOW TO GROW YOUR FAMILY TREE

Dave Kiil

Sagas are medieval Nordic stories of battles, social customs, family histories and legends. Thus the selection of the word Saaga as a name of the Estonian family history website is appropriate.

My interest in family history research blossomed in the 1990s following several trips to Estonia. Having found the headstones of early ancestors in the Kihelkonna Cemetery on Saaremaa, I returned home and visited the Family History Centre of the Mormon Church in Edmonton. Unexpectedly, I discovered that records of the Lutheran Church and other information about my ancestors was stored on microfilm in Salt Lake City and available for viewing. Over a few years and many hours in front of a microfilm reader, a computer monitor and personal contact with many relatives and researchers, I have accumulated valuable information about my ancestors.

A new era for genealogists opened up during the first few years of the 21 st Century with the launch of the Saaga website by the Estonian Historical Archives (EHA). The first digital records, based on material stored at the EHA in Tartu, became available in 2004, and the data base continues to grow.

All of this research can now be done in the comfort of one's home by logging on to www.eha.ee/saaga/. Before gaining access to the parish registries, census records (hinge loengud), and other related information, the user must complete a straightforward registration procedure with User Name and Password. Once you've gained access to the searchable database, you can familiarize yourself with the website Content, the Saaga Project, Source Categories and Search procedures in Estonian and/or help-text in English. The Source Categories section provides a list of record titles in both Estonian and English.

The same page lists the three primary categories of information by source categories, namely:

1. Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELK)
2. Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church (EAÕK)
3. Wacka-books

By clicking on any of these categories, new pages will open to reveal lists of over 120 Parishes under each of the first two Categories. The Parishes are listed in numerical order, followed by the name of the congregation.

Selected Congregational listings:

236 Tallinna Oleviste kogudus
1253 EELK Tartu Jaani kogudus
1270 EELK Urvaste kogudus
3134 EELK Kihelkonna kogudus

Examples of Congregational listings

Search aides can help you find the name of a Parish provided you know the name of the

municipality where your ancestors lived. Once the user opens the information page for a specific Parish, it is possible to click on numerous options, usually listed by the type of archival record and the period covered by each. The resulting pages of images can also be viewed in PDF format and printed for your records. The downloading of each page is slow but doable from the comfort of your home or library.

Familiarization with website contents, the terminology used, and appreciation of basic research techniques will prove helpful in navigating the searchable data base. In some instances a rudimentary knowledge of Gothic Script, Russian and Estonian would be an asset. The layout and format of the basic records and forms are quite similar, and most search-related difficulties can be overcome with dedication and recognition of recurring headings.

The following list under Source Categories in the "Sitemap gives some basic English titles and their corresponding meaning in Estonian.

List of Record Titles

Parish register of births - Sünnimetrika

Parish register. Births, engagements, banns, marriages, deaths, communicants, confirmands-Kirikuraamat. Sünnid, kihlad, mahakuulutused, abiellumised, surmad, armulaualised, leerilapsed.

List of confirmands -Leerilaste nimekiri

Parish register of marriages -Abielumetrika

Parish register of deaths -Surmameetrika

Parish member *list, German congregation* - *Personaalraamat, Saksa pihtkond* pihtkond

Parish member list, Estonian congregation - *Personaalraamat, Eesti Pihtkond*

Selected listing of bilingual record titles

MIDSUMMER DAY CELEBRATION ON SAAREMAA!

Irene and Deane Kerbes

The Midsummer Solstice, or Jaanipäev, celebration dates back to the pre-Christian era and has continued from generation to generation. On the Island of Saaremaa, the second-largest island in the Baltic Sea, Jaanipäeva celebrations continued unabated during the Soviet occupation and preserved important cultural traditions. With the arrival of Estonian Independence in 1991, Midsummer Eve, with bonfires in public places and in private backyards, coupled with Independence Day celebrations, continue to attract locals and tourists from the mainland of Estonia and abroad.

Poetess Debora Vaaran di made Saaremaa's Midsummer Days famous with her poem "Saaremaa Waltz" which was later melodized by composer Raimond Vagre. The lyrics of this song are well known especially for Estonians and Finns, and George Ots's rendition is very popular. The song tells a story about a wonderful Midsummer Day on Saaremaa.

Midsummer Day as an enduring Estonian custom is of course much older than the song. On June 23, St John's Eve or Midsummer Eve, bonfires have always been lit. In coastal areas old boats or hulks were burnt in bonfires. It is popular custom to look for a "fern flower" at Midsummer Night. The finder will become rich and happy, and will know the languages of birds, animals and people. People have sometimes called glittering glow-worms the "fern-flowers". And they were looked for in the same way as fern-flowers were. It was believed that anyone who brings a glow-worm home will be happy, but someone who kills the worm will find his house on fire. Near Kaarma, Saaremaa, it was believed that if you find a horse-shoe before Midsummer Day and throw it over your head, you will be happy. Diligent farmers wanted to get most of their hay made and under shelter before Midsummer Day, as before that day the hay has honey in it, afterwards it has water. A Midsummer involves merry-making with homemade beer, accompanied by the traditional accordion and singing.

Bonfires and Summer Solstice celebrations go hand in hand, It is the ideal time to gather for dancing and singing around bonfires together with good friends and relatives, and to sip the strong homemade beer of Saaremaa.

The Kerbes's, Deane, Irene, Margaret Pelto, and Eldon Kerbes saw the preparations on Saaremaa, but had previous plans to celebrate Midsummer Day in Tallinn with the Anstall family at Rocca La Mare near Tallinn. There were three parties on at one go!

HELVE SASTOK

Helve Sastok is a creative and innovative published and performed composer, educator and pianist who can perform and teach at an advanced and specialized level. She is highly adaptable and able to share and instill a passion and love for music of all styles in others.



Sastok also works as a clinician, adjudicator, the composer and graphic artist of a series of children's piano books, and is the sole proprietor of Music Everywhere! She currently lives and works in Calgary.

Sastok has a Master of Music and a Bachelor of Music degree (with distinction) in composition as well as two piano performance diplomas. She is an Associate Composer of the Canadian Music Center, a member of the Canadian League of Composers, and the Association of Canadian Women Composers. Since 1994, Sastok has been involved as a composer and educator with The Artist in Schools Residency Program throughout Alberta. She has worked as an Artist for the Learning Through The Arts program since 2007. Workshops given in various centers on composition, improvisation, piano pedagogy, Canadian music and twentieth century music have been well received.

Sastok's compositions have been performed across Canada and in Europe. Two of her pieces have been released on CD: 'Duologue' on Brief Confessions (1997), and 'Elegy' on Glossa (1999). Her electro-acoustic composition 'Sailing the High 'C' is being released on CD in 2008. Her piano trio, 'Misty Mountain Morning' was performed in a New Works Calgary concert in March, 2008.

REIN SASTOK WINS SCHOLARSHIP!

On March 15, 2008, one day before his 18 th birthday, Rein Sastok attended the Outstanding Speech Performers Showcase in Calgary. At the Showcase, he received the Dorothy W. Gregory Speech Arts Scholarship and its accompanying plaque. Rein is also a back-up contestant for the Speech Arts provincial Festival.

In his thank you letter to the Calgary Kiwanis Musical Festival, Rein indicated that he plans on using the \$1,000 Gregory Scholarship to further his university education. He will be attending the University of Calgary, where he'll study Linguistics, whilst pursuing both Performance and Teachers Speech Arts with his Speech teacher, Susan Duska. Ultimately, Rein plans to teach Speech Arts or to become a Speech Pathologist.

Well done, Rein, and continued success in the future!

ESTONIA OPENS EMBASSY IN VIRTUAL WORLD

Estonia opened an embassy in the internet-based virtual world Second Life on Tuesday, 4 December, 2007. Estonia is the third country to open an embassy in Second Life.

According to Foreign Minister Urmas Paet, more and more of communication goes on internet, and Estonia must keep up with the trend. "Second Life's popularity as an alternative environment for interaction has grown rapidly, which is why we decided to establish an embassy there," Paet added.

Art exhibits, concerts, lectures and other events will be organised in the embassy. The first lecture, entitled "Back to the future," will be given in January by Estonian Ambassador to Great Britain Margus Laidre.

According to Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry Matti Maasikas, several other countries are planning to open virtual embassies in Second Life, which means that the prominence of Second Life is growing in diplomatic circles. "We expect people interested in Estonia, as well as people interested in foreign relations and foreign policy, to participate in events at the embassy," said Maasikas.

The virtual embassy has a conference room, exhibition room, reception hall and a technology room, where Estonia as an e-nation is introduced. Visitors to the Estonian embassy will hear current news read by an Estonian hound.

In honour of the 90th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia, the embassy will display the exhibit "Blue-black-white in Estonian painting". There will also be other materials dedicated to the anniversary on display.

The virtual representation was born under the leadership of the Foreign Ministry. The State Chancellery and the Estonian Informatics Centre made significant contributions, and there were many volunteer helpers as well. The project is being implemented by consultation firm Hill & Knowlton.

Source: Spokesman's Office

pressitalitus@mfa.ee

Submitted by Helgi Leesment

Schengen Visa Space

The land and maritime borders of nine countries- Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia opened on 21 December, 2007, as they acceded to the Schengen visa space.

The events to mark the Schengen enlargement took place at Port of Tallinn's D-Terminal with the presence of Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen and other representatives of the Finnish,

Swedish, Norwegian and Icelandic governments.

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TORONTO BASED ROCK BAND WITH ESTONIAN MEMBERS JAAN KITTASK AND MARKUS SAKS GETS COOL REVIEWS ON ITS FIRST CD

Band Members: Johnny Kay (Jaan Kittask), James Robertson, Markus Saks, Steve Payne

The I Spies began in 2003 as four young musicians experimenting with angular riffs and new wave hooks, inspired by the likes of The Police and Elvis Costello and by the attitudes of bands like The Clash and XTC. Recently, The I Spies have gelled. They are more than the sum of their influences. Their energetic and fiery pop songs translate flawlessly into high energy live performances.

Released independently and distributed nationwide by Fontana North, 'In the Night' is The I Spies' full-length debut. The I Spies breed an imposing sound. Robertson's layered guitar grit scuzzes-up Kay's strong pop rants, while Payne's infectious bass melodies race alongside Saks' machine gun percussion. Organs and synths pulse in and out. The music is urgent and abrasive; big and fresh; hook-laden and filler-free. Armed with a clear agenda and a stunning record, The I Spies are ready to infiltrate. More information: <http://theispies.com> or <http://myspace.com/theispies>

ALBERTA'S GREAT ESTONIAN STONE EXCHANGE FEATURING PLACE NAME RESEARCHERS FROM ESTONIA

Helgi Leesment

This summer marked another event depicting unity and reconnection between Alberta descendants of Estonian pioneers and relatives in Estonia.

The first known Estonian immigrant to homestead in Canada was Hendrik Kingsep of the Horma estate in Võrumaa, south-east Estonia. He settled in 1899 onto lands in what is now west central Alberta. In 1905 his father Ott Kängsep, also known as Horma Ott, travelled from Estonia to see how his two sons were doing in the wilds of Western Canada, but, after a short illness, died. He was buried in a tiny unofficial graveyard in the Gilby area, kindly donated by the Raabis family. In May of 2007, a piece of stone from Horma Ott's headstone in Alberta was taken to Võrumaa by Bob Kingsep, Hendrik's grandson and current president of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS). This tiny item was ceremoniously placed at Horma Ott's memorial stone located on the Horma estate. In turn, a piece was chipped off the Horma Ott memorial in Estonia to be brought to Canada. All this is clearly depicted in the half-hour DVD documentary produced by the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society in 2007.



Note: A chance encounter in early 2007 onto a then unknown relative's website led to reconnection of the extended family. Neither group on either side of the Atlantic was aware of the other stone dedicated to the same ancestor.

This summer, on August 16, 2008, two Estonian descendants of Horma Ott who were visiting Canada for the first time, participated in the event involving the second piece of stone, thus enacting the GESE or the Great Estonian Stone Exchange. AEHS members were invited to attend the ceremony at the Raabis cemetery near Gilby. Among those present were almost all of the people featured in the previously mentioned documentary. Over half of the 50 attendees were members of the extended Kingsep and Saar families.

Bob Kingsep introduced the event with some humorous memories of growing up among the Estonian descendant farms, often playing Roy Rogers and Hopalong Cassidy cowboy games with his best friends in and around the then unfenced and mostly forgotten cemetery. As of the 1999 Centennial of Estonians in Canada, the tiny cemetery has been officially consecrated, re-consecrated and fenced, with metal white crosses added to symbolically mark the final resting places of approximately 14 other Estonians who were buried there before any official cemeteries were established in the area. Horma Ott's stone marker had been covered in moss, all of which was cleaned off for the 1999 celebration, and has been carefully maintained since then.

Now this stone was central to the event of August 16, 2008.

Thus, candles were lit to the memory of the others buried in the little hilltop location. Two young seventh generation descendants of Ott Kingsep, Madison Smith and Danielle Werenka, each placed an apple in front Horma Ott's gravestone in tribute to the apples he brought with him on his trip to Canada - the pioneer family members had not had any apples since leaving Estonia six years earlier, so this fruit was an exceptional taste treat in 1905 as testified in well kept diary records.



Estonian relatives Evo Saar, Evar Saar and his wife Mariko Faster, passed around the rock bit chipped off Horma Ott's memorial stone in Võrumaa the previous year. Each and every person present had the honour of handling this symbol of unity and reconnection. All four briefly jointly held the stone. This was truly a cherished moment of connection. Former cowboy playpals of Estonian descent, Garry Raabis, Allan Posti, Howard Posti and Bob Kingsep now took on a different role, preparing the resting place for the stone of honour on the same hill where they used to playfully track each other down among the bushes.

Amazingly, Evar Saar had recently stumbled across an 1890 draft of Horma Ott's will and now proceeded to read portions of the Estonian text out loud, standing immediately behind the gravestone of the unexpectedly "unfinished life of the author. Next, Bob Kingsep's daughter Tobi, representing the Alberta side of the extended family, began to read the English translation of the unfinished document. Unintentionally yet symbolically, the ceremony itself became "unfinished as Madison's great grandmother gracefully fainted into the bushes from the heat of the midday sun.

By the time the 50 member group re-gathered at the Friendship Centre in the nearby town of Eckville, the fainting Great Grandmother had apologized a thousand times for causing an interruption. Everyone was glad to hear of her quick recovery and continued the celebration in the Estonian way - meaning two buffet tables groaning with food. Some of the pot luck fare was of delicious Canadian variety featuring fresh produce from local farms, some was very Estonian. At first the kilu (small salted fish) and diced egg sandwiches were left almost untouched, however, as the afternoon progressed, the entire large trayful disappeared. Same applied to the Estonian style lightly pickled cucumber, the best "roosa manna dessert ever and many other dishes.

The visitors from Estonia were particularly interested in the new display created by Dave Kiil, depicting the voyage routes of Alberta's Estonian pioneers and other excellent related graphic information. True to the Estonian penchant for singing at any gathering, Eda McClung accompanied "Perekonna Valss / Family Waltz on the piano long ago dedicated the memory of Estonian Lenny Kingsep. Garry Raabis and Edna Osborne led the song.

The afternoon concluded with Evar Saar and his wife Mariko Faster presenting their wonderful slide show on Võru County, of which they are very proud. Both are employees of the Võru Institute which propagates the Võru language, very closely related to the standard Estonian language, and other unique aspects of Võru culture. They are on the staff of the võru language weekly newspaper *Uma Leht / Our Own Paper*.



From Alberta, Evar Saar and Mariko Faster proceeded to Toronto to make presentations at the International Congress of Onomastic Science (<http://icos2008.yorku.ca/>) at York University August 17-22. Onomastics is the academic study of place names, personal names, names in literature, and names in relation to such disciplines as geography, linguistics, sociology and history. Interestingly, four others from Estonia also authored research papers there.

Evar Saar is a specialist in place names and family names of Estonia, particularly in the Võrumaa region. He is the main force behind an extremely detailed map of Võrumaa place names, having worked on it for 8 years and interviewed 7000 households in the process. The map is available online and on paper. He states that he would be happy to assist people tracing their Võru region ancestry through confusing old records mentioning manor houses, lakes, villages, etc. differently in the various languages that have been used over past centuries in Estonia on documents. This is very good news for the many Estonian descendants in North America persisting in tracing their ancestry despite considerable difficulties. Contact Evar Saar at evsar@wi.werro.ee or by telephone at 372-7828754 or cell 372-56213177.

Upon leaving, the Saars and Mariko Faster stated, in their Võru language: "Kõigilõ eestäisile ja võrokõisilõ säääl kavvõn Kanadamaal! Hää ja lämmi oll' ti man ollaq. Hää oll' nätäq jupikõist kodomaad nii kavvõl Eestist. Aituma tuu vaimu hoitmisõ iist!"

Translation: "To all Estonians and Võru folks in faraway Canada! Being amongst you was a great and heartwarming experience. It was wonderful to encounter a little bit of our homeland in a place so far from Estonia. Thank you for maintaining that pioneer Estonian spirit."

President Bob Kingsep followed up the GESE with a letter to AEHS members, in which he states in part:

"I can't emphasize enough the gratitude we feel for the support of all of you who attended our Great Estonian Stone Exchange (GESE). Thank you to those who planned, showed up, pitched in and made a great day for our Esto visitors. I know the Horma people were overwhelmed by the appearance of so many people who came from great distances to be part of the ceremony. It was pretty impressive. It was so rewarding to look around at the group at the cemetery and realize that once again our little organization has recognized an opportunity and rallied to create an impressive event...

Horma Ott's magic continues to come through somehow. It appears the more we dig into Ott's gravesite, the more interesting the results! As I said when we were there, I think his story is so symbolic of the Alberta Estonian roots, that we probably have discovered not only a 'headstone'

but a 'cornerstone' of our Alberta Esto heritage."

MESSAGE FROM ESTONIAN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Are Saarne

I am Are Saarne, president of the Tallinn Branch of the Estonian Genealogical Society, married, 42 years old. Donna Koper of Alberta, Canada has written in this AjaKaja issue of her very recent trip to Estonia and Ukraine. I would like to further add some interesting memories of that same visit from my perspective.

Firstly, meeting Donna Koper and her husband Larry Koper was an experience my family and I will never forget. She is such a positive person; I was immediately delighted to help her attain her goals on this trip. It is impossible to describe all the details (I believe Donna and Larry will do that remarkably well). We simply had not experienced such a heartwarming new acquaintanceship for a long time. This visit by Donna and Larry convinced me to the bottom of my heart that Estonian-mindedness and warm sincerity can and do co-exist very well.

Specifically, Donna Koper came to Estonia and later went to Ukraine in search of her ancestral roots. Her forefathers left the Albu Manor, located in the Järva-Madise parish and Julianeneberg (Sügalepa) village of Estonia, before the beginning of the cultural movement known as the National Awakening. They followed the self-styled 'Prophet Maltsvet' to Ukraine in 1862 and later moved onward to Canada in 1903. From that time forward, none of her family has set foot in Estonia, until this year. Donna wanted to discover and preserve something of her ancestors' original home region for her current extended family in pictures and by filling the blanks in the family tree and family history, as well as about Estonia as a whole.

Through prior contact, I had done some research in preparation for informing Donna and Larry about conditions in Estonia during the 19th Century when her ancestors lived there. Despite the fact that Donna does not speak Estonian and my English is weak, we were able to communicate quite well - with and without humour.

Being well acquainted with Estonian history, I was particularly pleased to be able to convey to her the essence of the 19th Century lifestyle of Estonians. For me it meant she gained an understanding as who the Estonians are, because she, through one side of her family ancestry, has Estonian blood flowing in her veins. I sincerely wanted to give Donna and Larry the maximum results I could obtain, and I believe that goal was successfully achieved. I am continuing to help her complete her family tree for both the Reinson and Pertel lineages. This includes forwarding to her various relevant materials about Estonia in general.

The Society itself would like to work with Canadians of Estonian ancestry, as our historians at this end would very much like to find out the ongoing fate of Prophet Maltsvet's followers as well as of the lives led by other Estonian emigres of that period and the beginning of the 20th Century.

I add that our meeting was made possible by Helgi Leesment and Dave Kiil who both put out a great deal of effort to make the Koper Estonian trip a positive experience for us all. I have since

had interesting and helpful contact with Helgi Leesment and through her translation services, I send greetings to all the readers of this article!

On behalf of the Estonian Genealogical Society, we extend our best wishes to all of you way over there in Canada!

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MY JOURNEY TO THE PAST

Donna Koper

About the author: Donna Koper grew up with a family of eight children in farming communities of southern Saskatchewan. She landed in the big city of Calgary in 1960 where she worked, married and raised four children. Donna is now retired and lives on a working farm near Cochrane, Alberta. In the summer her passion is gardening; in the winter, the never-ending task of genealogy. She is compiling her family history for publication and she says that life is good!

My lifelong dream of going to Estonia to learn of the land, its people and their culture began September 23, 2008 for three weeks. In my journey to uncover my family history I had the privilege of meeting many wonderful individuals who showed me just how warm and friendly my ancestral home of Estonia truly is. I would like to share a few highlights of my experiences with you.

Together with my husband Larry, who accompanied me on this trip of a lifetime, we gained new insight and an understanding of my family's history. I am grateful to Dave Kiil for the online introduction to Are Saarne, Chief Genealogist of the Tallinn Chapter of the Estonian Genealogical Society who resides in Tallinn. The day after our arrival Are began our immersion experience with a trip to Albu Manor (it is now a school) where my ancestors lived and toiled under the power of the manor - much to my surprise I learned that one of my forefathers was Taskmaster. Are had arranged a private tour for us with two of the schools most knowledgeable guides-teacher Enda Trubok and the Librarian. Historical records for Albu date back to 1282 and it was once the largest manor in Järvamaa. I could only wonder what part my ancestors played in its construction.

Day two Are whisked us off first to Paide to join the town's Genealogical Society meeting - they say Tere to all AEHS members and gave me their Estonian Newsletter to present to you. One of the elders then took us on a tour to Türi to see the different sights that were bombed and destroyed during the Russian occupation and German invasion of WWII. He himself was sent off to Siberia for the then unlawful act of owning a house. From there we headed to explore the historic Järva-Madise Church for another private tour. Hard to believe I was at the place of worship that my relatives attended as far back as the 16th century- many of whom would have found their final resting place in the vast cemetery. As a note of interest during invasion years, peasants put in a false ceiling in the upper tower where they hid and lived to escape their enemies. People sheltering them would raise food and water via ropes lowered from holes cut out in the tower. The War of Independence Memorial now majestically stands at the gates entrance.

Are took us on numerous excursions of which each and everyone was memorable but too many to mention at this time. However, I would be remiss if I did not mention the awesome sight of Old Town in Tallinn! Are gave us a tour of the numerous wondrous medieval sights to explore, one of which was the Estonian Museum. When my Great Grandfather and his sons immigrated to Saskatchewan in 1903, they constructed "teepee" style shelters on their homesteads as temporary dwellings until their houses were built. Imagine my surprise upon entering the

Museum the first thing I saw was a replica of one of those shelters! We were fortunate in spending several days wondering about the cobblestone streets and exploring the numerous shops. Heh, I even convinced Larry to go to McDonald's with me.

Are, his wife Meeli and their adorable son, Marken, won our hearts immediately and shall ever remain in our minds as part of our new family. But now we are off to Simferopol, Crimea for the remaining ten days and a place I had little knowledge of. Wow! Not quite the affluent Canadian comfort we are accustomed to. Nadiya Gladzin was our knowledgeable guide and Urri our most skilled driver for the duration of our stay. We quickly became aware of the vast Estonian network in the Crimea, it seemed like everyone knew we were coming and were welcomed with open arms and hearts and treated like royalty! Our first hosts were "shirt-tail" relatives of my Grandmother- and they invited us to their flat for a scrumptious Estonian feast complete with champagne and caviar. Next day Nadiya had made arrangements to Konchi Saava where my ancestors settled after the trek of 1862 from Estonia. We were invited to the home of more "shirttail" relatives where about a dozen of the villagers gathered and showered us with flowers and gifts. After a long discussion (thanks to Nadiya's interpreting) of the Village history, its people and pouring over pictures, we were able to gain a greater understanding of my family's hardships and struggles that they endured before crossing the Big Pond.

Like magic, a HUGE Estonian feast was set before us - the presentation was something right out of a gourmet cookbook. All this from someone who has only the barest essentials in their kitchen let alone running water! Outhouses are the norm for this part of the world. Anyway, served along with this feast is of course, champagne, caviar and the infamous Vodka.

Next we all had to pay a mandatory visit down the street where the Village's eldest citizen, Anna Papelbeu -she was absolutely adorable and had quite the sense of humour. Waiting for us was a table spread with caviar, appetizers and what else-Vodka! Crammed in her extremely TINY kitchen, they serenaded us with many old Estonian songs which seemed to transport us to another time and place -Unforgettable!! Needless to say it was a heart-warming adventure for me with a lot of happy tears. My heartfelt thanks go to Nadiya for making all the prior arrangements to Konchi Saava which made for so many fond memories.

Another special time for me was meeting Leongard Salman, the most knowledgeable man in all of Crimea for genealogical information- he has been helping me for the past year. Then there was Meeri Nikolskaja - the dearest soft-spoken lady who has spent her lifetime compiling old photographs of every Estonian village and town in Crimea. Not only did she accompany us on many of our excursions, she even met us at Simferopol Airport. That was rather humorous as she does not speak one word of English! Meeri loves to sing and has the voice of an angel - I recorded several songs that she sang for me and have put it on a disc which I have now listened to over and over.

Again, we did not spend time at the tourist hangouts but chose to follow the paths of my ancestors which gave me a whole new understanding of why they left Crimea for Canada. For this reason we saw how the majority of Crimean Estonians live - there is no middle class and for the most part they are stuck in past centuries with little or no chance of change.

It was a wonderful feeling to connect with my Estonian identity and come away knowing that to be an Estonian feels proud and good!! Aitäh to all my new friends.

Author's acknowledgement

Huge bouquets of thanks to the following members of the AEHS who helped me prepare for my Estonian adventure: Helgi Leesment, Lillian Munz, Martha Munz Gue; to Bob Kingsep for posting my Help! notice on the AEHS website and to Dave Kiil for responding.

Tänan one and all!

Donna (Reinson) Koper

FOREMOST ESTONIAN ESTABLISHMENT

Otto Laaman

Forty miles south of Lethbridge is the village of Warner, just a few tens of miles from the US border. The Warner and Foremost Estonian settlers arrived from the other side of that border, specifically from the Koidu Estonian settlement of South Dakota. Even though they were formerly from Crimean settlements and accustomed to heat, and although South Dakota lands were good for raising cattle, there was such a shortage of water here, that in the summer they had to drive their herds 8 miles to the shores of the Missouri river.



One of the first to cross the border was Hans Meer (Määr) who was the first Crimean Estonian settler to travel overseas. He arrived in South Dakota as a bachelor in 1892 and moved to Alberta in the spring of 1906. He and his family stayed in Lethbridge until August 31, 1907 when he moved with his family to an area about 35 miles north of Warner where he purchased 160 acres of land and immediately proceeded to establish a farmstead. A month later his father, brothers, sister and brother-in-law joined him. The brothers also quickly purchased land and built homes, waiting for homestead allotments which were established May 10, 1910 when each person requesting it obtained a quarter-section which was 160 acres. By 1910 this settlement, which was located close to the present-day Foremost, had seven Estonian families and two bachelors. But even in the Foremost area they had to contend with a water shortage. In this region farmers raised field crops, mostly wheat, meaning they endured hardships due to the dry climate and rocky soil.

The life of the poor, cashless pioneers was no better even 10 years after the first Estonians came to Alberta. To them were left comforting words of a Canadian poet (Isabella V. Crawford "Malcom's Katie: A Love Story 1884): *"My axe and I - we do immortal tasks -* , at a time when the rich in Alberta were already speeding around in their cars (at 25 miles an hour), living comfortably with central heating and had electric lights in their houses, chattered on the telephone, attended movies, theatre and balls. The rich were constantly in touch with their own kind, while the settler and his family were separated even from their neighbours by long walking distances.

Mihkel and Helena Krasman together with their three children came to Alberta in 1909 and their homestead was granted according to their application sequence 45 miles from Warner on unsettled land where the nearest neighbor was 35 miles away. Krasman's daughter Leena wrote about their new life and incredible hardships in her memoirs:

"In the fall, father bought 2 horses, a wagon and a load of lumber from Warner and built a hut the size of a garage, whose walls were covered on the outside by tar pitch. The only furniture on dirt floors was a home-made bed for my parents and a bench which was also used as a table. Three children slept on the floor.

Before winter, as much hay as possible was cut and carefully stored in such a way that wild horses would not eat it during the winter. When we got new closer neighbors, this English family slept in our haystack until they could build themselves a shelter. Wherever you looked was empty land, rocks jutting up through the grass and these all had to be pried up before you could till the land. We gathered cow and buffalo manure for heat in the bitter winter. We didn't have milk or eggs, we ate gruel, beans, salt herring and bread. We rode to town maybe once a month and this took two days and nights.

Our sister Linda was born in the spring. When she was a few months old, she was accidentally burned with boiling water over half her body. Father was on a trip to town at that time. We had no medicine and only thing that mother could do was to carry the crying baby around all night. In the early morning she sent my brother and me to the neighbor (2 miles) so that he could fetch the doctor (9 miles). Fortunately the neighbor's boy had a bicycle. The doctor arrived in the evening and mother was still pacing the floor from one corner to the other. The baby was only whimpering now and - miraculously - she survived!

In the spring father broke more land. The new grain was thrashed under horses' hooves and then father threw the straw in the wind to remove the chaff. Our greatest worry was water; we dug many wells but got no water and in the summer we had to haul water 5 miles. Of course, in the winter we melted snow.

After the first harvest we barely survived another prairie disaster. Fortunately father had plowed two well-spaced furrows around our house and this spared our home and haystack from the sea of prairie fire which raged around us. Not all our neighbors were so fortunate.

Father built a barn from field rocks, filling the spaces with mud. With our help he finally got the roof boards on. Some time later a whirlwind carried the roof a quarter mile away in shreds. At the time, father was in Barons visiting his uncle who had promised us a cow, chickens, and food to ease our hardship. This trip lasted 2 weeks and we often wondered whether we would see him again. But he finally arrived with the cow, chickens and food. The milk and eggs tasted out of this world. But the barn roof was gone and in the late fall with no money it was impossible to replace it. The cow had to exist in the roofless building all winter and became ill. We wrapped her in blankets but even this did not help. We all cried when she died. In the same winter mother contracted pneumonia and the baby became ill. Father tended to them both and didn't dare leave them long enough to get a doctor. But we children played with old arrowheads around abandoned Indian fire pits. The first school house was 5 miles away. My brother and I together with another 5 children all attended but not regularly because of distance. We learned to read and write Estonian at home. When a new school was built 3 miles away we started taking two grades a year but we needed to stay home to help during sowing and harvest times.

Years passed. Our family grew with three more boys. Things improved for father when he drilled a well deep enough to get water. The older children went to work and sent their monies home. This went toward the purchase of machinery and seed. Life also improved with the extension of the rail line to Foremost and two good crop years (1915 & 1916). We were all optimistic especially when a new house and barn were built, but then came dry years-soil blew in the wind and the crops failed. Bills were left unpaid and there was no cash to be had. Father decided to abandon the farm and we moved to Barons. From there we moved on to Innisfail near Red Deer. Both dad and mother are buried there.



At Foremost's 50 th anniversary my two brothers and I went to see the old farm but all we found were some ruined stone walls in the middle of a grain field.

Krasman's experience was typical of all the Foremost Estonians. For the same reasons as they had, over the years almost all the families left and by the 1960s there was only one farm left that was still operated by a descendant of the original family but none of these people spoke any Estonian.

Translation by Evelyn Erdman

'NOW' GENERATION OF ALBERTA ESTONIANS

Janet Matiisen

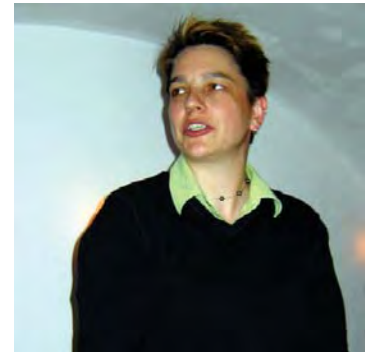
I've said many times that I was born under a lucky star.

My dad, Arne Matiisen, may not have felt the same way when he was a young man. He was born during the glory days before WWII in Tallinn, though his family followed a familiar path of rebuilding their lives in another country. First, in Sweden, and eventually in the Eckville area of Alberta - it was not an easy life. My mom, Carolyn Wilfley Matiisen, has traced her family roots back to the 1800s in America and were true homesteaders in the States, and in Alberta. They prove, in many ways, that opposites attract; they met at U of A and married in Red Deer and I came along some time later.



My parents instilled a sense of curiosity and a desire to explore, discover and see. We moved to Germany and then London, England for my first few years. We travelled all over Europe and other parts of the world before finally settling in Calgary while I was in elementary school. I've been here ever since. My sister, Melanie, arrived when I was almost 10 years old, we have been best friends for about 20 years and counting.

I am a proud native Calgarian, though I cling strongly to my roots in Estonia. One of the highlights of my life was the time I spent in Estonia in 2007 with my dad and my aunt, Eda McClung. Words cannot describe the emotions when I first saw Pikk Hermann and our flag flying above - I was excited and awestruck and overwhelmed with emotion, covered in goose bumps. We explored our roots and discovered so much about our history, met family and friends all over the country . . . I can't believe we did all that in 10 days.



Now, I continue to explore the world, but I do it mostly from my desk. I work at the Calgary Herald, where I am Assistant News Editor/Graphics and Design. When people ask me what I do, I tell them that I make the paper look good, I make them WANT to read it, I'm a visual journalist. It's an exciting way to make a living, you never know what is going to happen on any given day, but you can count on us to tell you about it.

I always crave knowledge and am always curious. I love to explore the world - in journalism and in a more traditional sense, too. In the last few years I've been to Australia, Costa Rica, Spain, Mexico and various ports of call in the U.S.A. Some day, I will return to Estonia, a proud ex-pat, showing off the country of my roots to my partner and basking in the glow and history of a resilient and progressive people that will never say die, never quit, never give up their birthright. My lucky star will lead me there.

OTTOMAR LAAMAN, CRIMEA ESTONIAN AND 25-YEAR PRESIDENT OF THE CALGARY ESTONIAN SOCIETY

Helgi Leesment

The year 2008 marks 30 years since Ottomar Laaman, former president of the Calgary Estonian Society resigned his position, and 20 years since his passing. He lived through a major revolution, two world wars, two escapes, a divorce and two new starts in life, maintaining a passion for reading and literature throughout.

Ottomar Laaman was born on February 27, 1900 in the village of Samruk (now Beregovoye) on the western shores of the Crimean peninsula which at that time was part of Russia (currently Crimea is part of Ukraine). At the turn of the 20th Century, approximately 2200 Estonians lived on that well known peninsula in the Black Sea; they were many of the original trekkers who made the 2000 km journey on foot or by a series of riverboat and horse cart trips, and their descendants.



Ottomar's grandfather came from Tiskre, a village west of Tallinn. They arrived at Samruk in 1861 after a trying journey where many fellow travelers perished enroute from disease and abhorrent conditions. Upon reaching the abandoned Tatar farm that was to be their home, they discovered a Greek sheep herder was using it. There were many other initial setbacks to be overcome.

The house was of the standard Tatar design: an entry way with a kitchen behind it and a single room to each side. Otto's grandparents lived in one end and Otto with his five siblings and both parents lived in the room at the other end. After considerable initial effort, the Estonians grew various grain crops including wheat, barley and oats, also grapes and apricots. A dairy herd provided supplementary income as did the small general store operated by the Laaman family. Theirs was the only store in Samruk village. Horses and oxen worked their farm, although camels and a type of buffalo could be seen labouring on other farms. Father died when Otto was only 15, creating a very heavy workload for the mother and for Otto as the eldest child. Otto himself was saved from certain death by a cousin who happened to be nearby and dragged the youngster out of a gasoline barrel into which he had fallen. Later at hospital little Otto's stomach was pumped to get rid of all the gasoline he had swallowed.

The value of education was well understood by Estonians. There were elementary schools in all the Estonian villages where all subjects were taught in Russian except for Estonian language courses, Bible study, catechism and music (singing) classes. Most often the school building had the same design as homes, with the classroom at one end, entry way and kitchen in between, and the teacher's residence at the other end. For decades the Crimean schools doubled as churches. Although Otto had a school in his own village, he later travelled to another Estonian village, Utš- Kuju-Tarhan (now Kolodeznoje), to attend confirmation classes as the Estonian Lutheran tradition held that the rite of confirmation was a major life-step for youths approaching

adulthood, around ages 15 to 20. Mostly the school teachers were ethnic Estonian, so, naturally, they formed choirs and orchestras. On November 10, 1911, the Samruk choir participated in the 50 year jubilee of the settlement of this village by Estonians. One of the difficulties of maintaining a choir was that customarily, when the Estonian women married, they resigned from their choir. Despite that, the Crimean Estonian Song Festival was held in 1914.

For high school, the students went to a larger centre. Often the entire Estonian family moved off the farm into a town just so the children could obtain post- elementary education. Otto was fortunate to be able to attend high school in the town of Eupatoria (now Yevpatoria, Jevpatoria or Evpatoria), north of Samruk. But he was not accepted the first year he tried to gain admission, at age 11. He remained in Eupatoria at his aunt's place, studied determinedly on his own all winter, and next year was accepted into the second year of studies at the boys' school there. Girls attended a different school. Eventually many other Estonian boys and girls boarded at his aunt's home, including the parents of some current and past Alberta residents. Life was fun in Eupatoria with relatives and friends, swimming in the Black Sea, going on frequent rowboat excursions and seeing the occasional silent movie. The 48 km shoreline route between Samruk and Eupatoria was a muddy grain transportation road. Otto traversed it on horse cart, or sometimes hiked the entire distance during the school years so he could help out at the farm from time to time after father's death.

A steady stream of letters, newspapers, magazines and books flowed between Crimea and Estonia. All printed material was shared among villages so everyone could keep up with matters at home. Otto read it all voraciously. Interest was especially high in Eduard Vilde's writings as he had visited many of the Crimean Estonian settlements in 1904 as well as those in the Caucasus; he even lived in Crimea for a time researching the life of Johan Leinberg, better known as Prophet Maltsvet. Crimean Estonians admired Vilde's writing skills but cursed at some of the content, complaining that he had deliberately been given misinformation. This was apparent to them both in Vilde's historical novel *Prohvet Maltsvet = Prophet Maltsvet* and in the series of newspaper columns about his southern travels, later combined into book form. The arrival of the Russian Revolution and WWI cut off all communication with Estonia as of 1917. After that, the Crimean residents had no idea what was going on in their original homeland.

The warring brought horrors. The peninsula was occupied or attacked at various times by the Russian Red forces, the Russian White forces, the Ukrainian forces and German forces. These each were usually followed by various wandering adventurers, including many criminals. There was complete breakdown of law and order, streets became dangerous. There was terrorism, bombing, frequent arrests, hunger, a freeze on all imports and exports regarding Crimea. Governments changed frequently; Estonian organizations were forbidden to function. Nature added to the woes by bringing drought in 1918. Despite such conditions, school graduation took place for Otto Laaman in 1919, albeit in a restricted manner.

The fact of Estonia's 1918 independence was generally known even though there was no communication at that time between Crimea and Estonia. By 1920, two years after Estonia's independence, the southern Russian government formally recognized the new nation. This meant that Estonia could send an official government representative, a Consul, to Crimea. Through his office, the mail began to flow again. Also, the Consul was able to issue Estonian passports to those wishing to have one; a requirement if one wanted to go live in the newly

created country. These passports also excused the holder from military service in the Russian forces. Naturally, the young men especially sought passports, including Otto Laaman. At age 20, along with a group of friends, he decided to move to Estonia.

Travelling through Russia was out of the question, so they decided to take a ship to Constantinople/Istanbul and continue north through war torn Europe by train. It was a muddy sad day in October 1920 when Otto said goodbye to his family in Samruk and travelled to the port city of Sevastopol. On board the ship, a fellow passenger warned the Estonian youths that before arrival at Constantinople they would have to go to a steam bath where they would be scrubbed by staff who would charge a fee based on how dirty their client was! As it happened, the ship moored at Tuzla on Turkey's Asian shore where the Estonians had to give all their clothes to be "disinfected but thankfully showered on their own. They took advantage of their opportunity to do a little sightseeing in the fabled ancient city of Constantinople.

During the trip on various trains northward, Otto's group met several other similar groups of Crimean Estonians and Latvians, all heading towards their ancestral lands to start new lives. Eventually a ship took the group from the south Baltic shore to Paldiski on Estonia's north coast and yet another train from there brought them to their final destination, Tallinn.

At that point Otto Laaman's adventures in his book *Mälestused Krimmist = Memories from Crimea* come to an end. All of the above, and much more, is described in that book.

Had he lived a great deal longer, Ottomar Laaman would have been amazed to learn that in September of 2001, his home village of Samruk, now called Beregovoye, hosted the celebration of 140 years of Estonians in Crimea. It was a huge event with choirs, soloists and folk dance groups from Estonia and the Ukraine, commemoration services, parties, speeches and a conference where academic papers were presented. One family from Alberta, descendants of Crimea residents, was also among the participants, the only Canadians present. In 2004 a conference was held in the Crimean city of Simferopol in honour of the 100th anniversary of Eduard Vilde's trip to Crimea.

Upon settling into a new life in Estonia, Otto studied agriculture and law intermittently at Tartu University from 1922 to 1926. He landed a management position in the government cadastral unit which compiled detailed maps for taxation and other legal purposes. In 1938, the Estonian government awarded him the Order of the White Star Class V medal, presumably for excellence in carrying out his civil service duties; archive records of the award in the Estonian National Archive of Tallinn lack supporting information to determine the exact reason.

Otto married Pauline Elfriede Puusepp in 1929 and they had three children: one son and twin daughters. The marriage dissolved in divorce in 1941. Thus, when WWII brought a second Soviet Russian invasion to Estonia in September 1944, Otto escaped along with approximately 70,000 fellow countrymen, but without any members of his family. He lived in a refugee camp in Germany before working briefly as a surveyor in Scotland. He immigrated to Canada in 1948, heading straight to Calgary where a close relative, also from Crimea, was already settled.

By 1953 Otto Laaman was elected president of the Calgary Estonian Society whose entire budget of \$40 for that year was kept in a shoebox. As was the common experience of many immigrants, Otto's education and qualifications were not recognized here, so he initially worked

as a kitchen aid at a sanatorium/hospital along with several other newly arrived Estonians.

Remaining true to his deep interest in reading, he became a local agent for various exile Estonian publishers of books and magazines. He also wrote two chapters about Alberta Estonians for the compilation *Eestlased Kanadas: ajalooline koguteos / Estonians in Canada: a historical account* published in Toronto in 1975.

Two long term former colleague executive members of the Calgary Estonian Society characterize Otto Laaman as being serious, honest and a man of this word; adding that he performed his leadership duties in a competent professional manner, being neither talkative nor a dazzling socializer. In 1978 when a new president was elected for the first time in 25 years, the Society held a reception in honour of Otto Laaman's quarter century of volunteer service to the community.

By 1979 the ex-president re-settled into rural life on an Estonian society vacation property called Seedrioru, near Kitchener, Ontario. One of his daughters from Estonia visited him shortly after he moved to Ontario. This was not an easy feat to arrange, considering that travel permission was needed from the Soviet Russian bureaucracy in Moscow.

Surrounded by the lush greenery of southern Ontario nature and the fellowship of countrymen also residing at the same property, Otto compiled his book *Mälestused Krimmist = Memories from Crimea*, self-publishing it in Toronto in 1981.

Twenty years ago, in 1988, the other daughter came to Canada for an elongated visit of several months. Unfortunately, during that time, Otto became ill and died in hospital on October 10th.

One of Otto Laaman's granddaughters tells us of her grandparents' personal lives "because it seems so romantic. Ottomar divorced from the mother of his children. Then came the war and escape, etc. but he never did find another mate. When my aunt visited him in Canada, she saw he kept lovely pictures of his former wife. Grandmother remarried, however that match also ended in divorce. Grandmother and grandfather did not correspond with each other at all, but on what would have been their 50th wedding anniversary, both sent each other a card to mark the occasion.

IN MEMORY OF DORIS HENNEL, 1928-2008

Doris was born in Alsask, Saskatchewan on February 15, 1928 and passed away in Stettler on October 23, 2008. Her family moved to the Linda Hall area south of Stettler in 1939. Doris married Rudolph Hennel in 1945 at the age of 17. They had three children Bunny (Manley), Allan (Rita), and Ron (Jo). Through the years the family grew to include in-laws, 8 grand children and 15 great grand-children

In 1952 Doris, along with four other community members, formed the present Linda Hall Ladies Club of which she was a honorary member. She was also a member of the Agriculture Society and Board member for the Stettler Coop. She had a keen interest in politics .

Doris loved cooking, baking, playing horseshoes and cards, especially 500 and crib. She learned to make the traditional Estonian rukkileib (rye bread) and Jõuluvorst (barley sausage). She thought nothing of cooking for a house full at Christmas, New Years, and other events. You never left her home hungry. Doris was always seen working beside her husband, milking cows, haying, packing food out to the field, taking cream and eggs to town or running for machine parts. It was not uncommon in the summer months to host horseshoe tournaments with 75 to 100 people attending. Camping, fishing, rodeos and travelling in her motor home were also a joy. Doris and Rudolph traveled by motor home to Las Vegas, BC, Alaska and Yellowknife just to name a few places.

Doris' life was her home, husband, children, grand children and great grand children who called her GG. Doris was predeceased by her husband Rudolph of 60 years on Oct. 2, 2005.

After the funeral service at Stettler United Church and the burial at Lake View Cemetery, family and friends gathered for fellowship at Linda Hall. Linda Hall Ladies provided the lunch. Doris will be missed by all.

Contributor: Astrid Ustina

Members of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society extend their sympathy to the family and friends of Doris Hennel, and for their unfailing support and leadership in the Estonian community.

ESTONIAN MEDIA ARTISTS FEATURED AT EDMONTON'S "THE WORKS ART & DESIGN FESTIVAL."

Eda McClung and Dave Kiil

Estonia regained her independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Since then the nation has embraced new technologies, reflecting and affecting rapid cultural changes.

Their fascination with new technologies was demonstrated by five members of the Estonian Media Artists' Union in Edmonton for the Works Festival last summer. They participated in several media events, including a panel discussion, an exhibit reception, CBC interviews, as well as being the focus of articles in the Edmonton Journal.

We caught up with two of the Estonian multimedia artists-Eve Arpo and Riin Kranna-Rõõs- in the Works Festival Big Tent in Churchill Square to find out more about their 'A day without a Mobile Phone' presentation. Interested cell-phone owners were asked to surrender their phones for 24 hours and used to present a sound-and-light show.

The Edmonton installation attracted about 25 cell-phones, somewhat below the expectations of the two artists. The phones were suspended from a spider-like construction of pipes and wires in a corner of the Big Tent. In part at least, the modest response answers the question: What does the cell-phone mean to you? It means that Edmontonians think twice about surrendering their cell-phones, even for 24 hours.

The two media artists explained that Estonians are very attached to their cell-phones; in many households, mobile phones have replaced the traditional desk phones. This attachment to cell-phones led Eve and Riin to think about what it would be like to spend 24 hours without them. To find out, they hung 40 borrowed phones from a tree in Tallinn's Freedom Square. The artists and participants alike discovered how much they depended on their cell-phones. While Estonians use more cell-phones per capita than Albertans, both groups consider them important for work and perhaps even more for sending and receiving text messages or for making calls; in other words, it's like a wallet for many people.

During the Soviet era, Estonians often had to wait for years to get a regular phone line installed. As a result, they have embraced cell-phone technology with a passion, and enjoy seamless coverage of wireless service throughout the country. The project is one way of doing this in a playful fashion.

Biographical sketches of the artists: Eve Arpo: Architect; member of the Estonian Academy of Arts in Tallinn. Riin Kranna-Rõõs: Master of Arts in Interactive New Media, Estonian Academy of Arts.

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE OLD SCHOOL

Editor's Introduction

Jack Pallo is a 'blueblood' amongst Alberta's pioneer descendants. His mother was Salme (Kingsep) Pallo, the second oldest daughter of Hendrik and Emilie Kingsep who in 1899 established the first Estonian settlement in Alberta. Also amongst the first pioneer families in the Medicine Valley were August and Miili Posti. Jack's father was Miili's brother, Hendrik Pallo who arrived from Estonia in 1908 to join his sister. The wedding of Selma and Hendrik Pallo in 1922 was a special occasion as it was the first wedding to be celebrated at the recently completed Gilby Hall. Selma Pallo kept a diary and had a gift for expressing herself in recording family and community events. In 1967 she wrote a Kingsep family history for the Red Deer Advocate Centennial series 'pioneers of central Alberta.' Drawn from her diary, she described as seen through the eyes of a child, the moving, simple funeral for her grandfather Horma Ott who passed away in 1905 while visiting from Estonia. This evocative account was read on the recently-produced DVD " Alberta's Estonians. Jack continues the Kingsep family's strong support of reunions and applies his accounting background as keeper of family records. In recognition of his long and accomplished career, the City of Red Deer named a scenic, handsome street in North Red Deer in his honor: 'Pallo Close.'



During his 43 years working for the City of Red Deer - a record that still stands 12 years after his retirement - Jack Pallo constantly improved his qualifications.

It seems some habits are hard to quit.

At **77**, Pallo recently earned his Associate in Arts in General Studies degree from Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills.

He began his program of studies immediately upon retirement and says he has thoroughly enjoyed the process.

He did the entire program by correspondence he says, completing an average of a little more than one course annually.

Pallo, by the way, does not own a computer.

Pallo pays tribute to two friends for their part in his success. One acted as proctor for the exams required and the other faithfully typed up his essays and submissions and also helped with research.

"The course work I enjoyed very much, because I can take my time and put in, hopefully, a lot of thought, he says. Exams, however, were another matter as they are for many. They seem to conjure up a fear that knows no age limit.

"The exam is a pressure situation I don't respond to very well, says Pallo.

On top of that, Pallo can only write slowly, so would often find himself simply writing answers in point form just to show he knew his stuff within the time allotted.

The exam portion of a course is only part of the final mark, and clearly between all the components, Pallo had the right stuff.

Taking the program by correspondence was an obvious choice for Pallo, who stands about a metre tall.

He has mobility issues and while he can and does walk, he says, though as he ages balance is increasingly becoming a problem. He has a car but in recent months has used a combination of the Action Bus and a wheelchair to get around.

As to why he embarked on the degree, Pallo says he can trace that back a long way, to when he had a very hard time landing a job after graduating from high school in Red Deer. He found many employers didn't think that was enough.

Of course, he eventually went to work for the City of Red Deer as a utility clerk. He had been earning 41 cents an hour before that, but the city job paid a handsome 85 cents an hour.

"I was on easy street, says Pallo, with a smile.

When he retired, after working in such positions as accountant and internal auditor, he was the city's grants administrator.

The several accounting designations that he earned during his career are framed and displayed with pride on the wall of his office at his sunny south Red Deer apartment.

But even those concrete symbols of his academic achievements weren't enough for Pallo. Even before he retired, he planned to pursue higher learning once he'd finished work.

Deeply religious and with an abiding interest in theology, Prairie Bible Institute's courses filled the bill.

"It keeps me off the street at night, he jokes, about the benefits of studying.

On a more serious vein, he says the course work has been good mental exercise.

Pallo recently got an affirmation right out of the blue that he's doing the right thing.

He is of Estonian descent, and over the years his family has kept in touch with relatives in the old country.

Recently, two Estonian cousins came to visit and brought with them a framed copy of his great-grandfather's will, translated into English.

One portion of it caught Pallo's eye.



"He gives a charge to his children to keep their minds active, and get an education, because nobody can rob you of those things.

Besides pursuing his education, Pallo attends church regularly, for which he uses the Action Bus, and thoroughly appreciates and he also enjoys attending concerts.

He also has season tickets to Rosebud Theatre and gets there along with friends by renting the Action Bus.

During his lifetime, Pallo has undertaken dozens of volunteer roles, often ones that made use of his accounting background.

But for the foreseeable future he is going to be busy.

Pallo has already enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts in Ministry degree, again with the Prairie Bible Institute. He is a little unsure as to whether he will be able to fulfill the practicum portions of the program because of his physical limitations, but not too worried.

"I think by the time I finish the course I have enrolled in I will either be dead or senile, he says, with typical mischievous humor.

"My goal is to become an enlightened layman, he says, on a more serious note.

Asked if he has any advice for other seniors who may be contemplating higher education, Pallo is quick to respond.

"You're never too old, he says.

Source: Penny Caster, Red Deer Advocate, October 15, 2008.

MESSAGE FROM RASMUS LUMI, ESTONIAN CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES, OTTAWA

The Republic of Estonia opened an Embassy in Ottawa in 2000 and one of its goals has been to bring Estonia closer to Estonians living in Canada and vice-versa. Given the vast geography of Canada, it has not been an easy task. However, I firmly believe that a lot can be achieved if there is a will to do it. Therefore I, as well as my predecessors, have tried to make every effort to visit other cities in Canada as often as possible.



Estonians in Alberta are unique due to a largely different background and history. While I have been surprised as to how proud Estonians are of their origin, it is especially noteworthy in Alberta where the Estonian roots go back so far.

In order to communicate more closely with Estonians in Alberta, the Embassy in Ottawa has been working on the idea of appointing one or two honorary consuls to Alberta. Honorary consul is a voluntary position that can be assumed by anybody with necessary credentials and the willingness to promote Estonian interests. Needless to say, those interests include close relations with the Estonian community. Finding the right persons can be a somewhat lengthy process. But I assure you that our goal is to make decisions that are good for both Estonia and Estonians in Alberta.

Turning to the more general issues of Estonians in Canada, I am happy to note that many people whose parents or grandparents were Estonian citizens have shown considerable interest in applying for an Estonian passport. According to my experience, the reasons are largely emotional, but also practical. The passport simplifies traveling, living and working not only in Estonia, but in most of the European Union countries. To be eligible for the Estonian passport, one must present a document or apply to be eligible from the Estonian archives proving that the applicant or his/her parents or grandparents were Estonian citizens before June 16, 1940.

Another important and related topic is relevant for most Estonian communities in Canada and elsewhere. It is the issue of attracting more Estonians to play an active role in their ethnic community. While I acknowledge it is not easy, I must say that Estonians in several places are doing a commendable job along those lines. I'm glad to see similar activity in Alberta and I hope that more and more people will be looking for their Estonian roots. The stronger the Estonian community in Alberta, the stronger it is in Canada and elsewhere.

To conclude, I invite all Estonians who have not yet done so, to visit Estonia and feel being part of that little nation in Europe. For those who would like to learn more, the Embassy in Ottawa is just a phone call away. Obviously we will make every effort to be there anytime someone wants to visit us in Ottawa.

Season's greetings!

KNITTER EXTRAORDINAIRE IN ESTONIAN STYLES, NANCY BUSH VISITS ALBERTA

Nancy Bush, introduced to AjaKaja readers in the Summer 2007 issue, was in Alberta November 7 -10, teaching Canadians about Estonian style knitting. A resident of Salt Lake City, Utah, Nancy became enamoured of Estonian folk designs in 1993 and first visited Estonia in 1995. Since then, she has toured her 'adopted' country 14 more times. She counts dozens of Estonians both inside and beyond Estonia among her friends. She has studied the designs, history and culture to such an extent that she is now a sought after instructor in Europe and North America, including at the Tartu University Cultural Academy in Viljandi, Estonia. She is the author of several books on Estonian knitting.

In Alberta, Nancy was the guest of the Make One Yarn Studio, who organized a two-day retreat in Kananaskis November 7 & 8, attended by 92 advanced knitters and 5 well known instructors. Among other items, the knitters delicate lace Haapsalu shawls. On November 10, Nancy taught the knitting of Kihnu Island mittens in Calgary at the Yarn Studio to approximately a dozen participants, most of whom were introduced to Estonia and its culture for the first time.



At both places, she introduced her recently published book *Knitted Lace of Estonia: Techniques, Patterns and Traditions*, 157 p. Interweave Press, Loveland CO, 2008, available at her web shop Wooly West www.woolywest.com. Her earlier publications featuring Estonian knitting, are *Folk Knitting in Estonia and Folk Socks*.

Nancy Bush's teaching schedule, as displayed on her website, is amazing. There are sessions in Utah, Wisconsin, California, Indiana, Maryland and Washington State. There is also a knitting cruise in the Baltic late summer 2009. At all of her classes, Estonian knitting is the topic of the course.

Helgi Leesment

ADAM KREEK, GOLD MEDALIST

Adam Kreek, a member of Canada's eight-man rowing gold-medalists in Beijing, was born in London, Ontario to an Estonian father and Canadian mother.

Adam's singing of O Canada at the gold medal ceremony was cited "as an inspiration by Simon Whitfield, another outstanding Olympian. He actually wrote 'sing like Adam Kreek' on the handlebars of his bicycle as he sprinted for a silver medal.

His grandfather, Aleksander Kreek, was European and World University Games shotput champion in the 1930s. Adam visited the family's abandoned farm in Estonia in 2003 but his efforts to find the medals his grandfather had buried there before escaping to Sweden proved unsuccessful.

Kreek will visit Estonia again in 2009, equipped with a metal detector and a film crew to record the story and to broadcast it on television.

At a recent fundraising event for Olympians in Edmonton, Kreek spoke to an audience of 700 about his commitment to the sport. He worked on Alberta's oilrigs from the fall of 1999 to the fall of 2000, and again during the winter of 2000-2001.

Dave Kiil

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tere!

Watching the US Presidential race and the election of Barak Obama strikes a chord with Estonians and Estonian descendents. The achievement of a suppressed minority, the breaking of bonds of social restraints and the attainment of power mirrors the struggles for freedom by the small Baltic country of Estonia.



This fall, our global society is taking stock of its resources and setting a new course. As challenging as the financial and social barriers standing in the way of this new leader may be, on a personal level, they are no more daunting than the situations of the early pioneers, or the refugees, who's eyes of disbelief, stared at a future stripped of the familiar, the comfortable and the known. They took the challenge, they went the mile, and set the course for us to follow.

Perhaps our ancestors are once again looking down with that look we recognize. A look somewhere between smugness and bewilderment. For some of us it may be time to roll up the sleeves, tighten the belt, and with neighborly support and encouragement, readjust our aspirations. Fortunately, we as a community have history on our side. We are strong and resilient. We have imagination, creativity and determination. Above all, we are in a country, which, although it cannot escape world trends, is in a far better situation than others. Lets take the liberty of assuming the social influence of our forefathers rippled beyond the local cooperatives.

AEHS is continuously surpassing the mark. Our history website is a superior accomplishment for a few descendants of a small country. We are planning to develop a companion Edukit website as a learning tool for school children and adults alike, accessible globally by virtue of the Internet.

Our Society is in good financial position. Although our operating costs are slightly higher than membership revenues, we have residual cash from the merger of old societies and positive event revenues. We will not need to raise membership fees in the foreseeable future. We would, however, like to increase our membership. Greater numbers would secure our financial position, and would also enrich our social and cultural bottom line.

We proved this summer that we still retain our basic old-fashioned entrepreneurial and social values. Although this was our 'quiet' year with no province-wide events planned, we were able to respond spontaneously to create an event such as the Great Estonian Stone Exchange. Having relatives from Estonia, previously strangers, take part in one of our historical pioneer events, was a cultural learning experience for residents on both sides of the Atlantic. It was another example of the overwhelming responsiveness of the Estonian community.

Our next major social event is well into the planning and organizing stage. Jaanipaev 2009 will be at Stettler, and I encourage all to become involved. If you have time and opportunity to contribute that is appreciated. But when all is said and done, your attendance is valued in staging another of our first rate social events.

So, kudos to all. Each of you is part of an organization of which to be proud. It has the foresight, willingness and tenacity to accomplish great things. Each new challenge elicits that uncanny Esto capacity to go further, reach new levels and have more fun in the process!

Tervitades,
Bob Kingsep

RECONNECTING IN ALBERTA

In the summer and fall of 2008, some former Barons schoolmates and relatives held two fun gatherings in Calgary where they explored their common Estonian heritage. Some had not seen each other since childhood.

Donna Reinson-Koper's and Wilma Pertel-Costello's parents came from Crimea as did Anita Linderman-Madill's mother. Members of Evelyn Erdman's family came directly from Estonia in 1910 and 1921. Lillian (Erdman family) Munz's great grandparents did the 2000 km trek from Estonia to Crimea in the 1860's, as did the ancestors of three of the others. One way or another, the ladies on these two photos are either descendants or relatives of Crimea Estonians and all their families farmed in the Barons or Foremost area at some point in time. Three of the five were students at Barons Consolidated School. Anita Madill attended school in Foremost, south-east Alberta. Donna Koper's roots are with the Reinson family in Saskatchewan where she received her schooling; however her father and various aunts and uncles attended Barons Consolidated School. The five have been pleasantly surprised to discover how much they have in common among themselves, among their friends and among their parents' family friends; something they had never discussed previously. According to Lillian Munz " We had quite the afternoon talking about international work about the old times in Barons when Anita's family who lived in Foremost, east of Lethbridge, used to visit the Erdmans, etc.



Evelyn Erdman's recent translation of Otto Laaman's account of the Foremost Estonians was pivotal in getting these ladies together. They also credit the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society for enabling them to reconnect.

Helgi Leesment

LIFE AS THIRD GENERATION ESTONIANS: BRENDAN, KARL AND TRAVIS ROBERTSON

Our parents Christine and David: Our mother is Canadian with Estonian parents and was born in Vancouver, British Columbia. Our father, David, is Canadian, with Scottish parents and was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Our mother speaks fluent Estonian and attended evening Estonian school in Vancouver. Our parents met in Swan River, Manitoba, and we now live in Leduc, Alberta, the five of us, and a chocolate lab named Mocha.



Our maternal grandparents are from Saaremaa. Christine's father, Villi Lepik, escaped to Finland in 1943 and later joined fellow Estonians in Vancouver in 1951. Villi built his first house with brother Paul in 1954, his first low-rise apartment in 1956 and Lepik Construction built their first concrete high-rise in 1961. Villi married our grandmother Anne Ojamaa in 1958. Christine mother's family was from Tartu.

Our parents started Alta Flights (Charters) which is now going into its 23rd year of operation. At its peak, they operated 53 airplanes in Edmonton, Calgary and leased aircraft around the world. Dad is president of Alta Flights and spends most of his time buying and selling aircraft. They're down to about 30 aircraft and the business involves flying crews up north to work on oil rigs, aerial pipeline patrol, cargo, hot shot, and executive flights. For fun, people charter planes to go golfing, fishing and wine touring. Dad also likes to fly for QJets, a private company in which people have bought time shares. Alta Flights flew Estonian President Meri and his entourage during his visit to Alberta in 2000. Mom is no longer active in the day to day operation of Alta Flights. She is now in her second year of office with the Black Gold Regional School's Board of Education which involves education and setting policy.

So what's it like being a third-generation Estonian?

Brendan: I was born in 1989 and I just turned 19. We've lived in Leduc all our lives, attended a few Estonian functions (Midsummer Night - Jaanipäev, Independence Day) and got to know some other Estonians in Edmonton.

When I was in Grade 11, I applied to do my Grade 12 on the High Seas. I was accepted to a private-school program called Class Afloat, offered through West Island College, Calgary. The school is a 188 foot tall ship and the college accepts 48 students per year. Besides sailing around the world, we studied the grade 12 curriculum, watched out for pirates (one of our regular duties), along with scraping rust, painting, and raising and lowering the huge, billowing sails.

We started off in Vancouver, BC, sailed to Hawaii, Samoa, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Australia, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Oman, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Spain, Copenhagen, Belgium and Poland to name a few. We interacted with local schools in every port and had an amazing experience! We arrived in Poland in June 2007 and had our graduation ceremony at Gydinia, on

the northern coast. My family came out to the grad after which we travelled to Estonia for a quick visit.

It was my first visit to Estonia and we spent time touring Tallinn, Saaremaa and Parnu with my cousins. It was very beautiful but I was surprised at how few people spoke English. The old town in Tallinn was great with all its shops and cafes. We visited family in Kuressaare and saw where grandpa was born. Remnants of the past are still on the farm and my cousins have a herd of sheep. Swimming in Parnu was the greatest. We couldn't believe how warm it was and how far out you can walk before it gets deep.

My first year at university was in Victoria where I studied Fine Arts. I have always enjoyed film making, but you don't specialize in that until much later. University of Victoria was OK. During my year I got to do a lot of rock climbing and road racing (biking). However, I missed Edmonton and my family. So for my second year, which is this year, I am at Grant MacEwan College in International Business. I love the business courses and I'm studying Chinese as my second language. I'm not sure what my goal is, but I've decided a degree in business will be an asset no matter what.

Karl: Besides school, my life tends to revolve around track and field. I am in grade 12 at Leduc Composite High School and seem to be doing alright. In December I will be writing my SAT's - a mandatory exam if you want to go study in the

United States . I have already applied to a few universities in the United States who are ranked as a Division 1 track school. My first choice is to go to High Point University in North Carolina. I have another friend who is already going to school there, and says it is awesome! I am hoping to get a track scholarship which will help pay for the schooling and I want to major in Business.

I usually run every day, even when we travel. Two summers ago when we were in Poland and Estonia, I found 400 m tracks and carried on with my workout (there is a nice one in Tallinn and one right beside the Kuressaare Castle). If there are no tracks, then I usually run 10 km. I also like to kite-board and snow-board.

Travis: Travis is in grade 5 and enjoying school. He got to travel to Orlando with his mom and dad this October. Dad attended a big aviation conference called the NBAA while mom and Travis got to spend time with Mickey Mouse in Disneyworld, had a chance to swim with a dolphin in Discovery Cove, saw Shamu in Seaworld, and enjoyed an air-boat ride on the swamps looking for alligators. Travis is very friendly and we think he'd make a great greeter at Wal-Mart!

LISA SILBERMANN'S LEGACY

Lillian Munz

Lisa Erdman was about 20 years old when she and her family left Crimea, first settling in South Dakota and then homesteading in Barons, in 1904. Lisa worked as a housemaid in Lethbridge and in Medicine Hat where Reverend Sillak had encouraged many Estonians to settle. It was there that Lisa first met her future husband, Martin Silberman, who stopped off the train there in 1905 on his way from Estonia. After Martin earned some money working for a year as a blacksmith at the Exshaw cement factory, he was able to marry Lisa in 1907 and settle on CPR land 3 miles south of Barons.

After first living in a sod house, they eventually built a large two storey house which was sent out in sections from Winnipeg. A daughter and twin boys were born. Lisa was busy as a pioneer farm wife, cooking for threshing crews, raising vegetables, chickens and pigs. When the children were approaching high school age, the Silbermanns rented out their farm and moved to Estonia for over 10 years. This was Lisa's first experience with the homeland of her parents. The family lived in Tartu so the children could attend university there.



In the early thirties, the Silbermanns returned to the Barons farm. Over the next 17 years, Lisa and Martin had eight grandchildren, among whom are Martha Munz-Gue, Albert Munz and Lillian Munz, children of Helmi. The three Silvertons (Mae, Silvia and Ernie) are children of Lea Weiler and Walter Silverton who farmed in Barons and retired to Victoria.

Lisa was very creative and enjoyed writing, gardening, painting and needlework whenever she had spare time. While she was in Estonia she hand knotted a Persian style carpet measuring 8 feet by 10 feet. Like many immigrants she was hard working, community minded, and proud to be a Canadian. She often reminisced about her semi-tropical birth place, Crimea, quite a contrast from the dry flat prairies of southern Alberta.

THE SINGING REVOLUTION RELIVED TWICE

Helgi Leesment

In the final four years of the evolution of Estonia's regained independence, one of the major events was the gathering of one third of the nation's population at Tallinn's Song Festival Grounds in September 1988. It was a heady show combining the best choirs, soloists, pop bands and speakers talking publicly for the first time in 50 years about the social and political situation as it truly was then, not toeing the then standard politically forced lies. For the first time in 50 years, the forbidden blue-black-white flags were waving by the hundreds in a statement of unity and deeply felt aspiration. There was no attempt by the Soviet Communist government to cut it short nor to arrest anyone. That raised the spirit of hope among the 300,000 individuals present. They enthusiastically joined in some of the singing, holding hands and making human waves such as had never been experienced previously in Estonia.

This event gave the whole independence movement the name "Singing Revolution."

The past year marks two observances of that major gathering.

Jim Tusty, an American of Estonian descent, and his wife Maureen Castle Tusty co-directed and co-produced a documentary titled *The Singing Revolution*. First shown in New York in the fall of 2007, it gained the status of 'New York Times Critics' Pick ' and played for 4 weeks. The critic compared this documentary to a famous scene of defiance in the movie *Casablanca*. Quoting from one of dozens of positive reviews on the internet, Mark Leeper writes "This is a powerful and emotional account of 71 years of the history of Estonia and especially how the Estonian spirit freed the country from the leash of the Soviet Union. The film combines beautiful choral music with the dramatic story of the country's fight for independence. Directors Maureen and James Tusty and narrator Linda Hunt bring a dramatic tension unusual in pure documentaries rising to a climax with the account of the 1991 Soviet coup Rating: high 8/10".

By now, the film has played in most major North American cities and hundreds of smaller places such as Pender Island and Oliver, BC often being held over for a week or two, or later returning to several places. The Tustys are receiving thousands of letters from impressed viewers.

The Singing Revolution documentary arrived in Edmonton and Calgary in June, 2008. The Alberta Estonian Heritage Society went all out to give it as much publicity as possible, thanks to special donations from enthusiastic members. Some Albertans travelled hundreds of kilometers to see this film. Sufficient numbers of admission tickets were bought in the first week, that it was held over in both cities for a second week. About a dozen few Edmontonians combined the screening with a gala dinner. Calgary organized a pre-event gathering in the lobby of the theatre to celebrate opening night.

The second 'reliving' occurred in August of this year. With a few additions, the same choirs, soloists, pop bands and speakers as had been previously featured, gathered at Tallinn's Song Festival Grounds this August to celebrate the 20 th anniversary of the 1988 event and to celebrate the 90 th anniversary of Estonia's independence, first declared on February 24, 1918.

The specific day was chosen to coincide with the date, August 20, when Estonia regained its independence in 1991. So, a three-way celebration.

This time it was scheduled for the evening and billed as the Night-Song event. Once again, it attracted hundreds of thousands. For the younger crowd, it was an opportunity to experience first hand an event similar to the legendary original; for older spectators, it was an opportunity to relive some of the magic of 20 years ago. In current times of increasing uncertainties, the Night-Song festival of 2008 was a morale and spirit booster, just as the daytime concert had been 20 years ago. This time, the entire event could be watched live on the internet, making distant observers feel as though they were present in Tallinn.

Note: The Singing Revolution DVD for home use is now available on www.thesingingrevolution.com

ESTONIAN ATHLETES EXCEL AT BEIJING OLYMPICS AND EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Estonian athletes earned Olympic medals, gold and silver, at the Beijing Games. At the European Championships in Greece, the Estonian quadruple sculls team won gold.

Gord Kanter won gold in Men's discus throw, tossing the 2 kg weight apparatus a distance of 68 meters. The men's double sculls team of

Jüri Jaanson and Tõnu Endrekson won silver on the water.

The Estonian quadruple sculls team of Jüri Jaanson, Tõnu Endrekson, Andrei Jamsa and Allar Raja triumphed at the European Championships. The surprising tandem of Vladimir Latin and Kaspar Taimsoo took a silver medal in the men's doubles event.

TO BREATHE AS ONE

It is not a coincidence that in the Estonian language the words "soul" and "breathing" come from the same stem. One word developed from the other, because breathing and soul are connected. Even so closely connected that if you breathe in the same rhythm with someone, with a little luck it is possible to see his soul. The same magic works when tens and thousands breathe as one. They look for the right place in a hurry, gasping for breath. They hold their breath in anticipation. They rejoice from their heart and soul. This is when the souls of one nation meet. It is breathtakingly beautiful. By breathing as one, history can be changed. The vibrations of the soul create a resonance that has broken iron and brought down political regimes. But it is not the only aim of breathing as one. This celebration unites us with those who sang and danced before us, as well as with our contemporaries whose soul may go unnoticed in the everyday rat race. When people breathe as one, it does not matter whether you face the audience or the performers or whether you are somewhere else instead. When you breathe with others as one, your soul is there.

It is time for a nation to breathe as one again.

Welcome to the Song and Dance Celebration To Breathe as One!

In 2009 another Estonian family reunion - our very own Song and Dance Celebration - will take place. This Celebration is marked by significant anniversaries - it is already the 25th time that a nation comes together to celebrate the sense of belonging. 140 years ago the first Song Celebration took place in Estonia. Also Dance Celebrations have impressive history going back to 1934, when the gymnastics' festival took place in the frame of the first Estonian Games. The upcoming Song Celebration will follow the tradition that started in 1999, namely that the Song Celebration consists of two concerts of different types. The programme of the first day concert is more demanding, including the Estonian, Western and vocal symphonic repertoire. All Estonian professional choirs and Estonian National Symphony Orchestra will be participating. The second day concert is more traditional, performing only pieces by Estonian composers. The artistic director of the Song Celebration is Ants Soots. The Dance Celebration concert will be centred around the theme of the sea. There will be three concerts on the Kalev Stadium. Henn Tiivel is the author of the idea of the upcoming Dance Celebration, the artistic director is Ülo Luht. The Song and Dance Celebration will be preceded by Folk Music Celebration with about 200 folk musicians from folk music groups to individual players.

To Breathe as One | Programme

2 July, Thursday

Folk Music Celebration on Town Hall Square

3 July, Friday

at 19 on Kalev Stadium - First Concert of Dance Celebration

4 July, Saturday

at 11 on Kalev Stadium - Second Concert of Dance Celebration

at 14 Festive Parade of Song and Dance Celebration

at 19 on Song Celebration Grounds - First Concert of Song Celebration

5 July, Sunday

at 11 on Kalev Stadium - Third Concert of Dance Celebration

at 14 on Song Celebration Grounds - Second Concert of Song Celebration

ALBERTA ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

Letter from the Editors

Recently, the 2006 Canada census provided numbers and trends that speak directly to Alberta's Estonians. It is said that numbers don't lie but perhaps people who use them do. However the 'Albertans with Estonian Ethnicity' census tables printed on page 10 are worth a close look. Embedded in the data are possible explanations for the genesis of AEHS and the adaptive ways it has responded to the realities of the Estonian presence in this province.

Overall there are a total of 2160 people in Alberta who identify themselves as having Estonian ethnic ties. This number is surprisingly large. About half of this group resides in the Calgary and Edmonton areas. The remainder is in the central Alberta region, with smaller groups in Lethbridge and other areas. Separate Estonian Societies in the cities operated by post-war immigrants existed for many decades.

By 2004 it was obvious that to retain viability, other regions of the province needed to be included. It was the non-urban centres that contributed the pioneer and heritage history that makes Alberta Estonian history unique. The Alberta Estonian Heritage Society was formed to provide an inclusive organization for those who are interested in their culture and heritage, who want to preserve ties to their ethnic identity, and to share this through social means.

Table 2 highlights the changing demographics amongst successive generations of Estonians in this province. By 2006, only 20% of individuals were born to parents who were both Estonians whereas 80% are born to or are in mixed marriages. In the under 15 year age group, fewer than 100 people have two Estonian parents. The trend toward mixed marriages is clear and so are its implications. Language will likely be lost as we continue to adapt to a multi-generational, multi-ethnic reality. AEHS does not rely on the Estonian language because that would exclude the vast majority of its members. The reason for AEHS's existence and its ability to thrive is that it encompasses local history and heritage, and promotes awareness of present-day Estonia, its stunning accomplishments and its changing culture.

AEHS hopes it can meet the needs of both older and younger generations even as our identity is changing. To this end we're including a "Today's Generations" section to showcase some of our accomplished contemporary Alberta Estonians. AEHS has demonstrated that pioneers, immigrants, recent arrivals and those born here can work together. This has been a source of some amazement to non-Albertans who wonder how this was possible. The driving force in the West has traditionally been survival and this has required an emphasis on shared values rather than differences, and inclusiveness rather than exclusivity. With this approach, AEHS is dealing with the reality of its changing demographics and utilizing the advantages of the electronic age to reach the greatest number of people possible.

The World Wide Web is an important engine of the Information Age, accessible to all, and responsive to the needs of present and future generations. By acting locally and thinking globally, we capitalize on the tremendous reach of technology to preserve our heritage and to raise awareness of who we are and what we do.

RHUBARB: A PERENNIAL SPRING FAVORITE

Spring has officially arrived when a thick patch of rhubarb returns to the back garden. The rosy red stalks with their large, bright green leaves can be seen everywhere in yards, alleys and farmer's markets. Rhubarb is a perennial plant, thought to originate from the Volga River region more than 2000 years ago. Initially it was harvested and cultivated as an ornamental plant and for its medicinal qualities. Although a vegetable from the buckwheat family, it is most often prepared as fruit in desserts, cakes and jams. Rhubarb is used in numerous Estonian recipes because it grows in yards throughout the country and is one of the first garden plants to ripen in the spring. And it is delicious!

Strawberry-Rhubarb Layer Cake

This layer cake filled with strawberry-rhubarb compote and whipped cream makes an elegant springtime dessert. Because of the tartness of the rhubarb and the small amount of sugar in the cake, it's not overly sweet.

10 to 12 servings

Layer Cake:

16 tbsp. (2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature

1 c. granulated sugar

4 eggs

1 tbsp. vanilla extract

2 $\frac{3}{4}$ c. all-purpose flour

4 tsp. baking powder

1 tsp. salt

$\frac{1}{4}$ c. milk

Compote:

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds rhubarb, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch slices

$\frac{3}{4}$ c. granulated sugar

2 lbs. fresh strawberries, sliced (about 4 cups), plus additional for garnish

1 tsp. fresh lemon juice

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla extract

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. ground nutmeg

Whipped Cream:

2 c. heavy cream

6 tbsp. confectioners' sugar

1 tsp. vanilla extract

Preheat the oven to 350 o F. Grease two 9-inch round pans and line with parchment paper. To make the cake, using an electric mixer cream the butter until light. Beat in the sugar until the mixture is fluffy. Beat in the eggs, one at a time and add the vanilla. Sift together the flour, baking powder and salt. On low speed, slowly add the flour mixture to the batter. Mix in the milk.

Divide the batter evenly between the prepared pans. Bake for 30 minutes, or until a cake tester comes out clean. Cool the cakes in the pans on racks for about 20 minutes. Turn out the cakes onto the racks and cool completely.

To make the compote, combine the rhubarb, sugar, and 1 tbsp. of water in a medium-size saucepan. Bring to boil. Reduce the heat, cover and cook for approximately 2 minutes. Add the strawberries and lemon juice and cook for 2 to 3 more minutes or until the rhubarb is tender. Stir in the vanilla and nutmeg. Chill.

To make the whipped cream, beat the cream, sugar, and vanilla until stiff peaks form.

To assemble the cake, carefully slice each cake into two layers. Put one layer on a serving plate. Top with one-third of the compote, then one-quarter of the whipped cream. Top with a layer of cake, more compote and cream. Repeat. Top with the last cake layer, cut side down. Cover the cake and chill for at least 1 hour, or up to 1 day.

To serve, top the cake with the remaining whipped cream. Add sliced strawberries for garnish.

* NOTE: This cake keeps very well for up to 4 days

Source: Estonian Tastes and Traditions, Karin Annus Kärner (2005)/em>

KUMU ELECTED EUROPEAN MUSEUM OF THE YEAR

According to the European Museum Forum the jury made the decision due to its role in the creation of Estonia's national identity.

There are nearly 60 museums taking part in the contest every year.

KUMU, which has a total floor area of 23,910 square meters and was designed by the Finnish architect Pekka Vapaavuori, was opened to the public on February 18, 2006.

Kumu images: [website](#)

Estonian 15-year-olds score high in learning skills

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an internationally standardized assessment that was jointly developed by participating countries and administered to 15-year-olds in schools.

The survey was implemented in 43 countries in the 1st assessment in 2000, in 41 countries in the second assessment in 2003 and in 57 countries in the 3rd assessment in 2006. Sixty-two countries have signed up to participate in the 4th assessment in 2009.

Tests are typically administered to between 4,500 and 10,000 students in each country. Besides reading, math and science skills, the test also assesses beliefs and attitudes towards learning.

The top performer in science in PISA 2006 was Finland, followed by Hong Kong-China, Canada, Chinese Taipei, Estonia, Japan and New Zealand. Finland and Estonia were the two top performers in Europe!

Source : Economic News

MEMBERSHIP LIST, NOVEMBER 2009

1. Annist, Pille, Alar, Sven - Nanaimo, British Columbia
2. Ansley, Imbi, Andrea A, Gary and I, SV Birchcliff
3. Asmus, Peter, Jeanette - Calgary
4. Brennen, Virginia-Stettler
5. Brewer, Elsie-White Rock, British Columbia
6. Clark, John - Denver, Colorado
7. Collin, Marion, Glen, Cameron, Gary, Julia - Airdrie
8. Costello, Wilma - Calgary
9. Cowick, Anne-Liis- Red Deer
10. Cowick, Kathleen - Calgary
11. Derksen, Linda, Colin, Jack, Jamie - Edmonton
12. Dinning, Shirley, Leonard - Edmonton
13. Doherty, Linda K-Big Sandy, TN
14. Engler, Faye - St. Albert
15. Erdman, Evelyn - Calgary
16. Erdman, Ken and Kelly Ann-Calgary
17. Erdman, Oscar and Sally-Calgary
18. Fodor, Steve and Evelin - Calgary
19. Graham, Judy, Bruce- Surrey, British Columbia
20. Gullickson, Barbara - Barons
21. Hall, Gwen, Ernest - Boyle
22. Helenurm, Kalju, Margot - Calgary
23. Hennel, Lorne-Calgary
24. Hennel, Rodney, Elizabeth - Stettler
25. Hennel, Ron W.F and Jolewna, Stettler - Stettler
26. Herman, Liia, Derrill, Liisa and Alex Tamme - Innisfail
27. Holukoff, Bob - Calgary
28. Jaako, Harry-Vancouver, British Columbia
29. Kaert, Mati and Linda- Edmonton
30. Kalev, Tiiu - Eckville
31. Kalvee, Willy G- Calgary
32. Kerbes, Deane, Irene - Stettler
33. Kerbes, Marguerite - Stettler
34. Kerbes, Richard-Saskatoon
35. Kiil, Dave, Betty Ann - Edmonton
36. Kiil, Glenn, Ingrid, Ranek, Kalev - Edmonton
37. Kiil, Lisa, Diana - Edmonton
38. Kingsep, Bob, Annette and Tobi Telford-Redwood Meadows
39. Kivisild, Livia - Calgary
40. Klaus, Alfred, Joyce - Stettler
41. Klaus, Larry, Kathy - Sherwood Park
42. Klaus, Roy - Stettler
43. Koper, Donna - Cochrane
44. Kraav, Jüri, Helle - Calgary

45. Kuester, Matt F- Edmonton
46. Langeste, Helmut, Airi - Edmonton
47. Leesment, Helgi, Peeter - Calgary
48. Leilop, Aino - St. Albert
49. Letourneau, Loree - Eckville
50. Luik, c/o Renate, Avo - Edmonton
51. Lumi, Rasmus-Ottawa
52. Maddison, Anneliese - Edmonton
53. Madill, Anita, Wallace - Calgary
54. Magi, Enzo, Maimu - Calgary
55. Maki, Jean and Joe- Eckville
56. McClung, Eda - Edmonton
57. McElroy, Elve and W.L-- Camrose
58. Metsar, Gerli - Calgary
59. Mottus, Arnold, Vera, Catherine-Red Deer
60. Munz, Lillian - Calgary
61. Munz Gue, Martha, David, Lisa, An.- Medicine Hat
62. Nicklom, Otto, Gladys - Stettler
63. Paasuke, Elizabeth - Edmonton
64. Paasuke, Rein, Jan - Calgary
65. Paasuke, Toomas - Canmore
66. Pallas, Andi, Liz - Calmar
67. Pallo, Jack Henry- Red Deer
68. Pastewka, Astrid - Calgary
69. Payson, Tiina, Paul - Edmonton
70. Peet, Ethel - Edmonton
71. Peet, Linda - Edmonton
72. Pelto, Margaret, John- Sherwood Park
73. Pihooja, Ralph, Nella Collins - Edmonton
74. Pilt, Shirley - Edmonton
75. Põhjakas, Kaljo, Lillian - Lethbridge
76. Poldas, Karin-Calgary
77. Posti, Allan, Maria, Ryan - Eckville
78. Ruus, Ivar, Lea - Calgary
79. Ruusauk, Siim, Lamour - Sherwood Park
80. Saar, Lembit and Iris-Calgary
81. Saar, Rein, Patricia - Calgary
82. Sandre, Ülo - Calgary
83. Sastok, Laine - Edmonton
84. Schuler, Kelly- Calgary
85. Shafer, Nancy-Blue Island, IL
86. Shongrunden, Astrid-Penticton, British Columbia
87. Shursen, Evelyn - Stettler
88. Sparrow, Lori-Eckville
89. Stanich, Robert, Leila-Calgary
90. Szady, Caroline, Linda-Edmonton
91. Tiislar, Enn, Pärja - Canmore

92. Timma, Olev - Calgary
93. Tipman, Bob, Kathy-Calgary
94. Urke, Jan-Edmonton
95. Ustina, Astrid - Edmonton
96. Ustina, Judy K - Edmonton
97. Varney, Sharon-Edmonton
98. Ward, Allan,E, Geraldine-Surrey, British Columbia
99. Wartnow, Floyd C- Delta, British Columbia
100. Zach, Inge - Calgary
101. Zielinski, Kristine, Michel - Spruce Grove
102. Zoumer, Anne - Calgary

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tere!

Christmas this winter saw snow in every city in Canada. Most of us Albertans felt the bone chilling cold weather systems that assumed biweekly sweeps across our province. On those days of double digit minus temperatures, when I ventured out to shovel the drive I became obsessed with imagining how my grandparents and their neighbors had coped with the elements 110 years ago. We've all joked when our parents insisted that winters were more severe when they were young, however statistics bear that out and I've seen the receding glaciers myself. I think I'm ready to believe.



That concession made, I return to my pioneering thoughts. The first year or two of the early pioneers particularly intrigues me. How did they get through days like these? Their refuge was a marginally tolerable hut, and survival depended on outdoor tasks. They donned some felt, wool, and last summer's beard and did what they had to do. There was no choice.

While I can relate to the physical challenges, I have difficulty comprehending the psychological duress that must have weighed on them. They were faced with harsh elements and isolation. Day in and day out nature permeated every aspect of life. For many it had to be a never-ending and deeply depressing struggle.

This last summer our society was exposed to a timeless aspect of human life. At the Great Estonian Stone Exchange at the Gilby Cemetery, we were read the will of Horma Ott. In it, Horma Ott (Otto Kingsep) pressured his sons and their families to return to Estonia or face losing their inheritance.

The details of this scenario brought us a very personal glimpse of and another dimension to the onslaught of difficulties faced by the pioneers. Over and above struggling for survival, they had to deal with the same stressful family situations that we do today.

It is interesting to watch the layers of our society wrap themselves in our heritage. From the war devastation of Europe, another generation of Estonians found themselves devoid of choice. With relentless dedication their efforts and insights have guided us through some of our proudest achievements. Last years additions to our historical website further opens the window of the world to an enduring community and its roots.

The exposure we have gained over our short existence has inspired organizations regionally, nationally and beyond to query the methods that keep the AEHS in the forefront. Our society, small, dispersed, and of stock from varying backgrounds, continues to fuel aspirations, establish goals and set exceedingly high standards.

Choice surrounds our generation. With it we have elected to honor our heritage and maintain a spirit of optimism and enthusiasm. Ajakaja and the community that supports it are the embodiment of the dreams of yesterday. Once more we open these pages of news, interest,

opinion and progress. Enjoy!

Bob Kingsep

AEHS HERITAGE PROJECT RECEIVES FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM ESTONIAN GOVERNMENT

Dave Kiil and Eda McClung

The Compatriot Program of the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research provides financial assistance to expatriate Estonian communities for collecting, digitizing, cataloguing and preserving historical and cultural heritage materials. Establishment of networks and cooperation between Estonian and expatriate memory institutions, individuals and organizations for sharing of archival materials, including the use of new media and enhanced technology, is encouraged.

Recently we received exciting news that our grant application to the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research had been approved under the Compatriot Program. This grant will enable us to continue work on the AEHS heritage project and consolidate the archival materials of Alberta's Estonians in a central location in the province.



The Estonian government's financial support is particularly timely as it will enable us to complete an archival collection to preserve the history and cultural heritage of Alberta's Estonians, and to make the information available to AEHS members, memory institutions in Estonia and elsewhere, and researchers, genealogists and historians worldwide. Maintenance of the "Alberta's Estonian Heritage website and ease of access to the digital archive will facilitate coordination, cooperation and networking with and by many potential users of the material.

We are now exploring various options to consolidate the donated archival materials used during the production of our heritage website and "Alberta's Estonians DVD.

The agreement with the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research provides funds for the collection, storage, cataloguing and preservation of an "Estonian Archive in Alberta, and is intended to provide access to printed and digitized materials. The funds may also be used to enhance our heritage website, to increase collaboration between interested individuals and organizations, and to increase awareness of the availability of the collection. Development of networks and cooperation with Estonian organizations, including the Estonian Literary Museum, Estonian National Archive, Baltic Heritage Network, and others, will be prioritized.



Development and maintenance of an "Estonian Archive in Alberta is a challenging but justifiable initiative for our Society. Our members are widely scattered throughout the province, making it

impractical to train volunteers to describe and catalogue an archival collection, not to mention the challenge of updating and improving the historical material.

We have initiated discussions with the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton to explore opportunities for donating our materials for storage, registration, preservation and access. The Library and Archives of Canada have agreed to return the Medicine Valley Estonian Society's collection, donated to that organization in 1984, to Alberta because it is not national in scope. The Red Deer Archives is willing to accommodate our materials but their primary role is to preserve local and regional collections.

A second grant from the National Estonian Foundation of Canada in Toronto in 2009 has enabled us to enhance "Alberta's Estonian Heritage website in several areas, including substantial additions to post-World War II activities, an expanded Multimedia Resources component with several hundred new images, AjaKaja and newspaper articles, and new sections about Estonian cuisine, athletes and musicians.

Work on the so-called Phase 3 of our digital archive was completed on May 31, 2009, and coincided with the transfer of Alberta's Online Encyclopedia-Albertasource.ca from the Heritage Community Foundation to the University of Alberta. Discussions will be initiated shortly with the University about maintaining and enhancing our history and cultural heritage project.

"Alberta Estonian Heritage website finds new home at the University of Alberta in Edmonton

On June 1, 2009, the Heritage Community Foundation (HCF) gifted the Alberta Online Encyclopedia-Albertasource.ca, including "Alberta's Estonian Heritage website, to the University of Alberta (U of A) Learning Services (comprising the Libraries and Archives as well as the Peel Digital Collections).

The HCF, the developers of the AEHS heritage website since 2007, will be dissolved on June 30, 2009.

The gifting and transfer of the Alberta Online Encyclopedia-Alberta Source.ca to the U of A ensures that our heritage website will be maintained to provide access to individuals, organizations and memory institutions worldwide.

The AEHS has signed a Partner Copyright document to transfer the Foundation's interest in the AEHS Website to the U of A. We will now hold copyright jointly with the University.

In the months ahead, we will familiarize ourselves with the U of A's website maintenance program and discuss opportunities for further enhancement of the site. Discussions will include consideration of the University of Alberta Archives and the Peel Digital Collections as well as the Provincial Archives of Alberta as a permanent location(s) for the proposed "Alberta Estonian Archive.

"NOW GENERATION OF ALBERTA ESTONIANS

Catherine Mottus

Catherine Mottus is the great granddaughter of Gust and Linda (Kingsep) Mottus, and great great granddaughter of Henry and Emily Kingsep. Both families are original Medicine Valley pioneers.

Many memories of my travels in Japan are truly unforgettable! Imagine being asked if you like "fresh fish. Well, sure I do. I never dreamed that answering that question would lead to me sitting at a table with my students and watching a fish arrive, so intricately decorated, gently sliced with fresh wasabi on the side, and still flapping its tail and looking at me. Yes, now that is fresh sushi! My students loved to see my reactions to so many events. This was one of my introductions to the passions of Japanese culture. Food is one of them as the Japanese are very ardent about their fresh and delicious cuisine. I also witnessed first hand how they are passionate about their education. I share their beliefs in the value of education and that is one reason why I ended up living and teaching in Japan for almost three years.

It was a curvy learning path for me to reach my dream of becoming a teacher. I have always been an educator in one way or another since graduating from high school. I initially pursued figure skating as a career and had the opportunity to travel to Mexico to skate in an ice show and then concentrated on coaching skating upon returning back to Alberta. I began to think about areas of post-secondary education that interested me and chose to study Correctional Services. After graduating from Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton, Alberta, in 1997, I worked with Young Offenders and as a Family & Youth Counsellor. I loved the challenge of this work, but I still had the desire to obtain my degree and pursue teaching. I decided I could combine my two passions, travelling and teaching.

In April 2003, I graduated from the University of Alberta with my teaching degree and was on an airplane to Japan by that July. I initially obtained a position as an English Teacher with a national English Conversational School in the city of Kitakyushu on the southern island of Kyushu, where I would live during my time in Japan. I certainly had the opportunity to expand my teaching skills as my students ranged in age from 3 to 76 years. I was extremely impressed with the dedication and seriousness of my students to learn English. They stated that they wanted to speak better English to enhance their careers and travel opportunities. They would study diligently, often after working 12-hour days. It was intriguing to learn that most of my students were medical doctors, lawyers, engineers, and fellow teachers. I held a huge amount of admiration for their determination.



Not only did my adult students show seriousness towards learning, but they were eager to teach me about their culture. My social life in Japan was also a terrific educational experience for me due to my students. They would invite me to their homes for traditional meals, take me to Japanese tea ceremonies, show me the best Japanese restaurants and karaoke bars, accompany me to local festivals and sumo wrestling events, and show me some of the most majestic and history-filled castles, temples, and shrines. I could have possibly taught them. I did love teaching adult students, but I wanted to focus more on teaching children.



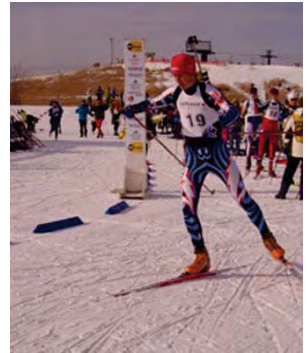
"NOW GENERATION OF ALBERTA ESTONIANS

Liisa and Andrew Chisholm

Liisa and Andrew Chisholm are third generation Estonians who grew up knowing their Estonian-born great grandparents and grandfather. They have been lucky enough to meet many of their Estonian relatives both here and in Estonia as well as spend several vacations with them. Their Grandpa, Enn Kaarsoo, was very proud when they and their cousins, Alison & Callum McLeod received their Estonian passports and began to learn the language.

Andrew:

Ever since I joined biathlon five years ago, it seems that it has become the centre of attention in my life. I am in grade 12 at Sir Winston Churchill High School in Calgary and am set to graduate in June of 2009. I also applied and was granted my Estonian citizenship just over a year ago. As for post secondary education, I have not yet made a solid decision of where to go. My other (and preferred) choice is to move to Canmore, where I will be able to train full time and hope to achieve my goals in biathlon. I will have made my decision soon enough.



Other than in April, I am training around 6 days a week. Last summer I was lucky enough to go to Estonia and attend a training camp in Haanja. This was a bit strange at first as my Estonian was limited, but I soon found myself making friends throughout each training session. I was able to train with many of Estonia's top biathletes. Some of the ones I met were Meelis Laht, Martin Pajos, and Tõnis Uiboupin. I trained with them almost every day at the camp, but the exciting part was that after I left Estonia, they came to Canmore this winter for the World Junior Championships! It was an awesome experience having them come here, as they allowed me to train with them on many different occasions. It was in this time that their coach (and my coach from the summer) Tõnu Paasuke helped me with different training methods and skiing techniques. I used their knowledge and integrated that into my own training to achieve results I could not have imagined possible! I won double gold medals at the BC championships and became the Alberta Champion the week after. Unfortunately due to a slight illness and extreme exhaustion I was unable to perform equally well at the National Championships, but there is always next year!



I am hoping to return to Estonia this summer to train and visit with my friends once again. I have been keeping in touch with them throughout the year but it is always nice to visit face to face again!

Liisa:

I am 15 years old right now, turning 16 in the summer. I've lived in Calgary for my entire life, but I've been lucky enough to visit Estonia twice - once in the summer of 2008 and once several summers before.



I devote a lot of my time to training for biathlon (cross country skiing and rifle marksmanship) and have had successful race seasons the past two years - I won two gold medals at the 2008 Alberta Winter Games and this year, after moving up a category, won two golds at the 2009 National Championships (one in the 6 kilometre sprint and one in the 3 x 4.5 kilometre mixed relay).

The first time we were in Estonia my brother and I did a biathlon race in Otepää - I have kept in touch with two of my friends from that day on the website Orkut - the site that they use instead of Facebook. When we were there this past summer I saw one of them in Otepää while I was on a bike ride and she was training - it was exciting to see her since it was unexpected. I like having connections to people my age in Estonia.



My brother and I attended a biathlon training camp in Estonia last summer. It was a really good experience and the training helped me see areas where I need to improve. I'm hoping to be able to see them this summer and go to the camp again.

When we are in Estonia I have fun visiting my cousins and the rest of my family. I am really enjoying learning Estonian with my teacher, Helgi Leesment, because even though it is a hard language it is worth it because it helps me communicate with friends and relatives in their own language. The younger people in my family speak English but a large portion of the older ones don't.





Can any of our readers identify this unique stone house with a sauna built 100 years ago? Can you identify the original owners, stories or people associated with its history and/or current circumstances?

AjaKaja will reward the most informative response and the winning entry will be printed in the next issue.

A CULINARY INNOVATOR

Thirty-three years as doyenne of Calgary's Blue Flame Kitchen

I was born in Barons, Alberta, the youngest of three children of Gustav J. and Linda Erdman. Both parents came from Estonia on the invitation of relatives already settled in Barons. My primary and secondary schooling was received in the Barons Consolidated School, with the exception that the final year was taken at the Mount Royal College in Calgary. I was the senior class valedictorian at graduation. Following graduation with a BSCHED degree from the University of Alberta and a Registered Dietician (RD) designation, I served a one year practicum at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal.



My first position was as the dietician at the old Medicine Hat General Hospital. This entailed meal planning and service for both patients and staff, ordering food and other related supplies, taking care of special diets and becoming a "jack-of-all-trades, including the operation of the dishwasher should support staff be absent. I was fortunate to be involved in the planning of the kitchen for the new general hospital as well.

After just one year, I was asked back to the U of A Home Economics Department as a food lecturer to fill in for the professor who was on a one-year sabbatical. It was here I got a deep grounding in all aspects of food theory and preparation. I was lecturing students almost my own age who delighted in trying to stump me with questions. To keep up with them, I had to study at least four extra texts each night. This knowledge was a great benefit in my next job which was to become my career.

I accepted a position as a home economist with Canadian Western Natural Gas in what was then the Home Service Department and became its Director two years later, a position I held for 33 years until my retirement in 1990 when the department was known as the Blue Flame Kitchen. The work was essentially public relations promoting the use of domestic gas appliances through cooking schools conducted in communities throughout southern Alberta. We encouraged customers to contact us with their cooking problems, recipe searches, and any other household problems such as laundry, stain removal, furniture care, etc. I went on to do radio phone-in programs, and then some television cooking programs before the advent of national cooking shows. Any number of cook books and pamphlets were produced in my department. Calgary's high altitude necessitated the testing of all the recipes to ensure that they would be satisfactory. When the Calgary Herald started issuing a week-end magazine we were asked to write the foods column. When this was dropped we continued to write a weekly column for the Herald for a number of years.

After retirement I have been concentrating on various hobbies for which I had no time while working. I enjoy working with my hands and attempting new challenges so have done a fair amount of clothing construction. In the winter months I turn my hand to needlework, knitting, crocheting and quilting (I've even tried rug hooking). In the summer these are set aside and I

undertake gardening, trying to keep the flower gardens close to what mother had developed before she passed away.

I am not a great one for international travel, but did take mother back to Estonia in 1967 to visit her immediate family still living, and had not seen since 1920. Estonia was still under Russian domination and travel was strictly controlled but the time I spent there was very enjoyable and informative, and I certainly got much greater appreciation of home and family from this experience.

Evelyn Erdman

ESTONIA BECOMES E-STONIA

Walk down the cobblestone streets with medieval houses that look straight out of storybooks, and it's hard to believe that Tallinn - a city that has been sacked, pillaged and bombed numerous times over the centuries - still retains much of its past. But while this capital city of Estonia - a north-European country along the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea - remains a living museum, it's also a high-tech hotbed. For instance, the technologies for Skype and Baidu were developed in this country. Recently with the latest group of Wi-Fi access points installed, this 45,000-square-kilometer former Soviet nation is now also completely covered with wireless Internet access, setting an example for more-developed and richer states that have been trying to achieve this feat for years.

"Above all, much of this access is virtually free.

Often called "E-stonia" by geeks, every one of its 1.4 million residents- half of whom live in the suburbs and rural areas - is connected by wireless Internet. More than two-thirds of the population conduct personal banking transactions and file taxes online. And students access their schools' servers and connect to national libraries from home - or anywhere for that matter. In Estonia, it's even possible to travel between cities by trains and buses and maintain Wi-Fi Internet access.

Above all, much of this access is virtually free. Users do not pay any access charges directly in most locations. Interestingly this nationwide wireless deployment has been achieved with almost no government support. Other than a few schools and libraries that have been set up by the Estonian government, the 1,100-plus Wi-Fi hotspots that span the country, covering every nook and corner, have been set up by small businesses, such as hotels, cafes, groceries and gas stations, along with the four national telecom companies. The whole effort is driven largely by just one man: Veljo Haamer, a technology geek who conceived this dream of wiring - or rather unwiring - his country about six years ago.

Veljo's Vision

"I realized back in 2002 that, for Estonia, the Internet could be just like electricity," said Haamer, editor of WiFi.ee, a nonprofit association he and a group of volunteers created. "And just as it happened 100 years back, when initially people did not care about electricity, Estonians too, were not bothered about the Internet."

That is when, Haamer said, he became a technology evangelist and began promoting free Internet access as a human right. "I took upon myself, the task of convincing everyone I could that the benefits of the Internet are enormous," he said. Through newspaper articles and visual signs, and the first step of setting up approximately 100 free Wi-Fi hotspots, Haamer and Wifi.ee demonstrated the Internet's power on everyday life.



"It took us a while to drive the concept home, but having achieved that, the rest wasn't very difficult," said Haamer. "We were able to create a competitive environment between businesses, like competition between different cafes or hotels, and soon the numbers [of Wi-Fi hotspots] started growing rapidly. That's how the concept caught on and eventually almost every school, household and business - big and small - joined the movement."

The most interesting aspect of Estonia's public Web access business model is that a user doesn't pay separately for the access, and so it feels as if it comes free. "The price of the access is actually built into the cup of coffee you buy at the cafe, or in the bus and train fare, or the meal or anything you pay for," Haamer said. "Moreover, the price that one pays extra is miniscule, so it doesn't pinch." That's one way of paying for the access. The other one is even simpler: People pay with their eyeballs. For connecting to the Internet where there's no sales outlet, such as in a park, government building or public library, one can gain access just by clicking on an advertisement.



There is, of course, paid-for access as well, where a "ticket" could be bought simply through a text message via mobile phone.

Technology Inspires

Haamer said his idea of wiring his country was borrowed from the Wi-Fi employments in the United States. "I was fascinated when I visited Bryant Park in New York [City] and saw people communicate with nycwireless.net," he said. "I decided that I must roll out a similar network in my country."

With the decision made, it took Haamer several trips to the United States to study the "problems of setting up city-nets" faced by cities like Seattle, Boston and Portland before he could zero in on his business model for Estonia.

The result of that research is that there isn't just one technology that blankets Estonia. A mix of technologies - Wi-Fi, WiMAX and CDMA 450v - has been used. "Technology is not an issue with me. I favor anything that works," said Haamer. "What is important is a trouble-free Internet access."

"I am confident that by 2010, Estonia would again be another 'first' by achieving the feat of offering a nationwide [limited-speed] broadband service that's free in the real sense."

"Initially when I embarked on this mission [of wiring Estonia], many said that if citywide public access had not proved successful in rich countries, it can't work in Estonia either. But now, Estonia has set an example , Haamer said.

So what's next? "I believe that broadband isn't just a technology -enabler; it should be considered an essential service just like electricity or health services, said Haamer. WiFi.ee is now actively working to involve the central and local governments to open limited-speed broadband absolutely free to be supported by the government. Haamer and his small group of

volunteers have already done that, he claims, on some small groups that involved both the local governments and local Internet service providers; soon that rollout would achieve a much bigger scale.

"I am confident that by 2010, Estonia would again be another 'first' by achieving the feat of offering a nationwide [limited-speed] broadband service that's free in the real sense," he said.

Meanwhile, having established itself as one of the most wired countries in Europe, Estonia is also emerging as an important destination for global e-commerce ventures, according to E-Commerce News, which reports that the Internet's growth has made Estonia one of the world's largest per capita users of online banking, and impressively, now ranks seventh in the 25-member European Union for broadband Internet penetration.

Source: Indrajit Basu, Government Technology's Digital Communities, July, 2008

ALBERTA ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP, JUNE 2009

1. Anderson; Nicole - Edmonton
2. Asmus; Peter, Jeannette - Airdrie
3. Clark; John - Denver
4. Collin; Glen, Marion, Cameron, Julia, Gary - Airdrie
5. Costello; Wilma - Calgary
6. Derksen; Colin, Linda, Jack, Jamie - Edmonton
7. Dinning; Shirley, Leonard - Edmonton
8. Doherty; Linda K - Big Sandy
9. Erdman; Evelyn - Calgary
10. Erdman; Thomas - Barons
11. Fodor; Steve, Evelin, Mitchell, Jasmine - Calgary
12. Gue; Brian - Edmonton
13. Hall; Gwen - Boyle
14. Helenurm; Kalju, Margot - Calgary
15. Hennel; Daryl, Gloria, Jeff, Tom - Myrnham
16. Hennel; Lorne, Leah - Calgary
17. Hennel; Rodney, Liz, Colin, Keith - Stettler
18. Hennel; Ron W. F. - Stettler
19. Herman; Derrill, Liia - Innisfail
20. Kaert; Mati, Linda, Krista, Eric - Edmonton
21. Kalev; Tiiu - Eckville
22. Kalvee; Willy G. - Calgary
23. Kenzle; Alice, Susan - Creston
24. Kerbes; Deane, Irene - Stettler
25. Kerbes; Marguarite, Hal, Annette Berry - Stettler
26. Kerbes; Richard - Saskatoon
27. Kiil; David, Betty Ann - Edmonton
28. Kiil; Glenn, Ingrid, Ranek, Kalev - Edmonton
29. Kingsep; Bob, Annette, Tobi Telford - Redwood Meadows
30. Kivisild; Livia - Calgary
31. Klaus; Roy - Stettler
32. Koper; Donna - Cochrane
33. Kraav; Jüri, Helle - Calgary
34. Kuester; Matt F. - Edmonton
35. Langeste; Helmut, Airi - Edmonton
36. Leesment; Peeter, Helgi - Calgary
37. Leilop; Aino - St. Albert
38. Luik; Avo c/o Renate Smentek - Edmonton
39. Lumi; Rasmus - Ottawa
40. Maddison; Anneliese - Edmonton
41. Madill; Anita, Wallace - Calgary
42. Magi; Enzo, Maimu - Calgary
43. Matiisen; Arne, Carolyn, Janet - Calgary

44. McClung, Eda-Edmonton
45. McElroy; Elve, Wilfred - Camrose
46. Metsar; Gerli - Calgary
47. Mottus; Arnold, Vera, Catherine - Red Deer
48. Munz; Lillian - Calgary
49. Munz Gue; Martha, David, Lisa, Anita, Brian, Kevin - Medicine Hat
50. Myhre; Mae - Port Alberni
51. Nicklom; Otto, Gladys - Stettler
52. Pääsuke; Elizabeth - Edmonton
53. Pääsuke; Mark - Vancouver
54. Pääsuke; Rein, Jan - Calgary
55. Pääsuke; Toomas - Canmore
56. Pallo; Jack Henry - Red Deer
57. Pastewka; Astrid - Calgary
58. Peet; Ethel - Edmonton
59. Peet; Linda - Edmonton
60. Pelto; John, Margaret, Christine - Sherwood Park
61. Pihooja; Ralph, Nella Collins, Liz Tardie - Edmonton
62. Pilt; Shirley - Edmonton
63. Põhjakas; Kaljo, Lilian - Lethbridge
64. Posti; Allan, Maria, Ryan - Eckville
65. Robertson; David, Christine, Brendan, Karl, Travis - Leduc
66. Ruusauk; Siim, Lamour - Sherwood Park
67. Saar; Lembit, Iris - Calgary
68. Saar; Rein, Patricia, Julia - Calgary
69. Saarne; Are - Tallinn
70. Sandre; Ülo - Calgary
71. Shongrunden; Astrid - Penticton
72. Silverton; Ernie - St. Albert
73. Songster; Giuliana - Sierra Madre
74. Sparrow; Lori, Lexi, Evan, Reed - Eckville
75. Stanich; Robert, Leila - Calgary
76. Tiislar; Enn, Pärja - Canmore
77. Timma; Olev - Calgary
78. Urke; Jan - Edmonton
79. Visser; Mari, Igor, Constantine - Cochrane
80. Walters; Sylvia, John - Rimbey
81. Wartnow; Floyd C - Delta
82. Zach; Inge - Calgary
83. Zielinski; Michel, Kristine, Jeffery - Spruce Grove
84. Zoumer; Anne - Calgary

ESTONIAN TALENT FEATURED DURING ESO 2009-2010 SEASON

A dynamic conductor of the next generation, Lucas Waldin, brings enthusiasm and experience to the ESO as the newly appointed Assistant Conductor in Residence.

Mr. Waldin is a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music and has also studied with Bernard Haitink, Colin Metters, Michael Tilson Thomas, and Helmuth Rilling. His strong passion for baroque music has led him to appearances with the Stuttgart Bach Akademie, the Cleveland Bach Consort, and the Oregon Bach Festival as a Discovery Series Conductor.



Also active in Europe, Mr. Waldin has conducted the BBC Scottish SO, l'orchestre du festival Beaulieu-sur-Mer, the Staatstheater Cottbus, and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

Lucas Waldin, in his own words ...

Born in Toronto to an Estonian father and a Hungarian mother, I began studying music at the age of 5 with the recorder, and switched two years after to the flute. I studied privately from the beginning, but I only decided to make music my life and profession after attending the Interlochen Arts Camp at the age of 16 where I felt for the first time the enjoyment and inspiration of being immersed completely in a life of music.

I went to the USA to continue my studies and attended the Cleveland Institute of Music where I received my undergraduate degree studying with Joshua Smith, the principal flute of the Cleveland Orchestra. In my fourth year in the degree program I began to have some opportunities as a conductor-conducting off-stage brass for the conservatory orchestra, conducting the wind ensemble, and also forming my own ensemble of students and faculty to perform the concertos and cantatas of Bach. My favourite music to conduct is Brahms, but Bach will always be the music that nourishes me as an artist. Other musicians in the Waldin family include my grandmother Aino, who is still teaching weekly lessons at the age of 93; my late uncle Peter who played the lute and who recorded frequently for the CBC in the '70s, and my father Jan who tortures the fiddle occasionally and impresses with the jazz harmonica frequently.

I've been living in Europe for the past year gaining experience and exploring my European roots.

Lucas Waldin

Lucas Waldin will conduct the ESO on the following dates:

A Family Christmas Concert, Saturday, December 19, 2009 at 2 pm.

Piano Spectacular, Wednesday, March 10, 2010 at 7:30 pm

Mozart's Oboe Concerto, Wednesday, March 17, 2010 at 7:30 pm.

Mozart, Boy Genius, Symphony for Kids. Saturday, May 8, 2010 at 2pm

AEHS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 2009

Helgi Leesment

Twenty people took part in the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society annual general meeting on April 18, 2009 in Red Deer. It was a positive event chaired by President Bob Kingsep: a review of another highly active year, finances in great shape and clear plans for the near future. The same executive and board were unanimously voted back into office for the next year.

Participants at the AEHS AGM in Red Deer, April 18, 2009

Before the meeting, those present helped prepare mailing envelopes with material about the forthcoming Jaanipäev event to take place Saturday June 20 at Linda Hall, Stettler. The planning committee is working very hard, having done major advance fundraising to ensure that costs are covered.

Past year's activities include executive, board and Jaanipäev planning committee meetings plus some meetings with Rasmus Lumi, Estonian Charge d'Affaires, from Ottawa. As usual, we had excellent feedback on the previous two issues of AjaKaja, with the section by and about the younger generation being especially well received. A spontaneous and successful Great Estonian Stone Exchange with guests from Estonia took place at the Old Raabis cemetery, followed by potluck dinner and presentations. In addition, smaller local events have been held: Jaanipäev in Calgary and a reception for Estonian symphony orchestra director Anu Tali in Edmonton. We have sent 10 copies of our DVD Alberta's Estonians to various relevant libraries, archives and government departments in Estonia. As of April 18 we had 85 paid-up memberships covering approximately 200 members. In the future more use will be made of the news bulletins emailed from the AEHS member website. Consideration will be given to making the member site easier to use. As an organization, we are receiving communication from places beyond Alberta, meaning that we are gaining acknowledgement and recognition as an entity with drive, foresight, purpose and integrity.



Treasurer Toomas Pääsuke reported that AEHS finances are balanced, with past and future general expenses as well as special project expenses all under control, within budget.

Dave Kiil's talent at attracting grant funds for our historical and archive projects is keeping various board members very busy writing, editing, working with photos and liaising with the Heritage Community Foundation (HCF) and various archives staff. Phase 3 contract with the HCF terminated May 31, 2009. The AEHS has been awarded a grant from the Government of Estonia to continue our collecting, documenting and archiving projects. Dave Kiil will make a presentation about Alberta Estonians at the Baltic Heritage Network Conference in Tartu, Estonia in July. Dave is also working on a presentation at the West Coast Estonian Days Festival in Seattle, Washington State, in August.

The next AGM is slated for April 17, 2010.

AEHS ARCHIVAL COLLECTION TO BE DONATED TO THE PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF ALBERTA

Tom Anderson, Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton

Foreword

The production of "Alberta's Estonians DVD and "Alberta's Estonian Heritage website (www.albertasource.ca/abestonians) has resulted in an impressive collection of historical materials about Alberta's Estonian community during the past 110 years.

At a recent meeting of the AEHS Board, it was decided to donate all suitable materials-photos, historical documents, accounts of Estonian pioneer families, maps and rare books to the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA) in Edmonton.

As a result of discussions with Tom Anderson of the PAA, our collection of materials will be donated to the Archives during the first three months of 2010. The Alberta Estonian Collection (AEC) will include records returned to Alberta by the Library and Archives of Canada in Ottawa and the Estonian Central Archive in Toronto.

Individuals can donate family records to the Collection at a later date. Efforts will be made to link these items to the AEC. We will assist the archives staff to process and describe the records, thereby making them accessible to interested publics, onsite and online.

The Editors

Tom Anderson describes the mission and role of the Provincial Archives of Alberta as follows:

It is the mission of the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA) to acquire, preserve and make available records of enduring value that represent the history and culture of our province. We were therefore very pleased to hear that the AEHS was willing to donate the research and work related to the wonderful heritage project of the last number of years. It is a grand legacy that will be preserved for all Albertans.

I am also very pleased that Library and Archives Canada is now in the process of transferring the records of the Medicine Valley Estonian Society to the PAA so that these records might be more accessible in the region they were created.

The records of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society, as with all donors to the PAA, will be open and available to the public once the donation has been appraised, processed and described by archives staff. The records at the PAA are housed in acid-free enclosures, and preserved in

climate controlled and secured vaults. The records, regardless of origin or language, are described and file lists created so that researchers may easily access the materials in our holdings, either on site or through the finding aids on our website.

These finding aid descriptions of the records are made available at <https://hermis.alberta.ca/paa/>, and also through the Archives Network of Alberta at <http://asalive.archivesalberta.org:8080/access/asa/archaa/>. Everyone is welcome to visit the PAA, and researchers may access records onsite at 8555 Roper Road, Edmonton. Tours for larger groups can be arranged.

It is important to document the lives, work and lifestyles of the Estonian community in Alberta, and we accept records (papers, letters, photographs, home movies, audio tapes, maps and plans) from individuals, groups and businesses. The PAA is eager to receive donations from the Estonian community in Alberta.

If you are interested in donating family, personal or business records to the Provincial Archives, or to your local archives, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to working with the AEHS and its members to preserve the legacy of Estonians in Alberta and to make this rich history available to everyone.

Tom Anderson
Team Lead, Private Records
Provincial Archives of Alberta
780-415-0700
Tom.anderson@gov.ab.ca

CENTURY FARM AWARD FOR ORO FAMILY

Astrid Oro Ustina, Edmonton, Alberta

My father, Alex Oro, acquired his Stettler area homestead in Sept. 20, 1909. It is still owned and farmed by the family. Following a lot of documentation and proof, in September, 2009, we were honored to receive the Century Farm Award from the Government of Alberta.



The following is a brief history of my father Alex Oro: my father's ancestors lived on Saaremaa and were serfs to German landlords. He joined a group of Estonians who immigrated to Tver, Russia (Pranti Mets) in 1888. There they bought land and farmed. Word reached them that ample farmland was available for homesteads in Canada. So a group of Estonians immigrated to Canada at the turn of the century, arriving in Sylvan Lake where they were greeted by other Estonians.

My grandparents John and Liisa Oro settled in Sylvan Lake area where they built a log house on their homestead. Homestead land became scarce so a group of Estonian families moved eastward and took homesteads in the Stettler/Linda Hall area. The Rahu family, with siblings Mike, Liisa, Sophie and Miina all migrated to Stettler. They married and became the families of John and Liisa Oro, Magnus and Sophie Tipman and John and Miina Neithal. By that time, my father had become of legal age to acquire a homestead. The entire John Oro family moved to Alex Oro's homestead. The log house on the homestead in Sylvan Lake was dismantled and shipped to Stettler by rail. It was then hauled to Alex Oro's homestead and rebuilt. It still stands there today.

In 1914, John Oro died at the age of 47 years and left Liisa and her five sons to farm the homestead. By the mid-1920's, Martin bought his own farm, Oscar moved to Vancouver, leaving Liisa to farm the homestead with sons Alex, Mike and Otto.

When Alex was nearing 40 years of age, he arranged for a mail order bride, Julie Hiie, to come from Estonia. She arrived in the cold mid-winter 1927 and they were married in the spring of 1928. About that time, Mike and Otto moved a few miles to another farm. Alex and Julie had two children: Harold born in November 1928 and Astrid born in November 1929. Alex and Julie struggled through the 'dirty thirties' with two small children, little money, the dust storms and economic depression. They had a mixed farming operation; they hired help with farming until Harold was old enough to work. In 1948, I left the farm to attend University of Alberta to study Pharmacy. In 1952, Fred Ustina and I were married. We had five children: Stephanie, Melanie, Gregory, Judith and Barbara. We were divorced in 1971. I continued my career as a pharmacist in Edmonton until retirement in 1994.

With Estonian tenacity and Estonian work ethic, the farm survived the depression and farm life gradually improved. The old log house has had many additions such as a kitchen, back entry, sun porch, bathroom and upgrades such as electricity, running water, telephone and gas heating.



My mother Julie passed away in 1980, my father Alex in 1986 and my brother Harold in 1990. Now that I acquired the homestead I thoroughly enjoy spending summers there, living the life of a farmer.

Astrid is fluent in Estonian and has travelled to Estonia several times with her family. She has an Estonian passport as do her granddaughter and great granddaughter. Interest in the family's roots and heritage live on to the sixth generation!

"NOW GENERATION OF ALBERTA ESTONIANS

Stephanie Ustina, Victoria, B.C.

"Listening for the Music

This summer my mother's farm near Stettler received the Century Farm and Ranch Award for remaining in one family's possession for one hundred years. Why do I tell you this? Because prior to coming to Canada my family were serfs possessing no land, and then free but dispossessed and poor, and for these last 100 years, while Estonia froze under the icy thumb of Russian and German occupations, enduring repression to eventually find freedom, that land near Linda Hall, an undulating sea of golden grain beneath the wide prairie sky, faithfully, peacefully, during a century of unbroken stewardship in the hands of one Estonian family, turned with the seasons, peacefully sovereign.

Not all years were good years-the Depression and lesser evils wrought their wrath-but the years belonged to John and Lisa, and then to Alex and Julie, then Harold, and now Astrid.

While Estonians in occupied Estonia survived by developing a certain outward politeness and reserve, coupled with a wry, biting sense of humour shared among certain close friends, Estonian pioneers in Alberta were exploring freedom through creating a community of their own design. Drawing together the threads of their disparate existences, weaving a safety net for survival buildings were erected to meet in-houses, a church, a hall. Choirs formed. Work parties, and dinner and dance parties flourished.

This August I was lucky enough to attend West Coast Estonian Days in Seattle with my mother, and the singing and Stephanie and Astrid Ustina at West Coast Estonian Days, Seattle. dancing didn't stop. I don't speak the language, and my father is not Estonian, but I was warmly welcomed. Why does this matter? In Edmonton, where I grew up, aside from my ballet teacher, a fiercely committed and exacting woman with posture to match, who during WWII escaped Estonia to Sweden by rowboat, I didn't know of another Estonian. "Are you Estonian? the people in Seattle would ask. When we are few, we search for ourselves in others.



I used to stop people in the street who were speaking a foreign language, hoping that the music I was hearing was the crisp lilting singsong of my grandparent's Estonian. But, it would usually be Finnish, or Hungarian. Estonian is rarer. I have looked for someone to teach me Estonian-asked people directly, called the university, replied to an ad in a newspaper-but haven't found anyone. Most often I'm told "It's too late you need to learn it in childhood, or "It's too difficult. It would take a long time.

In September 2008, as I prepared for a trip to Estonia with my mother, where we would visit Tallinn, Haapsalu my grandmother's seaside birthplace, and Saaremaa, island of unerring light, birthplace of my great grandfather, I tried to teach myself a few Estonian words. Every night, just

before sleep, I would turn to my laptop and Before you Know It, a free language course site, and dutifully recite phrases and words. Hoping to prove my progress, I would try out a few words on Mom. But, despite my best efforts, I couldn't make myself understood, and after some time of listening patiently, trying to make out what I was saying, she would break out in laughter. All I've been able to master is mina armastan sind (I love you). Sometimes, still, I close our conversations with it. And still she laughs, telling me I speak like a real Estonian. There's hope, though. I hear someone's teaching Estonian online using Skype (an Estonian creation!). I may try that.

I live in Victoria by the sea, counselling women with eating disorders and suicidal youth. When the Estonian Girls' Choir (choirmaster of 'Singing Revolution' movie fame) sang in a church here everyone of Estonian descent was asked to move up to the front row, and there I met a few Estonians, mostly of my mother's generation. All came to Canada in the wave after the war. They think of my roots as old time Canadian. But, when I think that my Estonian Canadian family started with pioneers in 1901, I have a sense of being new to Canada.

Perhaps my perception has more to do with Canada being a young country, with soil first being tilled, with prairie brush becoming homestead. Perhaps it's the Estonian pioneer spirit I'm thinking of that is new-always young, courageously looking forward, strengthened by remembering one's ancestors, having faith in oneself and Nature, and never falling into cynicism or the easy way out. Perhaps it's a timelessness that comes with not being trapped by preconceptions of what is or is not possible that I'm thinking of.



What of me is Estonian, then? My sweet tooth? My jokes so wry my boyfriend can't tell if I'm being funny or I mean it? My hand made life? My hearing the music in Nature? My work ethic? My desire to contribute to a team? That I enjoy doing new things? That I love freedom? Maybe it's that I'm succinct-some would say curt. But I say, If I've said what I've needed to, why say more? Please don't mistake my polite reserve for agreement or compliance. A true Estonian is never an occupied country.

"NOW GENERATION OF ALBERTA ESTONIANS

Mike Ekelund, Edmonton, Alberta

In 2008 I met with a delegation from Estonia's Eesti Power Company (the state owned power corporation) as part of my business working in Alberta's Energy Department. Following a walk-through I gave on the history of Alberta's approach to development of oil sands resources, which I thought might be of interest to Estonia in development of its oil shale resources, I was invited to make a presentation at the World Shale Oil Congress at the Technical University in Tallinn. I was also asked to moderate a session on fiscal development issues. This was particularly exciting for me. Although I speak in numerous venues each year on technical topics I had never been invited to Estonia, where my maternal grandfather "Mike Kerbes and his family had emigrated from.



In early 2009 I was approved to attend on behalf of the Government of Alberta. Following discussions with my wife Lorraine (who did not intend to go all the way to Estonia with me and stay by herself while I attended a technical conference) we decided to include some vacation time. I also got travel advice and contacts of relatives in and around Tallinn from my aunt and uncle Deane and Irene Kerbes. They and a number of my other aunts and uncles had visited relatives there over the last decade. Some of their advice don't drink vodka with the relatives there, and if you do, don't try to outdrink them.

We travelled to Tallinn prior to the conference start to use some of our vacation time to get acclimatized and get a sense of where things were. It was a weekend, and we found while travelling there that Tallinn has become a major tourist location for visitors from around Europe. We spent that first day walking around the old town, which is one of the best preserved in Europe, and one of the reasons it is a tourist mecca. Our first discovery was the penchant for herring. At breakfast we were offered pickled herring, preserved herring and baked herring along with more familiar (to an Albertan) fare. For lunch, most of the bars had salted herring on brown bread. Since both Lorraine and I come from families that always kept a big orange jug of pickled herring around, this was great. I also tried to contact some of the relatives, but unfortunately was unable to meet with any of them due to travel, and in one case illness.



We spent our free time before and after the conference travelling around the old town, climbing up on the walls, visiting the coffee shops and the marzipan shops, and touring a number of museums using our 'Tallinn Card and taking pictures. And sitting and relaxing drinking coffee in the town square. Since the weather was cold, we had to do that under blankets part of the time, but being out in the cold is not an unusual situation living in Edmonton.

We also went to the Estonian Heritage village, which had structures from across the country in

different time periods. It was a bit like Heritage Park, Fort Edmonton or the Ukrainian Heritage village, but on a larger scale. This gave us a good understanding of how people lived in rural Estonia during different periods.

Another museum we spent a lot of time at was the "Occupation Museum, which was dedicated to the recent history following independence with the involvements with the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. This is a very interesting, and complex, historical period and we spent several hours going through the presentations and looking at artifacts. As Lorraine comes from a Ukrainian background, she found it interesting to understand the different situations that various countries found themselves. At least that's what she said - she being a very kind, and patient person. She did later draw the line regarding the number of different WWII tanks we went to see in different countries.



The evening prior to the conference I was invited to attend a dinner at the Estonian Academy of Sciences. I was seated next to the keynote speaker, Minister of Economic Affairs and Communications Juhan Parts (a former Prime Minister), at a table of embassy and conference attendees from France, Jordan and the United States. The dinner was quite interesting, especially being able to discuss with the former P.M a number of political issues around Estonia's relationship with Russia and the challenges of joining NATO. We did receive a few raised eyebrows from some of the diplomatic corps when we started drawing maps on the napkins to illustrate our discussion.

The conference itself was held at the Tallinn University of Technology. It drew attendees from around the world, but primarily from countries that have large shale oil or similar resources - such as Estonia, Jordan, the United States, Canada and Australia. My presentation on the oil sands and its development went over well and I answered a number of questions on oil sands development policy and how it might apply to oil shale. A number of other presentations on production techniques, mine remediation and waste management, exploration results from New Brunswick, China and Serbia, the new fiscal regime in Jordan, greenhouse gas challenges, and potential world developments were attended by myself and by another representative.

Following the conference Lorraine and I took a couple of days of vacation and spent one day on bicycle travelling around the Tallinn area. We were able to visit the harbour and bicycle along the seacoast to the beach areas north of the city. As it was cool and a weekday, they were fairly empty but a number of young mothers were pushing strollers along the paved paths in the woods along the edge of the beaches. There were also a number of school age children in a school of miniature sailboats learning to sail at the Olympic sailing site. We visited the remains of a large mediaeval Abbey, and bicycled through the suburbs. Some had very nice detached homes and were reminiscent of towns in rural Alberta in the 1950's or 1960's. Others had the large Soviet style concrete apartment buildings, many of them covered with black streaks from water runoff. A few appeared to have been recently painted in cheery colours like yellow or light orange.

Another day was spent relaxing in town and mostly taking photos of the lily festival, of ourselves

at various landmarks (such as me in front of the KGB building) and so on before heading out for the rest of our vacation itinerary.

Beyond the value of the technical conference, it was a great opportunity to see where some of my family had come from.

Mike Ekelund is Assistant Deputy Minister, Oil Development, Ministry of Energy, Government of Alberta.

"NOW GENERATION OF ALBERTA ESTONIANS

Alison and Callum (Kaarsoo) McLeod, Calgary, Alberta

I am Callum (Kaarsoo) McLeod. I am 14 years old. As with my sister I am very proud of my Estonian heritage. A number of our relatives live in Estonia, and when we went to visit them in both 2002 and 2008, I felt a sort of connection. One connection that was very clear to me was that most of the people we met still had a close relationship with the land, and a love for the outdoors. I feel that I have these characteristics as I love hiking, skiing and cycling. I also enjoy growing and collecting some of my food. In Estonia many of my family take great joy in collecting mushrooms. It is a family outing; they all go out into the woods with a basket and a knife. When they return the baskets are normally full of chanterelles. My grandfather's cousin, Anne, has a wonderful garden. I loved it so much that I didn't want to come out of the strawberry patch for supper, after which I ran right back outside and climbed up the cherry tree. I stayed there for the next hour gorging myself. I feel as though I share many things I enjoy with my relatives, maybe it has something to do with the genes, but I am very proud to be Estonian.

My name is Alison (Kaarsoo) McLeod and I am 16 years old. I am very proud of my Estonian roots. I especially like to see people's reactions when I tell them I am Estonian because a lot of people have never heard of it. They usually look confused, it is really amusing to watch them try and figure out where it is before I tell them. I like teaching them something new about the world that they never have known otherwise. Some of my hobbies include arts and language studies. Currently I am studying with Helgi Leesment to learn Estonian. When I first visited Estonia in 2002 I became fascinated with the Old Town architecture in Tallinn and all the little shops throughout it, I really liked the blend of old and modern. After visiting again in 2008 and now that I have Estonian citizenship, I feel like I really am officially part of such a unique and interesting country. I plan on going back again next summer so I can learn the language through assimilation.

"NOW GENERATION OF ALBERTA ESTONIANS

Kalev Kiil, Edmonton, Alberta

My trip to Estonia in 2009 was great. The reason my family and I went to Estonia is because my Grandpa is from there and so that we could see the Song & Dance Festivals. My Grandpa also came with us. We visited the Old Town in Tallinn many times. There were many nooks, crannies and winding streets in the Old Town. During our stay in Tallinn we ventured out to Tartu. We stayed in Tartu for 2 days. During our stay in Tartu, we saw the University of Tartu building. It looks like the Parthenon in Greece. When we were leaving we went close to the Estonian-Russian border and talked to a border guard. Except he spoke Estonian so my Grandpa had to translate what he was saying.

When we came back to Tallinn we went to the Dancefest. The dancers wore basic vibrant colours. One day we went to a manor, it was miraculously big. After a week of living in Tallinn we went to Saaremaa where we lived in an awesome cabin. There was a greatly furnished walking trail right near the cabin. Then one day we went to the city of Kuressaare where we visited the Kuressaare castle. In the castle there was a dark and scary tower. In the tower there used to be lions and they would throw people into the tower. The castle wasn't as cool as I thought because there wasn't that much about the castle. There was mostly other stuff like modern art. My trip to Estonia was different.

Kalev is Dave Kiil's 10- year- old grandson. He is a Grade 5 student in the German Bilingual Program at Rideau Park Elementary School in Edmonton.

ÜHESHINGAMINE 2009

Song Festival, Tallinn, Estonia
Susan Kenzle, Austin, Texas

Two Alberta-born ladies of Estonian heritage, Alice and Susan Kenzle, travelled to Tallinn, Estonia in July, 2009 to attend the 25th Song Festival (Laulupidu). Alice Kenzle (nee Moro) grew up in Eckville; she is the daughter of August and Lily Moro. This was the two Kenzle's third trip to Estonia in recent years. The trips were taken to research their southern Estonian roots and experience contemporary Estonia. This was their first song festival.



The theme of this national song and dance celebration was ÜhesHingamine (To Breathe as One). It was a good occasion for unity of the nation in a time of difficult economics. Given the huge crowd at the festival grounds it seemed to us that the entire Estonian nation had turned out for the celebration. Indeed, the Estonian newspaper Õhtuleht proclaimed after the event, "Kõigi aegade suurim pidu! (Biggest ever Celebration), with 153,900 reported attendees to the three-day-long song and dance event. This figure did not include the 26,430 singers or the 7,460 dancers. It was an event of impressive magnitude.

The festival officially started on Thursday, July 2 with a free Folk Music Celebration in Tallinn's Old Town Hall Square and the arrival of the "celebration flames to the ferry port. The celebration flames are like the Olympic torch, their arrival initiates the celebration and they burn on top of a tower at the Lauluväljak (Song Festival Grounds) until the last song.



Friday, July 3rd was the first of three dance celebrations, none of which we attended unfortunately. Saturday was the first of the two song celebrations, preceded by a five-hour-long festival parade. The Celebration Flames led the parade, in which groups from all over the country sang and danced their way from downtown to the Song Festival Grounds, about 6 km away. There were no floats as you would see in a typical North American parade; mostly it was groups of singers and dancers in their colorful, traditional costumes, preceded by flags and banners announcing their affiliations. Groups from outside Estonia were in the parade too, with a large Canadian contingent mainly from Toronto and Hamilton, but at least 20 people from Vancouver also and maybe others we missed. Large and small Canadian flags flew among the ubiquitous Estonian tricolor flags. It



was a strong expression of national pride.

We watched much of the parade, hoping to see folks from Sõmerpalu in Southern Estonia where my grandfather was born. We left before the parade finished, so we could go to the song grounds. As we were walking down Narva Mnt. paralleling the parade route (buses weren't running due to the parade) we finally saw the participants from Sõmerpalu and Urvaste, and actually walked beside them part of the way.



After reaching the Grounds shortly before 7 p.m. we headed for our seats which were three rows from the front and near the "stage which is a huge concrete shell with risers. The stadium is built in a bowl that rises up towards the rear allowing people seated on grass at the back to get a good view. Outside the stadium there were many tents housing vendors selling all kinds of food and souvenirs. The area outside the stadium was packed, making it difficult to walk around or get food or drinks during the performance.



The evening's performance did not begin for over an hour after the stated time of 7 p.m. because the parade was still filing through the front of the stadium. Following that was the lighting of the Celebration Flame atop the stadium's tower. This involved the torch holder taking the flames up the tower stairs, stopping at each level to reveal the flame through a window. The crowd cheered excitedly every time the flames appeared through a window in the tower.



Estonia's President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves made a speech. We were surprised to see that he and his family (and other dignitaries) were sitting mere rows away without a posse of armed guards as you would see in North America. Photographers in the aisle next to us were snapping a photo of the President's every movement. He even signed some autographs and shook hands with some of the singers during a break.



There were 28 songs performed the first night, each directed by a different conductor who led the singers or orchestral groups from a raised platform in front of the stage. After each song a little flower girl or boy ran up the stairs of the platform to present a bouquet of flowers to the conductor. The number of performers changed throughout the evening, starting with 24,705 singers and decreasing to 446 later. The choirs contained people of all ages - from small children to seniors - and genders, mostly decked out in their elaborate region-specific costumes. We even saw one fellow in a kilt, an Estonian-Scotsman we guessed.

It was quite an event to see the changing of the choirs, as people streamed on and off the steps of the "stage as quickly as they could. Considering the numbers of performers it was an

amazing feat of organization and choreography. Remarkable too was the high quality of the sound in the 50-year-old stadium.

We were also astonished by the length of the event. The singers who had just endured five hours of marching seemed to have endless energy as they proceeded to sing well into the night. We have no idea what time the first song celebration ended as we were tired, cold and wet from rain, and left for the hotel around 11 p.m. As all the buses were packed to the bursting point we decided to walk the 6 km back to our Old Town hotel.

The second and final song celebration was on Sunday, beginning at 2 p.m. During the next approximately six hours the various choirs performed 38 songs. Around 8 p.m. the celebration flame was extinguished and the large, raucous crowd of singers and festival attendees cheered, sang, and waved flags. It was truly an emotional experience to see so much pride and joy at such a large, peaceful gathering.



As we left the crowded stadium thousands of singers were still singing. It seemed that they did not want the party to end. A happy but weary crowd of festival goers left the stadium and streamed down Narva Maantee, in reverse of the parade a day before, closing down the highway to vehicles, and signaling the end of the Laulu- and Tantsupidu for another five years.

Susan Kenzle is a native Albertan presently living in Austin, Texas where she works as a Landscape Architect. She is currently researching her Estonian heritage in Alberta and Estonia. She has been able to trace the Murro family back to the end of the 1700s in Southern Estonia.

Tallinn, Estonia Scores Again Amongst World's Cleverest Cities

In terms of studies about the world's most intelligent cities, Tallinn came in the top 7 for the third year running. Canada was the only country to have two representatives in the top 7, whereas Stockholm kept up its typically good performances. The intelligence is measured in terms of the city's relationship to information technology. Seven most intelligent world communities have been recently chosen among 400 cities by independent think tank Intelligent Community Forum.

The ICF is an organization that measures the intelligence of a certain community on the basis of its relationship towards information technology, particularly broadband and the Internet. The top 7 intelligent communities of 2009 are Bristol, Virginia, USA; Eindhoven, Netherlands; Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada; Issy-les-Moulineaux, France; Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada; Stockholm, Sweden; and Tallinn, Estonia.

Many of the top scorers were typically from the richest countries in the world, such as the USA, Sweden, Canada and France. However, despite its reputation of being stuck in the gloom and doom of Eastern Europe and in the freezing Baltic, Tallinn came out as one of the winners.

Major contributions to the Estonian capital's success were the Ülemiste University and the Cyber Defence Centre. There is also the fact that, mostly young people tend to use technological services such as hotspots and broadband. Tallinn is renowned for having older users. The research and technology status of the city is second to none in that area of Europe and mobile applications and e-services are currently on the rise.

Experts have named Tallinn the centre of 'smart business' and often praise the fact that so much is developed there. It has also been stated in many places that the Estonian capital should improve its marketing skills to ensure the findings of the ICF are well known in Europe and other areas of the world. This could do wonders for the possibility of technology tourism in Estonia.

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THE 2009 ESTONIAN SONG AND DANCE FESTIVAL IN TALLINN

Helgi Leesment, Calgary, Alberta

Have there ever been so many Albertans or former Albertans of Estonian heritage in Estonia at once? Two years ago there were fourteen at dinner at the Golden Piglet restaurant, but this summer's Estonian Song and Dance Festival attracted over thirty. About twenty people from BC, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec met, chatted and reminisced at the lively Alberta gathering on the warm and sunny Canada Day July 1 at Raekoja Plats = Town Hall Square in Tallinn. A few others were unable to be present, or were unfortunately unaware of the gathering. A Tallinn relative of an Albertan was the most visibly loyal person there, cheerfully waving three large flags: Canadian, Estonian and Albertan.

Among the Albertans were four members of the Leew family (anglicized version of the original name Liiv). For 93 year old Alexander, born in Stettler in 1916, this was his first trip to Estonia. He and his three children were all impressed with the festival, the Old Town and the islands. Despite a long-ago loss of all family records and photos in a flood, on this trip they were able to gain some understanding as to their parents' and grandparents' origins in the Pärnu area - an additional worthwhile achievement for this family.



We all were among 1000 visiting Canadians of Estonian heritage this July. About 500 turned up late afternoon July 1 to take in a short Canada Day ceremony. Canadian Ambassador to Estonia Scott Heatherington, based in Riga, Latvia, read a brief speech in commendable Estonian. Estonian president Hendrik Ilves and his wife were in attendance as he too has a Canadian connection, having attended university and lived in Vancouver and Toronto.

Then it was on to the big musical event - Laulupidu and Tantsupidu - Song festival and Dance festival and the parade.

The dancers and gymnasts presented a "sea- based theme on the grass of an outdoor stadium close to downtown Tallinn. Estonian folk dances were presented by thousands of dancers in a variety of national costumes, forming at different times straight and curved lines, circles of many sizes, at one point surrounding a large sailboat; all the while doing elegant footwork or quick changing partner work. One of the highlights was a map of the country formed by rhythmic gymnasts of all ages from teens to pensioners. Another was an elaborate spiral of hundreds of dancers which kept spinning while tightening AND moving across the field - a feat requiring high levels of spatial and timing skills. During the entire dance performance, no one got lost on the field, not even any of the young children.

Ah, yes, the parade. All 26,251 singers plus their directors, all 7460 dancers and gymnasts plus their leaders, and hundreds of government officials from all levels marched in the parade from downtown Tallinn out to the Song Festival grounds in perfect sunny weather. Also 60 musical

bands. Foreigners were given the place of honour at the front of the parade; thus we saw the Torontonians and Vancouverites, including several former Albertans among those choral and dance groups. One former Albertan marched with the Tallinn civic officials as a special guest of honour in the last section of the parade; that is the host city's traditional position. This parade was happily interactive in nature: spectators called greetings and marchers enthusiastically responded. Unfortunately, the parade was so long, that the start of the first song concert was delayed by nearly two hours as the marchers continued crossing the performance area, the official end point of the parade. That has never happened before.

Many readers of this article have attended an Estonian national Song Festival and/or have seen the 2007 film *The Singing Revolution*. Thanks in part to that film, ever more non-Estonians are now getting caught up in Song Festival fever. Among the 804 participating choirs, 41 were from outside Estonia's borders. For example, one choir from Spain had no connection with Estonia or Estonians at all, except that the members very much wanted to participate in this concert and had learned the songs and pronunciation well enough to be among the selected.



The July 4th Saturday evening concert at the Song Festival bowl had an audience numbering well over sixty- thousand, which dwindled noticeably as the rain came down. Had the start been punctual, the performance would have been over by the time the weather turned unpleasant. Nonetheless, that concert was magnificent, focusing partly on Estonian music and partly on famous classics. The sound of 15,000 adult voices forming the massed choir thrust its energy into the first set of songs, followed by various combinations of men's and women's select choirs. Among the traditional pieces were Lüdigi's Koit and Nerepi's Call, Cuckoo Bird. The operatic numbers also were definitely worth the damp wait - Gypsy Chorus from Verdi's *Trubador* and a selection from Orff's medieval themed *Carmina Burana*.

Next day's concert attracted over 100,000 audience members, heralded as the largest ever. The instigators of the first Laulupidu in 1869 in Tartu could not have imagined such participation 140 years later. However, their original idea of choral singing of traditional songs as an integral expression of Estonian culture, continues to be valid as proven by the concert on the cool, sunny Sunday afternoon of July 5th, 2009. 1700 wind instrumentalists started the event followed by combinations of boys', men's, girls', women's and massed choirs. Works by well known Estonian composers including U. Sisask, V. Tormis and R. Valgre were on the program. There were new and old humorous, playful, contemplative and traditional selections such as Let's get going, men, What's behind the forest?, Yearning for home, Men and women. Gustav Ernesaks' My native land is my love brought everyone to their feet according to Estonian Song Festival tradition and as highlighted in the film *The Singing Revolution*. When all the singers tried to gather for the grand finale, they did not fit onto the huge stage. They spilled over into the seating area, forming an unintended yet symbolic unity with the appreciative audience. The vocal power of 26,251 united singers makes for a unique, rich, utterly unforgettable experience.

ALBERTANS AT WEST COAST ESTONIAN DAYS, SEATTLE 2009

Helgi Leesment, Calgary, Alberta

Is Alberta considered part of the West Coast? For purposes of the West Coast Estonian Days festival, the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society is a full fledged member of the Estonian League of the West Coast = Eesti Organisatsioonide Liit Läänerannikul = EOLL.

Albertans of Estonian heritage enjoyed a few days of getting in touch with their roots in Seattle, Washington August 26-29. This is the 29th time the West Coast Estonian Days have taken place. The festivals started in San Francisco in 1953 moving to Los Angeles in 1955, Portland in 1957, San Francisco in 1959 and for the first time in Canada, in Vancouver 1961. Since then, the Estonian communities in those cities plus Seattle have taken turns hosting the event, once every two years.

While a smattering of Albertans have attended many of the West Coast Estonian Days festivals over the decades, two years ago, 2007 was the first time Alberta made a major impression with our Reader's Theatre play outlining a pioneer Estonian family's story and with the world premiere of our DVD Alberta's Estonians. We followed through this year. Nearly a dozen Albertans partied,



purchased, souvenirs, dined, attended concerts and academic presentations in Seattle. Among the first time Alberta attendees were Astrid Ustina, Stephanie Ustina (former Albertan), Laura Bakken, Rein & Jan Paasuke. Among the veterans were Eda McClung, Jüri & Helle Kraav, Dave Kiil, Peter & Helgi Leesment. Most of the events took place on the campus of the University of Washington which was celebrating its 100th year of the Scandinavian Studies Program and the 15th year of the Baltic Studies Program. These themes were woven into some of the festival events. Particularly noteworthy was the University Library's large display dedicated to Estonian Song Festivals.

For the second time in its 29 year history, an Albertan was part of a major presentation at an Estonian West Coast Days festival. At the Thursday morning session, Dave Kiil presented a well received overview of Alberta Estonian history, enhancing it with PowerPoint illustrations. He was in the company of Maie Barrow of Australia, Dr. Guntis Smidchens of the Baltic Studies Program at the University of Washington, and Aho Rebas of Tallinn, Counsellor to the Minister for Population and Ethnic Affairs, and mediator between the Estonian Government and Estonians abroad, as well as coordinator of the Fellow Countrymen Program implementation. As the AEHS had recently received final approval for a major grant from the Estonian government, Aho Rebas' speech on Estonians abroad and the implementation of the Fellow Countrymen Program dealt precisely with our grant application process. During his presentation

he referred to Alberta several times as a positive example of how the Estonian government grant process benefits many aspects of society inside and outside Estonia.

Among the other highlights of the 2009 West Coast Estonian Days were the concert by a professional fivesome song-and-comedy team from Tartu (Kaunimate Aastate Vennaskond = (Brotherhood of the Best Years of Our Lives), a boat cruise to a wonderfully floral picnic site operated by a local First Nations band, and an excellent Song and Dance Concert in a modern theatre with good acoustics. In the past, the conductors of the choral songs have been Estonian, with an occasional guest not of Estonian descent. This year, the statistics were turned. The choral segment of the main concert featured four non-Estonian conductors: veteran Lonnie Cline from Oregon, Terri Johanson from Vancouver, Giles Buser-Molatore also from Oregon, and University of Washington student Andrew Schmidt who is enhancing his music Master degree by learning the Estonian language because of the prominence of Estonian songs in the choral world. The other three conductors were USA Estonians: Kati Tamm, Dr. Taavo Virkhaus and Helve Kalman. The printed program offered English translations of most of the songs.



First timer Stephanie Ustina's impressions of the Festival:

"Mom and I had a great time at this year's LEP in Seattle. Everywhere we turned we were met with friendliness and organization. It just didn't stop! Starting with the young musician who opened the door for us and the welcome desk and envelopes filled with tickets and map and every need to find our way around the university campus. We loved meeting everyone from so many parts of North America -- learning about their lives and hearing their stories. Friendly faces, the musical lilt of the Estonian language, celebratory meals and the special Estonian meal, the song and dance festival night, singing on the boat trip.

We remember it all with affection, but for me what really made the entire event special was the band from Estonia. They really carried the day. Not only did they entertain us all with everything from jokes and rollicking polkas to folk music, but they also joined in during informal moments, sitting with the rest of us when they weren't on stage, making for a very rare and special experience, for many of us, of meeting fine performing artists from afar.

Our hearts were opened so much with all the singing and dancing, especially those magical moments on the lawn at the Salmon BBQ when we all joined in a huge circle on the grass to dance and sing, that our hearts were heavy when it came to leave -- but only for a moment, for soon we were singing again, and when I went to bed the music and singing were still ringing in my ears. Thanks to everyone who worked so hard to organize. It couldn't have been better!

Stephanie's mother Astrid Ustina comments:

"The welcome mat was out to greet and direct us for the first time attendees. I thoroughly enjoyed socializing and immersion into the Estonian culture. Personally I was happy to speak Estonian as it was my first language. I was even questioned as to when did I come to America? The presentations were most interesting. With the luck of the draw, we sat with the Estonian band members at the Ball. The Song and Dance presentation was excellent. The last day at

Seattle we took in the Salmon BBQ, a three-hour boat ride to a Lodge with beautiful grounds and flowers. There we were treated to Salmon feast followed by music and dancing on the lawn. What a great event.

The next West Coast Estonian Days will be hosted by the Estonian community at Portland, Oregon in 2011, specific dates to be announced.

ALEKSANDER WEILER

Roland Weiler, Toronto, Ontario

Aleksander Weiler played an instrumental role in the creation of the Estonian republic and in its War of Independence in 1918 - 1920, in its politics after the war and in founding and building up the largest newspaper publishing enterprise in Estonia between the two world wars. World War II ended his publishing enterprise in Estonia as he and his family were forced to escape the Communist takeover of Estonia, first to Finland, then to Sweden in 1944. He re-established his journalistic career, first in Sweden, then in Canada, founding the Estonian weekly *Meie Elu* in Toronto in 1950. His untimely death at the age of sixty-three put an end to the resumed career as well as to the many services he rendered to the Estonian displaced persons community in Canada.



He was born in 1887, the son of a gardener on an estate in Estonia, then part of the tsarist Russian Empire. Leaving school at 15, he worked as a smith, then a machinist and electrician. His career in journalism began already at the age of twenty, when he became the editor of a periodical. The Russian tsarist regime jailed him as a leftist representative of workers and for his writings. After his release, he was one of the founders of a daily in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. The paper's editor was Konstantin Päts, later the first president of the Republic of Estonia. From 1914 to 1917, he worked as news editor and war correspondent. During the Germans' occupation of the Baltics from February to November, 1918, he was active in the underground Estonian provisional government. At the start of the War of Independence in November, 1918, against the Communists in Russia, he recruited volunteers for an infantry battalion. At the same time, as a member of the Constituent Assembly, he was instrumental in passing the land reform laws of 1919, which confiscated the estates of the Baltic German landowners to create a relatively satisfied agrarian sector of small, individual family farmsteads. As one of the founders of the left of centre Labour Party, which was a leading political force in the early days of the Estonian Republic, he helped to found, in 1918, the publishing company *Waba Maa* (Free Country) and the newspaper of the same name which served as the Party's voice. Later, he was a member of State Assembly (or parliament) until 1929, when, his chief interest being the newspaper business, he withdrew from active party politics. In the twenties and thirties, he, as publisher, made the *Waba Maa* newspaper and its associated publications, advertising and retail businesses into the biggest publishing concern in Estonia. He changed the traditional dull solidity of Estonian journalism by increasing the amount of news in the papers, sometimes of a sensational nature, and by including more photographs, caricatures and illustrations. The most modern printing presses were bought and installed. The chairman of the board was Voldemar Päts, the brother of the Estonian President and married to Aleksander's sister, Johanna. Aleksander was also on the boards of several publishing and trade associations.

During World War II, the company was confiscated after the Communist takeover of Estonia in 1940. He was arrested and jailed but, because he was severely ill, was not taken to Russia with other prisoners in July of 1941. During the German occupation from 1941 to 1944, only papers approved by the Germans were allowed to be published. *Waba Maa* was not one of them.

Under the direction of his son, the company functioned as a printing and bookbinding concern. Aleksander worked in the retail end of the business. In September, 1944, as the Russians were entering Estonia again, he and some of his family escaped by boat across the Gulf of Finland. The rest of the family had already left for Finland in February of the same year. Once together, they escaped by ship to Sweden the same month.

Aleksander continued his journalism trade at a newspaper in Sweden. At the invitation of his daughter, Lea, who had married Walter Silverton of Barons, Alberta and emigrated to Canada before the war, he and his wife Stella, whom he had married in 1909, came to Canada in 1948.

His organizing spirit and his belief that the Estonians in Canada could further their aims better by speaking with a single voice led him to coordinate the activities of the numerous existing Estonian clubs and organizations by initiating the formation of the South-Alberta Estonian Society. After his move to Toronto, he founded with others, in 1949, the Estonian Federation of Canada (Eesti Liit Kanadas - EKL). As its first the president, he assisted, through direct contact with the Canadian government, the immigration of post-war Estonian refugees to Canada, amongst them coal miners and their families from Belgium.

Because of his backgrounds as a newspaper publisher, he, together with others, created the Estonian Publishing Company in Canada (Eesti Kirjastus Kanadas) and became the publisher of the weekly Meie Elu (Our Life) in the spring of 1950. His work was cut short by his untimely death in October of the same year, although the paper continued to be published for another fifty years.

Aleksander was followed to Barons in May 1948, by his son, Rein, with his wife Marga and his three children - Roland, Hendrik and Merike. His daughter Asta and her husband and three children- Indrek, Reet and Helga followed as well as other Estonians from Sweden, whom Aleksander helped to immigrate. The older children attended school in Barons. Asta and her family soon moved to British Columbia. After Aleksander's death, his son and family moved to Toronto to continue the work at Meie Elu. Despite his death in January, 1952, his children went on to university and to post-graduate studies as did Asta's children. Today, they and their children and grandchildren live widely dispersed from British Columbia to Cairo, Egypt.

Roland Weiler is Aleksander Weiler's grandson. He graduated in chemistry from the University of Toronto and received his Ph.D. in oceanography from Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Until his retirement, he worked for both federal and Ontario environment ministries. He is married and has two daughters and a son.



THE STONE HOUSE

Lea Linderman Sepp and Anita Linderman Madill, Calgary, Alberta

Introduction: This story was received in response to the stone house heritage quiz in Ajakaja Summer 2009.

The stone house built by George and Minnie Meer Mursa on their homestead near Foremost in south-east Alberta around 1910 was the ideal environmentally friendly structure. Utilizing readily available and locally abundant building material, it was a cool refuge from the blistering heat of a southern Alberta summer day and was insulated from the cold icy blast of winter. We can only speculate if it was the family's first dwelling and



shelter for children Martin, Johnny and Linda until lumber ordered from BC and hauled by wagon from Warner arrived to build their large two-storey house. A dance floor was built in the grove of trees and every Saturday, weather permitting, the piano would be hoisted onto a wagon and moved out for the open-air dance. The stone house would be a centre for musicians and guests. The sauna was a special feature that continued to be enjoyed by subsequent owners into the 1950s. Unfortunately, the stone house was demolished to provide more crop land for a new land owner.

The Mursas were part of the Otto Meer family group of Estonian Crimeans who headed for America in the early 1900s when internal strife in Russia became unbearable. Settling originally near Fort Pierre, South Dakota, Otto and Mae (already in their 70s) along with their grown children John, Hans, Martin, Jacob, Eliza (Metz), Minnie (Mursa) and Helen, then moved to the Foremost area when homestead land opened up in 1909. The only family member to stay behind was daughter Anna Meer who had married John Linderman in Estonia. Anna's son and our father, Robert Linderman, would leave Estonia at the age of 16 to join the family group and seek a better life.

A few miles from the Mursa stone house was a much smaller stone house on Martin and Katta Meer's homestead. This is the farm where we grew up. Dad bought the farm in 1928 when Martin and Katta relocated to the Seattle area. We stored perishables in the stone house in the summer and occasionally mother, Rosalie Peetof Linderman, would take refuge there from the blistering prairie summer heat. Lea recalls how hired men working on our threshing crews used to store their jugs of spirits in the stone house to keep the contents cool. One summer when Anita and Wally Madill were helping on the farm during university break, mother decided the old stone house which was deteriorating and unsafe needed to go. Wally recalls the back-breaking labour on a very hot July day when he and father-in-law Bob Linderman sledge hammered, crow-barred, muscled and hauled away those rocks; he still relishes the memory of the lemon-aide Rosalie brought out to cool the sweating workers.

When the typical pioneer's first structure was a sod shack, it is interesting that these Estonians built stone houses. This required unique skills and knowledge. It's unfortunate in the trend toward modernization that these rare vestiges of Estonian heritage were lost.



Members of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society extend their sympathy to the family and friends of Lea Linderman Sepp who passed away on September 11, 2009.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tere!

Yesterday I was a Canadian. Eda McClung, Tina Matiisen, Garry Raabis and I were part of an Eckville High School reunion organizing committee who were donating the excess funds of the reunion to the high school. As the chair of the committee I made the official presentation and as I stood before the students, I was struck with the realization that my years in school occurred half way between the opening of the original Estonian school (early 1900's) and now. The links to the past just got a whole lot shorter!



Today I am an Estonian. As a consequence of being a grandson to an Estonian pioneer, I have my Estonian hat on. I dwell on the notion that the early Estonian families in our area made a pact to assure that at least one member of each family would go on to higher education.

Tomorrow I will be a Swede. As a grandson of a Swedish pioneer on my mothers side, I will lace up my skates, strap on hockey gear and step onto the ice for another game. I often think of the trunk full of skating trophies my grandfather left in the old country and never saw again. In the context of our society, I am reminded of the treasures that so many people had to leave behind.

As we know from our historical records, small communities like Eckville, Stettler and Barons, depended on the community for survival. Naturally we focus on the Estonian aspect of the community, however these communities consisted of mixed ancestry. A large component of our membership has lived their lives with several hats in their closets. They balance their lives by routinely slipping from culture to culture seamlessly adjusting to the circumstances. This may be one definition of the Canadian culture. This may be part of the explanation of why our society continues to succeed. With this inherent appreciation of multiple perspectives, the value of organizations such as the AEHS is enhanced. It is another vantage point, another perspective and another opportunity for each of us to expand our interests and test our abilities.

With the Winter Olympics in Vancouver just a few months away, lets get ready to cheer the Canadian athletes to victory. We will hold our collective breaths as Mellisa Hollingsworth of Eckville/Estonian heritage streaks down the skeleton track. Lets applaud the Estonian athletes as they pursue their dreams in our huge country and lets never forget the spirit of the coach who reached out to replace the competitor's broken ski pole! We are, after all, part of a much larger community, and in our own small but effective way, proof that it can be done.

Merry Christmas and all the best to everyone in 2010!

2009-A VERY BUSY AEHS AGENDA

2009 was an exceptionally "Estonian year, with major and minor international, regional and local events taking place. Albertans have attended all but one, as listed here.

- January 14 - Estonian musician Anu Tali guest conducts the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, followed by post-concert reception for members of the Estonian community.
- January 28-February 2 Estonian Junior Biathlon team competes at Canmore, Alberta in the Biathlon Junior and Youth World Championship.
- March 12 - AEHS Board and committee holds meeting, Red Deer, re: Jaanipäev planning
- April 18 - Alberta Estonian Heritage Society annual general meeting, Red Deer.
- June 20 - AEHS Jaanipäev at Linda Hall, near Stettler, Alberta. Approximately 200 attend.
- June 26-30 - "Esto 2009, one of a series of world Estonian festivals usually held every four years on various continents, takes place in Münster, Germany, out of its usual time sequence. This was the tenth such festival since the first one in 1972 in Toronto, although there is considerable controversy as to whether such an event is needed any more. We are not sure, but believe that no Albertans attended this festival held in Münster.
- July 1 - A special gathering at Raekoja Plats / Town Hall Square, Tallinn on Canada Day brings together approximately 20 current and former Albertans along with additional friends and relatives in Estonia. Later approximately 500 Canadian Estonians celebrate the day along with the Canadian Ambassador from Latvia.
- July 2-5 - Song and Folkdance Festival / Laulu- Tantsupidu held in Tallinn. Approximately 25 Albertans in attendance.
- July 7-10 - Baltic Heritage Network Conference at Tartu, Estonia, focusing on archives. Albertan Dave Kiil presents a paper about AEHS recent and upcoming historical projects; two other Albertans are in attendance.
- July 25-26 - Two young Albertans, Andrew and Lisa Kaarsoo-Chisholm, win medals at the Fourth Summer Biathlon Viessmann Cup competition at Otepää, Estonia
- August 26-29 - West Coast Estonian Days, Seattle, Washington Dave Kiil presents an overview of Alberta Estonian history and past and present AEHS projects. Approximately 11 Albertans attend the festival.
- September 1-7 - Six competitors from Estonia participate in the WorldSkills event, Calgary
- September 12 - AEHS holds Board meeting, Red Deer, re: planning archiving activities as per the Estonian Government grant for this purpose
- October 9 - Rasmus Lumi, Estonian Chargé d'Affaires from the Estonian Embassy in Ottawa, conducts consular business in Alberta
- November 10 - AEHS sends congratulatory letter to the Toronto Estonian Society which is celebrating its 65th anniversary, having been founded in 1944
- November 11 & 19-December 19 - Toronto musician Lucas Waldin, of Estonian heritage, conducts the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
- November 27 & 28 - Estonian musician Eri Klas guest conducts the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. Earlier, he was one of several conductors at the Song Festival in Tallinn, July, 2009

Busy year!

FROM THE EDITORS' DESK

'Flowers and butterflies drift in color, illuminating spring'

Author Unknown

Butterflies in flight over a pleasant summer meadow are beautiful and enchanting. They symbolize freedom, travel and transformation. They undertake epic odysseys and undergo an astonishing metamorphosis.

For this spring/summer issue of AjaKaja, we chose the butterfly to symbolize the story of Alberta's Estonian pioneers. They made amazing migrations, had an instinctive impulse for freedom, and the resources for adaptation and survival. Over a century later, their descendants still demonstrate that willingness to change and transform. Alberta's Estonians are recognized for celebrating and documenting their heritage but it doesn't end there.

AEHS is working actively to be in the present by using the Internet to further our informational, social, and cultural goals. As outlined in the President's Message, our next major project will be an update of the AEHS user website. AEHS has earned recognition for documenting its unique history. However it also wants a worldwide link to others who share present day interests. Staying current is a task we ignore at our own peril.

The multi-generational makeup of our membership provides us with a unique opportunity. A sense of adventure continues to be reflected in the community spirit of present-day generations.

Will the younger generation continue the symbolic flight to preserve their heritage? Will they embrace communications technology to develop global links to Estonian interests? This is our present and future challenge.

A multi-media format of our heritage information is now in place. We have the capability to continue the story and to communicate globally with those who are interested. We invite your involvement. Feedback on our use of Internet and other communications media to enhance the AEHS is welcome.

Although no formal province-wide Jaanipäev is planned this year, we hope you take time to celebrate a wonderful Estonian Midsummer.

Eda McClung and Dave Kiil

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tere!

Congratulations everyone! We have completed five years as the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society!

Something in the passing of time captivates us. Looking back, we remember that after combining the resources of the Alberta Estonian community and establishing ourselves as a registered non-profit organization, we embarked on a DVD documentary project. This, as you know, was not a simple conglomeration of pictures and facts, but a professionally organized work of art that provided an historic profile of a cultural community. It is a story, which can be appreciated by anyone regardless of ethnicity.



The information gathered for the DVD and the experience gained during that process provided a logical progression to another ambitious project, the establishment of an historic website documenting Alberta's Estonians. This website covers the history of the people, places and events of the Estonian Pioneers, world war immigration and the descendents through to the present and makes it available for worldwide access.

Additional information arrived with the repatriated collection from Toronto. The third project was more traditional, and in part, was the completion of a task initiated by the Centennial of 1999. This is a book documenting the Alberta Estonian story. It is in its final phases and will be available this summer. It too will be another quality endeavor of which to be proud.

The challenge of organizing and accessing our accumulated material has been a concern to us. However, through a series of negotiations, the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton has agreed to store, categorize and make available our prized collection.

Our personal website is five years old, and, as is the case with technology, it's time for an upgrade. Time. There's that word again and with it an implied project and a hint of predictability.

As you know, over and above these projects, we have enjoyed Jaanipaev celebrations, centennial events and other successful social activities. The print you hold in your hands this moment is a classic example of the energy and dedication of our talented volunteers.

Einstein theorized that time is a variable dependent on mass and speed. While it is interesting to speculate on how we might work that phenomenon to our advantage some day, our accomplishments, utilizing conventional time over these last five years, are quite remarkable. Perhaps it's what we do with time that captivates us.

Hats off to all of you!

Bob Kingsep

DEAR ALBERTAN'S, AJAKAJA READERS

Riho Kruuv is the Charge d'Affaires of the Estonian Embassy in Ottawa.



It gives me great pleasure to address you in 2010 Summer edition of AjaKaja. By now, I have been in Canada on diplomatic duty for almost half a year but since the last edition was published at the moment of my arrival, I was not able to introduce myself and send my greetings to you then.

As with every issue there are pros and cons; so there are also benefits for being late. Now that I have had the opportunity to visit Calgary and Edmonton, meet some of you, and pass enroute another important city for Estonians - Red Deer by bus, I am more informed about your history, life and everyday issues. I hope this helps me to serve you better and provide you with support from our distant fatherland, Estonia. For many of you Estonia is a land of grandfathers, great grandfathers or even great great grandfathers. Yet, if you still read this journal there is probably still some Estonian blood in your veins. This is something you can be proud of.

As mentioned above, I had a chance to visit Alberta in mid February enroute home from Vancouver Olympics to Ottawa. This quick visit to Alberta was motivated by my desire to learn as soon as possible specifics of different provinces of Canada and make myself known amongst Estonians living in Canada and Canadians of Estonian descent. Meeting many members of Alberta Estonian Heritage Society both in Calgary and Edmonton, and a nice coincidence, celebrating with them 92nd anniversary of the Republic of Estonia, I feel I am a step closer to that objective. I was also lucky to be one of first visitors to the recently opened Art Gallery of Alberta. Believe it or not, I was welcomed with a Russian heroic WW II song, well known to me from Soviet occupation Russian propaganda films. Of course, it was just part of one exhibition, nothing personal but a surprise nevertheless.

My visit to Alberta gave some of you a chance to renew your Estonian passport and ID card, or apply for it first time. Identifying Estonians around the world and allowing them to identify as Estonian citizens is very important for our country. It doesn't help much in preserving Estonian language abroad but helps the holders of the documents to maintain their Estonian roots and spirit. What is even more important, it keeps open the window for those who consider moving back to Estonia, now a full member of the European Union and NATO. Since Estonia is a small country and nation, we welcome all Estonians willing to return, in particular, those with knowledge, skills and enlightened minds regarding world affairs, international trade and technologies.

"Identifying Estonians around the world and allowing them to identify as Estonian

citizens is very important for our country.

For those not yet Estonian passport holders, there is a bilateral Youth Mobility Agreement, signed between Estonia and Canada and soon to be ratified by our legislatures. This agreement gives Canadian citizens temporary rights to work in Estonia which may become an important step in learning more about the country and the practice of living there. This agreement may also help to bring in Estonian language teachers for Estonian communities across Canada.

We also want to provide our best to serve those of you who are not returning to Estonia. This is why we are planning to open an Estonian Honorary Consulate in Calgary. It will serve as a hub in attracting Alberta investments to Estonia and helping Estonian exporters fill local niches with Estonian products. It will also serve you in solving some problems in communicating with Estonian authorities and help those Estonians that need immediate assistance while visiting Alberta. Hopefully, we will officially open the Consulate in second half of this year.

We will also try to initiate cultural programs in order to provide Estonian movies, musicians, dancers and other performers. This is where we need your enthusiastic cooperation to find the best places, dates and artists of your choice.

Speaking of political affairs, we are pleased to enjoy superb bilateral relations with Canada. Despite the fact that we are a Member State of European Union and there are occasional, minor grey clouds (issues like seal trade, climate change and so called bank tax), our relations are very good. Currently, EU and Canada work hard to negotiate Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) to make our bilateral trade and investments flow more freely and securely. Estonia is hopeful that completion and full implementation of this agreement will also help Estonian businessmen to expose Estonian products to Canadian and Albertan markets.

"This is why we are planning to open an Estonian Honorary Consulate in Calgary.

Estonia and Canada are partners who aspire to provide a more secure world for all of us. This is why our soldiers fight together in southern Afghanistan under ISAF and many other crisis areas of the World. We have both suffered heavy losses. We share an almost identical vision on present and future issues as members of NATO. We were sad that Canada's Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Lawrence Cannon was not able to visit Estonia this spring for NATO Foreign Ministers Meeting. The results of the meeting were very good. Good for Estonia, Canada and NATO as a whole. Our joint efforts and work will also continue in the future as security is never a completed task.

In conclusion, let me express my desire to visit Alberta again in near future and during this visit I hope to meet more of you. I hope that together we can do a lot to preserve Estonian language and spirit in Canada and keep it a shining piece of cultural identity in the palette of the global Estonian family.

With sincere regards,

Riho Kruuv

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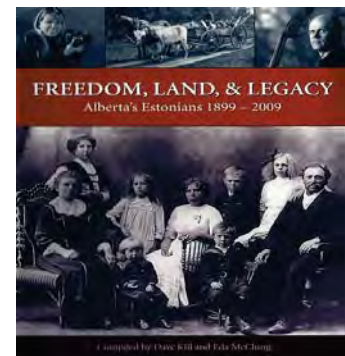
A HERITAGE BOOK

FREEDOM, LAND, AND LEGACY: ALBERTA'S ESTONIANS 1899-2009.

Dave Kiil and Eda McClung

"it is for me a very emotional experience to see a road sign say "Linda Hall. Linda is the wife of an Estonian National heroWe have done very little to discover the recorded history of Estonian archives. So with your help and interestwe will move forward. (Comments by Estonian President Lennart Meri during his visit to Stettler, 2000).

This book represents the completion of the three-stage Heritage Project of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS): initial project was a 30-minute documentary "Alberta's Estonians DVD; second project was development of the "Alberta's Estonian Heritage website, a comprehensive digital historical record; third and final is this book, a history of Alberta's Estonians in written form.



Looking back, the Stettler Estonian-Canadian Centennial in 1999 was the pivotal event which triggered awareness of and passion for Estonian roots. The visit to Stettler by Estonian President Lennart Meri in 2000 strengthened the value of our heritage focus.

The book provides a current context for the history and aspirations of the Estonian pioneers and the hopes of post-World War II immigrants. Its 300 pages are richly illustrated with photos, tables and maps from the pioneer era to 21st century highlights.

The unique legacy of Alberta Estonian pioneers is expressed in the diverse, province-wide, multi-generational AEHS, formed a short five years ago. Many members contributed materials to document and preserve their cultural heritage. This collective effort is recognized by Estonian organizations in Canada and Estonia. We can take pride in our accomplishments.

At the time of writing, the design and layout of the book is nearing completion. Hopefully it will go to print this summer and be available by early fall. Members of AEHS and other agencies will be informed of price and availability at that time.

We gratefully acknowledge generous financial support from the following granting agencies:

Eesti Vabariigi Haridus-ja Teadusministeerium (Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, Compatriot Program), 2009.

Eesti Sihtkapital Kanadas (National Estonian Foundation in Canada), 2009.

ALBERTA ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 2010

Attendees at the Annual General Meeting of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society, May 1, 2010

The inaugural meeting of the then-fledgling Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS) was held in Red Deer in April, 2005. Five years later, AEHS again held its AGM in Red Deer to review activities and to discuss future ventures.

AEHS President Bob Kingsep presented an overview of AEHS activities during the previous operating year: the 2009 AGM, attendance of many members at the 2009 Song-and-Dance Festival in Tallinn, the West Coast Estonian Days in Seattle, participation at the Baltic Heritage Network Conference in Tartu, and Estonian musicians Eri Klas and Lucas Waldin conducting the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. Rasmus Lumi and Riho Kruuv, Charge d'Affaires of the Estonian Embassy in Ottawa also visited Alberta.



Treasurer Toomas Paasuke presented the financial report for the year ending February 28, 2010. The Society had a healthy bank balance at the end of the reporting period. Peter Asmus reported that AEHS has 91 paid-up members with a total of over 160 individuals. Membership fees will remain unchanged for 2011 at \$20.00 for Individuals and \$25.00 for Families.

As reported in the Winter 2009 issue of Ajakaja, the "Alberta Estonian Heritage website is now maintained by the University of Alberta (U of A), in Edmonton. Additional historical material has been received since the transfer of the website from the Heritage Community Foundation to the U of A. The meeting approved additional funds to update the website with material not previously included.

Production of the illustrated book "Freedom, Land, and Legacy: Alberta's Estonians 1899-2009, compiled and edited by Dave Kiil and Eda McClung, will be printed in Summer 2010. The book's contents will trace the history of Alberta's Estonians from early pioneer era to recent events and activities. The 300-page book will be richly illustrated, and will include a selection of color photos.

Dave Kiil outlined work underway to prepare material to be donated to the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA), including:

- Files of the Medicine Valley Estonian Society retrieved from the National Archives of Canada in Ottawa.
- Correspondence files of the Calgary Estonian Society retrieved from Tartu College in Toronto,
- Archival materials, including over 100 original photos of Alberta's Estonian pioneers, retrieved from the National Estonian Archives in Estonian House in Toronto.
- Documents, articles, books and thousands of photos collected for use in the production of "Alberta's Estonians DVD, "Alberta's Estonian Heritage website and the book "Freedom, Land,

and Legacy: Alberta's Estonians 1899-2009.

It was decided to make Society funds available to help prepare the archival materials for preservation at the PAA.

Eda McClung reported that the 2010 Summer issue of AjaKaja will be published by mid-June. Members were invited to submit articles and other content by mid-May. Ajakaja remains well received by members, and increasing number of copies are requested for purchase.

Bob Kingsep reviewed the status of the AEHS website and led a discussion resulting in a consensus to update the site beginning in fall 2010. It was agreed that a project group be established to revamp the existing website, with greater emphasis on a new homepage and current information about AEHS activities and events. It was agreed that assignment of specific members with defined responsibilities could contribute to increased user level and raise the profile of the AEHS.

Scheduling of Jaanipäev celebrations was discussed at length. Given that the next West Coast Estonian Days will be held in Portland, Oregon in August 2011, it was decided that the next Alberta Jaanipäev will be held in June, 2012. Eda McClung and Allan Posti agreed to find a suitable venue for this major AEHS event.

In conclusion, 2009 was an active and productive year, with 2010 anticipated to see the completion of several major projects involving the history and legacy of Alberta's Estonians. Bob Kingsep thanked everyone for their participation and support.

LEAH HENNEL WINS 2009 NATIONAL PICTURES OF THE YEAR AWARD

Winning shot of parked dogs takes first place

Gwendolyn Richards, Calgary Herald, April 26, 2010

Two Herald photographers have been honoured by their peers, winning awards for their feature and sport photos. Leah Hennel took first place for her shot of two dogs under a Dog Parking sign in the feature category, while Stuart Gradon won third for a photo of a skip celebrating his Brier win in the sports action category at the 2009 National Pictures of the Year Awards.

The honours were handed out Saturday night at the annual News Photographers Association of Canada conference in Toronto.

Hennel was on her day off and was meeting a friend for coffee when she spotted the award-winning shot. Grabbing her camera, she snapped the photo.



"When you are a photographer, you are a photographer all the time," she said. She also received a honourable mention in the sports feature category for a photo of Calgary Flame Jarome Iginla walking past members of the Prairie View Hutterite colony.

"I was thrilled to know people like my work," Hennel said Sunday, adding she plans to buy a new lens with her prize money.

"Photography, for me, is not just a job. I live, breathe and sleep it."

Gradon was covering the 2009 Tim Hortons Brier in Calgary when he caught the celebratory leap of Ontario skip Glenn Howard after a final rock victory in an early-round match.

Herald editor-in-chief Lorne Motley praised the pair of photographers.

"We are very proud of Leah and Stuart. They fully deserve the honours," he said. "Both are young photographers who work hard to be the best. These awards recognized their extraordinary efforts."

Leah Hennel is a 5th-generation descendant of Kristjan and Annie Marie Hennel who settled near Stettler in 1903.

ALBERTA ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP, MAY 2010

1. Allen ~ Dianne - Spruce Grove, Alberta
2. Asmus ~ Peter & Jeannette - Airdrie, Alberta
3. Berry ~ Annette - Edmonton, Alberta
4. Clark ~ John - Denver, Colorado
5. Costello ~ Wilma - Calgary, Alberta
6. Derksen ~ Colin & Linda, Jack, Jamie - Edmonton, Alberta
7. Dinning ~ Shirley & Leonard, Emily - Edmonton, Alberta
8. Doherty ~ Linda K - Big Sandy, Tennessee
9. Downie ~ Elizabeth - Calgary, Alberta
10. Erdman ~ Evelyn - Calgary, Alberta
11. Erdman ~ Ken - Calgary, Alberta
12. Erdman ~ Oscar - Calgary, Alberta
13. Erdman ~ Ronald - Vancouver, British Columbia
14. Fodor ~ Steve & Evelin, Mitchell, Jasmine - Calgary, Alberta
15. Gue ~ Anita - Calgary, Alberta
16. Gue ~ Brian - Edmonton, Alberta
17. Gue ~ Kevin - Edmonton, Alberta
18. Gue ~ Lisa - Ottawa, Ontario
19. Hall ~ Gwen - Boyle, Alberta
20. Helenurm ~ Kalju & Margot - Calgary, Alberta
21. Hennel ~ Daryl & Gloria, Jeff, Tom - Myrnhem, Alberta
22. Hennel ~ Lorne, Leah - Calgary, Alberta
23. Hennel ~ Rodney & Liz, Colin, Keith - Stettler, Alberta
24. Hennel ~ Ronnie W. F. - Stettler, Alberta
25. Herman ~ Derrill & Liia, Kirstie Peterson - Innisfail, Alberta
26. Kaarsoo ~ Karin Kaarsoo & Scott Chisholm, Andrew, Liisa - Calgary, Alberta
27. Kaarsoo ~ Kirsten Kaarsoo & Lyle McLeod, Callum, Alison - Calgary, Alberta
28. Kaert ~ Mati & Linda, Krista, Eric - Edmonton, Alberta
29. Kalev ~ Tiiu - Eckville, Alberta
30. Kalvee ~ Willy G. - Calgary, Alberta
31. Kenzle ~ Alice, Susan - Creston, British Columbia
32. Kerbes ~ Deane & Irene - Stettler, Alberta
33. Kerbes ~ Hal - Calgary, Alberta
34. Kerbes ~ Marguarite - Stettler, Alberta
35. Kerbes ~ Richard - Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
36. Kiil ~ Dave & Betty Ann - Edmonton, Alberta
37. Kiil ~ Glenn & Ingrid, Ranek, Kalev - Edmonton, Alberta
38. Kiil ~ Lisa & Diana - Edmonton, Alberta
39. Kingsep ~ Bob & Annette - Redwood Mdws, Alberta
40. Kivisild ~ Livia - Calgary, Alberta
41. Koper ~ Donna - Cochrane, Alberta
42. Kraav ~ Jüri & Helle - Calgary, Alberta
43. Kruuv ~ Riho - Ottawa, Ontario

44. Kuester ~ Matt F. - Edmonton, Alberta
45. Langeste ~ Helmut & Airi - Edmonton, Alberta
46. Leesment ~ Peeter & Helgi - Calgary, Alberta
47. Leilop ~ Aino - St. Albert, Alberta
48. Luik c/o Renate Smentek ~ Avo - Edmonton, Alberta
49. Maddison ~ Anneliese - Edmonton, Alberta
50. Maddison ~ Terry - Calgary, Alberta
51. Madill ~ Anita & Wallace - Calgary, Alberta
52. Magi ~ Enzo & Maimu - Calgary, Alberta
53. Matiisen ~ Arne & Carolyn, Janet, Melanie Dewar - Calgary, Alberta
54. McClung ~ Eda - Edmonton, Alberta
55. McElroy ~ Elve & Wilfred - Camrose, Alberta
56. Mottus ~ Brian - Whitehorse, Yukon
57. Munz ~ Lillian - Calgary, Alberta
58. Munz Gue ~ Martha - Medicine Hat, Alberta
59. Myhre ~ Mae - Port Alberni, British Columbia
60. Nicklom ~ Otto & Gladys - Stettler, Alberta
61. Pääsuke ~ Elizabeth - Edmonton, Alberta
62. Pääsuke ~ Mark - Vancouver, British Columbia
63. Pääsuke ~ Rein & Janice - Calgary, Alberta
64. Pääsuke ~ Toomas - Canmore, Alberta
65. Pallo ~ Jack Henry - Red Deer, Alberta
66. Pastewka ~ Astrid - Calgary, Alberta
67. Peet ~ Ethel - Edmonton, Alberta
68. Pelto ~ John & Margaret, Christine - Sherwood Park, Alberta
69. Pihooja ~ Ralph Pihooja & Nella Collins, Liz Tardie - Edmonton, Alberta
70. Pilt ~ Shirley - Edmonton, Alberta
71. Põhjakas ~ Kaljo & Lilian - Lethbridge, Alberta
72. Posti ~ Allan & Maria, Ryan - Eckville, Alberta
73. Robertson ~ David & Christine, Brendan, Karl, Travis - Leduc, Alberta
74. Ruus ~ Ivar & Lea - Calgary, Alberta
75. Saar ~ Lembit & Iris - Calgary, Alberta
76. Saar ~ Rein & Patricia - Calgary, Alberta
77. Sandre ~ Ülo - Calgary, Alberta
78. Sastok ~ Laine - Edmonton, Alberta
79. Schuler ~ Kelly, Cameron, Carole Grant - Calgary, Alberta
80. Shongrunden ~ Astrid - Penticton, British Columbia
81. Simm ~ Nurmi - Edmonton, Alberta
82. Sparrow ~ Lori, Lexi, Evan, Reed - Eckville, Alberta
83. Tiislar ~ Enn & Pärja - Canmore, Alberta
84. Timma ~ Olev - Calgary, Alberta
85. Tipman ~ Bob & Kathy, Liisa, James - Calgary, Alberta
86. Ustina ~ Astrid, Holly Idenouye, Brooklyn Idenouye - Edmonton, Alberta
87. Ustina ~ Judy K - Edmonton, Alberta
88. Virak ~ Viktor - Toronto, Ontario
89. Visser ~ Mari & Igor, Constantine - Cochrane, Alberta
90. Wartnow ~ Floyd C - Delta, British Columbia

91. Watson ~ Maret - Spruce Grove, Alberta
92. Weiler ~ Roland - Dundas, Ontario
93. Zach ~ Inge - Calgary, Alberta
94. Zielinski ~ Michel & Kristine, Jeffery - Spruce Grove, Alberta
95. Zoumer ~ Anne - Calgary, Alberta

REMINISCENCES OF MY LIFE IN ALBERTA

Viktor Virak, Toronto

Time has shown that my personal and working life experience in Alberta between 1963 and 1974 occupies a special niche in my memories since my arrival in Canada in 1951. The following background story explains my connections with Alberta.

I was born in Narva, Estonia. In 1932, our family moved to Tallinn where I graduated from LX Gümnasium with Senior Matriculation in 1943. After that, as Junior Seaman, I worked for Eesti Merelaevandus (Estonian Shipping Co.) until September 1944, when my family escaped the approaching Soviets to Sweden in a small 20-foot motorboat over the stormy Baltic Sea.

The caring and humane reception by Swedish people allowed me to build a new life in Sweden (including my marriage to Aino Ohi in 1946). We lived there until May 1951 when our family left for Canada and Toronto.

In September 1951 I entered the School of Architecture at the University of Toronto. We moved to Montreal in 1953 and I completed my studies at McGill University's School of Architecture, graduating in May 1957 with a Bachelor of Architecture degree.

After working with the architectural-town planning firm Rother-Bland-Trudeau, I joined the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (C.M.H.C) in Ottawa in 1959 as an architect. The main mandate of the C.M.H.C was to improve the housing and living conditions of Canadians, while administering the National Housing Act (N.H.A).

My initial work experience was obtained in Central and Eastern Canada.

I won a N.H.A Planning Fellowship and arranged a leave of absence from C.M.H.A. In May 1963 I obtained a Master of Architecture (Town Planning) degree at McGill University in Montreal.

Then came change: I was appointed to the position of Branch Architect-Planner at the Edmonton Branch of C.M.H.C in June 1963. My responsibilities encompassed Alberta and Northwest Territories.



This was for me the first contact opportunity with the Wild West. And we liked it from the first moment!

My work experience confirmed that my first impressions were correct, in particular regarding working relationships with professionals, government officials, and citizens groups. There was a

spirit in the air to encourage Alberta to grow in the best possible way. Professionals were respected. My position involved a great deal of travelling in Alberta and Northwest Territories.

Following our arrival in Edmonton, we eventually purchased a house on 100th Avenue and 136 Street where we lived and experienced Edmonton winters until 1974, when I was transferred to the Victoria Branch in B.C.

"There is no doubt that the time spent in Alberta was the richest period of my life, both professionally and personally

In 1963, Edmonton was a city of young people who did not mind long winters and who were building careers and families. Community spirit was high; the physical demonstration of this was Klondike Days in July. Edmonton was the gateway to the Northwest Territories, Yellowknife and Inuvik. The huge region was served by Pacific Western Airlines. Without competition, the service was so-so, earning folklore nicknames like "Please Wait Awhile and "Pray While Airborne. However, it was a safe airline - an important asset for this huge region.

When we arrived, we did not know a single person in Edmonton or Alberta. Terra incognita! We soon established contact with Salme and Jaan Raud; through them we met Lea and Walter Silverton in Barons. Friendships were established easily. Through them, we met Salme and Andreas Pilt, Lea and Ivar Ruus, and Irma Ernesaks. The Raud's later moved to Penticton, B.C., where we visited them while we lived in Victoria. Jaan died there in 1976; Salme later in 1987. Presently, we still have strong ties with the Ruus family in Calgary.



In Edmonton, we also were friends with the Rein and Laine Sastok family. Regarding Silvertons, after Walter passed on, Lea made a home in Port Alberni, Vancouver Island. Hella and Herman Väärtnöu moved to Victoria where we stayed in touch.

Photo: Salme Raud - L to R: Jaan Raud, Aino Virak, Viktor Virak, Salme Pilt, Andreas Pilt.
Christmas 1964

My experience in Alberta left me with many memories:

- Impressions of dynamic growth, honesty and a strong work ethic, spatial vastness of grain fields, good working relationships with local officials, cultural-artistic landmarks, and the vast grain-and-snowfields against the majestic Rocky Mountains.
- Culturally-historically-personally interesting contacts with Estonians of Edmonton, Calgary, Eckville, Stettler and Barons, with their historical landmarks of earlier generations. All this is proof of the perseverance of Alberta's Estonians and their continued efforts to preserve their heritage, including the significant magazine AjaKaja.

There is no doubt that the time spent in Alberta was the richest period of my life, both professionally and personally. I have only good memories of human friendships, now part of the rich history of Alberta's Estonians.

LUSTWERK FAMILY, PIONEERS IN NORTHERN ALBERTA

Loretta (Lorie) Hark

My family lived in Estonia at the time that the Russian revolution swept through the Russian Empire, including Estonia. Martial law was declared in the capital city of Tallinn and Estonia gained little from the revolution, which was followed by a period of tense stability leading up to the declaration of World War I in 1914.

During that time the Lustwerk family operated a fur trading company across the Baltic countries and Siberia where they had hunting and trading lodges. A boat was used to transport the furs from Estonia to Germany and to bring back cloth, pots or whatever else was requested by their customers. It was during one of these trips that they were chased by a Russian boat, which they skillfully ditched on a sandbar. Their boat cleared the sandbar because it rode higher on the ocean.

Estonia was always under threat of invasion because of its small size. Therefore my grandparents George (Jüri) and Miina Lustwerk decided to leave the country with their two daughters a year prior to the beginning of World War I. However, the boat sailing for Brazil could only take three more passengers. George and Miina and their younger daughter Martha travelled to Brazil.



My mother Anna sailed on the SS Tietgen which arrived in New York on August 27, 1913. She continued her journey by rail from New York to Barons, Alberta. She attended the Lacombe Seventh Day Adventist School where she learned to speak English and where she acquired her cooking and sewing skills.

George and Miina's son George (Jüri) stayed behind in Estonia with his wife Juula (Julia). They later immigrated to Boston, Massachusetts, with their sons Ferdinand and Endel. They arrived in New York on June 21, 1924, on the Berengaria, which sailed from Southampton, England.

Anna was the first hired girl who worked for the Erdmans, an Estonian family who farmed near Barons, Alberta. In the fall Anna worked in the cook car that travelled with the threshing outfits.



Later on Anna found employment with a family in Calgary as a nanny. She travelled with the family on vacation, which enabled her to visit many places she may not otherwise have seen such as Catalina Island in 1917.

Anna next found employment at the Chateau Lake Louise as a pastry chef, where she enjoyed the mountainous scenery and the hot springs. She saved enough money while working at Lake Louise to open her own hat shop in Lacombe.

George and Miina decided to leave Brazil because of the hot, humid weather and the bugs and the snakes. They sailed on the SS Nandyck, which docked in New York on December 17, 1925. Their daughter Martha stayed in Brazil with her husband Gustavo Kangur, whom she had met on the ship from Estonia to Brazil.

George and Miina initially farmed rented land at Barons, but then they heard there were homesteads available in the Peace River Country. With the help of Anna, they loaded their possessions in a box car and travelled to the Peace River area where George and Anna each acquired quarter section homesteads.

Upon arriving on their homesteads, they set up a tent as temporary living quarters. Determined to fulfill their dreams of owning land and a home of their own, they got to work immediately. A log house, barns, chicken coop, ice house and even a sauna-workshop were built. Fences and corrals were erected. The fields were cleared of trees by axe or burning and the stumps were pulled out using horses. Scoop-outs or dams were created for water sources. In the winter, ice was saved in blocks and put in the ice house packed with sawdust for better drinking water and for keeping food cool.



For the first year water was hauled from Bear Creek where clothes were washed and hung on bushes to dry. Anna noticed men's clothes anchored with rocks being washed by the running water. She scrubbed them and hung them on bushes to dry. She was later thanked by Stan Tomkins, the gentleman whose homestead was just across the fence. One day he was building a house and she asked him what he was building it for. He said it was for them to live in when they got married. She looked after his horses for the winter while he went back to Ontario. In the spring he returned with a box car of stock to sell to the other settlers to help them fulfill their dreams. That fall they were married. Evelyn was born 1932, Ralph in 1937.

Life was always busy as there were everyday chores and seasonal chores that had to be done. The gardens were crucial for food. The long, sunny summer days helped the gardens and crops grow. The barns were cleaned out and the manure was spread on the gardens in order to grow the best vegetables possible, even rhubarb. Miina grew poppies that seeded themselves. She used the seed to make poppy seed rolls and glazed poppy seed buns. Pernickety plants were grown in the hot bed which had a layer of chicken manure on the bottom for heat production. Grandma planted her cabbage in there so she could make her kraut and sour cabbage heads for cabbage rolls. Her kraut soup was great as was her baked kraut, carrot and ribs.

During the summer wild raspberries, strawberries, saskatoons, chokecherries, cranberries, gooseberries and red and black currents were picked and canned.

The cows were milked so that we had milk and cream, and Mom made cottage cheese. I remember shaking a syrup pail containing cream to make butter for home baked bread or buns. Home churned ice cream was the greatest summer treat ever!

One of George's favorite treats for lunch was homemade bread spread with sour cream which was topped with salted pickled herring and chopped onions.

The chickens gave us eggs, and a baked or fried chicken was delicious! Chicken with noodles or chicken dumpling supper was even better. The smaller chicken feathers were washed in old tick bags and hung on the clothesline to dry. They were used to fill pillows or featherbeds. When eggs were abundant, Grandma made her special recipe for pickled eggs. Egg salad sandwiches were great for lunch.

It made our parents and grandparents proud to go down into the cellar in the fall and see the root vegetables in their bins, the canning on the shelves, the onions hung and the kraut and cured cabbage in the crock. At this time a couple of geese or ducks harvested from the grain field or prairie chickens cooked in cream sauce with wild mushrooms picked from under the pine trees was delightful.

The hay was cut, dried and stored in the loft. When the grain was mature it was cut with a binder, the sheaves were stooked to dry, then the threshing was done. The stack of straw was used for winter bedding for the livestock. The chaff was shoveled into the chicken coops so that the hens could have a good time scratching and picking out the weed seeds and small grains to eat. The grain was in the granary. The best was selected for seed for the next year otherwise it was a treat for the livestock. The extra animals were shipped to Edmonton for sale.

My parents and grandparents prayed there would not be an early frost or a wet fall and early winter so the crops could be harvested successfully.

The firewood was piled by the house to help keep us warm in winter. Then it was time to go hunting for a moose to fill any empty jars and to butcher and can fryers or older hens. We made delicious stews and the canned meats were great for school sandwiches with mayonnaise or butter and onions. We packed our lunches in syrup cans or lard tin lunch boxes.

Grandma and Mom made thick wool comforters in the winter from wool sheared from the sheep. They also sent wool away to the woolen mills to be made into blankets. Grandma spun the wool using her spinning wheel, and they made knitted scarves, mitts, socks and toques from the yarn. The mending and sewing was done and summer quilts were made from scraps of fabric.

The boys and men had winter trap lines in the bush, which reduced the number of predators. There was a bounty on coyotes and wolves. A brisk walk on snowshoes to check on the traps was usually successful.

The chickens (cluckers) were set on eggs in the straw in the loft of the chicken house in the spring. Seeds were ordered out of the seed catalogues and summer shoes were ordered from

the Eaton's or Simpson's catalogue-by the way outdated catalogues were very useful in the outhouses. The calves and lambs were born in the spring. The sheep were sheared and the wool was shipped. Soap was made with gathered fat or in the fall a bear would provide enough fat to make soap and meat to make sausages.

The winter pelts were shipped away for extra money as they were now stretched and dry.

As our parents aged and required some extra help, my mother decided to sponsor a family from Estonia. They were Herman and Sigrid Tiislar and their son Enn, arriving in Bonanza in late fall 1949. They helped our parents on the farm for about a year and then moved to Toronto. We recently contacted Enn and his wife Parja, who currently live in Canmore, Alberta.



Sadly our grandparents and our parents are gone, but they are not forgotten by us. I know they left this world proud of their accomplishments and in peace knowing they did their very best. They lie side by side in the Bonanza, Alberta, Cemetery.

THE MIKE AND ALMA KERBES STORY

Irene and Deane Kerbes

Mike Kerbes was the second son born to Peter and Julia Kerbes, on Sept. 28, 1898 in an Estonian settlement in Russia. He immigrated with his parents, two brothers and five sisters, to Canada in March, 1911 at the age of thirteen. Peter and Julia twinned Mike with his younger sister, Marie, to gain cheaper fare on the boat. This twinning later cost Mike one year of his Old Age Pension. The family traveled by train across Canada arriving in Stettler, Alberta where they were met by his uncle, Joe Hennel. The Peter Kerbes family lived with his brother John, Sophie and family, Jaan, Annette and family as well as Peter's Mother Liisa. They lived together in John's small home in the Linda Hall district before Peter and family moved to the Peterson farm near Docendo School. Mike attended Docendo School for the only education he received - one day! In later years, Mike's wife, Alma, was instrumental in helping Mike further his education in English. The family moved to a homestead on S.W. ¼-14-36-21-W4th in 1912. Mike worked with his parents, clearing and working the land using oxen, horses and later gasoline powered tractors. Peter and Mike were able to acquire a Cross- Motor Case Tractor and other farm equipment to cultivate their land.

As a young man in his teens, Mike worked in lumber camps and mines (sometimes as Camp Cook) in Idaho and Montana to support his family.

Mike had a strong desire to own motorized vehicles. He bought a Model T Ford car in the early 1920's. In 1924, Mike met and courted a local school teacher, Alma Clark. Mike liked practical jokes. To eliminate competition for Alma's affection, Mike put water in the gas tanks of the other fellow's cars in the winter - the gas lines froze! Consequently, Mike was able to court Alma without distraction as his competitors were busy thawing their gas lines! Mike eventually convinced Alma to be his wife and partner for life. They married on July 30, 1926 in Stettler. They began their married life living with Mike's folks in the lumber house which had been built in 1922 on S.E. ¼-23-36-21-W4th.



Kenneth Kerbes was their first child, born on April 14, 1927. Constance and Melvin Kerbes were born in 1928 and 1929. Julia Kerbes helped Alma with these home births. The house was getting crowded so it was decided that Peter, Julia, Edward and Carl would relocate to other Kerbes land at S.W. ¼-25-36-21-W4th. Peter and his sons continued to farm together until Peter's death on April 4, 1930. He is buried in the historical Estonian Cemetery near Linda Hall.

The dark, dirty thirties were difficult, but Mike and Alma welcomed many children into their family beginning with Deane (1930), June (1932), Ronald (1933), Kathleen (1935), Leila (1936), Donna (1937) and Margaret (1939). Their youngest son, Eldon was born in 1941 and the family was complete when Beverley was born in 1945. Sadly three of these children, Constance, Melvin and Ronald passed away very young.



During this time Mike and Alma worked very hard to feed, clothe and educate the large family and to expand their land holdings. They raised cattle, hogs, turkeys, and chickens for their own use and to sell. A very large garden was always planted and preserved for the long winters. Wild berries were picked by the tub-full and also preserved for winter use.

Mike drove a cream truck for the Alix Creamery. He also worked on road construction and trapped fur-bearing animals.

Mike and Alma built a herd of range-cattle while acquiring more land and farm implements. Mike was mechanically inclined, and enjoyed working and repairing machinery and vehicles. He owned many trucks, cars and new farm equipment. On two occasions he was able to order and pick up a new Ford Galaxy 500 car from Ford Canada in Oakville, Ontario. Despite the tough times, Mike and Alma were very hospitable and social. Their home was often the scene of community and family functions, including hosting Lutheran Church services presided over by Rev. John Sillak.

In 1942, Mike was able to purchase a half-section on N.1/2-19-36-21-W4th. The land was eventually cleared and cultivated to become productive farm land. In 1958 the family, with the permission of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Assistance program, together with Alberta Fish and Wildlife Association, constructed a stock-watering pond. In 1961, this Pond was stocked with rainbow trout and named the Kerbes Pond. It remains listed in the current Alberta Guide to Sport Fishing Regulations and is enjoyed by anglers of all ages. The Kerbes descendants placed a granite commemorative rock at this site in 2007.



Educating the children was important to Mike and Alma; several of their children completed post-secondary education. Many of the Kerbes grandchildren and great-grandchildren continued on to become lawyers, doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers, computer-technologists and many professions in oil industry and government.

Mike, often assisted by his sister Martha, encouraged and taught his large family in traditions of Estonian dancing. Their home was often the venue of parties with dancing and singing around the old piano Mike bought from his sister, Ida Yurman, of Chester, Montana. Mike also taught the family appreciation for Estonian barley sausage, herring, sauerkraut, rye bread, smoked meat and headcheese.

Practical jokes and visiting were things Mike enjoyed; as well as visiting sisters, brothers and other Estonian neighbors. Mike was an active member of the Farmers Union of Alberta.

Mike passed away suddenly on September 25, 1968. Alma, with son Deane and daughter-in-law Irene, continued farm operations until 1973. Alma, at age 101, passed away April 26, 2003.

Mike was proud of his Estonian heritage and passed this on to his family who still follow many Estonian traditions. Interest in family roots was keen as four of Mike and Alma's children, their spouses and some grandchildren have travelled to Estonia to meet relatives.

Members of the Kerbes family are active members of Alberta Estonian Heritage Society, Linda Hall Men's Club and the Estonian Cemetery Club.

To sum up the life of Mike Kerbes, you could say he enjoyed the simple things of life: his family and friends as well as the freedom to do his choosing. He was extremely hard-working, fun-loving and kind-hearted. He "LIVED TO WORK AND WORKED TO LIVE.

In 2011, it will be 100 years since Peter and Julia brought their large family to Canada. To date there are over 100 descendants of Mike and Alma Kerbes living in North America!

"All the Kerbes kids, us in-laws too
Are glad they chose each other
For we have had, each one of us
The Grandest Dad and Mother

GROWING UP ON THE HOMESTEAD

A story about Magnus Tipman family
Bob Tipman and Marlene (Tipman) Kuutan

In Estonia in the 1880's land ownership for the Estonian people was virtually nonexistent so when they heard of other opportunities many families decided to move. One who hoped to find a new life was Mikhel Tipman whose family consisted of one girl, Lena, and three boys, Josep, Johan and Magnus, the youngest, who was born in 1864. The family left the Pärnu area around 1885 and migrated to Nurmekunde in Russia. Homesteads were to have been given away free by the overlord but somehow the papers were lost and in order to obtain land, the settlers were required to pay. The land was poor quality, mostly bush, difficult to farm and the levy caused significant hardship to the settlers. Nevertheless, by the late 1880's, about 300 Estonians had settled in the area.

In the early 1890's, the community was also faced with the Czarist policy of Russification which was an attempt to assimilate the immigrant population. It included conscription into the Russian army which was very contrary to the beliefs of the pacifist Estonians. When word reached the settlement that 160 acres of land was available in America for ten dollars, along with freedom of religion and freedom of speech, a large portion of the community decided to relocate. In the early 1900's all three brothers, Johan, Josep and Magnus and their families came to Canada. Lena stayed behind and contact with her was lost.

While in Nurmekunde, Magnus married Viuu Rahu who was born in Karma, a village close to Kuressaare on the island of Saaremaa. Magnus and Viuu, with their four children Louise, John, Mary and Mike, sailed from Russia, the trip taking two weeks on an old ship. The train then took them to Red Deer and to Sylvan Lake which was in the Medicine Valley area where they lived with an aunt and uncle (likely Johan) while Magnus worked in the lumber mill for \$1.50 a day and looked for suitable land. By the time they arrived, most of the land in this area had already been homesteaded. Johan was able to get a homestead at Sylvan Lake, but the other brothers had to look elsewhere.

Later in 1904, Magnus Tipman and Mike Kudraa went looking for land at Medicine Hat. We believe they took a train from Red Deer to Medicine Hat, but when they got there, they found the prairie soil was dry, of poor quality and barren. It was not what they were looking for, so they bought some food, supplies and rifles so they could live off the land as they walked back across country looking for land suitable for homesteads. They walked in a north-westerly direction until they came to an area south of Stettler which was much more to their liking. One of the homesteaders already living in the area said that late one evening he was reading in his log cabin when he heard a knock on the door. He opened the door and two very tired, hungry and scruffy looking men who couldn't speak English appeared. When he offered them food, all they wanted was potatoes since for several weeks their only diet had been porcupines, rabbits and any wild berries they could find. The next day the two men continued their walk to Red Deer to record their homesteads and get back to their families. There were other groups that also walked the country looking for suitable homesteads, but eventually, they all considered the Linda Hall area near Stettler to be the most suitable and many of them returned there to claim

homesteads.

Magnus continued to work in the lumber mill until they were able to secure homesteads in the Stettler area in 1904. Magnus and Mike Kudras and their families were the first to settle in this area. They were soon joined by the families of Johan and Josep Tipman, Klaus, Hennel, Wagenstein, Nicklom, Oro, Kerbes, Asberg, Raho and other families. In this way the Stettler area was settled.

Magnus' oldest daughter, Louise, describes their journey from Medicine Valley to the Stettler area and their early life on the farm.

"In September, 1904, we moved to our homestead in the Stettler area where Dad had built a large one room cabin with a dirt floor and dirt roof. All our belongings were loaded in a covered wagon which was pulled by two oxen named Eric and Bill. We had a cow and a bull tied to the wagon and a dozen chickens in a crate. Our trip was quite uneventful until we had to cross a creek. The wagon was too heavily laden to use the bridge, so we forded the creek. Half way across, Eric decided to lay down and cool off as it was a very warm day. However, the spot he picked was quite unsuitable and his head couldn't be kept out of the water. Eight year old John went to the rescue by crawling out on the tongue of the wagon and taking hold of the reins, to see if he could pull Eric's head up. No amount of coaxing or swearing could get the oxen up until he was quite ready to do so himself. In all the excitement, Bill quietly stood by and chewed his cud.

We arrived at our destination after three days of travel and settled into our cabin which had a homemade stove made of rocks and clay with a cast iron top and beds made with rails and straw filled mattresses. The fireplace was used to bake bread which was wrapped in cabbage leaves until we acquired pans. As we had no outbuildings at the time, the chickens were kept in the cabin, fenced in under the bed. They kept us in eggs all winter and there was no sleeping in as the rooster crowed regularly at day break. After Dad made sure we were settled in for the winter, he returned to his work at the lumber mill in Red Deer.

Mother and brothers, John and Mike, and myself put up the hay which was cut by hand, loaded on a homemade willow stoneboat and pulled over to the cabin by the bull who was harness broke. In the spring, Dad cultivated five acres of land with the aid of the oxen and seeded it to a mixture of barley, oats and rye. In the fall, this crop was again cut and threshed by hand. The straw was salvaged and used to make a straw roof for the cabin. We also had a small plot for a garden.

To bring in a supply of groceries for the winter was quite an ordeal, as the trip had to be made to Red Deer and took a week to complete. The bob-sled was loaded with hay to feed the oxen and enough food to last Dad had to be packed. As more settlers had moved into the area, each one was called on and a list of supplies taken from each and delivered on his return. The years passed and improvements were made in living and working conditions. The family grew to five sons and three daughters: John, Mike, Ado, Ferdie, Edward, Mary, Sophie and myself. There was no school in the area until 1910 and until then, Dad and Mom helped us with our reading. Dad taught us some German as well. Being a school teacher was the only occupation to strive for at the time and two brothers, (Ado and Edward) and two sisters (Mary and Sophie) took this step."

By late 1905 a branch of the CPR railway had been completed through the area and the town of Stettler came into being. This alleviated some of the problems obtaining groceries and supplies since trading posts and shops were established. Next year, 1906, a few of the settlers decided to build a small Lutheran Chapel which was presided over by Reverend John Sillak who travelled in from Medicine Hat to perform the services. There was still a need for a place to have social functions, and in 1910, after the agricultural society was formed; plans were made for construction of a community center. John Kerbes donated the land for Linda Hall and Magnus Tipman was part of the group that helped to organize the Linda Hall Society and construct the center which opened in 1911.

In the few years after the railroad was completed, farms were becoming increasingly mechanized. The Estonians believed in the co-operative movement and equipment was bought individually and shared with other neighbours. The first pieces of equipment purchased were a threshing machine and steam tractor.

Tragically in the fall of 1913, Magnus had an accident while performing maintenance on a threshing machine while it was still running. His leg was crushed and his foot nearly severed in the accident. The threshing crew tied his foot back on with twine, put Magnus into the wagon and drove ten agonizing miles over rough prairie trails to Stettler. A three hour operation failed to save him and he died a few days later. This left the oldest member of the family, John, age 18 in charge of the family. The youngest member of the family, Edward, was born two months after Magnus' death. Tragedy again struck the family shortly after Magnus' death when Viuu (her name changed to Sophia) became ill with asthma. As her health deteriorated, she became bedridden and was taken care of by her children. In 1919, the family drained their resources and sent her to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota for treatment. She returned after several weeks but the treatment was unsuccessful. A year later, in the winter of 1920, she passed away.



During this time the family continued farming on the homestead and rented two partial quarters of land, one from Hans Asberg and the other from Lena Johanson. Louise took the role of mother, making and mending hand-me-downs. John carried on with farming mainly with Mike's help since he was the only other member of the family old enough to run machinery or drive horses. Help from the neighbors, particularly Alex Oro, became very important to their survival. Ado claimed that without their help, the family would have perished.

Magnus, a strong believer in education, helped to organize the Docendo School which opened in 1910. At first, the whole family attended, but the older children, John, Mike and Louise soon dropped out to work on the farm. After their mother's death, Ado, Mary and Sophie remained in school and became teachers, which as the oldest daughter Louise said, "this was the only occupation to strive for at the time". They all attended Normal School in Camrose.

A year after the death of her mother, Louise met and married Hugo Mottus from Eckville and settled into the Gilby area. John continued to farm the homestead while the other members of the family were going to Normal School or already teaching. Edward, who was now eight years old went to live with Louise until he was able to also go to Normal School and later, with the help of his siblings, to attend the University of Alberta where he completed a Master's degree in Chemistry. His marriage to Ruby Gilbertson produced no children. Edward passed away in 1985.

In 1926, John married Anne Posti from Eckville and they continued farming the homestead. By this time, all of the other members of the family had left the farm. In 1930, John purchased additional land near Linda Hall, built a new home and moved there to raise his family. For a time, he continued to farm the homestead but later this was rented to Alex Oro and then purchased by Ado. John passed away in 1979.

Mike, who never married, died of Bright's disease in 1945 at the age of 47.

Ado, who graduated from Normal School in 1925, took his first teaching job at East Coulee, a country school a few miles east of Drumheller. He later taught at Wooded Hills School near Big Valley where he met and married Aletha Klaus in 1940. He then purchased the homestead, taught at Kindergarden School and in 1949, purchased the homestead of Alex Klaus near Big Valley. Aunger School, where he taught for one year was closed and he was moved to Big Valley School. Bob, Marlene and Allan, his three children, attended Big Valley School. Ado continued to teach until 1964 and then retired to the farm. He passed away in 1990, leaving the homestead to Marlene, who now lives in Toronto. The farm still remains in the family, and Marlene, who married an Estonian, Kalev Kuutan, can claim that her grandchildren are the fifth generation of our family in Canada that can speak Estonian. Bob and Allan both became engineers and are living in Calgary. Bob served as first president of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society from 2005-2007 and Marlene was on the Board of Directors of Estonian House in Toronto from 1999 to 2007.

Mary taught school for a number of years in the Botha area until she met Jim Tennant. They were married and moved to Blue River in British Columbia where he worked as a mechanic for the CN railway. She had three sons (all now deceased) and a daughter who lives in British Columbia. Mary passed away in 1980.

Sophie, who taught at Docendo School, met and married Oscar Moro from Eckville in 1937 and moved to Peace River where they also purchased a farm. Later, Oscar set up a machine shop which serviced the farmers and the budding oil industry. They had two daughters, Marilyn who still lives in Peace River and Bonnie who moved to Vancouver Island. Sophie passed away in 1994 and Oscar in 2000.

Ferdie worked with Oscar Moro in the machine shop until he retired in the late 70's. He never married and passed away in Nelson, British Columbia in 1989.

Josep Tipman, Magnus' brother, also had a homestead near Linda Hall. Two of his sons, Gustav and Oscar, left to live in Australia but one son, Joe, stayed behind and took over the family homestead and lived there for most of his lifetime. He wrote a series of articles about the pioneer life of the Estonians which was published in the Stettler Independent. His autobiography is also excellent reading.

Queen Elizabeth II on Saturday awarded the CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) to former dancers of the English National Ballet Age, Oks and Toomas Edur from Estonia, on her official birthday. Oks and Edur received the decoration for the development of cultural relations



between Great Britain and Estonia and for furthering the art of dance. The British Embassy informed Oks (Oaks) and Edur were dancers of the English National Ballet since 1990 until their return to Estonia last summer. The embassy said that during nine years, Oks and Edur performed ballet at the highest level in the English National Ballet. The British Embassy expressed the hope that cultural relations between Estonia and Great Britain would continue developing now that Oks and Edur were working as artistic directors of the Estonian National Ballet.

FROM THE EDITORS' DESK

A bird doesn't sing because it has an answer. It sings because it has a song. Chinese Proverb

With the publication of 'Freedom, Land, and Legacy: Alberta's Estonians 1899 - 2009, it is clear that we have a song to sing! It is a song about pioneers, adventurers and new comers; it is a song about courage, conflict, achievement, and success. It is a song worth singing, a tribute to our heritage and a reminder that our small group has a long history in this province. The book also reveals that while not always singing in unison, all had a role in an amazing performance. Our book adds another act to this production and we hope the show will go on!

The book is not 'singing because it has an answer', meaning, a definitive account of the past 110 years. It is singing because we have completed a beautiful book based on the invaluable, collective contributions of AEHS members and friends who treasure history and seek to preserve it. Although this history is not complete and never will be, it fits with Ghandi's thought that 'whatever you do may be insignificant but it is very important that you do it'. Fifty years have passed since the Central Estonian Historical Commission from Toronto wrote about pre-WW II Alberta Estonians. It was time to put on record the dramatic story of the next fifty years while the ranks of those involved are still able to do so.

The book covers Alberta's major Estonian settlements and events during the past 110 years. Regional voices and histories have been preserved for future generations. Scores of AEHS members contributed materials and effort toward this legacy project. Current and future contributions have a home at the Provincial Archives of Alberta, the primary home of Alberta's history. It is hoped the book provides readers with appreciation of the past and a deeper connection to their heritage. It is a book about who we were and who we have become.

We thank all of you who took time to contribute articles for this issue! Without your support the newsletter could not happen. Your comments, feedback and articles are always welcome.

Best wishes to our readers for a wonderful Christmas and a very happy New Year.

Eda McClung and Dave Kiil

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Tere!

Good fortune is the product of opportunity, talent and effort. That could be one way to explain the good fortune that the AEHS has enjoyed since its inception in 2005. The events documented in our recently released book 'Freedom, Land, & Legacy: Alberta's Estonians 1899 - 2009' would support that theory well. Considering the overwhelming technological advancements that have transpired over the last century it's sometimes easy to forget that accomplishments are still based on a desire to succeed. Desire spawns drive and creativity. Drive and creativity leverage opportunity.



Our book team expended so much energy on meeting the deadline that I don't know how they had breath left to utter its lengthy title. Regardless of its length, the title is descriptive of our past and symbolic of whom we are. Our ancestors desired freedom. They found land, built homes, and we inherited a homeland. We have witnessed the evolution of heritage of 110 years, and AEHS has made commitment to preserve this legacy.

Reading the lines in the book or in some cases reading between the lines, it's not hard to see that the emotional aspects of life existed with as much exuberance back then as they do today. In some cases more character comes to life from this history than anything found in today's reality shows. The human content brings out our heritage in full 3D, and as a bonus, no special glasses are required.

Last winter we stood with collective pride as our flag waved over the Vancouver Olympics. That majestic symbol of freedom brought a lump to our throat and a tear to our eye. But it was not the flag that raised us. It was we who raised the flag. A flag needs a well-anchored pole to bear it. Our heritage project series has helped us understand how our collective complex layers of history have wrought a culture bound with strength, energy and passion.

While words are an abstraction, in practical terms I can site positive examples of their influence. For instance, a family member initially presumed that the hardships that came their way resulted from their ancestry. Through involvement with the AEHS, they came to appreciate the unyielding strength and determination of a courageous family member from a preceding generation who set a benchmark they now celebrate and aspire to emulate.

We have our capable book team to applaud for extending our legacy. We must also acknowledge the foresight of earlier 'amateur' historians who researched and documented components of our past which would otherwise have been lost. We owe them immensely for their efforts. This issue of Ajakaja continues to add perspective to our Society and once again we thank the Editors and contributors for their work.

As always, we must continue to look forward, determine aspirations of the next generation and nurture their involvement. Today the torch burns more brightly than we ever imagined. May our

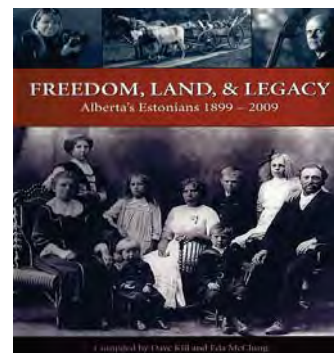
good fortune keep it fueled!

Bob Kingsep

FREEDOM, LAND, & LEGACY: ALBERTA'S ESTONIANS 1899-2009

The history of Alberta's Estonians dates back to 1899 and the arrival of two brothers looking for freedom, land, and a place to catch fish. It's a story of pioneers and refugees, adventurers and scholars; a story of courage, renewal, and assimilation; a story of success.

The book is the culmination of a heritage project of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society. The seeds for this ambitious initiative were planted by Estonian President Lennart Meri during his visit to Alberta in 2000. His imagination was caught up by the story of Alberta's adventurous pioneers who braved hardships to find a new life. He suggested that "we have done very little to try to discover the recorded history of Estonians abroad. So with your help and interest we will move forward.



The selections presented in the book tell the story about pioneers and refugees from Estonia and their collective efforts to establish themselves in Alberta. They tell stories about individuals and families facing a new life in their adopted homeland. Finally, they also tell stories about communities they helped to build and efforts preserve their cultural heritage through enterprise, music and community celebrations.

A Project of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society The book is organized into two parts. Part One highlights the legacy of the early pioneers. Part Two documents the history of post World War II immigrants and extends to present-day activities and achievements. The book is richly illustrated with over 200 photos, tables and maps covering the 110-year history of Alberta's Estonian community.

For the first time, an English translation is available of earlier articles about the history of Alberta's Estonians. This fascinating story is of interest to descendants of pioneers as well as a worldwide audience.

Mail orders

This 304-page, richly illustrated book is now available for sale at \$40.00/copy.
Shipping and handling: Canada & USA: \$14.00 CDN/US (for up to 3 copies);
Estonia: \$18.00 CDN (each copy).

Mail Order Form and instructions are posted on [AEHS website](http://www.aehs.ca).

Method of Payment: Cheque in CDN or US funds, or International Money Order in CDN funds, payable to AEHS. Please send your order with payment to:

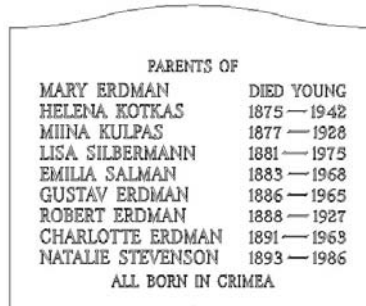
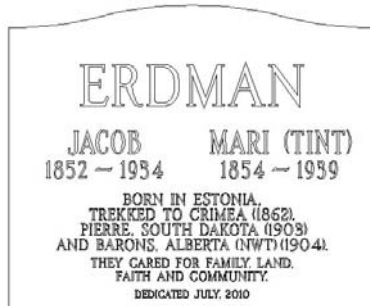
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DEDICATION OF HEADSTONE: JACOB AND MARI ERDMAN

Lillian Munz and Martha Munz Gue



July 10, 2010. A grey granite headstone was dedicated at the cemetery in Barons, Alberta, to honour the memory of Jacob and Mari Erdman and their nine children.

Thirty-eight descendants generously contributed to the purchase and installation of this stone. This project was facilitated by Jacob and Mari's great granddaughter, Martha Munz Gue of Medicine Hat. Many descendants gathered at the cemetery at noon for the dedication. Barons became a village 100 years ago. This was weekend of celebrations with hundreds of people taking part in various activities. In 2004 we celebrated the Barons 2004 Homesteading Centennial. Our ancestors were among the original homesteaders of this area. Their story involved three long and challenging journeys.

Jacob and Mari were eight and ten years old in 1862 when they and their parents left Estonia which was governed by the Tsar of Russia and where land was divided into German baronial estates. After getting various permissions, a group with over 70 families walked with their wagons full of possessions and with some of their animals for three months southward to the shores of the Black Sea. They settled in Targhan, Crimea, where at last farmers could actually own their land. In Estonia they were serfs for German landlords. Jacob's parents were among the many Estonians who died within the first difficult years in Crimea so he and his brother Siim were raised by his aunt and uncle, Madli and Otto Sessler.



About ten years later Jacob and Mari married. They had nine children and were very successful farmers in that Estonian settlement near the Black Sea. There was a school and a Lutheran church in each Estonian village. In 1903 when political unrest swept through Crimea and conscription into the Tsar's army was inevitable, the Erdmans made a very difficult decision to sell their farm and emigrate to America. Jacob and Mari were in their fifties by then. With seven of their nine children, they took the train north to Estonia, a boat across the sea to England and then sailed from Southampton, arriving



at Ellis Island, New York, on July 4, 1903. Anton Kulpas, who had married Miina Erdman and had an infant son in Crimea, accompanied the Erdmans. Anton's parents also were in this group of Estonian immigrants.

They spent much of the first year staying with other Estonian settlers in Pierre, South Dakota. That same year Jacob and Gus Erdman, Anton Kulpas, Mr. Kivi, and Mr. Lentsman headed west to scout for homestead land. They eventually found the rich prairies with grass as high as a horse's belly, north of Lethbridge, NWT, to be available. They filed for homesteads and returned to Dakota to pack their families and possessions into boxcars in a settlers' train.

The train brought the families to Lethbridge and they made their way 30 miles north to the flat treeless prairie which was to be soon developed into grain farms. The Erdmans built a small house west of what is now Barons. Their two youngest children were ten and thirteen years old when they settled on the homestead.

Three of their children, Gus (and Magda Liik), Helena (and Jaan Kotkas) and Lisa (and Martin Silbermann) soon married and remained in Barons to raise their families. Miina and Anton Kulpas emigrated to Oregon with their family. One of Jacob's daughters, Charlotte, never married and worked for her church. Natalie graduated from the University of Alberta in 1917, taught for a few years and then became a missionary in Iraq where she married Keith Stevenson, an Australian missionary. Robert remained single and died relatively young in Barons. Emilia had married Jaan Salman in Crimea before her parents emigrated. She remained in Crimea and raised a family of six children there.

Jacob and Mari lived on their farm near Barons for 30 years until their deaths in 1934 and 1939. They have over 150 descendants most of whom live in western Canada and United States. Several of their descendants still live in the Barons area.

We were honoured to gather at this cemetery just one mile from their original homestead to dedicate this gravestone. We, their great grandchildren, with our families, respect the sacrifice and courage that brought our ancestors to this prairie land so many years ago.

Lillian Munz and Martha Munz Gue are grand-daughters of Lisa (Erdman) Silbermann (1881-1975)



The cemetery land was provided for family members and Finns in 1905 by Jacob Erdman. In 1923 it was donated to the village of Barons. Dozens of pioneers are buried there in unmarked graves. The iron gate was installed in 2004. The trees were donated by Ralph Erdman's estate.

IN MEMORIAM DR. OSCAR E. ERDMAN, P.GEOL., CSPG HONOURARY MEMBER

Perry Kotkas, P.Geoph

(Article from the Canadian Society of Petroleum Geologists' publication,
the RESERVOIR.)

Friend. Boss. Mentor. Oil Finder. Grandfather. Father. Husband. Oscar Erdman, born of Estonian-Canadian parents in Barons, Alberta, was all of these things and, of course much more. He was one of the early geologists to work in Alberta, when summers meant horses, tents, campfire-cooking and measuring geological section in the mountains on foot. Oscar's career continued through the glory days of Canadian exploration - literally from coast to coast to coast, and offshore.

Celebration of Life was the appropriate term as the large attendance of family, friends, colleagues and former staff attended the memorial for and celebrated the life of Dr. Oscar Erdman, P.Geol. on August 17th in Calgary. Oscar was a highly-celebrated geologist and Canadian Society of Professional Geologists (CSPG) Honourary Member, who passed away in Calgary on July 27, 2010 at the age of 95 years. Oscar is survived by his wife of 60 years (Sally), his daughter (Elizabeth) and sons (Ron and Ken) and six grandchildren.



Oscar graduated with B.Sc and M.Sc degrees in Geology from the University of Alberta in 1941, and a PhD in Geology from the University of Chicago in 1946. He trained and mentored many young geoscientists during his career of 32 years with Gulf Canada and maintained an active interest in geoscience literally up until his passing last summer. Just a few weeks before his passing, Oscar had given the author a recent copy of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG) magazine depicting advances in geology and geophysics, mentioning that 'both sciences certainly needed to be practiced together, didn't they.' We had spent the afternoon with a few relatives, including a current M.Sc. Earth Science student (Anita Gue) discussing geology and looking at photos of his early days in the Rocky Mountains of Alberta doing fieldwork for the Geological Survey of Canada (GSC) and Gulf.

Oscar was born in 1915, into an Estonian immigrant farming family near Barons, in southern Alberta. His early education on the farm and in a small village during the Great Depression of the 1930's gave him the basic ethical and practical knowledge that would be fundamental to his distinguished career as a geoscientist in Canada. Oscar's university education was punctuated by stints back on the farm due to lack of funds. University in Chicago was necessary at the time to enable Oscar to pursue his education in petroleum and structural geology (authors note: Oscar was proud of the advances in geoscience education in Canada, especially in Calgary and Edmonton, since his days in university, and "it is a lot closer to home now.)

Oscar worked for the Geological Survey of Canada during WWII, as part of the war effort. An

interesting note is that his first field work, in 1941, was for the Alberta Research Council, working on a geological field party in the Nordegg area, at wages of \$2.85 per day, cooking over an open fire - transport by horses of course. Geological field work during the war years was deemed critical to the war effort; the search was mostly for coal and oil. According to Pearson & McMillan (Professional Excellence, Honourary Membership article, Bulletin of Canadian Petroleum Geology, Dec. 1993): "In 1943 Oscar moved to Ottawa and was employed by the GSC specializing in structural geology and stratigraphy as they relate to coal and petroleum prospecting in the foothills of the Canadian Rockies. Perhaps the most notable contribution of field mapping and five reports was his involvement in the interpretation of folded thrust faults in the foothills of the Canadian Rockies.

In 1946, Oscar was hired by 'Canadian Gulf Oil Company' - one of the two first geologists hired by Gulf in Canada. His career of 32 years as Chief Geologist, Exploration Manager and Senior Exploration Advisor encompassed Gulf's major exploration efforts in Canada, including notable fields such as Pincher Creek, Redwater, Stettler-Big Valley, Leduc fields, and exploration from East Coast offshore to Georgia Strait and north to the Beaufort Sea. Again, to quote Pearson and McMillan: "by far more important than his technical achievements was his influence on exploration strategies. His quiet, sage-like, inspirational, and harmonious leadership produced scores of highly qualified explorationists. His advice was sought and always appreciated. When geologists, geophysicists, and engineers met, with Dr. Erdman's cooperation, efficiency invariably resulted.

An interesting story - Oscar of course 'sat' many wells back in the day; he barely avoided sitting a particular well in 1950 and instead had time to marry his bride Sally Cuthbert, in Christ Church in Calgary. (Sixty plus years later, Oscar's memorial service was held in that same church). In an article of the Petroleum History Society, Oscar remarked that "the night before our wedding I had to remind my boss that I couldn't leave to sit the well in the Stettler area so he went instead.



Another story dear to the author's heart - back in 1967 I had heard about geology at a career fair in high school in Lethbridge, but didn't know much about the science. My parents advised we meet with "Uncle Oscar who was a big-time geologist in Calgary (Chief Geologist for Gulf Canada at the time). Oscar invited my mother and me to lunch in the grand dining room in the Palliser Hotel and thrilled me with stories about the oil patch. I shall always remember that day and the grandeur of that dining room - quite a day for a farm-kid from Barons. I followed his footsteps (but went to the 'darkside' of geophysics?) and my son, nephew and great nephew are all in the business now. Oscar had more impact on our family than he knows - although I was able to relate that story to him a few weeks before his passing.

Oscar joined the CSPG in 1946 and APEGGA in 1947, was active in the AAPG, the Petroleum History Society and a director of the Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy. He served on the APEGGA Council. Oscar was awarded Honourary Membership in the CSPG in 1992; he'd been a CSPG member for sixty-four years at the time of his passing.

Oscar was active as a geologist for another twenty-five years after his retirement until the age of

87. He was always helpful, inquisitive and had a very sharp mind right up to his passing. His memoirs include reference to prices for gas at 10 cents/mcf and oil at \$1.00/bbl. Imagine a career that spanned the decades from the 1940's -requiring surface geology extrapolation into the subsurface (because there was no well control) to 2002, where geoscience computer workstations were commonplace and well control was abundant. What changes he saw, and helped make happen!

Oscar and Sally enjoyed travelling, especially to visit family and friends. Their travels included several cruises. On one particular cruise to the eastern Mediterranean in later years, they had the opportunity to visit and picnic with family members they'd of course never met - including a relative Sergei Kotkas who had a striking resemblance to the author. (Oscar's father and my grandmother were siblings.) Oscar and Sally were instrumental in connecting many family members from North America to those in Estonia and Crimea.

Oscar and Sally were of course also active in and great supporters of the Calgary community, family activities and their church. They were able to spend many times with their family in Vancouver, Calgary and elsewhere. His memorial service allowed many of us whom he had mentored to say goodbye, and 'thank-you' - and to recognize a career in geology that was so distinguished and exhibited professional excellence for so many, many years.

Oscar AE. Erdman: B.Sc., M.Sc., PhD Geology, CSPG Honourary Member. 1915 -2010. We honor you.

OSCAR ERDMAN - 95 WONDERFUL YEARS

Lillian Munz

Oscar Erdman, the last of the 26 grandchildren of Mari and Jakob Erdman, died on July 27, 2010 in Calgary. His grandparents and seven of their nine children emigrated from Crimea and homesteaded in Barons in 1904.

Their son Gustav had settled in Barons with his parents. In 1908 Gus's fiancée Magda Liik arrived after a long journey by train and ship from Crimea. Gus and Magda were married by Pastor Sillak, the travelling Estonian Lutheran from Medicine Hat. Over the next nine years, six children were born: Victor, Ralph, Oscar, Alfred, Ellen and Mary. A larger house was needed so in 1917 Gustav ordered the materials from the Eaton's catalogue. This heritage house, Oscar's childhood home, still stands in good condition north of Barons.



When Oscar started school, he spoke only Estonian, but soon he was fluent in English. Many Estonian families farmed in the district so several of his school mates shared a similar heritage. During the depression years students could not attend school on a regular basis because they had to help out with the horses, with seeding, harvesting and other chores on the family farms. Oscar graduated from high school in 1931 receiving the Governor General's Award for the highest grade 12 marks in southern Alberta. Education was important to the Erdmans, so several in the family made university their goal, taking on extra jobs to make enough money for expenses.



During the great depression, Oscar travelled to Edmonton 500 kms away to study geology at the University of Alberta. Oscar's brother Ralph had received his MSc in agriculture there in 1938. After graduating with a Master's degree in geology in 1941, Oscar studied at the University of Chicago for his doctorate in geology which he received in 1946. From 1942 to 1946 he worked during the summers for the federal government doing geological survey work as a wartime technologist specializing in structural, stratigraphic petroleum and coal geology, preparing maps and reports that were vital to the oil business which was in its early years of development in our province. His survey crew roughed it, sleeping in tents, and travelling with pack horses. The crew scrambled over the rocks in the Alberta foothills to prepare geological maps some of which are used today. In 1946 Oscar began work for Gulf Oil Canada in Calgary, remaining with this company for 32 years until 1978. He was chief geologist, manager of geology and manager of exploration at different times over three decades and continued with consulting work until recent years. Many younger geologists in Calgary benefited from Oscar's mentoring, enthusiasm and keen interest in that profession. Perry Kotkas of Calgary, recalls *"Back in 1967, while I was in high school, Oscar convinced me to become a geoscientist. My son is in the business now as a seismic data broker. My nephew is a geologist and my great nephew is a geophysicist. Oscar had an influence on quite a line of Kotkas family folks.* In 1993, Oscar was elected honorary member of the Society of Canadian Geologists.

Oscar met Sally Cuthbert from Fort Macleod on a ski trip to Banff and the couple were married in 1950 in Calgary at Christ Church Anglican. They celebrated their wedding anniversary on May 6, 2010. Their children, Ron, Ken and Elizabeth each have two children. Keeping up with the computer age, at the seniors' lodge where Oscar and Sally lived, Oscar was sending e-mails very recently to his grandchildren. Oscar and Sally attended the many Erdman family reunions first inspired by his sister Ellen Johnson in Barons. The family has shown keen interest in the branches of the Erdman clan comprised of over 150 descendants of Mari and Jacob in western Canada and the United States. In 1998 Oscar and Sally visited a group of Erdman/Salman relatives who gathered dock-side at Yalta, Crimea, when the Erdmans were on a Mediterranean cruise. This emotional occasion was the first meeting between the Canadian and Crimean branches of the family. Oscar's aunt Emilia had married an Estonian and remained in Crimea when her parents and seven siblings emigrated in 1903. Over forty descendants of Emilia and Jaan Salman were born in Crimea near the Black Sea over the span of one hundred years.



At Oscar's funeral on August 17, about three dozen relatives were among the many guests who will remember him as a man with a fine sense of humour, a generous spirit, a sharp mind, a capacity for many interests and a love for family and many friends. He truly will be greatly missed.

BARONS 2010 100TH YEAR CELEBRATION

July 9 - 11, 2010, Barons, Alberta

Barbara Gullickson

After 2 ½ years of preparation - it finally happened. Barons was celebrating 100 years of incorporation as a Village!

Plans were in place for parking, restricted parking, registration, Friday Street Dance, Pancake Breakfast, Parade, Gazebo Entertainment, Show & Shine Car Show, Beer Garden, Out House Race, displays (Historical, Heritage Quilt, Market Garden, School), Beef Dinner and Dance, Worship Service and Chili Cook-off. A Guided Village Tour and a Cemetery Tour were also arranged. And these were just the organizing seen by the people.

Special guests were invited. His Honour, Colonel (Ret'd) The Honourable Donald S. Ethell, O.C., O.M.M., A.O.E., M.S.C., C.D., Lieutenant Governor of Alberta and his wife, Her Honour, Mrs. Linda Ethell, graciously consented to attend the dinner and to speak during the Opening Ceremonies.



MLA Barry McFarland and his wife, Mary; County of Lethbridge Councilor Hans Rutz and wife, Margaret; Reeve Lorne Hickey; Mayor of Barons, Ron Gorzitza and wife, Olive; MC Perry Kotkas and wife, Karen were guests at the Head Table.

Arrangements were made for our local centenarian, Jay Murray, and his wife, Ida, to ride in the Parade in Roy Gullickson's 1918 Dodge.



Another centenarian who had a connection with Barons was Edgar Dunning, the son of the publisher of the Barons Globe in 1920-21. He lived here at that time and offered to talk a little about his life here. An interesting man - he was involved in the media business all his life and still wrote a column for a Delta, BC, newspaper.



When I was talking with him on the phone, I thought I would impress him - and told him that the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta would be present. He said, 'Very nice. I'm going to Toronto to have tea with the Queen!' And he did!

When this story was told during the speeches, His Honour, Donald Ethell, was heard to mutter, 'I don't mind being up-staged by the Queen!'

Attendance was phenomenal. We have no data for the people who were there on Saturday, but the streets were full of people.

There were 100 entries in the Parade. We are grateful to surrounding towns and villages for their floats, as well as all the personal cars and trucks, tractors, and bicycles which made the parade such a success.



Martha Munz Gue organized the Celebration Choir. This photo shows them in the Gazebo on Main Street on Saturday afternoon.



The Out House Race was held Saturday afternoon, with 3 entries: Cammy Pariseau & family, the Gue Crew and Christopher Gullickson & crew.



The Beef Dinner was sold out - latecomers were sold dinners, but they had to find seating somewhere else.



The dancers said the dance band was outstanding. However, there were a FEW of us who thought the music was much too loud!

The interdenominational Worship Service on Sunday was well done, with the Celebration Choir providing leadership in singing the hymns. The Pastor, Allan Calvin, had an easy disposition, and handled the curves thrown at him very well.

The Service was followed by a Chili Cook-off. Six chefs prepared chili for the title of 'Best Chili' as determined by the luncheon crowd.

Barons residents, former residents, relatives, friends and strangers met and talked and enjoyed themselves. It was an outstanding weekend!



KIVISILD: ENGLISH TRANSLATION 'STONE BRIDGE'

A suitable name for a family linking Estonia and Alberta

Livia Kivisild, Calgary

My husband Hans Kivisild and I moved to Calgary in 1973, and Hans worked as an engineer in the oil and gas industry. He had been appointed Vice President and Manager for the Western Region for FENCO - Foundation of Canada Engineering Corporation. He was also responsible for offices in Vancouver, Edmonton and Saskatoon. The office in Vancouver had been established in the 1950's and served to manage the construction of Massey Tunnel under the Fraser River as well as extensive building of highways and bridges in the BC interior. In the 1970's, however, the focus was on Arctic oil and Calgary was, and remains, the Canadian Centre for this industry.

Already in 1970 Kivisild's suggestion for building ice platforms to carry drilling rigs was adopted by Panarctic Oil. The first engineered sea ice road was developed in James Bay along with a year-round marine oil terminal on the St. Lawrence River. The first bulk terminal in Arctic Ice, Hudson Strait, soon followed.

In 1975, Hans became Vice President of Lavalin Inc. While in charge of operations in Alberta and Western Canada, Hans continued his international career. In the 1980's the company was retained to design water supply systems for several islands in Indonesia. With Canadian staff posted in Jakarta and the island of Lombok to conduct the work, Hans took a number of trips to supervise this project. When Hans left Lavalin in 1987, he founded HRK Consulting Inc. that took on a variety of projects. These included designing pillars to withstand currents and ice floes for the Great Belt Link, an 18 km causeway in Denmark linking Copenhagen to the European mainland. HRK Consulting was dissolved in 1999.

In retirement, Hans and I joined Canadian Executive Services Overseas (CESO), a volunteer charitable organization to help developing countries. We were asked to serve in Estonia, where Hans was member of a team that developed a new curriculum for the Estonian Maritime Academy. Later, he was instrumental in converting the former Soviet nuclear submarine base at Paldiski to a civilian commercial and passenger terminal.



Hans was active in engineering and science organizations such as the Engineering Institute of Canada; chairman of the 1987 Centennial Celebrations in Calgary; head of the Honors and Awards Committee of the Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta (APEGGA) for several years; member of the Snow and Ice Committee of the National Research Council and member of the Rules and Regulations Committee of the Canadian Standards Association.



He was also honored with a number of awards over the years. Among them are:

- 1976 - Engineering Medal of the APEO (Association of Professional Engineers of Ontario).
- 1977 - Her Majesty the Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Medal
- 1985 - Ernest C. Manning Award of Merit
- 1987 - Government of Alberta Achievement Award of Excellence

Over the years I have always been active in volunteer community services and fund raising for charitable causes. For many years I was a member and then president of the Women's League of the Calgary Philharmonic Society. This involved the annual Benny the Bookworm sale of second-hand books, sheet music and records. At the same time, the Women's League together with orchestra members ran an annual music competition for young musicians that provided scholarships for the winners.



Always interested in languages, I was principal of the Calgary German Language School for ten years, and served as president of the Southern Alberta Heritage Language Association (SAHLA), an umbrella organization for community-based language schools involving instruction in 47 different languages.

I spent two years as a volunteer for the 1988 Olympic Winter Games in Calgary, helping to run the Olympic Centre in downtown Calgary before the games, and as a member of the Language Services Team during the games.

Our two youngest daughters of four lived with us in Calgary before going to the United States to attend university. They now live in California, Chicago, Houston, Texas and Vancouver, BC. We have ten grandchildren and three great grandchildren, all of whom visit Calgary and Estonia regularly.

The Kivisild family shares a love of music at home and in performance. We also all have an interest in sports. Tennis has added much enjoyment to life wherever the Kivisilds have been. Hans was a competitive swimmer in his youth and all his children participated in age-group swimming. One of our grandchildren - Matt Smith - competed as a member of the Estonian National Swim Team at the World Championships in Rome in 2009.

ADAM AND ANNA MATTEUS (MATTHEWS): THE QUEST FOR A NEW LIFE

Pioneers to the Medicine Valley from Võru, Estonia

Shirley (Matthews) Dinning

Photos by Alice Gunderson and Iona (Matthews) Oja

(Note: Many of the pioneers to the Medicine Valley came from the Võru region of southern Estonia. These included the Kingsep, Kinna, Langer, Moro, Mottus, Pihooja, Posti and Raabis families).

Adam (b.1872) and Anna (b. 1880) Matthews were early pioneers to the Eckville district, homesteading in the Medicine Valley in 1905. Their lives began in Kärejala district, Võrumaa. Anna's father was a government forest warden who was clubbed and robbed while delivering a payroll, leaving his wife Maria (Sonnatar) a widow with five daughters and a son. Maria was entitled to receive four years of education and thus learned to read and write, a status attained by few women in those times. Anna was raised in a foster family but visited her own family on weekends. She received four winters of schooling, learned to read and write, and do arithmetic.



Adam, the oldest son of a land owner, stood to inherit land. He had an education, could read and write, and was drawn to courting Anna. She was 17 years old when they married and they joined his crowded family home that sheltered five other families. She found it difficult to adjust to this crowded life. After just three months of marriage, she was left to fend for herself when Adam did



mandatory service in the Russian army for two years. She was a tiny woman, only four feet, ten inches but courageous and determined. Their first son August was born December 26, 1900 and another son Elmer was born September 23, 1903. Rumors of Russia's preparations for war were a deciding factor in Adam's decision to emigrate to the Medicine Valley district.

Adam had been corresponding with his good friend Henry Kingsep who came to Alberta in 1899. He told Adam that homestead land was available for 10 dollars for 160 acres if improvements were made. In 1905, Adam, Anna and their two sons, as well as Adam's sister Leena, her husband August Pihooja and daughter Hilda made the rough, ocean crossing. Land was a welcome sight. Setting foot on Canadian soil was a boost to their spirits and their hopes ran high as they crossed the vast continent by train to Red Deer, the end of steel. They were fascinated by the vast tracts of empty land, so different from Estonia, where a small plot was like a pot of gold.

They were met by Henry Kingsep who had hired an ox cart and took them along barely marked trails the 40 miles to his home beside the Medicine River. That is where they spent the first winter. In Adam's trunk were tools: a broad axe, double bit axe, a two- man saw and a hammer. That winter he made handles for these tools. In the spring, he filed for a homestead in the Gilby district and together they built a one room log house. In that fresh rich soil, their garden grew well, they had



vegetables to store for winter and a barrel of sauerkraut provided for the cold months ahead. The cabin had a sod roof, earthen floor and a stove made of rocks plastered with clay; beds had mattress bags stuffed with hay. Rabbits, grouse and prairie chickens were plentiful, as were coyotes that preyed on Anna's chickens. To Adam and Anna, this was luxury, a home of their own.

As the number of animals increased, so did the size of the family with six more children arriving between 1907 and 1922. All six births took place at home and without a doctor present. In 1910, with many more mouths to feed, Adam bought a quarter section of land with the Medicine River winding through it. Another house was built, this time a three room log dwelling which provided for the family until after World War I. Travelling between the two homes and carting the little ones meant both hardship and heartache for Anna. There were still no roads, no real bridges, just wilderness and rich soil waiting to be broken and cultivated.

The Estonian immigrants to the area settled mainly along the Medicine River and it was a close knit, cooperative settlement. Working hand in hand, their accomplishments were many. Education was a top priority. Carl Langer donated land for the first school and through collective effort, a school house named Estonian School was built in 1910. So intense was interest in education that a pact was made that each family should try to educate one child as a teacher. Their commitment was outstanding. Six of the founding families did produce a teaching member, among them August, the first born son of Adam and Anna. After August became a teacher, he changed the Biblical name 'Matteus' from Estonian spelling to 'Matthews'. After that the growing family was known as the Matthews family.



In 1920, Adam went to Nordegg to work in a coal mine. With money earned, he was able to build a permanent two story home from lumber with a full basement. It was finished in time for the arrival of their youngest child, Robert, born in 1922. All of the Matthews family were ill but survived the flu epidemic of 1918.

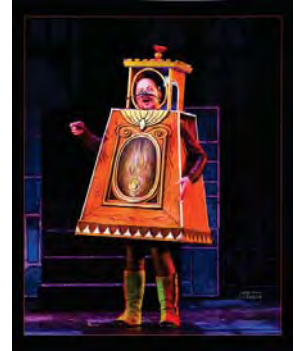
But the strains of work and the Great Depression took a toll and Anna passed away in 1935 at age 55. She was laid to rest in the Gilby Kalmu Cemetery. Adam remained a widower and lived his remaining years with youngest son Robert in Eckville. In 1949, he passed away at the age of 78. He was buried beside Anna in the Gilby Kalmu Cemetery where so many brave and courageous pioneers rest.

THE BAND PLAYED ON AND ON

Hal Kerbes, Calgary

"Not so 'Now' Generation

It's been a long time since I was a semi-hip artist/ entrepreneur only a few years from when my primary artistic outlet was playing wedding dances with the family orchestra. Back in the 80's, my wife & I had a young family, our fledgling theatre company was just taking root, we were building careers and looking at a mortgage that we could not envision ever being paid off.



Auntie Beth talked about "the years just flying by when I'd graduated from high school. She was right; decades disappeared and in 2010 I'm a middle-aged guy whose smart, lovely elder daughter is a school teacher with two degrees and a funny, industrious husband. My talented, lovely younger daughter is finishing her diploma at Mount Royal University and has one foot out the door headed for Europe. My wife of 28 years and I closed the doors of that "fledgling theatre company on New Years' Eve, 2008 .. after 20 years and thousands of productions but more on that later.

So: to quote the Sound of Music, let's start at the very beginning.

One hundred years, on a singularly inhospitable January day, Jaan & Annette Kerbes, along with their three small children (and one on the way) stepped off the train in Stettler. The family homesteaded in the Wooded Hills area, thirteen miles northwest of Big Valley, not far from the Red Deer River. By 1922, the family grew to a total of six kids (my dad being the youngest), the "old house took the place of the "really, really old house. The children grew up; my eldest uncle went to Chicago to be a newspaper pressman & ended up living in Winnipeg. My aunts all logged some time in Calgary working in the professions of the day - hairdresser, seamstress - before two of them returned to the farm. My dad became a rural school teacher who returned to work the farm with my other uncle - who never lived anywhere else until necessitated by ill health in the 1990s.

But with the comings and goings, depression and war, the constant companion to my family was music - oh, how they loved to play instruments and sing and dance. So it was only natural that from the time my Dad was a raw teenager in the 1930s that the family would be making music for the community to dance to. What emerged was the 4K's. "K for "Kerbes though there was the odd "Klaus thrown in and occasionally a Blair or a Nicklom or a Gabriel - but I digress.

For the next fifty years, the 4K's played for dances - wedding dances, dinner dances, barn dances, sportsman's dances, carnival dances. Throughout Central Alberta, the sweet sound of the saxophones played by Elmer & Albert Kerbes was the soundtrack of many major events.

And then there's my Mom. She came to board at the Kerbes homestead in 1950 as a young relief teacher in a one-room schoolhouse at Wooded Hills I always suspected one of the things my Dad found most attractive about her was the fact that she played piano, so in 1954 the 4K's acquired a permanent pianist through marriage - and the band played on.

And then in 1957, things changed. I came along, followed by my sister, Annette, in 1960.

We grew up in what was a typically "ethnic family for the neighbourhood, with the food, the parties & the music. Sometimes my Auntie Beth would quietly sing "Mu Isaama. And at any gathering involving Kerbeses, Hennels, Nickloms, Saars and at a certain level of the homemade Saskatoon wine, rum and rye there would be a rousing rendition of the "Bear Song. I learned to recognize a few words & phrases of Estonian, mostly choicer phrases used in reference to escaped cattle, but often through the music; sadly, I never mastered the language.

Cast of the Ice Queen, written by Hal Kerbes, pictured at Stage West for Kids, Christmas 2001. Standing, L-R: Kathryn Kerbes, Gerald Matthews, Trevor Rueger, Shari Wattling, Sarah Kerbes; Front L-R: Hannah Kerbes, Hal Kerbes

But language was never a barrier when everyone made music. In the late 60s, there was many a party at Mike & Alma Kerbes's house, where the dancing carried on to the wee hours, and I vividly remember the occasion when I was finally taller than Leila (Kerbes) Stanich - who'd always been my favourite dancing partner because she made me feel tall from the time I was about 10.

So music was a big part of our lives from the day we were born. We had our little toy instruments with us as the "4K's of the future on a float in the 1964 Big Valley Golden Jubilee parade. And by "float I mean the rock wagon pulled by the old Allys-Chalmers tractor. And by "rock wagon I mean the splintery, worn cart that the Allys-Chalmers tractor hauled across the field in the spring and into which we'd toss any rock bigger than a walnut that had worked its way up to the surface over the winter. In my world at that time, "rock had less than nothing to do with Elvis, the Beatles or any other ground-breaking musical influence of the day.

Then we actually learned to play instruments & make music, starting with piano lessons from my mother. You want frustration? try teaching piano and music theory to your children. Especially if they might have a little talent and a lot of stubborn.

Then, in the best tradition of "the Music Man, Art Dee swept into the heartland, and in one magical night (in the raw, but finally roofed Big Valley Jubilee hall) the Big Valley Band was born. Our whole family was swept up in a cause for the next several years: marching in parades around the province, alternately freezing & boiling in the heavy wool uniforms (purchased at a discount from some American high school) blasting out classic Souza tunes to kick off community festivities. At the same time, my sister & I began to work our way into the family business.



No, not farming. Oh, I drove a tractor, picked rocks, raked hay, herded cattle, and remember

those days fondly but I knew from an early age that my future was not in agriculture. I mean the 4K's.

From the time I was about nine years old, my primary source of income came from playing for wedding dances, dinner dances, barn dances, sportsman's dances, carnival dances. Annette & I also performed everywhere, playing and singing at the community shows, school events and the infamous Christmas concerts at Fritz Hill, Linda Hall, Big Valley School, in talent shows all over central Alberta - we even ended up in the finals of the big Red Deer TV show!

Then came the music festivals. First Drumheller (I came from a pack of 30 equally eager 11 year olds to capture the "Trumpet E division, and received a \$25 scholarship!) and then the Stettler festival. Then I got disqualified from Drumheller because I twice won a trophy that had been intended to go to a girl. Then the Stettler music festival changed some rules so there were limits on how many awards anyone could receive.

Did I have endless talent? No. Did I start learning some life lessons? You betcha.

And the band played on and on; the 4K's was well into its second generation of wedding dances. Then in 1971, I entered Wm. E. Hay High school, and things changed again: I discovered drama. Oh, I kept up with music -I was an enthusiastic member of the stage band, concert band, madrigal ensemble, folk mass and concert choir .but in Pat Brayton's drama classes I began to realize that theatre & music couldn't be separated for me.

When it came time to leave the community, I had opportunities to go to U of A to study theatre, to Alberta College of Art + Design to study art, and to U of C to study music. While agriculture was never a real option for me, I didn't come from a tradition of theatre or art, so I opted for music. I received my B. Music from the U of C in 1978; my wife, Kathi, received her degree in Music Education at about the same time.

Kathi & I married in 1982; Sarah was born in 1984. We started Shadow Productions in 1988 with our associate Gail Whiteford. In 1991, our daughter Hannah arrived. I also toured with the a cappella quartet "Guild for many years, while Kathi taught music and then drama at Chestermere High School. Kathi left teaching and went into theatre full time in the 1990s. From 1988 through 2008, Shadow Productions presented thousands of murder mysteries, family theatre shows, musicals and interactive events.

Which brings us to "more about that later while our company officially closed on New Years' Eve 2008, we still retained the legal entity, and continue to use it to produce entertainment in conjunction with Alberta Prairie Steam Excursions (APSE) out of Stettler.

In 2009, Jaanipäev was held at Linda Hall, and we were asked to present a dinner show for the event. Since it coincided with the first APSE show of the season, I recklessly agreed, thinking "it'll be easy to include something specifically Estonian for Jaanipäev. So I wrote a show that covered the topics of both WWII and Estonian immigrants, and with both of my daughters and our comrades, we presented the show - first in Big Valley then later that evening at Linda Hall.

And of course, knowing that no celebration of Jaanipäev would be appropriate without the Estonian National Anthem or the Bear Song, I had to include them both. The anthem was

simple enough. But the Bear Song? Fortunately a happenstance meeting with a colleague - Kathleen Rennie, a Calgary writer - led to her getting her Estonian Dad to send me the lyrics.

On a June evening in 2009, there I was, on the tiny stage at Linda Hall, asking myself "what the hell were you thinking? I was about to start "the Bear Song, followed closely by the Estonian National Anthem in front of a crowd who actually spoke the language.

Theatre depends on a lot of things - skill, rehearsal, good material, preparation - and magic. And that evening, the magic happened. I started the song . and they all joined in! chorus of Estonian voices ringing out a folk song that only a few weeks ago had been a dim memory from my childhood. Then, a few moments later, to see them stand, to hear their heartfelt rendition of "Mu Isamaa? My heart was full, and my life had come full circle.

Postscript: near the end of the term last year, Hannah was at a party with some of her university friends and in the midst of the festivities, she heard something she couldn't quite believe - someone was singing "the Bear Song.

She found a fellow Estonian in the crowd - apparently you still can't separate an Estonian from the music.

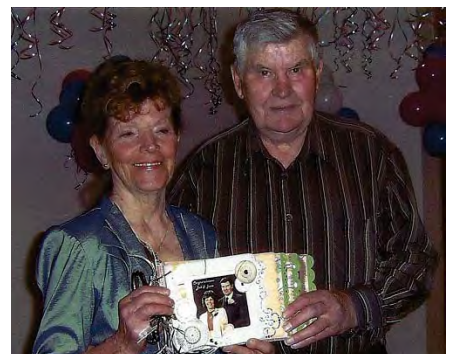
Sarah Kerbes and Wyatt Milliard's wedding. July 25, 2010. L-R: Hannah Kerbes, Hal Kerbes, Sarah Milliard, Kathryn Kerbes

(In this picture Wyatt is behind the pillar arguing on the phone with the guy who was supposed to have the wedding cakes set up by now!)

KERBES CLAN CELEBRATES

About 120 descendants of Mike and Alma Kerbes and other relatives gathered near Rocky Mountain House, Alberta on August 14 and 15, 2010 to commemorate family anniversaries, honors and retirements:

- Leila and Bob Stanich celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary (actual date October 8, 2010).
- Bev Wasylciw turned 65 on September 3, 2010 and marked the occasion with family at White Sands.
- Deane Kerbes celebrated his 80th birthday on October 23 with family and friends in Stettler.
- June and Bob Ekelund celebrated their 56th wedding anniversary (actual date August 18, 2010); June and Bob Ekelund recently retired after 43 years of foster parenting. They raised a large family of eight children of their own. The couple was honored recently by the Central Alberta Child and Family Services. June and Bob have had 477 children in their home during the past 43 years! They claim the trick to raising children depends on providing the three "s's": "Security, Self-reliance and Self-esteem. June's sister Leila, Bob Stanich and June's brother, and Deane and Irene Kerbes also attended the celebrations.
- Donna and Eldon Kerbes were honored as Citizens of the Year and received Honorary Parade Marshall Awards of the Town of Peachland in B.C. According to Peachland Mayor Keith Fielding, "both of them have been deeply involved in the community since moving here, and they are very deserving of the Award; Eldon, retired since 2002 has held the position of president of the Peachland Lions Club. Donna is involved with the Kelowna General Hospital Foundation and the Peachlands Arts Troupe.
- Twenty Kerbes family members, many of whom are members of AEHS, attended Jaanipäev 2009 at Linda Hall.
- Mable Schultz, Edna Leffler and Sid Leffler, descendants of Nick and Lizzie (Kerbes) Laas who homesteaded in Chester, Montana, attended Estonian functions at Linda Hall in 1999 and 2009. These descendants of Nick and Lizzie have expressed interest in AEHS and it's heritage projects.
- Members of the Kerbes clan are keenly interested in their Estonian roots and cultural traditions. Family members have visited the land of their ancestors to meet relatives and to toast their heritage.





Members of Kerbes clan: Clockwise from top left to bottom right: June and Bob Ekelund with book of foster children's names; standing L to R: June Ekelund, Marg Pelto, Bev Wasylciw, Donna Summerfeld, Leila Stanich, front: Ken, Eldon and Deane Kerbes, 2010 seniors; standing L to R: Charlie and Walt Laas, Billie Hamel, Gus Laas, front: Mable Schultz, Nick and Lizzie Laas, Edna Leffler; Bob and June Ekelund (56th anniversary), Leila and Bob Stanich (50th anniversary), 2010; bottom left photo: Eldon and Donna Kerbes, Peachland, British Columbia Citizen of the Year & Honorary Parade Marshall; bottom right photo: Nick and Lizzie (Kerbes) Laas, Havre Montana, February 24, 1916.

VÕRO IN VOGUE

Kara Brown, University of South Carolina

When I visited the Kreutzwald School in Võru, Estonia in 1999, the teacher introduced me to twenty of her fourth grade students, "Today we have a visitor with us who has come all the way from the United States, from the state of Indiana so that she can learn the Võro language. Now class, can you imagine how lucky you are that you don't have to travel so far to learn our beautiful language and how important it is that people are coming from all over the world to learn our language?"



With this introduction, I was thrust into the promotion and revival of the Võro language (voro kiil), a movement unfolding throughout southern Estonia. The revival includes teachers, politicians, poets, geographers and administrators, who are attempting to increase the use of the Võro language, which is currently spoken to some degree by approximately 35,000-50,000 people in southern Estonia and beyond. The majority of fluent Võro speakers are elderly Estonians who continue to live in the rural parts of southern Estonia. The Estonians leading the Võro-language revival are all fluent speakers as well, but most are young and live in the countryside of Võru County.

For almost twenty years, a grassroots effort has sought to revive Võro and reverse the twentieth-century shift away from speaking the language. The decline was a result, in part, from the ban on the instruction and speaking of Võro in schools during the Soviet period and from an earlier push to speak only Estonian in schools during the interwar period. As a result of these efforts to discourage the use of written and spoken Võro, some in the region consider it to be a language that should be spoken in more informal settings, with friends and family, and not used in the formal, professional spheres of work, school and government. Others have responded to the linguistic decline with clear goals to aid in Võro revival: the creation of an orthography, the publication of textbooks and literature, the organization of language classes in schools, the training of language teachers, the expansion of Võro-language usage in local media, and the collection of historical place names in Võru County.

Estonians are struggling to fight this regional- language decline for several reasons. For some, losing the language, means losing family connections, especially since Võro is often the language spoken at home between grandparents and grandchildren. Others are driven to maintain the language out of concern that a way of life and a way of seeing the world will be lost if Võro dies.



As a result of revitalization efforts and the shifting ideas about the role of regional languages in Estonia, the oral and material use of Võro has dramatically increased since independence. The

summer of 2008 marked several significant milestones for the Võro regional-language community in southeastern Estonia. Language activists, county governments and local musicians organized the country's first ever regional-language song festival, Uma Pido (Our Party), which celebrated its second gathering during the summer of 2010. In a country proud of their over one century-old tradition of song festivals, to have two and a half thousand singers gathered in southeastern Estonia to participate in regional-language singing and celebration took an old tradition in new directions. Weeks later at a celebratory, public event, the President of Estonia helped to unveil a Võro-language official road sign - the first along the country's major North-South highway. The summer concluded with the twentieth meeting of Kaika Suve Ulikool (Kaika Summer University), the annual three-day summer university where adults and children alike come together to learn in the language and about local places and regional culture.

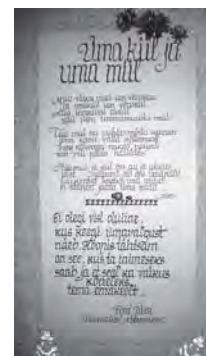
In the ten years I have conducted research in the region (1999-2009), there has also been a noticeable spike in commercial and governmental use of Võro in signs. Although standard Estonian continues to dominate southeastern Estonia, the regional language is increasingly used in virtual and physical space. For example, the webpage of Võru County government (www.werro.ee) uses the regional language in its motto "Our land, our language" ("Uma maa, uma kiil") and provides quasi-translations of the Estonian-language main menu options. While the content of the county webpages remains exclusively in Estonian, the language functions to mark the County's distinctive linguistic difference. In the bus stations and in the cities and towns of the region, stickers declaring "You can use the Võro language here (Tan vői pruuki Võro kilt)" are stuck on storefronts and doors. In the Võru Cultural Center building, signs in the regional language hang identifying the main rooms and performance spaces. Along the county roads, official signs mark the cultural border of Historic Võrumaa. The streets of Võru city center are dotted with storefronts, including a second-hand store and a liquor shop, that use Võro in some capacity. And, finally, commercial enterprises use the regional language to promote their bread, dairy products and meat on advertisements and product wrappings.

The Võru Institute has made considerable progress since its' founding in 1995 to spearhead the language revival. Currently, more than half the schools in the region offer elective Võro-language and culture classes, maps have been printed with Võro place names, and dozens of books and tapes have been published in the language. The regional-language renaissance extends to the higher-education level as well with Tartu University offering courses about the Võro language, regional folklore and history.

One of the greatest challenges in the educational sphere is to maintain and expand the breadth of regional-language instruction in general public schools. In most southern Estonian schools, the popularity of English and computer classes helps to undermine the development of and enrollment in Võro-language classes. Language-teacher retirement and incremental recruitment further complicates planning.



Despite these challenges, or perhaps because of them, recent initiatives have targeted the regional-language education of the youngest Estonians - the pre-schoolers. A handful of local public kindergartens in southeastern Estonia have begun to incorporate Võro regularly through the use of naptime lullabies, group singing and basic language instruction. One kindergarten also posted poetry in the Võro language on homemade posters and Estonian texts in the kindergarten hallway to promote language prestige. The wall hangings, decorated with small cornflowers, the national flower of Estonia, and a woven folk belt from the region, declared both symbolically and literally the kindergarten's parallel allegiance to the local community and the Estonian nation.



Outside the public sphere, a pilot Võro "language nest" opened in the 2009 for one day a week also to serve the youngest members of the community. The language nest, a result of NGO and public institute cooperation, promotes a one-language immersion approach to instruction through the exclusive use of Võro with a small group of children. This entree into early-childhood education strives to sustain Võro by passing the language along to the next generation of Estonians and by preserving it well into the twenty-first century.

(Kara D. Brown is an Assistant Professor of Educational Studies at University of South Carolina, brownk25(at)mailbox.sc.edu)

ANU TALI'S RETURN ENGAGEMENT WITH THE ESO

Jan Urke, Principal Bass, ESO

It was certainly a pleasure to have Anu Tali back for a return engagement with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra (ESO) on October 15 and 16, 2010. In the meantime we had also had the pleasure of a pair of concerts conducted by veteran Estonian conductor Eri Klas. It seemed appropriate to include music by an Estonian composer for Anu's return engagement.



The first half of the concert for Anu's return concert opened with the Beatrice and Benedict overture by Hector Berlioz, followed by the Piano Concerto #1 by Frederic Chopin. This first half of the concert could have been followed by any number of war-horses of the symphonic repertoire. We were, however, blessed with the Canadian premiere of Arvo Pärt's Symphony #4, the "Los Angeles.

The work was commissioned and premiered by the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra and Esa-Pekka Salonen at Disney Hall, LA; 10 January 2009, dedicated to Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the former oil magnate controversially imprisoned in Russia. Symphony #4 has already had about 40 performances around the world, which includes five or six performances of a European tour by the Nordic Symphony Orchestra. This orchestra, co-founded by Anu Tali and her identical twin sister Kadri, included Vienna in their European tour.

Anu has worked closely with Arvo Pärt for her performances of his Symphony #4, staying in touch with him prior to each performance, the ESO performances notwithstanding. Her collaboration with Pärt and her experience of previous performances of the piece were a valuable asset for rehearsing it for the performance in Edmonton.

Pärt's first three symphonies were scored for full orchestra. The fourth symphony, written after a 39- year hiatus from the previous symphonies, is scored only for strings, harp and percussion, Pärt's favorite orchestration for his Tintinnabuli (ringing of bells), composition technique. To quote Pärt, "Tintinnabuli is the mathematically exact connection from one line to another.....tintinnabuli is the rule where the melody and the accompaniment [accompanying voice]...is one. One plus one, it is one - it is not two. This is the secret of this technique.



The performances of Pärt's Symphony #4 in Edmonton was a success, the result of a dedicated collaboration between Anu and the players. Although there is a feeling of simplicity and freedom

to the piece, a lot of hard work was needed to allow it to be so.

Symphony #4 with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Esa-Pekka Salonen is now available from ECM records New Series 2160.

ESTONIANS KEEP THEIR MUSICAL TRADITION ALIVE

With a long history of song festivals, Estonia is a country where singing has served the purpose of both entertainment and political protest. Today's young Estonians are keeping up this tradition.

The small Baltic country of Estonia has hundreds of choirs, which meet at schools, churches and even factories. Many towns hold regular music festivals of their own, but the vocal climax for the country is the Estonian Song Festival, which has taken place every five years. First held in 1869, the event continued throughout Estonia's tumultuous history and now attracts tens of thousands of participants.



Singing is an important art form for Estonians

Music as a political tool

At 34, accomplished singer Tomi Rahula is too young to remember the worst of the Soviet rule over Estonia, which lasted from 1944 to 1991, but he clearly recalls occasions when Estonians used song to defy the Soviet censors.

"There were songs that we were supposed to sing about Lenin and Stalin, but when that singing ended people didn't go away - they started to sing songs that they weren't allowed to sing, said Rahula. (The authorities) couldn't do anything because there were like 80,000 people.

With its strong economy and highly educated workforce, Estonia has become the envy of many former Soviet republics since its independence. Even in the two decades since the fall of the Soviet Union, singing has not lost its significance in the republic.

Across the spectrum

Rahula is the concertmaster and conductor of the Tallinn Boys Choir, which was founded by his mother Lydia Rahula, in 1988. The two of them work well together, in spite of - or perhaps because of - the family connection.

"We feel the music very well (together), said Lydia Rahula. "We can look at each other and know. It works - we have the same understanding, the same heart, although we have two heads. The choir, made up of men and boys aged six to 36, rehearses several times a week and performs more than 30 concerts per year. Everything from Ave Maria to African spirituals is included in the repertoire.

As a child, Tomi Rahula was a choir boy, but also a composer. In 1988, he penned the tune Estonia took to Eurovision Song Contest, "The children of the Sea. These days, he juggles his choir duties with his other role as keyboardist in the successful rock band The Sun.

"I perform in churches and in clubs and I see very intelligent people and very drunk people, said Rahula, laughing. By living out his music career on both ends of the spectrum, he says he never gets bored.

Enduring passion

While his style of music might change from day to day, fame has not changed him much, according to his friend and fellow choir member Ants Aguraiuja. "We were at the same school and he was one or two years younger, said Aguraiuja.

"We've been singing with him for almost 30 years. He's the same.

At 36, Aguraiuja is the veteran of the Tallinn Boys Choir. He was scouted by Lydia Rahula at the tender age of six, and has followed her ever since. "It has been a pleasure to sing and music gives my soul something that I need. said Aguraiuja.



If the rest of Estonia shares his sentiment, there is sure to be plenty of singing involved in next year's celebration of the country's 20th anniversary of independence.

Author: Karen percy, Tallinn (ew)

Editor: Kate Brown

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When the weather is good, music is taken outside.

ITCHING FOR ESTONIA!

Only on Saaremaa

Life in the world's only post-communist Nordic country

Hot tubs such as the one pictured are popular throughout Estonia; many use the word Saaremaa in their advertising, ostensibly because Finnish tourists are enthralled by the Island. The hot tubs became particularly popular during World Cup cross-country ski races at Otepää in 2009.



There is a special aura on the Island that we cannot describe. Maybe it is because of junipers standing on the edge of the forest, maybe it is the stony beach that creates this atmosphere or maybe it is the unspoiled forest that creates this aura. Visitors will be fascinated by houses with thatched roofs, stone fences and windmills and strong, home-brewed beer!

Saaremaa's soil is ungrateful, and harvests tend to be poor. Consequently, the Islander's sense of humor easily outweighs their crops. It is said that, in their hearts, Islanders are principled, survivalists, and self-reliant last action heroes.



Suur Tõll and his wife Piret (pictured) are the mythical heroes of Saaremaa.

ALBERTA ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP, NOVEMBER 2010

1. Allen ~ Dianne - Spruce Grove, Alberta
2. Armstrong ~ Bev - High River, Alberta
3. Asmus ~ Peter & Jeannette - Airdrie, Alberta
4. Berry ~ Annette & Family - Edmonton, Alberta
5. Clark ~ John - Denver, Colorado
6. Costello ~ Wilma - Calgary, Alberta
7. Derksen ~ Colin & Linda, Jack, Jamie - Edmonton, Alberta
8. Dinning ~ Shirley & Leonard, Emily - Edmonton, Alberta
9. Doherty ~ Linda K - Big Sandy, Tennessee
10. Downie ~ Elizabeth - Calgary, Alberta
11. Ekelund ~ June & Robert - Rocky Mountain House, Alberta
12. Erdman ~ Evelyn - Calgary, Alberta
13. Erdman ~ Ken - Calgary, Alberta
14. Erdman ~ Ronald - Vancouver, British Columbia
15. Fodor ~ Steve & Evelin, Mitchell, Jasmine - Calgary, Alberta
16. Gue ~ Anita - Calgary, Alberta
17. Gue ~ Brian - Edmonton, Alberta
18. Gue ~ Kevin - Edmonton, Alberta
19. Gue ~ Lisa - Ottawa, Ontario
20. Gullickson ~ Barbara - Barons, Alberta
21. Hall ~ Gwen - Boyle, Alberta
22. Hark ~ Lorie - Nelson, British Columbia
23. Helenurm ~ Kalju & Margot - Calgary, Alberta
24. Hennel ~ Daryl & Gloria, Jeff, Tom - Myrnham, Alberta
25. Hennel ~ Lorne, Leah - Calgary, Alberta
26. Hennel ~ Rodney & Liz, Colin, Keith - Stettler, Alberta
27. Hennel ~ Ronnie W. F. - Stettler, Alberta
28. Herman ~ Derrill & Liia, Kirstie Peterson - Innisfail, Alberta
29. Jaako ~ Harry - Vancouver, British Columbia
30. Kaarsoo ~ Karin Kaarsoo & Scott Chisholm, Andrew, Liisa - Calgary, Alberta
31. Kaarsoo ~ Kirsten Kaarsoo & Lyle McLeod, Callum, Alison - Calgary, Alberta
32. Kaert ~ Mati & Linda, Krista, Eric - Edmonton, Alberta
33. Kalev ~ Tiiu - Eckville, Alberta
34. Kalvee ~ Willy G. - Calgary, Alberta
35. Kenzle ~ Alice, Susan - Creston, British Columbia
36. Kerbes ~ Deane & Irene - Stettler, Alberta
37. Kerbes ~ Hal - Calgary, Alberta
38. Kerbes ~ Marguarite - Stettler, Alberta
39. Kerbes ~ Richard - Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
40. Kiil ~ Dave & Betty Ann - Edmonton, Alberta
41. Kiil ~ Glenn & Ingrid, Ranek, Kalev - Edmonton, Alberta
42. Kiil ~ Lisa & Diana - Edmonton, Alberta
43. Kingsep ~ Bob & Annette - Redwood Mdws, Alberta

44. Kivisild ~ Livia - Calgary, Alberta
45. Koper ~ Donna - Cochrane, Alberta
46. Kraav ~ Jüri & Helle - Calgary, Alberta
47. Kruuv ~ Riho - Ottawa, Ontario
48. Kuester ~ Matt F. - Edmonton, Alberta
49. Langeste ~ Helmut & Airi - Edmonton, Alberta
50. Leesment ~ Peeter & Helgi - Calgary, Alberta
51. Leilop ~ Aino - St. Albert, Alberta
52. Luik ~ Avo - Edmonton, Alberta
53. Maddison ~ Anneliese - Edmonton, Alberta
54. Maddison ~ Terry - Calgary, Alberta
55. Madill ~ Anita & Wallace - Calgary, Alberta
56. Magi ~ Enzo & Maimu - Calgary, Alberta
57. Matiisen ~ Arne & Carolyn, Janet, Melanie Dewar - Calgary, Alberta
58. McClung ~ Eda - Edmonton, Alberta
59. McElroy ~ Elve & Wilfred - Camrose, Alberta
60. Mottus ~ Arnold & Vera, Cathy - Red Deer, Alberta
61. Mottus ~ Brian - Whitehorse, Yukon
62. Munz ~ Lillian - Calgary, Alberta
63. Munz Gue ~ Martha - Medicine Hat, Alberta
64. Myhre ~ Mae - Port Alberni, British Columbia
65. Nicklom ~ Otto & Gladys - Stettler, Alberta
66. Pääsuke ~ Elizabeth - Edmonton, Alberta
67. Pääsuke ~ Mark - Vancouver, British Columbia
68. Pääsuke ~ Rein & Janice - Calgary, Alberta
69. Pääsuke ~ Toomas - Canmore, Alberta
70. Pallo ~ Jack Henry - Red Deer, Alberta
71. Pastewka ~ Astrid - Calgary, Alberta
72. Pastewka ~ Peter & Tina - Calgary, Alberta
73. Peet ~ Ethel - Edmonton, Alberta
74. Pelto ~ John & Margaret, Christine - Sherwood Park, Alberta
75. Pihooja ~ Ralph Pihooja & Nella Collins, Liz Tardie - Edmonton, Alberta
76. Pilt ~ Shirley - Edmonton, Alberta
77. Põhjakas ~ Kaljo & Lilian - Lethbridge, Alberta
78. Posti ~ Allan & Maria, Ryan - Eckville, Alberta
79. Robertson ~ David & Christine, Brendan, Karl, Travis - Leduc, Alberta
80. Ruus ~ Ivar & Lea - Calgary, Alberta
81. Saar ~ Lembit & Iris - Calgary, Alberta
82. Saar ~ Rein & Patricia - Calgary, Alberta
83. Sandre ~ Ülo - Calgary, Alberta
84. Sastok ~ Laine - Edmonton, Alberta
85. Schuler ~ Kelly, Cameron, Carole Grant - Calgary, Alberta
86. Shongrunden ~ Astrid - Penticton, British Columbia
87. Simm ~ Nurmi - Edmonton, Alberta
88. Sparrow ~ Lori, Lexi, Evan, Reed - Eckville, Alberta
89. Tiislar ~ Enn & Pärja - Canmore, Alberta
90. Timma ~ Olev - Calgary, Alberta

91. Tipman ~ Bob & Kathy, Liisa, James - Calgary, Alberta
92. Ustina ~ Astrid, Holly Idenouye, Brooklyn Idenouye - Edmonton, Alberta
93. Ustina ~ Judy K - Edmonton, Alberta
94. Virak ~ Viktor - Toronto, Ontario
95. Visser ~ Mari & Igor, Constantine - Cochrane, Alberta
96. Wartnow ~ Floyd C - Delta, British Columbia
97. Watson ~ Maret - Spruce Grove, Alberta
98. Weiler ~ Roland - Dundas, Ontario
99. Zach ~ Inge - Calgary, Alberta
100. Zielinski ~ Michel & Kristine, Jeffery - Spruce Grove, Alberta
101. Zoumer ~ Anne - Calgary, Alberta

ESTONIAN HERITAGE

The Alberta Estonian Heritage Society held its first Jaanipäev, a celebration of summer solstice, at Linda Hall on June 25. The celebration brought together the descendants of Estonians who arrived at Sylvan Lake between, 1899 and 1903. The Kingsep brothers had explored opportunities in Canada, setting up homesteads in 1899 at Sylvan Lake. The reports they sent back encouraged about 25 more families to follow. They homesteaded north of Eckville, south of Settler and near Lethbridge. Here, Deane Kerbes and Marguarite Kerbes kneel at the gravesite of Lissa Kerbes, Marguarite's husband's grandmother and Deane's great-grandmother. The two were participating in the ceremony's at Linda Hall south of Stettler and went by the grave to see where some of the Kerbes are buried.

New website opened

Another chapter was officially added to Alberta's pioneering history this weekend - the Estonians.

The descendants of the tiny Baltic country "wholeheartedly" participated in a website project to keep their history alive, said Dave Kiil, communications director of the Alberta Estonia Heritage Society.

They shared family stories and childhood memories on the Heritage community Foundation website, www.albertasource.ca/abestonia.

Also known as Alberta's online encyclopedia, the website contains a wealth of information about most of the cultural groups that make up Alberta, including Metis and aboriginals.

The Estonian database now has over 4,000 images and thousands of stories, said Kiil, who credits older society members for providing information about festivals, fashion, music, cuisine, and customs. The first Estonian, Hendrick Kingsep, arrived in Central Alberta in 1899.

He was drawn here by the offer of cheap land - quarter-sections sold for \$10, said Kiil. By contrast, most farmers couldn't own land in Estonia and were forced to work like serfs for landlords.

After Kingsep and his wife Emily settled in Sylvan Lake they helped other Estonian homesteaders make the transition to Canada. These countrymen and women later settled in places such as Medicine Valley and Gilby, near Eckville, and Stettler, Big Valley and Barons in southern Alberta, said Kiil.

While there's a reminder of Estonian Pioneer days in a small log cabin museum in Stettler, the cultural group never established as high a profile as the Danes, who have a large museum in Dickson, or Icelandic settlers, who founded the town of Markerville.

"We didn't have the numbers," said Kiil, who noted the 2006 census shows there were only 2,100 Albertans of Estonian heritage.

More than half live in Edmonton or Calgary.

But the rest still largely reside in what Kiil calls "the Estonian Heart-land," the region between Stettler, Red Deer, Sylvan Lake and Medicine Valley.

On Saturday, Red Deer mayor Morris Flewelling, MLAs Mary Anne Jablonski, and Cal Dallas congratulated the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society for making their history accessible to a whole new generation on the web.

"You have given our youth a chance to learn, understand and discover," said Jablonski.

Blaine Calkins, Wetaskiwin MP, believes it's vital that young people, who have never known oppression, persecution or hardship to learn about people who have.

"It's very, very important that we remember our past."

The Heritage community Foundation is the non-profit Edmonton-based group behind the Alberta Online Encyclopedia, which receives more than 3.68 million hits a year from people looking for a range of information about Alberta.

The website is partly funded through Alberta Lotteries grants and Canada's New Horizons program.

The Estonian website can be reached directly at www.AlbertaSource.ca/Abestonians,

Contact Lana Michelin at lmichelin@redddradvocate.com

BALTIC CONCERT JOYFUL

By Anne Burrows - Journal Music Critic

English was the lingua franca at Victoria Composite High School Friday evening, and the mood was one of the joyful and viciferous communication.

The occasion was the Baltic Federation of Canada's presentation of the Edmonton Branch's Centennial Festival Concert: a gift for Canada, as the chairman, Dr. Anna Rudovics phrased it as a gift given in a spirit of simplicity and enthusiasm, and received as such by a full and emphatic house.

Guest artist for the occasion were: Estonian Soprano Maret Pank, Latvian bass-baritone Andrejs Kurmins, and Lithuanian violinist Elena Kuprevicius, all of whom were accompanied by pianist Lydia Pals.

It was a critic's holiday, for not one note had I ever heard before, and composer, arrangers and artists were all unfamiliar, so that every impression was fresh, and once more powerful.

The major work on the program undoubtedly was the Sonata for Violin and Piano in E-Minor by Lithuanian composer-in-exile, Gaidelis. Uncondensed as the finale may be, and awkwardly written in terms of texture and tessitura through the music often is in this movement, the sonata yet has great qualities. The themes of the first movement are particularly attractive; and Elena Kuprevicius showed a very special sensitivity in her interpretation of the impressionistic remoteness in the slow movement.

If the art-songs of Latvian Kalnin and Estonian Aavik seem to the outsider to the unarresting, it may be because they seemed to be so closely dependent upon the styles of their Russian models; but the folksong arrangements told another story.

Andrejs Kurmins sang a beautifully contrasted group of songs transcribed by Darzins, each melody having about it a quality that made me wish it, too, had been among my childhood musical memories.

Whether in folk or composed songs, Mr. Kurmins sings with warmth of color and animation.

As the bright color in the national costume of Latvia contrasted with the quieter shades in the Estonian, so did Mr. Kurmins' singing differ from that of Maret Pank.

Yet it was the ice-blue color of Maret Pank's voice, the liquid beauty of Estonian.

Baltic Festival Set October 6 and 7

The first Baltic Festival in Western Canada will be held October 6 and 7, sponsored by the

Alberta branch of the Baltic Canadian Federation.

Two singers and a violinist, residents of the United States, will be guests at the concert October 6 at Victoria Composite High School. Mrs. Ilmar (Lydia) Pals of Edmonton will also be featured on the program as an accompanist.

Maret Pank of Minneapolis, Minnesota, is a soprano. Born in Estonia, she teaches singing at the University of Minnesota, MacPhail College of Music.

Paris Study

Elena Kuprevicius of Columbus, Ohio, was born in Lithuania. The violinist studied in Prague, Munich, Buenos Aires and Paris.

A former Edmontonian who will appear in the concert is Andrejs Kurmins of Los Angeles. The Latvian baritone is active in Los Angeles opera.

The festival will continue Saturday with the Baltic Arts Exhibition at 10:00 a.m. at the Macdonald Hotel. On display will be national costumes, paintings, handicrafts and jewelry.

A panel on the worth of preserving ethnic cultures in the Canadian framework will be held at 10:30 a.m., followed by Baltic Music and dances at 2:00 p.m.

The Baltic Canadian Centennian Choir, conducted by Mrs. August Kivi, will sing in four languages.

E. Preston Manning, son of the Alberta premier, will be guest speaker at the banquet and ball beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the Eldorado room.

800 EXPECTED

Algimantas Dudaravicius, vice-president of the Alberta federation, said about 800 persons are expected to attend the festival.

He said there are 5,000 families of Baltic origin in the province.

Their forefathers originally came to Canada in 1813 to fight for Canada against the Americans. At the close of the War of 1812 the soldiers disbanded and settled in Canada.

The Baltic States - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - were independent until 1940 when they were incorporated into the Soviet Union.

August Osis, president of the Alberta branch of the federation, said it is hoped the general public would attend the festival and become acquainted with the cultural heritage of Baltic peoples.

NINTH MEMORIAL DAY

June 18 1950

EDMONTON

**ESTONIA
LATVIA
LITHUANIA**

1941

Program

O Canada

Introduction Chairman Dr. Davidenas Dovydenas

Guest Speakers:

His Excellency Most Reverend J. H. MacDonald, D.D.
Archbishop of Edmonton

Rev. A. Vikman
Minister of Augustana Lutheran Church

Vocal Chorus:

Musical Selections by Augustana Lutheran 'Church Choir

Government Representatives - City of Edmonton

Addresses by the Presidents of the Estonian, Latvian,
Lithuanian Societies in native language with translations

Musical Performance:

Solo - "Prayer" (F: Hiller) .. Mr. A. Kurmins
Solo - "Folksong" Mr. A. Kurmins
Accompanist: Miss Ruth Thoms
Closing Address .. Dr. Davidenas Dovydenas
God Save the King

Scene decorating and Art Director: Prof. Alex Shepetys (Lithuania)

Established from time immemorial on the shores of the Baltic Sea there were three independent democratic states: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Their people lived in freedom and happiness. Profoundly attached to the ideals of peace, social and cultural progress, the Baltic Republics had become an element of a political stability, indispensable in Northeastern Europe. Although closely collaborating among themselves, they have at the same time been anxious to entertain friendly relations with their great neighbours and have always endeavoured to be useful members of the international community.

Nevertheless, when the policy of domination pursued by Germany pronounced a crisis in Europe, the coalition formed between the Third Reich and the Soviet Union was fatal to the Baltic States. The Soviet Government proceeded to the liquidation of the independence of the Baltic States. In the middle of June, 1940, the Baltic States were occupied by Soviet troops in flagrant violation of international law and in spite of the treaties signed by the Soviet Union.

Although the first Soviet occupation of the Baltic States lasted only a year (1940-1941), incurable evils were let loose. Tens of thousands of Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians were massacred. More than one hundred thousand persons were imprisoned. And then on the night of June 13 and 14, 1941 the scales at last fell from the eyes of all those who to that time refused to see the truth in its whole setting. During that night the Soviets mercilessly arrested men, women and children-newborn babies as well as aged people of more than 70 years-throughout all the Baltic States, drove them to the railway stations, locked them up in cattle cars and deported them to Siberia. Families were divided, husbands were separated from their wives, mothers from the children. The "enemies of the people"- farmers and factory workers as well as professional men were transported under indescribable conditions. Many died on the way. Relatives were not allowed to bring members of their own families.

No one can estimate the number of Balts deported, imprisoned and massacred up to the present time. There is no doubt, however, that more than ever before are on the way to forced labour camps in Northern Russia. The ghostly night of June 13 to 14, 1941, was only the beginning of the brutally planned liquidation of the Baltic people.

Today, remembering those who were deported to Siberia, imprisoned, murdered and raped morally as well as physically, we are grateful to the Canadian people for giving us a new home. Our sincere wish is to give all Canadians an understanding of the fate of displaced persons, warning all those who do not realize the devilish poison in the hands of communism.

Radio Broadcasts

Wednesday, June 14th, 1950
at 8:30 - 9:00 P.M.
at CFRN Station
EDMONTON

Broadcast Speaker: Dr. Helga Silvester. National Music and Addresses
by the Presidents of the Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian Societies.

CHFA
Wednesday, June 14th, 1950
at 9:00 - 9:15 P.M.
Speaker: Dr. Davidenas Dovydenas

Sponsored by:

Estonian Society of Edmonton - Edmonton Latvian Society "Imanta"
Canadian Lithuanian Association, Edmonton Branch

ALBERTANS SELL TORCH INVENTION

A farmer's son with an idea has put the city of Red Deer, Alberta into Canada's international trade.

In January, 1938, August Matthews watched a man repairing an auto radiator with a torch - a job that took six hours the two of them had expected to spend at dinner and a friendly visit - and from that developed the Matthews Manufacturing company which handles gas welding torches.

It hasn't been easy sailing. Soon after the war came along and August Matthews could not obtain materials to make his torches. But in the post-war period there has been plenty of flame attached to his idea and today he lists his customers all the way from Tel Aviv to Athens, Greece; Brazil, Burma, central America, Texas and Mexico.

As exports must be paid for in United States funds or sterling, Matthews figures his plant in the past three years has earned Canada \$15,000 in U.S. exchange, and it's a fair domestic trade, too, for his company's postage bill in December, 1950, totalled \$500.

Matthews hasn't had things as tough as his father. The father, Adam Matthews, came from Estonia in 1905 and homesteaded 45 miles northwest of Red Deer. The first three times Adam visited Red Deer, he made the trip on foot.

Adam Matthews had three sons, August, now 49; Elmer, 46, and Herbert, 37, and they are associated in the manufacturing plant and a retail farm implement business in Red Deer. August is the guiding light of the manufacturing end.

In the thirties, August turned to writing at one stage and entered a contest sponsored by a true story magazine, for one yarn earned \$5,000, for another \$1,000, he said.

When his health gave out he quit teaching for piano tuning in Calgary. When he ran out of pianos to tune he went to Red Deer in 1936, and met an old friend, Tim Enno. Tim was in the auto radio and battery business.

Matthews had one or two patents to his credit, and Enno asked him what he could do about developing a torch.

"I didn't give it much thought. I spent six hours watching Enno repair the radiator, and could see why he wanted the torch."

Then Matthews developed a torch that works from compressed air and gasoline or from compressed oxygen and gasoline. The hydro carbons of the gas take the place of those acetylene.

He also developed 11 different heads by which a fellow can get a flame so fine he can repair the nose piece of a pair of spectacles or so strong he can cut through a piece of railway rail.

The flame can be worked right inside the honeycomb of an auto radiator. It will curl itself around

a circular object, gripping the object like a finger. By adjustments, the operator can get 40 different types of flames from one head using the air-gasoline equipment.

Matthews developed the torch but found himself stymied in his manufacture when the war cut off materials. It was in 1946 that he began manufacturing and since has sold 800, running in prices from \$115 to \$250 a torch with all accessories.

Some of the letters come in foreign languages and Matthews, if an order results, does the translation and sends the equipment C.O.D.

"In our foreign trade," he said, "I've found that people are remarkably honest."

Ken Liddell

ESTONIAN HANDICRAFTS ON DISPLAY

Understanding and appreciation for the varied cultures, skills, customs, habits, and traditions of Calgary's many ethnic groups will be increased and promoted among Canadians by a display project organized by the Calgary Canadian Citizenship Council in co-operation with the T. Eaton Co. Canada Ltd. The department store agreed to put a special window at the disposal of one of the groups to feature their exhibits for one week each month. The Calgary Canadian Estonian Club opened the series with the above display this week showing such exhibits as colorful national costumes and leather handicraft work.

BALTIC FEDERATION PRESENTS NATIONAL DRESSES TO MUSEUM

As a Centennial project of the three associations which form the Baltic Federation of Edmonton, national dresses of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have been presented to the Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta. The new structure will be officially opened the evening of December 6.

Sentative of dresses worn by women and girls of local districts in the three Baltic states, were presented by Mrs. Ilmar Pals, 4207 - 115 Street, of Estonian Association of Edmonton; Mrs. Adam Kantautas, 12010 - 87 Avenue of the Edmonton branch of the Canadian Lithuanian Association, and by Dr. A. G. Rudovics of the Latvian Association. They were received by Bruce McCorquodale, head curator of the museum.

It is expected the costumes will be used for display in the ethnic section of the human history division.

JOHN AND MARIA KINNA CAME WITH FIVE CHILDREN

In 1903 They Came From Estonia To A Homestead North of Eckville.

This is another in a series of articles on the pioneers of Red Deer and district. The articles are being contributed by the Archives Committee in the completion of its centennial project.

John Kinna

A pioneer family who contributed in many ways to the needs and development of the Eckville district was that of John and Maria Kinna.

Both were born on farms in Estonia. The old European calendar records John was born on January 31, 1854; Maria on March 29, 1858.

With their family of five children they moved to Canada, in 1903, to a homestead north of Eckville. Their son, Fritz, took the northwest quarter of the same section. The Medicine River wound through both lands. Beside the river on Fritz's quarter, the father and sons built a family room 2-storey house out of logs found in the vicinity. Here John and Maria Kinna lived with Fritz and later his wife and family until their retirement to Eckville in 1942.

John's European background helped him cope with life in the wilderness.

He had done leather work, so repairing shoes, mitts or harness presented no problem. He loved to knit fish nets, and use them to catch suckers and pike from his river and nearby Wood Lake.

John Kinnda's first big purchase was four cows and several chickens. In 1903, Red Deer was the nearest trading centre but by late 1905, old Eckville, three miles south of the farm began to develop and Killick's General Store and Post Office started to trade eggs and butter for groceries.

In order to earn cash, then Kinnas contracted a mail route - Eckville, Evarts, Burnt Lake, Red Deer - and back three trips a week. A horse-drawn two-seated homemade sleigh, or a democrat, was used for the trip. "We carried a small tent, food and bedding with us," Fritz later recalled.

"The first day we got as far as Red Deer. We disposed of the mail, then pitched our tent near the C.P.R. locomotive coal chute. The horses, and they deserved it, were treated royally in Hewson's Livery Stable."

"The next day we bought necessities, picked up the mail, then headed homeward. Five dollars was paid for the round trip. Homestead seekers and other passengers paid one dollar."

"One very dark night, John lost his way. After driving many hours he came to a haystack where he stopped, rolled in some hay and slept. On awakening he could hardly believe his eyes. The surroundings were familiar. The haystack was his own!"

"I worked part time with a bridge gang near calgary until 1908. With my first pay I bought a shotgun and shells and rabbits, ducks and prairie chickens were added to the menu at home. All the rest of my earnings went towards the purchase of farm tools, implements, horses, cattle and sheep."

"We sheared our sheep for woll which the women washed, carded, spun, dyed and knit into socks, scarfs, sweaters and mitts. Many homemade wollen quilts were needed and made. Pillows were filled with our ducks and chicken feathers. Mattresses were ticking bags filled with long rye straw."

For many years the Kinnas hauled pig's heads and feet from the Red Deer slaughter house. These were free of charge because no one wanted to buy them.

"What do you do with these?" the butcher once asked. That was the first time he had heard the word "head cheese" which today is as expensive as any cold meat.

When a hog was butchered at home Mrs. Kinna made sausages, lard, smoked hams and blood sausage with barley added to it - a special Estonian food.

Since no canning was done for several years, mostly root crops were seeded as vegetables. These kept reasonably well in the cellar under the house.

The first field crops were rye and oats. Rye bread was a must and an oat dish "kiisla" was served frequently.

In 1909, Fritz Kinna wrote to the federal department of the interior, asking permission to dam the Medicine River and to constrcut a mill operated by water-power for the purpose of "running a feed-grinder, wood saws, threshing mill and other farm machinery for the benefit of myself and farmers in the district."

An engineer came to examine the site and eventually permission was granted. Fritz drew the plans for the entire project and built the building.

Charlie Raabis helped John build the turbine box and two wheels from logs, Red Deer Iron Works supplied gear wheels, bearings and steel shafts. The entire family participated in the building of the damn and 50 yard canal.

When the project was completed, about 1912, the undertaking was a great success and farmers came from a radius of 30 midles to grind grain. First forty then fifty cents was charged for 100 lbs. of white unbleached flour and 10 to 35 cents for brown flour.

One damn was washed away by a high water and ice. The next one was made with a more solid base of specially made planks.

At high water the mill building was tied to trees by a cable to prevent it from sailing away. The highest water was in 1920. The mill became obsolete when tractors appeared on the farm scene and farmers did their own grinding. Also Moro Bros. new modern mill at Eckville was more dependable and a welcome convenience.

In his younger days, John was a member of a village band and learned to play the clarinet. This knowledge he imparted to his children.

Although all were familiar with and enjoyed concert music there arose a need for dance music.

In about 1912 the Kinna Or chestra came into being. This band, which included interested musician from the area, served a radius of 30 miles.

Maria died on August 6, 1950. John suffered a stroke, and died the same year on November 14. Both are buried in the family plot in the Gilby Cementery.

They had six children, all born in Estonia. A son, Robert, died in infancy.

Fritz was born Sept. 30, 1881, at Waimela County. In his grade school and high school he learned both Estonian and Russian. He married Julie Yurkin. She died in 1942 in a car accident.

They had three sons and a daughter. Robert married Julia Solberg. Alfred married Josephine Lenty. Woldemar did not marry. Ella is married to Hugo Neuman.

Fritz served on the Eckville school board for many years. He was a shareholder, a director and for a time president of the Eckville Co-operative Association.

He was the first secretary of the Eckville Rural Telephone Association.

In 1928 Fritz completed a two-year course in electrical engineering at the Calgary Institute of Technology. He opened a store, "Kinna Electric" at Eckville in 1937. He sold his farm in Ernest Dorchester. Today he lives in retirement at Eckville.

Olga, also born at Waimela, on March 29, 1883, married Charlie Raabis. They farmed north of Eckville until Charlie's death. She now lives in retirement at Eckville enjoying her hobby oil painting. They had three sons: Carl married Ethel Peterson, Waldo married Myrtle Greenman, and Arthur married Myrtle Erickson.

Their daughters are Salme, Mrs. Art Mottus; Hilja, Mrs. Nick Kalev; Mary, Mrs. Fred Bardenhagen; and Clara, Mrs. Vic Bremner.

Minnie was born on Oct. 9, 1886. She taught school until her marriage to Varley Buchanan when they became proprietors of the Benalto Hotel. Minnie died May 20, 1942, and is buried in the Gilby Cementery. Varley died at Brantford, Ont. They had a son, Jack and a daughter, Mona, now Mrs. Harold Crawford.

Arthur was born May 31, 1889. He studied violin in Estonia and San Francisco.

He had a homestead north of Eckville which he sold. He was married to Emma Gudmundson. They operated the Benalto general store and post office. He died in July, 1928, Emma in July, 1951. Both are buried in the Gilby Cemetery. They had a son, William, who died in infancy, and one daughter, Ruth (Mrs. Donald Wilkes).

Ernest was born on March 3, 1901. He worked at store clerking until his marriage to Ena Woima.

They live on their farm in the Kuusoma district. They have no children. Ernest was secretary-treasurer of the Kuusamo school district for a few years. He is a director of the Kuusamo Mutual Telephone Association but his musical contributions had been his main service to this and surrounding communities since 1914. The saxophone is his favorite instrument.

(Fritz, Olga and Ernest Kinna interviewed January 1968, at Eckville from Ena Kinna).

Roots

The ethnic history of Edmonton

Distinct melodies on piano

She's in tune with Estonia

Canadian-born Helve Sastok, 18, has preserved her ethnic culture in an unusual way.

A promising music composer, Helve Sastok creates piano arrangements that have distinct, Estonian melodies in them, even though she has never visited her homeland.

This characteristic, says Mrs. Lydia Pals, her music teacher at Alberta College, is a sign many third generation Estonians possess.

"Music as an art form has always held a very important part in our cultural life," said Mrs. Pals, who immigrated to Edmonton 27 years ago.

"In a small country like Estonia, the only way you can survive is through your culture," she said.

Recounting the settlement of the first Estonian immigrants in the Barons, Milk River, Brooks, Medicine Hat, Stettler, Eckville and Peace River areas in 1890, Mrs. Pals says the Estonians have come a long way in preserving a culture that has been cut off from its homeland for more than 100 years.

"The Eckville area has still maintained its identity to some degree," said Mrs. Pals, explaining that Eckville was the site for the first Estonian school in the early 1900s and is an area that still cultivates the small, creamy Estonian potatoes, first seeded in the area in 1890.

Closed before the Second World War, the Eckville School was the first and last attempt to preserve the Estonian language in Alberta.

"Even though many Estonians in Edmonton don't speak the language any longer," said Mrs. Pals, "they still get together privately to enjoy music and their food."

More than 1,000 Estonian folk songs telling a story of oppression of culture and religion are among the main means of preserving the ethnic culture.

Estonians here get together on Independence Day, Nov. 18, to sing these songs that date back to the 13th century, Mrs. Pals said.

Intricate woodwork and pottery, Estonian literature and food (which is adapted from Soviet

cooking) are just a few of the customs from their cultural past that Estonians still observe, said Mrs. Pals.

Today, Estonians here are involved in all types of occupations, said Mrs. Pals, and many don't associate with the Edmonton Estonian Association because they are still afraid of retaliation against their relatives in Estonia.

"Many still fear Communist persecution," Mrs. Pals said. A concert pianist in Estonia, Mrs. Pals says the years she and her husband have spent in Canada have been happy ones.

"Some people say we were discriminated against, when we first came here, but I spoke English so I never experienced this," Mrs. Pals said, explaining that it was a policy in Estonia that all children learn four languages, one of them being English.

With a small community of about 60 families here, Mrs. Pals says the Estonians are trying to maintain their cultural identity but can't isolate themselves at the same time.

"The cultural awareness of Estonians isn't dying because of traditions," she said, "but we are proud - to be Canadians."

Intense desire for freedom

The peoples of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia (formerly known as the Baltic States), didn't share that much in common linguistically or culturally.

For example, the Lithuanians and Latvians spoke one of the oldest languages in Europe, which has striking similarities with Latin, Greek, Sanskrit and Gothic, while Estonian was clearly similar to Finnish and Hungarian.

But despite dissimilarities, the peoples of the small land area on the Baltic Sea were united in one common cause - a desire for political freedom.

Located at the crossroads between Germany and Russia, the Baltic countries historically experienced a seesaw of occupations by the two powers.' In fact, the Baltic States enjoyed a short and troubled independence only from 1918 to 1940.

The wars, uprisings, poverty and persecution impelled many of these peoples to yearn for a country free of turmoil. Some saw Canada as the land of opportunity.

As far as can be proven, one of the first to come to Alberta was a Lithuanian named Petras Baltrusis, who died in Edmonton in 1948 at the age of 98 years.

During the 60 years Mr. Baltrusis spent in Alberta, he was alternately a trapper, prospector and farmer. The date of his arrival in Canada from Lithuania, which was at that time under Russian rule, was between 1880 and 1890.

Although Mr. Baltrusis came early, immigration to this province was basically in two main waves.

The first was in the late 1920s after the United States had changed its quotas on immigration. Immigrants from the Baltic countries came seeking land, trades and more money and their journeys west from Halifax and Nova Scotia were sponsored in most cases by the Canadian Pacific Railway. Many of them came alone until they had saved enough money to bring their families over. A conservative guess of Lithuanians in Alberta by 1923 borders around 1,500, but this number was reduced by the Depression, which caused many to seek employment in Toronto and Montreal, reducing the population in Edmonton to less than 100 people.

The second main wave came after the Second World War, after several years of fighting across the Baltic.

HISTORIC SIGN TO BE UNVEILED JUNE 24

At 10 o'clock Saturday morning, June 24, Minister of Culture Horst Schmid and Consumer Affairs Minister Graham Harle will unveil an historic sign to commemorate the Estonian settlement around Linda Hall around 1903. The sign is located on Highway 56 at the junction with Linda Hall Road south of Stettler.

Following the ceremony, a light lunch will be served at Linda Hall. An oldtime Estonian picnic will take place in the afternoon with the Estonians taking on the World in horseshoes, nail driving, tug-o-war and ball. Other festivities will take place in the hall.

Estonians from all over the province will attend, and it is hoped the Stettler Community will be out in good numbers. The convener is J.J. Tipman. Following is wording on the sign:

Estonian Settlement

"Oppression was theirs in the old country, freedom and land in the new. The first Estonians to settle in Alberta were the Kingsep brothers, who homesteaded north of Red Deer in 1898. Several settlements sprang up around the province, the largest being at Eckville in the Medicine River Valley and in the Linda Hall district south of Stettler. These prosperous farming communities proclaim the diligence of the Estonian pioneers, their culture and their faith."

ESTONIANS TO BE MARKED BY UNVEILING SATURDAY

Most of the Estonians now in Canada belong to the great stream of refugees who fled the second Russian occupation of the Estonian Republic in 1944 but 46 years earlier the first Estonian settlement was established east of Sylvan Lake.

These early Estonians and province will be commemorated at 10:00 a.m. June 24 when an historical sign is unveiled at the junction of Highway 56 and the Linda Hall Road, south of Stettler, where Estonians also settled.

Culture Minister Horst Schmid and Consumer Affairs Minister Graham Harle will unveil the sign, 76 years after the Estonians moved to the Stettler region.

The Kingsep brothers were the first Estonians to homestead in Alberta. They settled on section 2, township 39, range 28, west of the 4th meridian in 1898.

In the next two or three years, several more Estonians came and settled in the same area.

In 1902 a small group of Estonians left the Sylvan Lake environs to move to the Medicine River valley near Eckville. At the same time another group moved to the area south of Stettler, in what is known as the Linda Hall area, having first tried unsuccessfully to settle south of Medicine Hat.

They came mainly from the Crimea and other areas of czarist Russia.

Half a century later Estonians were fleeing from a recurrence of communist terror experienced during the 1940-41 occupation, when more than 10,000 of their countrymen were arrested in a single night and deported to Siberia. Each year Estonians in Canada commemorate this night of horror by mass meetings and demonstrations.

Since 1948, with the aid of the Canadian government and international refugee organizations, large numbers of Estonians have come to Canada from Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom and other countries.

ESTONIAN EDMONTONIANS ROOT FOR HOMELAND'S INDEPENDENCE

By Glenna Hanley

Neighbors Reporter

As Estonians prepared to cast their ballots in the March 3 referendum on the Baltic nation's independence from the Soviet Union their countrymen here in Edmonton were rooting for their success.

Edmonton Estonian Society members and their families gathered Feb. 24 at the Commonwealth Lawn and Bowling Clubhouse in Woodcroft to mark Estonian Independence Day.

Part of the celebrations included a motion to support Estonians in their bid to gain independence from the Soviet Union.

"As Estonians living abroad, we don't have a vote in the referendum, but we want to show them we support them," said society president Eda McClung. Their motion supporting independence will be passed on to Estonia through the Toronto-based Estonian Central Council of Canada.

The three Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, were taken over by the Soviet Union at the close of the Second World War. In a referendum held Feb. 9, Lithuanians voted 90 per cent in favor of independence. Latvia also holds a referendum on independence March 3.

Estonian Independence Day marks the date, 73 years ago, when the Baltic country first gained its independence from Russia. Estonia remained an independent nation until 1940.

There are 80 families who are members of the Estonian society here. McClung estimates there are several hundred Edmontonians who are partly or fully of Estonian origin.

McClung said there have been three waves of Estonian immigration to Canada. The first was to Alberta at the turn of the century. Most settled in Sylvan Lake and Stettler. The second she described as economic refugees who came for the land and homesteading. The final group were political refugees who came at the end of the Second World War to escape Communist rule.

McClung said most of the members of the society belong to the third wave of political refugees, and they see the current struggle for independence and democracy as a continuation of the struggle they faced at the close of the war.

"With Gorbachev (Soviet President Mikhail Gorba'chev) saying he doesn't want the Soviet Union to break up, we realize it may be a while before they get the independence they so justly deserve," said McClung.

Guest speaker at the Independence Day event was Miriam Isberg Anderson, an Estonian and a Toronto travel agency owner. She recently succeeded in establishing a travel agency in Estonia.

Anderson has travelled many times to Estonia and she described life there as very difficult, particularly for city dwellers. She said rural Estonians have been less affected by the Soviet rule and have been able to retain their own way of life. In the cities she says people often hold two, three and even four jobs and struggle for the bare necessities of food and clothing.

She visited several schools and although the children can watch western television programs on Finnish TV channels, they have very little real knowledge of western life.

She said Estonians are eager to learn more about Canada and about their Estonian countrymen living here. She urged local Estonians to make an effort to visit their homeland.

Despite the political upheavels, Anderson said it is still safe to travel in Estonia and visitors are, free to visit all parts of the country.

TONU KALJUSTE

(born in 1953 in Tallinn)

Is a dedicated and accomplished promoter of Estonian choral chamber music.

He is the artistic director and chief conductor of the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir which he founded in 1981. He has frequently worked with choirs in Finland, Sweden and Canada.

Mr. Kaljuste has recorded extensively in Europe. He will be conducting an evening of classical and contemporary spiritual music of Pärt, Nystedt and Victoria.

Followed by today's popular Estonian folkloric songs by Kreek and Tormis

Pro Coro Canada

A 25-member chamber choir that was founded in Alberta in 1980. It is Alberta's only professional choir. Pro Coro Canada has toured Eastern Canada, Europe and participated in the Olympic Arts Festival in Calgary.

In 1990, the choir was awarded the Canada Council's prestigious Healy Willan Award for excellence in choral singing.

Pro Cora Canada has been recorded extensively by CBC Radio.

Concert tickets (\$13.00/\$16.00) are available at Gramophone Record Store, Orlando Books, Ticketmaster and Pro Cora Office 420-1247.

ESTONIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY INVITATION

Edmonton Estonian Society cordially invites you and your family and friends to celebrate the Estonian Independence Day with a pre-concert festive dinner Saturday the twenty-fifth of February Edmonton House Suite Hotel, Maddison Room, Mezzanine Level, 10205 - 100 Avenue.

Cocktails 5 pm (cash bar)

Buffet dinner 6 pm

Group departure for concert 730pm

Concert 8:00 pm

Guests are invited to a post-concert reception at All Saints' Cathedral Hall to meet Tonu Kaljuste, conductor and members of Pro Coro Canada. Hosted by Edmonton Estonian Society and Pro Coro Canada.

Adults' buffet dinner \$25.00

children under twelve \$12.00

RSVP with payment by February 17

For info call 437-2247 days, 452-2712 evenings.

Join in this special evening to celebrate the "Spirit of Estonia".

Edmonton House Suite Hotel

Conveniently located in downtown Edmonton 10205 100 Avenue.

One block from the concert hall at All Saints' Cathedral 10039 103 Street.

Concert goers are offered a special "Spirit of Estonia" rate of \$48/night for a spacious, panoramic view one-bedroom suite. To book, contact Rosella Moshansky, Edmonton House at 420-4005

Parking

Free evening underground parking provided by Edmonton House.

Passes available at the dinner.

Barons District Pioneers Celebrate Diamond Wedding

Mr. and Mrs. J. Erdman

(Special to the Herald.)

BARONS, May 15. - Mr. and Mrs. J. Erdman attained the sixtieth year of their married life on Monday, May 1, 1933. On Sunday, April 30, a large group of relatives and neighbors gathered at the old folks' homestead to offer congratulations and enjoy a pleasant afternoon.

Mrs. Erdman was born in 1854 and Mr. Erdman in 1852, both near Tollinn, Esthonia. In the year 1862, Mary Tint (later Mrs. Erdman) and Jacob Erdman, with their parents and seventy other families, set out on a long journey to Crimea. The men, women and children walked, while their clothes and provisions were conveyed in one-horse vehicles. They arrived nine weeks later in Crimea, where they settled in a village near Simferopol.

Here they lived until their marriage at Simferopol, May 1, 1873. Then for nearly thirty years Mr. and Mrs. J. Erdman resided in Targhan, where they farmed. They had seven daughters and two sons, six of whom are still living.

Leave Old Home

In 1903, hearing of the great opportunities for wheat farming and homesteading in America, Mr. and Mrs. Erdman and family sold their lands and set out for South Dakota. A year of ranching proved distasteful and unprofitable, so they proceeded farther west, to find suitable farm land. This brought them to Southern Alberta. At Claresholm they were informed of free homesteads in the district which is now Barons. There they made their home till 1921.

Then Mr. and Mrs. Erdman, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. A. Kulpas and family, went to Salem, Oregon, where they owned fruit farms. After the death of their daughter, Mrs. Kulpas, they returned to their homestead in 1930 at Barons, where they are residing.

Their family is now widely scattered: Mrs. J. Salman in Crimea; Miss Natalie Erdman B.A., a missionary in Arabia; Miss Charlotte Erdman, secretary of S.D.A. of Western Canada, at Winnipeg, and Mrs. M. Silberman, Mrs. J. Kotkas and Mr. G. Erdman, of Barons. Mr. and Mrs. J. Erdman have 24 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Many Gifts

The afternoon of Sunday, April 30, was pleasantly spent In songs and presentation or many beautiful gifts. During the delightful lunch, short addresses were made and letters of congratulation from relatives and friends were read. Among them was a letter from a teacher from their old home, Mr. A. F. Raudkepp, 84, who congratulated them on their good fortune in leaving Crimea in time to escape the horrors under the Soviet regime.

ESTONIAN-CANADIAN CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

Linda Hall district, located 14 kilometres south of town in the County of Stettler, will be the site of the Estonian-Canadian Centennial Celebration June 25, 26 and 27, 1999.

This celebration will be a large gathering of Estonian pioneer families from throughout the province, with guests from all over Canada. How fitting that the community of Linda Hall be honored as host of such a celebration. The first Estonians to settle in Alberta were the Kinsep brothers in 1898, who home-steaded north of Red Deer. From 1903 to 1910 Linda Hall district became the site of one the largest settlements of Estonians in Alberta. In 1978 the Alberta Government saw fit to erect a historic-site-sign on Highway 56 south of Stettler to commemorate the settlement of Estonians at Linda Hall. The local descendants today include the Klaus, Saar, Raho, Raadik, Hennel, Tipman, Oro, Nicklom, Kerbes, and Shursen families.

The only other Alberta settlement was Eckville in the Medicine River Valley.

During the early 1900s there was no immersion into Canadian culture and traditions and, indeed, there couldn't be, as communications and transportation were limited and difficult. These new settlers in our district could speak only the one language of Estonian - the language that they had safeguarded for more than 700 years of suppression by Germans, Danes, Poles, Swedes and Russians. In the short period of time that they had been in this country under an atmosphere of free democracy, they have freely assimilated with other ethnic groups and became intimate members of the Stettler community.

The strong character of the local Estonians - their positive outlook and strong code of moral values - was developed as a result of the ceaseless and heartbreaking struggle of their settlers, their own dedication to hard work, their traditional spirit of independence and, finally, the traditions and culture they brought with them.

There is no doubt in our mind that these energetic descendants of the Estonian community of Linda Hall will do a first class job of staging the centennial celebration. However, we of the larger community should support this undertaking and volunteer to assist, in whatever way we can.

Ever since the Linda people settled their district, they have been important supporters and contributors to the development and maturing of the town and County of Stettler. Their community members have travelled to Stettler and throughout the district to cater many community functions. They played active roles in Stettler's 50th, 60th and 75th anniversary celebrations, hosted activities during the 1991 Alberta Summer Games, to mention only a few examples of local service. And let's not overlook the personal contributions that individuals of Linda district have made. These people have held top positions in most service clubs in Stettler and at the national level, have been county councillors, Reeves, and volunteers. They have made a remarkable contribution to the cultural life of the community.

We as a newspaper will keep the community informed of the celebration plans as they develop. We encourage this community to volunteer and assist the Linda Hall planning committee, as we

can be assured that they will suitably showcase their community and their town and county,
"The Heart of Alberta".

Game thrills birthday gal

Juniors' win makes her day

By Todd Saelhof

Calgary Sun

It's one thing to live to the ripe old age of 104, but quite another to get exactly what you want for such a milestone.

Margarete Pasuke was all smiles yesterday for more reasons than just celebrating her birthday with 83 close friends and family at The Manor Village Life Center.

"Mother is particularly happy because the Canadian junior hockey team won," Tom Paasuke said of his mom's wish fulfilled a night earlier by Canada's young stars.

"Oh yes I was so delighted they beat those Russians," said the birthday gal.

Then came yesterday's celebration especially for Paasuke.

The seniors centre's dining room was decorated, and her arrival met with song, a cake, a violinist and speeches.

"It is maybe too much for an old person like me," she said.

Paasuke is a native of Estonia and endured a difficult life that continued even after she immigrated to Montreal in 1948.

"I never dreamed I would live this long after all those unhappy days," said Paasuke, whose 62-year-old son believes caring for others kept her going all these years.

"First of all, I had to live for my sons because my husband died (in 1951) when they were eight and 10."

She also helped her relatives in Estonia when it belonged to the Soviet Union and bought her folks a farm to retire on.

Adhering to a daily regimen of walking at least 500 steps - despite bad knees - has also helped her longevity.

These days, it's hockey - especially the Canadiens and Flames - that helps keep her going.

Todd.saelhof@calgarysun.com

Alberta's Estonian community
congratulates Margarete Paasuke on
the extra special occasion over
104th birthday!
We share in the joy and celebration
of a long life, young at heart.

ESTONIAN SKIER TO COMPETE IN ALBERTA

We are hoping to see people waving Estonian and Canadian flags at the side of Canmore's ski trails on December 15 and 17!

The 2005-2006 World Cup cross-country ski season has two stops in Canada - Vernon, BC on December 10-11 (in Silver Star Park at the Sovereign Lakes area www.sovereignlake2005.ca) and Canmore, Alberta on December 15-18 (adjacent to Banff Park, about 100 km west of Calgary, the same place where the cross-country events took place during the 1988 Winter Olympics). There will be no Estonians competing at Vernon, but the country will be represented by Jana Rehema at Canmore.

The Estonian Ski Federation explains "The reason no additional Estonian skiers are participating in the Canadian World Cup events is that we are dealing with extraordinarily long travel times and severe jet lag due to time-zone differences. Competition Conditions in North America are excellent, the athletes regret missing out on those opportunities, but this season we are focusing mainly on the all important Winter Olympic Games in Torino, Italy, and we do not wish our athletes to undertake too many risks.

Many European athletes who participated at a variety of competitions in Utah prior to the Salt Lake City Winter Olympic Games, became ill afterwards, resulting in a premature end to their competitive year. Because the Olympics are of major importance and in case of unfortunate results, it would be a matter of four years to make amends, then this season, Europe-based Estonian competitors are not participating in North American World Cup events."

26-year-old Jana Rehema has spent the last 3+ years at Boulder, Colorado, USA where she is working on a degree in international affairs. Jana adds "I am here on an athletic scholarship and this is my final year. In order to win the scholarship, I merely had to ski better than the Others." Jana continues "I became seriously interested in skiing at age 12 and have skied in a few World Cup events as a Junior. Among my best results was a 10th place at a Junior World Cup competition. I have been Estonian women's champion a couple of times. I prefer freestyle skiing, but can't really explain why. I am planning to compete only at Canmore where I will give it my all and if I do well, hope to gain a place on the team going to Torino. Additional information about me is available on the University of Colorado website www.cubuffs.com"

Jana's coach in Estonia is Anatoli Smigun, her uncle, who also coaches his well known daughters (Jana's cousins) Kristina and Katrin Smigun. At international events, Mali Alaver is usually the head coach of the Estonian ski team. At Colorado, Jana's coaches include accomplished former World Cup competitors.

At Canmore. Jana will compete Thursday December 15 in the women's 10 km freestyle race and Saturday December 17 in the women's 15 km classic style race. Exact start times are to be announced later by the event organizers, information will be available online at www.canmore2005.com. Results for Estonian athletes will be available via the International Ski Federation (FIS) at www.fis-ski.com. Choose the discipline of interest (cross-country, nordic combined, ski jumping), and/or proceed to the competitor biographies.

But, the better option is to come in person to Canmore with your flags!

HELGI LEESMENT

ALBERTA'S ESTONIANS DVD DOCUMENTARY SERIES OF PREMIERES IN ALBERTA

Estonia's Charge d'Affaires as guest of honour

Rasmus Lumi, Chargé d'Affaires for Estonia in Canada, visited Alberta from Ottawa November 16-18, on a tour organized by the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society. He was the guest of honour at each of the three Alberta premieres of the documentary film *Alberta's Estonians*. Because the members of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society are widely spread throughout the province, it was most practical to hold a separate premiere of the film in each geographical region: Calgary, Red Deer and Edmonton.

Thus, Rasmus Lumi had a grand opportunity to meet, among others, many descendants of Estonian pioneers, at this unique tri-partite event.

Polar Bear Entertainment Inc. was initiated into the AEHS documentary project in early Spring 2007 for their professional film production expertise. As the staff had no previous knowledge of Estonian history or culture, a considerable amount of AEHS time was required to ensure accuracy. All together, one and a half years of steady volunteer effort brought the DVD to a timely conclusion in September 2007. Thanks are due many, including two main funding agencies (National Estonian Foundation and the Community Initiatives Program of the Alberta Government) plus hundreds of hours of effort, travel and vigilance mainly by Dave Kiil, assisted by Eda McClung, Bob Kingsep, Helgi Leesment and several others.

This 30 minute, professionally produced DVD was first in Toronto in October. It was the only Canadian made film at that event. More information about the film is available online at www.aehs.ca.

Calgary and Red Deer premiers

In Alberta, the first segment of the tri-partite premiere celebration of the DVD *Alberta's Estonians* was held in Calgary on November 16. The emphasis in AEHS President Bob Kingsep's opening address was on the reasons the pioneers departed their homes in Estonia and Crimea over 100 years ago and their struggles in finding suitable land for survival - land which allowed for their extended family members and friends to settle nearby. He also drew attention to the physically demanding labour initially required of the men in order to enable their families to survive.

Thus, Rasmus Lumi had a grand opportunity to meet, among others, many descendants of Estonian pioneers, a first for him, and to learn about their background from watching the highly acclaimed documentary DVD *Alberta's Estonians*. In turn Albertans were honoured to meet Rasmus Lumi and to host him as the official Estonian government representative at McClung, Bob Kingsep, Helgi Leesment and several others.

This 30 minute, professionally produced DVD was first shown at the 2007 West Coast Estonian

Days festival in Los Angeles in August where it was very well received by North Americans as well as by visitors from Estonia. Next it fanned part of the 2007 EstDocs Estonian Documentary Film Festival

Attention to the physically demanding labour initially required of the men in order to enable their families to survive the cold winters and short summer growing seasons. Rasmus Lumi was given two AEHS pins - for him and his wife who stayed behind in Ottawa. Juri & Helle Kraav, Bob & Annette Kingsep and Peter & Helgi Leesment hosted the Calgary function.

The second segment of the DVD's tri-partite premiere took place at the Red Deer Museum + Art Gallery on Saturday afternoon November 17 in Central Alberta, 150 km north of Calgary. Among those present were Michael Dawe, City of Red Deer archivist and Morris Flewwelling, Mayor of the City of Red Deer. Evelyn Shursen presented each with a copy of the DVD as gifts from the AEHS. Loree LeTourneau, a descendant of the second Kingsep family to settle in Canada, presented a verbal tableau of the life of the pioneer Estonian women. The Estonian Chargé d'Affaires gave Jack Pallo a framed letter from the AEHS recognizing his family's contribution to the storyline in the documentary. It was Jack's late mother Selma Pallo who wrote diaries and accounts, parts of which are read by current family members on the DVD.

The organizers cocluded ""Mr. Lumi was a great person to chat with, he's a great man with a vision, his sights are set high and we'll most certainly hear more about this young man in future years." Arnold Mottus, Anne Cowick and Liia Herman hosted the Red Deer event.

Edmonton Estonians

On the third day, November 18, Rasmus Lumi, along with the event, reached the provincial capital, 150 km north of Red Deer. It was another successful gathering and reconnected many Edmonton area Estonians. This DVD premiere was dedicated to the post WWII immigrants who brought renewed energy to existing Estonian communities, forming long-lasting Estonian societies in Edmonton and Calgary. Bob Kingsep asked Eda McClung to speak on the recognition of ""immigrants who carried the torch while th rest of us were too busy growing up to realize the gift that we had been given."

Mr. Lumi was presented with a gift copy of the DVD despite the fact that he had just seen it four times within the last four days. In his remarks, he noted that he knew of no other Estonian group who has made a professional documentation of it's own history. He paid tribute to AEHS for this significant accomplishment and said he had enjoyed meetin in person many of those who appeared on the DVD. Eda McClung and Dave Kiil hosted the Edmonton event.

Over 70 people attended the three-part Alberta event. At each location there were opportunities to chat with other attendees about the professionally produced film while nibbling on elegant finger foods or sipping a glass of wine. Tables were exquisitely decorated with Estonian themes in honour of both the official Estonian government representative's presence and the series of significant historical premieres.

Guests discovered connections with each other of which they were previously unaware. This is a most welcome development and a reason for the creation of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society. Rasmus Lumi obliged all those who needed his consular expertise. As part of his

presentation at each location, Mr. Lumi informed the listeners about recent happenings in Estonia and a range of consular services available to them and their families. He also brought a variety of literature as hand-outs.

This tri-partite Alberta event was a marriage of enthusiasm, pride, determination, efficient planning, professionalism, efficient planning, professionalism, hard work and some luck, united with the presence of an interested official representative of the government of Estonia. All in all - a highly successful unique three-day celebration, in the spirit of traditional Estonian weddings of yore which, as everyone knows, properly lasted three days.

Helgi Leesment

ALBERTA ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY GOES DIGITAL AND PLANS JAANIPAEV

The Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS) will use grant funds to professionally prepare a half-hour documentary on the history of Alberta Estonians.

The Society is very grateful to the National Estonian Foundation of Canada (Eesti Sihtkapital Kanadas) for a \$17,200 grant. Formal approval of another major grant application, submitted under the Community Initiatives Program of Alberta, has just been received in the amount of \$50,070. The AEHS itself has allocated \$3,000 toward the production of the DVD. Together, these amounts will be adequate for a professional-quality DVD and the development of an Estonian Community website project on the Alberta Online Encyclopedia. The Alberta Estonian Heritage Society holds Dave Kiil in high regard for his work in preparing all the documents for the grant application submissions.

The finished historical documentary DVD, with a focus on three unique Estonian communities established in the province starting in 1899, will be debuted at the Los Angeles Estonian Days festival (Lääneranniku Eesti Päevad) this August where the AEHS will present a 1-hour program. That program will also include a readers' theatre production telling the story of one Estonian immigrant family who emigrated to South Dakota in the USA, and a few years later began a renewed life for the third time, near Barons in southern Alberta.

There will be a question-answer session and time to chat with some of the pioneer descendants. For some Albertans, this festival will be their first major Estonian cultural event. Many have traveled to Estonia, having been inspired by the late President Meri's visit to the Stettler area Estonian community in the year 2000. Certainly this will be the first time any program by or about descendants of North American pioneer Estonians is presented at the West Coast event.

At the February 10 meeting of the AEHS, an experienced documentary director/producer explained some of the techniques to be used in creating the DVD storyline. To this end, for the last six months, Albertans have been taking new photos and collecting old ones for scanning into a computer. We are looking for videotapes or videoclips of interesting events. We are also digitizing a selection of important documents and will be doing fresh interviews and videotaping of familiar Estonian-related places in Alberta. Several members are systematically contacting and searching various archives in Canada and Estonia for relevant materials.

This historical project is ably kindly asked to contact Dave at 3229-112C St NW, Edmonton, AB T6J 3W2 Tel; 780-988-0019 or email: adkiil@telusplanet.net. He can also be reached using Skype.

During the February 10th meeting, attended by 17 AEHS members, two long-standing Alberta Estonian organizations carried out their final transactions. Calgary Estonian Society's last treasurer, Jüri Kraav, handed over a cheque transferring the balance of the Society's bank account to the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society's first treasurer, Toomas Pääsuke.

The Edmonton Estonian Society's last executive members, Eda McClung and Dave Kiil, carried

out the same transaction. Now both of these city-based organizations are officially defunct. Both passed their mandate to the provincially- based organization.

Another item on the AEHS agenda at this recent meeting was planning for Jaanipäev which will be held on Saturday, June 16 at Lincoln Hall, near Gull Lake amongst surrounding farms in central Alberta. It will be a one day event, including a Roast Pig Feast provided by Big Pig Catering. Those lucky to have attended the 2001 Gilby Centennial in the Medicine Valley will recall the story of one Estonian immigrant family who embarked on a a three-month journey of 2,400 km from Paide to Crimea in 1861, lived in Crimea for 40 years, im-_____

This historical project is ably led by Ain Dave Kiil of Edmonton. Anyone having materials of possible interest to the AEHS are tended the 2001 Gilby Centennial in the Medicine Valley will recall the fantastic dinner served by this group.

There will be an opening ceremony, games, a reader's theatre, time to chat, musical entertainment, and evening dance music provided by the Garry Raabis band, one of several pioneer Estonian descendants active in music. All arc invited, Pre-paid reservations are needed. Detailed information and advance registration forms will be available in the near future.

Anyone wishing to be put on the list to receive these forms, please contact either Eda McClung at tel. 780452-2712 email: emcclung@ shaw.ca or Helgi Leesment at tel. 403-217-0515 or email leesment@ telus.net. Helgi can also be reached via Skype.

HELGI LEESMENT, AEHS vice-president

HOLLINGSWORTH WINS NATIONAL SKELETON CHAMPIONSHIP

Skeleton

"Winning today is nice, but it's not my main focus. My sliding has been inconsistent this year, so my goal was to have four consistent runs, which I was able to do so I'm very happy."

- Mellisa Hollingsworth, National Champion.

Calgary - Mellisa Hollingsworth and Jon Montgomery held off a cluster of teammates loaded with Olympic, World Championship and World Cup medals, to emerge as national titleholders at the national skeleton championships on Sunday.

The 27-year-old Hollingsworth, who has won medals in all major international skeleton events around the world during her 12-year career including a bronze at the 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Italy, added a second national title to her mantle after sliding to the golden spot on the podium with a four run combined time of three minutes 50.75 seconds. Her first title came in 1996 as a national team rookie.

"Winning today is nice, but it was not my main focus. My sliding has been inconsistent this year so my goal was to have four consistent runs, which I was able to do so I'm very happy," said the Eckville native, who currently sits in third in the Overall World Cup standings.

Hollingsworth, who captured a World Cup silver medal the last time she slid on the Calgary track in November, trailed World Cup comrade Michelle Kelly after the first run, but sprung into the lead after posting a personal best time in the second heat on Saturday night and never looked back.

Michelle Kelly, of Fort St. John B.C., who is the overall World Cup leader with two gold's and one silver medal in her first three races this year, slid into second spot behind Hollingsworth with a time of 3:51.36.

Calgary's Lindsay Alcock hung on to third place at 3:51.64".

Meanwhile, Montgomery chalked up another triumph in what is already developed into a stellar sophomore season on the national team. The 28-year-old Russell, Manitoba, native has one bronze and one silver medal in his opening three World Cup races, also locked up his second Canadian title after a sea-saw affair with Olympian Paul Boehm.

The lead flip flopped back-and-forth between the Canadian duo after each heat. Trailing heading into the final heat, Montgomery took a perfect line to the winner's circle in his final run.

"It feels good to be able to win with all of the best athletes in Canada in the field," said Montgomery, who clocked a time of 3:44.83, and sits in second spot in the Overall World season now with a Canadian Championship win."

Calgary's Boehm settled for silver after finishing .02 seconds behind Montgomery on Sunday at

3:44.85.

Olympic silver medalist, Jeff Pain, rounded out the men's podium in third at 3:45.39.

Edmontoni Eesti Selts (EES). ei lase selles Kanada eestluse hällis rahvuslikel traditsioonidel surra isegi siis, kui eesti keele oskajate arv kahaneb ning peamiselt suheldakse ja kirjutatakse inglise keeles.

Toimetusse jõudis hiljuti EESi käesoleva kevade ajakiri Ajakaja, mis annab hea ülevaate seltsi tegevusest, kuid mitte ainult. Sissejuhatuse on seekordsele väljaandele kirjutanud Mare Maxwell, kes 1989.a. pani aluse omaaegsele uudistelehele Ajakaja ja kes elab 1996. aastast Tallinnas, töötades õigustölgina ja keelekümluse programmides. Mare käis Kanadas aprillikuus, nimetades oma siinviibimist kojutulekuks. Järelikult ei tunne ta end Eestis veel päriselt kodus? (Hea teema mõne välisja kodueestlaste vahekorda lahkayaks artikliks!). Osaliselt oli tegemist töövisiidiga, sest Mare kuulus vene koolide delegatsiooni koosseisu. Need koolid alustavad septembrikuus eesti keele kümlusõpet. Eesmärgiks on, et kui lapsed lõpetavad kooli, räägiks nad perfektset eesti keelt, unustamata sealjuures oma emakeelt. Fantastiline, et sellesse programmi on haaratud väliseestlanna.

Siis selgub, et eesti jõulutraditsioonid elavad Edmontonis edasi. 2002.a. joulupeole kogunes 60 osavõtjat vanuses 3 kuni 80 aastat, nauditi tõelist eesti jõulutoitu. Ei puudunud ka muusikaline programm. Tunnustavalt märgitakse, et isegi mitteeestlastest perekonnaliikmed aitasid kaasa eesti toitude ja käsitööde valmistamisel. "Suhteliselt väike eesti kogukond Albertas, kes koosneb peamiselt Eestist 19/20. saj. vahetusel ümberasunute järeltulijaist, võib tunda rahuldust selle üle, et nende esivanemate traditsioone hoitakse elavana," kirjutab EESi esimees ja sealse eestluse hing Ain Dave Kiil.

Et mitte üldsõnaliseks jääda, on väljaandes ka tanguvorstide ja rosolje retseptid.

Ajakirjas õnnitletakse Catherine Mottust kes lõpetas sel kevadel Alberta Ülikooli ja asub nüüd inglise keele õpetajana tööle Fukuokas, Jaapanis. Helve eesti muusika bibliograafiat ja esitas suure menuga oma muusikat ka lõpuaktusel.

EES pole unustanud oma teerajajaid ja kättemurdjaid. Mis tõi Adam ja Anna Matteuse Kanadasse, küsitakse artiklis, milles on juttu, sellest eesti perekonnast. Matteused tulid Kanadasse 1905. aastal. Pikk reis ülekoormatud laevas ja ebasanitaarsetes tingimustes oli kohutav, aga Matteuste pere meeoleu hoidis üleval lootus paremale elule. Nagu paljud eestlased enne ja peale neid, alustasid nemadki võõral maal majahütikese ehitamisest, mis pakkus kaitset koiottide eest. Siis kaevati kelder juurviljade tarvis ja edendati põlluharimist. Nad ei mõelnud ainult endale, vaid jagasid kõike olemasolevat uute eesti asukate ja ka kohalikega. Nende lapsed oli teadmistehimulised ja andekad ning jõudsid kaugele.

Järgneb Kerbesite pere lugu, kelle mõned liikmed asusid elama 20. saj. esimestel aastatel Kanadasse. Rubriigi all "Märkimisväärsed Eestist" on juttu eesti spordikuulsusest Georg Lurichist. Kirjutisele on lisatud mitmeid fotosid.

Siis minnakse sujuvalt üle eesti keelele: oma mälestusi vennanaisest Leida Pildist jagab Andres Pilt. Samas on mitmeid lahkunu luuletusi.

Järgneb artikkel Suurbritannia parlamendiliikmest Lembit Öpikust. Huvitavate faktidega pipardatud lahedas ja mõnuses keeles kirjutatud artikkel annab ülevaate ühest ainulaadsemast eestlasest, kellel on tahtmist tegelda Põhja-lirimaa keeruliste probleemidega ja esindada Briti parlamendis uelslasi. Muuhulgas saab lugeja teada, et kõigi tähtsate tegemiste kõrval on hr. Öpikul suurepärase naljasoon; et ta suhtleb meeleldi ajakirjanikega ja et tal on alati taskus suupill, millega kuulajaid lõbustada. Tema suurimaks mureks on, kuidas Maa elanikkonda kaitsta kosmosest ähvardava asteroidiohu eest. Aga Lembit on huvitatud ka lennundusest ja sõja-ajaloost ning tema lemmiksõidukiks on mootorratas. Juttu on samuti L. Öpiku päritolust ja kuulsatest esivanematest. Siis tutvustab Ajakaja lugejaile üht Tallinna vaatamisväärsust - Kiek in de Köki torni.

2004.a. kavatsetakse Baron'is (Alta) tähistada sealse eestluse 100. juubelit, kuhu on oodatud kõik huvilised. Põhiüritused toimuvad 31. juulil ja ka 1. augustil Heritage DayWeekend'i nimelise programmi raames.

Väljaandes on veel ära toodud ajalehes USA Today (21.04. 2003) ilmunud Eesti-teemaline artikkel "E-stonia: From Iron Curtain obscurity to wired wonderland".

Ja lõpuks kutsutakse kõiki Portlandis (Oregon, USA) toimuvatele XXVI Lääneranniku Eesti Päevadele 16.-20. augustini 2003 ning tutvustatakse selle ürituse programmi.

Sulgenud Ajakaja viimase lehekülje, on jälle põhjust imestada ja imetleda, kuhu eestlased on jõudnud ja millega kõik hakkama saanud. Tõesti - eestlane olla on uhke ja hää!

ELLE PUUSAAG

Eesti viiljapanek Red Deer'i muuseumis

Alberta eestlased kohtusid dr. Rita Matiiseni kodus

RED DEER (Alberta)- Pühapäeval, 27. mail kogunesid siin eestiased Red Deer'ist, Edmontonist, Calgaryst ja teistest Alberta keskustest, et osa võtta Red Deer ja District muuseumi uue tiiva ametlikust avamisest. Tähtsam väljapanek Pioneer Gallery ruumides uues tiivas on eesti rahvarõivad ja ajaloolised esemed. See alaline väljapanek meenutab eesti asunikke, kes koondusid Medicine River orus sajandi pöördel.

Avamistseremooniale olid tulnud kohalikud tegelased, nende seas linnapea ja provintsiavalitsuse esindaja. Kohal oli ka föderaalminister John Munro. Muuseumi avamisest võttis osa ümberkaudu kuussada inimest.

Eesti väljapanek oli võimalik Medicine Valley Eesti Seltsi toetuse läbi, Ettevõtte viidi läbi lõpuni dr. Rita Matiiseni juhtimisel ja tema väsimatu tööga. Kohalike eestlaste abiga teostati esemete kogumine, Paljud väljapanekud on nüüd likvideeritud Medicine Valley Eesti Seltsi pärand. Väljapanek muuseumis on eesti asunike Meenutamiseks, kes asusid siia provintsi ossa, kui Alberta oli veel põlismets.

Muuseumi väljapanekua on kolm eesti rahvarõivastes mannekeeni. Kuigi suurem osa asunikke Medicine Valley rajoonis tulid Virumaalt, on esitalud valikut eesti rahvarõivastest. On näha Vaivara, Mustjaia ja Tõstama rahvarõivad. Rahvarõivad ja osa teistest esemetest tehti Torontos eestl kunstkäsitöölise poolt Lilla Tombak'u juhatusel. Ehtsate esemete seas leidub 1884.a. Piibel, üks käsitsi tehtud koolipink 1909, aastal asutatsi tehtud koolist Medicine River orus ja üks ehtne ehtne Eestist toodud hõbesõig. Näitel on ka moodne koopia traditsioonilisest laekast, mis on rikkalikult rahvusmuustritega nikerdatud. Väljapanekute taustaks on Eesti lipp. pildid elanike elust ja suur Euroopa kaart, kus Eesti on silmapaistvalt märgitud. Kaart on dr. Rita Matiiseni kadunud abikaasa Voldemar Matiiseni töö.

Eesti rahva kultuuri väljapanek on tähtis Alberta ja Kanada rahvale ja eriti eesti päritoluga kanadalastele. See väljapanek tunnustab tähtsat osa, mida eesti asunikud mängisid Kanada rajamisel. Eestlased ei ole enam nii silmapaistvad Alberta provintsis kui nad kord olid, kuid eestlaste ettevõtlikkus ja töökus on rajanud kindla põhja tänapäevaks ja tuleviku eduks siin maal.

Pärast ametlikku tseremooniat ja muuseumi vaatamist, umbes viiskümmend inimest, eestlased ja sõbrad, koondusid dr. Rita Matiiseni kodus Red Deer linnas. Koosviibimine Oli eriti meeleolukas, kuna tähistati ka dr. Matiiseni 75-a. sünnipäeva. Koosviibimine võimaldas Eestlastel igast provintsi nurgast kohata ja üksteist tundma õppida. Eriti tunti huvi dr. Matiiseni töö vastu, mis nähtus muuseumi avamisel. Leiti ühiselt, et see saavutus On väärt kiitust dr. Rita Matiisenile.

Rein ja Valve Andre külalistena Oberammergau Kannatusmängudele

Oberammergau Kannatusmängud, mis toimuvad tavaliselt iga 10 aasta järel, saavad sel aastal erakordse rambivalguse osaliseks, kuna 1984. a. tähistab Kannatusmängude 350. aastapäeva.

Kuna New Canadian Theatre (Uus-Kanada Teater), mis asutati 1962. aastal, on oma lavastustes korduvalt rakendanud ka saksa päritoluga näitlejaid, on seda hinnanud mitmed saksa teatriühingud.

Juba aasta tagasi tuli kutse Rein Andreie kui New Canadian Theatre'i kunstilisele juhile aukülalisena osa võtta Oberammergau Kannatusmängude 350. juubelilavastuse ettekandest teatrikriitikuna.

Kutse Rein ja Valve Andrele oli saadetud Oberammergau linnapea poolt pidulikuks avaetenduseks 20. mail, kui see pole võimalik, siis terveks hooajaks.

Rein ja Valve Andre võtavad osa Oberammergau Kannatusmängude juubelietendusist 10. ja 11. juulil.

SUUR ELAMUS ON VIIBI DA EESTLASTE - SUURES KESKUSES

"Teie siin vaevalt oskate kujutleda elamusi, mida pakub suur eestlaste keskus neile, kes tulevad linnast, kus kõige enam korraga on koos vaid paarkümmend kaasmaalast," ütles Nikolai Rõuk, kes koos abikaasaga viibis Calgary'st külaskäigul Torontos.

"Sõitsime 2000 miili, et näha eestlaste elu siin Ontario pealinnas, millest senini olime lugenud vaid ajalest. Võrdluseks olgu üteldud et see vastab umbes reisile Tallinnast Baikali järve äärde - nii on ka mõistetav, et kokkupuuted ei saa olla tihedad."

N. Rõuk on Rahvusliku Välisvõitluse Nõukogu liige ja seepärast on tal siidamel meie ikesikor.ganisatsioo nl küsimused. "Oleks vajalik, et üldvalimised toimuvad ja osavõtjaid oleks rohkesti. See näitab meie rahva huvi kodumaa saatuse vastu ja annab seljataguse organisatsioonile, kes iuba aastaid on teinud tänuväärset tööd. Oleks oluline, et kandidaate oleks mitmelt poolt Kanadast ja nad pääseks ka RVN-u töö juurde. Ülesandeid ka jätkub kõigile - näiteks üks suur tööala on lugejakirjade saatmine ajalentedele meie probleemide selgitamiseks. Tuleks leida ka inimesi, kes annaks pidevalt informatsiooni meie rahvusgrupi elust ja nii hoiaks Eesti nime päevakorral."

Eestlaste elu kohta Calgary's märkis N. Rõuk, et poolsada kaasmaalast, kes võtavad osa eesti üritustest, on suures enamuses kõik majanduslikult kindlal järeel. Tööalad on väga mitmekesised, haiglaõed, kooliõpetajad, kontoriametnikud, ehitus - ja maalritöö-ettevõtjad jne.

Külalised, kes peatusid Torontos E. Tikenbergi perekonnas, sõitsid nädala keskel edasi New Yorki Eesti Päevadele.

Tööpuudust ei tunta. - Kaasmaalased Ehitavab maju õhtutundidel

(Meie Elu kaastooliselt) , Calgary asub kooliajast hästi tuntud Kordiljeeride mäe-aheliku jalal. Rahvasuus kutsutakse neid mägesid lihtsalt Rocky Mountain'ideks ja Calgary't "mäejala-linnaks". Linn asub umbes Alberta enam asustatud ala keskel, ca 1,5 km üle merepinna, kahe jõe ühinemise orus ja on praegu ca 135,000 elanikuga, autodest ülekoormatud ja sirgete tänavatega moodne väike-suurlinn. Calgary on veidi üle 75 a. vana ja sellega üks vanimaid Albertas. Varem oli see linn üheks preeria tõeliste kovboide keskuseks, millise aja traditsioonile tuginevad veel praegugi iga-aastased näitnsed ja võiduajamised "stampede" nime all. "Stampede" tähendab äraseletult hirmsat kihutamist. Lühidalt, see linn on nagu iga teinegi moodne linn ükskõik kus Kanada ääres, ainult, et teatrit siin küll ei ole. Aga paljud teisedki linnad läänes peavad leppima ränd-teatritega ja külalis-kontsertidega. Pealegi kinosid on siin rikkalikult ja neid kutsutakse rahvasuus ka teatriteks.

Calgarys asub kümme-kond leibkonda eestlasi - vanaolijaid, kelledest suurem osa on asunud siia otse kodumaalt. On ka Baronsi, Eckville ja Stettleri eestlaste asundustest ületulijaid, missugused asundused Albertas on igale uustulnukale huvitavaks ja südamelähedaseks vaatamisväärsusteks. Praegu tõuseb Calgarys teadaolevate eesti-vereliste inimeste arv koos uustulnukatega 60-le. Leidub ka neid, kellel huvi Eesti küsimuste vastu on vähenenud, eriti siin sündinutel.

Kui küsida, mida need eestlased kõik üksikult siin kaugel läänes teevad, siis oleks küll õigem vastata üldiselt, et töötavad ja teenivad igapäevast leiba. Aga siiski mõnikord tekib ka tunne, et siinsed eestlased ületavad üldiselt tunnustatud eestlaste tubliduse, kui ehitavad maju segi ainult õhtutundidega, nagu härrad Mäeots, Mägi, Kriik, Kirch ja teisedki.

Töötuid eestlasi siin ei ole olnud ega ole praegugi, kuigi ametlikult leidub registreeritud töötuid. Kus on ametis üks eestlane, sinna võetakse tarbekorral healmeel teinegi, see tähendab, et ka siin kaugel mandri teisel äärel on juba eestlane tuntud hea ja korraliku töötajana.

Aga ka rahvuslike asjade ajamiseks leitakse - aega ja toetatakse annetustega meie keskorganisatsioonide üritusi. Kuigi siinne rahvusgrupp on suhteliselt väike, on siiski suudetud huvi äratada kohapealsetes ajalehtedes ja ringhäälingutes, nõnda et need toovad tihti teateid eestaste ja Eesti üle. See on ka üks osakene üldisest rahvuspropagandas, mis peaks tulema kasuks meie kannatavale kodumaale.

M. Rn.

Ühendkoor laulis neljas keeles. - Rahvariiete komplektid muuseumile

EDMONTON - Kanada 100-le juumbeliaastale pühendatud Balti Pidustused Edmontonis Albertas, tõid kokku hulga eestlasi, leedulasi ja lätlasi kui ka teistesse rahvustesse kuuluvaid kanadlasi nii Edmontonist kui ka Kaugemalt.

Pidustused algasid BALTI KONTSERDIGA reede, 6. Oktoobri õhtul Edmontoni Vactoria High School'i suures Auditoriumis, mi soli täidetud viimase võimaluseni, - koos oli ligi 700 inimest.

Kontserdil esinesid sopran Maret Panik, leedu viiuldaja Elena Kuprevicius ja läti baritone Andrejs Kurmins; saatis klaveril kogu kontserdi ulatuses Lydia Pals, kes teguteh Edmontonis klaveriõpetajana. Programm oli täiesti pühendatud eesti, leedu ja läti rahvusmuusikale. Sopran Maret Pank laulis E. Aava, J. Aaviku, E. Oja, M. Saare, J. Talli, R. Tobiase laule ja peale selle mõned rahvalaulud; Leedu viildaja Elena Kuprevicius esitas J. Gaidelise sonaadi E-minor ning baritone montonist.

Balti Segakoor Lumilla Kivi juhatusel esitas peale hümnide veeliga rahvuse keeles ühe laulu, eesti osas C. Kreegi, "Ma kõndisin vainul". Esines veel läti topeltkvartett "Dzintars" Edmontonist H. Skraftonsi juhaasel; laulsid leedu sopran pr. A. Smidtas Edmontonist J. Barroni klaverisaatel ja läti sopran S. Porieus Calgary'st G. Kornsi klaverisaa.

Elevust tekitasid rahavatatsu gruppide esinemised, mis juhatatisse eesti naisvõimlejate esinemisega - viis sinistes võimlemisriietes näitsikut Vancouverist. Esinesid: läti ralivatantsijad pr. A. G. Rudovicsi juhatusel; leedu rahvatantsijad Vancouverist pr. Dr. A. G. Rudovicsi juhatusel: leedu rahvatantsijad Vancouverist pr. Kaulise juhatusel ja eesti rahvatantsijad kahe grupiga - Edmontonist pr. Soosalu jahatusel ja Vancouverist pr. Öunapuu juhtimisel. Eestlaste osas esitasid Edmontoni tantsijad kaks tantsu. Suure menuga esinesid Vancouveri tantsijad, kes esitasid suure programmi: Mulgi polka, Kuljus, Kepitants, Lõikuse tants, Pill kutsub, Kilvikasukas, Kalamies, Kosjatants, eriti ilmekas Tühja-jutu tants ning Polka.

Balti Pidustuste Centennial bankett ja ball

Oli peo lõpupunktiks laupäeva, 7. Oktoobri õhtul. Sellel tervitas koosviibijaid muu seas BATUN-i nimel õp. N. Trepsa New Yorgist.

Banketil esines peokõnelejana E. Preston Manning - Alberta peaninister E. C. Manning'i poeg, kes sisukas kõnes käesolevate pidustuste mõttele toetudes rõhutas eriti seda, et Kanada poliitikas peaks esile tõstemama mitte üksi inglise ega prantsuse rahvuse olemasolu, vaid et Kanadas on ka teisi rahvusi, mis eriti preeria-provintsidest moodustavad 50 protsenti rahvastikust. Teiseks rõhutas hr. Manning mitmete keelte valdamise tähtsust, nagu see ilmselt

on esile tõstetud Balti rahvaste seas ka käesolevate pidustuste ajal. Peale selle peaks eriti Kanada noorus, hr. Manningi arvates, vaatama sügavamalt sellele, mis siia tulnud balti rahvaste liikmed läbi on elanud ja neid fakte arvestama rahvusvaheliste olukordade ja eriti kommunismi hindamisel.

Hilise õhtutunnini kestnud banketi raamides anti üle Alberta valitsusele alalhoidmiseks asutatavas Alberta muuseumis Edmontonis eesti, läti ja leedu naiste rahvarõivad, iga rahvuse kohta üks - Eesti osas Väike-Maarja naise ülikond. Rahvarõivad võttis südamlike tänusõnadega vastu Alberta põllutööminister Harry Strom.

Peab ütlema, et kui osavõtt Balti Konuserdist reede õhtul oli üllatavalt elav ja kui rahvapidu oli ka kokku.

Vancouveri Rahvatantsurühma kaks kaugemat külas käiku.

Kanada 100 a. juubeli pidustused hakkavad lõpule jõudma. Viimaste hulka kuulusid Edmontonis, Alberta, Balti rahvaste pidustused 6. - 7. Okt. Ja Winnipegis, Manitoba, "Rahvaste ball" 21. Okt. Mõlemast üritusest osavõtu võimalus avanes ka Vancouveri rahvatantsijaile.

Edmontoni sõit toimus sealsete kaasmaalaste kutsel ja kaasabil. Varemalt oli juba kirjutis õnnestunud pidustuste üle, mis lopes punaste roosikimpude üleandmisega. Omalt poolt jäaks lisada, et sealne "käputäis" tegijaid olid tohtu toga toime tulnud. Laupäeva õhtupoolse kontserdi kompaktelt kokkupandud põimikkava voolav esitusviis võiks olla mitmelegi suurkeskusele eeskujuks.

Tantsurühma vastuvõtt oli kaasmaalaste poolt üksikasjaliselt välja töötatud. Rühma 13-liikmeline pere jagati kodudesse, kuhu iga "peremees" nad ballilt kaasa viis. Järgmisel päeval oli tutvumine Edmontoniga. Moodne kasvav linn lõhestatud puuderohke jõeoruga. Soe päikesepaiste peegeldus sinisel veepinnal ja kiirgas haavastike erekollaseil lehil tumedate kuuskede keskel. Kodudes ootas rikkalik lõikusepüha lõunasöök ja hiljem kella 4 ajal kohvi ühiselt pr. Ja hr. Penti kodus.

Soojad sõnad ja südamlikud soovid lõppesid "Nii ajaratus" helidega ja oliga tagasisõit lennujaama.

Meie siiras tänu kõigile kaasmaalasile Edmontonis!

Toonud saalitäie rahvast, siis õhtu ne bankett ületas kõik ootused rahva osavõtu poolest: oodatud 270 külalise asemel oli kokku tulnud ligi 500 inimest. Alberta eestlased, leedulased ja lätlased peavad olema tänulikud neile, kes sellise ainulaadse elamuse on võimaldanud: kõigepealt Alberta valitsusele ainelise ja moraalse toetuse eest ning siis ka rohketele pidustuse organiseerijaile eesotsas Balti Föderatsiooni Edmontoni Osakonna esimehega A. J. Osisega, abiesimees V. Suursaarega ja sekretär A. Dudaraviciusega.

VANIMA EESTI ASUNDUSE VÄÄRTUSLIK PARAND PIONEERIDE PANUSE MEENUTAMISEKS

Medicine Valley Eesti Seltsi likvideerimine lõpetatud

RED DEER, Alberta - Ajal.kui Toronto eestlased valmistusid suurpidustusteks, lõpetati vanima Kanada eesti asunduse organisatsiooni likvideerimine. 15. Juunil 1981 üldkoosoleku poolt antud volituse alusel lõpetas 74 aastat vana Medicine Valley Eesti Selts Eckvilles 16. Märtsil s.a. peetud juhatuse koosoleku otsusega oma tegevuse. Selts jättis väärtusliku pärandi eesti pioneeride panuse meenutamiseks.

Asutamisest saadik, 24. aprillil 1910, oli seltsi kultuurne ja seltskondlik tegevus s0bitatud farmielanikele. Noorema generatsiooni tung kõrgema hariduse poole ja avaramad tegevusväljad linnades on iätnud omaaegsesse tihedasse eesti asundusse Eckville ümbruses vaid väheseid eesti talusid. Ainult üksikud noored jätkavad põllupidamist. Seltsi liikmete vähesuse ja nende kõrge ea tõttu piirdus seltsi tegevus viimaste aastate jooksul pea eranditult seltsi vara likvideerimisega.

Seltsi kinnisvara, 1919 aastal ehitatud Eckville Eesti Saal, müüdi enampakkumise teel, olemasolev eestikeelne raamatukogu annetati 1983. a. Tartu Instituudile Torontos tingimusel. et see säilitatakse tervikuna, ja asjatundlikult katalogiseeritakse uurimis- otstarbeks. Juhul, kui Tarlu Instituut peaks lõpetama tegevuse, kohustub Instituutraamatukogu Ethnic Archives of P.A.C.-le üle andma. Protokolli- ja arveraamatute ning kirjavahetuse üleviimine National Ethnic Archives'ile Ottawas on teoksil.

LIKMESKOND VÄHENES

Pärast Teist maailmasõda sitasid Eckville ümbruse farmerid palju põgenikke Kanadasse ümberasumisel, Eckville kujunes keskuseks kus Alberta eestlased kokku tulid, Eriti populaarseks kujunesid Eckville Eesti supepäevad mitmesajalise osavõtuga. Kuid maaelu ei köitnud uustulijaid põlselt ja enamus asus peale ""katseaega" maal haljamatele aasadele linnadesse. Väikeseks jäänud seltsi liikmeskond otsustas seltsi tegevus ametlikult lõpetada ja varandus kasutada eesti pioneeride panuse mälestuse jäädvustamiseks Kesk-Albertas.

Suurimaks projektiks oli \$20,000 anetus uue seltskondliku maja ehitamiseks Eckville linnas ja kiviplaadi asetamine seele uue Eckville Community Hall'i seinale.

Püstitati ka mälestusmärk Jaak Kinnale Gilby-Kalmu surnuaiale, mis asutati 1914 aastal Jaak Kinna poolt annetatud maaalale tema homesteadil. Täiendava maa juurdeostuks selts määras 1,200 dollarit. Rahaline anetus tehti ka Eckville Manor House'ile, kusmitmed vana-eestlased veedavad praegu oma vanadusepäeva.

VÄLJAPANEK MUUSEUMIS

Viimane suurüritus oli eesti rahvariide ja rahvapäraste esemete annetamine Red Deer ja Districti Museum'ile. Esmakordne eesti väljapanek oli osa muuseumi uue tiiva avamispidustustest, mis toimusid 27. mail rohke rahva osvõtiga. See sündmus tõi kokku mitte ainult hulgaliselt Red Deeri kohalikke elanikke ja aukülalisi, vaid ka suurearvuliselt kogu Alberta eestlasi. Eesti väriküllane rahvariide eksponaat oma kõrge käsitöötasemega äratas üldist tähelepanu ja tänu muuseumi jahatajale, Morris Flewwelling ule, see jäb tulevikus püsivaks väljapanekuks Pioneer Gallery'sse.

Erilist huvi pakuvad ka seemed nagu Rosalie Rääbis'e perekonna Piibel, mis on Kreekakeelest "eesti Ma Kele" tõlkena 1884. aastal Tartus Laakmani Trükikojas trükitud.

1909 aastal Peter Perir'i poolt ehitatud koolipink esimese kooli jaoks Medicine Valley distriktis väärrib tähelepanu, kuna koolivalitsus nimetas seda kooli Eckville Estonian School'iks, tunnustusena eesti uusasunike kaasabi eesi ehitusmaterjali ja tööjõu näol. Kool tegutses seele nime all kuni 1953. aastani, kui reorganiseeriti koolivõrk, milles Eesti Kooli piirkond endiselt nimetatakse ametlikult Estonian School District'iks.

Rahvariideid rikastavad hõbeehted, mis on kadunud hr. Prunsfeldi poolt valmistatud. Eriväljapanekuna on suur hõbesõlg, mis on varajase asuniku poolt Eestist kaasa toodud ja mille paarimees annetati Edmontoni Eesti Seltsi poolt aastaid tagasi Ottawa Museum of Man'ile.

Ainulaadse kingituse tegi muuseumile August Liivam, andes üle eesti lipu, mille olid tema sugulased Katarina ja Kustav Kiilstrom 1944 aastal kaasa toonud. See oli põgenedes olnud paadi "laevalipuks".

Näituse korraldajad tänavad heldeid andjaid - neid on olnud rohkem, kui loetletud. Medicine Valley Eesti Selts tänab eriti Lilla Tombakut ja kõiki tema kaastöölisi, kes nii suure innu ja oskusega valmistasid rahvariideid ja võimaldasid Alberta eestlastel välja panna suurima eesti esemete eksponaadi Kanadas.

Moskva kaubamaja mänedzher hukati

Moskva ajalehtedes ilmus lühikene teade, et N. Liidu suurema kaubamaja mänedzher Yelisseyev lasti maha kohtu otsusel kuritegevuse pärast kaubamaja juhtimisel ja aha kõrvaldamisel. Yelisseyevi mahalaskmine oli üks näide sellest, kui tõsiselt püütakse N. Liidus võidelda korruptsiooni vastu, mis seal on kasvanud kaugelt üle pea.

MEISTRIVÕISTLUSED EDMONTONIS

19. 24. märtsini toimusid Edmontonis maailmameistrivõistlused iluuisutamises, millest võttis osa ka Eesti võistkond. Sellesse kuulus viis võistlejat - üks meesuisutaja, üks spordipaar ja üks jäätantsupaar - ning kolm ametimeest. See oli Eesti iluuisutamisevõistkonna esimene esinemine Kanadas.

Seekordne võistlus oli võistlejate arvu poolest kõige osavõturohkem MM-ide ajaloos. Osavõtjariike oli 48 ja uisutajaid 219.

Vestluses Eesti koondise jihi Juhan Zimmermanni, kohtuiku Anne Saraskini ja treeneri Lea Rannage selgus, et nad ei ole enne näinud sellist soja vastuvõttu publiku poolt. Vaatajaskond oli väga sõbralik ja asjatundlik. Kõik 140 000 piletit olid juba assta enne võistlusi läbimüüdud. Väga hea hinnangu andsid eestlased ka Edmontoni linnale suurepärase komitee, hotellide, linna ja turismi koostöö organiseerimise eest.

Edmontoni Eesti Seltsi juhatus võttis lahkelt vastu Eesti koondise ja tutvustas neid kohalikele eestlastele ning näitas linna ja selle ümbrust. Seltsi juhatus osales võistlustel Eesti koondise ametliku saajana (chaperonina).

Selline suurvõistluse kogemus on väga tähtis noorte Eesti uisutajate jaoks. Treener avaldas veedumust, et iga järgnev võistlus parandab esinemisokust. Eesti ei suudeta jääd üle suve pidada ning seetõttu otsib Eesti Uisuliit võimalusi, et Eesti iluuisutajad saaksid ka suvel teenida. Rohkem tahetakse osaleda ka rahvasvadelistel võistlustel.

EDMONTONI EESTI SELTS PALUB TEIE JA TEIE SÕPRADE OSAVÕTTU

EESTI VAPRIIGI AASTAPÄEVA KOOSVITBIMISEST

Corona Hotelli Regal saalis, 28 Veebr, 1970, kell 8 P.L.

Baar, Õhtusöök, Eskava ja Tants.

Pääsmed \$5.00 isikult. Saadaval eelmüügil kund 20, veebruarini, Tel. 488-8520 ehk 433-7812

ASSORTED POETRY

O CANADA

O Canada, our home and native land
True patriot love, in all our sons command
With glowing hearts we see thee rise
Thy true north strong and free
From far and wide, O Canada
We stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, glorious and free
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

Mu isamma, mu onn ja room
J.V.Jannsen - F. Padus

1. Mu isamma, mu onn ja rMm,
kui kaunis oled sa!
Ei leia mina iial taal
see suure laia ilma paal,
mis mull' nil armas oleks ka,
kui sa, mu isamaa!

2. Sa oled mind ju siinnitand
ja illes kasvatand;
sind tanan mina alati
ja jaan sull' truuiks surmani!
Mull' koige armsam oled sa,
mu kallis isamaa!

3. Su ille Jumalvalvaku,
mu arnas isamaa!
Ta olgu sinu kaitseja
ja votku rohkelt onnista,
mis iial ette votad sa,
mu kallis isamaa!

75. Eesti Vabariigi Aastapäev
Edmontoni Eesti Selts
Rutherford House 20. veebruar 1993

Allow us to breathe this fragrant hour
Regain a moment of gentle power;
Wafting heavenward an ancient grace
Shatter the prison of steel embrace!

Our cries shall never be enslaved to time
But ring eternal in persistent chime;
Sounds hoisted o'er a noble citadel
Triumphant music to carry and swell.

Morn dawns upon a night of decay
Living sparks stir beneath cloaks of clay;
The power of passion never quelled
Liberty's sources if once beheld.

Can ephemeral beauty be so caught?
Will history's doom bring dreams to naught?
No, perforce the song shall stir and echoe
Over sorrowed years and across the woe.

Irene Rheinwald

Kava

OCanada
Mu isamaa, mu õnn ja rõõm

Avasõnad
Viivi Rita Piil ja Jan Urke

Tervitused/Telegrammid

Guest Speaker
Ain David Kiil, Edmonton

Musical Interlude
Helve Sastok

Guest Speaker
Saima Kint, San Fransisco

Special Presentation

Kohvilaud

EDMONTONI EESTI SELTS KUTSUB TEID JA TEIE PEREKONDA NING SÕPRU TÄHISTAMA

Eesti Vabariigi Aastapäeva

Pühapäeval

kahekümne kolmandal veebruaril

kell kaks pärastlõunal

Programmile järgneb külmlaud baariga

Osavõtu maks on ette tasutav

täiskasvanud kakskümmend dollarit

lapsed vanemad kui kaksteist aastat, kümme dollarit

Ootame teie osavõttu!

UNUSTATUD EESTLASED TÖÖTATUD MAAL

Sada aastat tagasi asusid esimesed eestlased maad harima Kanada Alberta provintsis. Juubelipidustustele Stettlerisse oddatakse üle 500 ümberasunu järeltulija.

tekst: Vesta Reest

See oli tühi, ürgne maa, täis pajuvüsa ja metsatulekahjudest jäänud suitsenud risu ja kännustikku. Kliima oli karm hilishallad olid sagedased juunikuu algul ja varajasi öökülmi tuli ette juba juulikuu lõpul. Lwnd sadas pahathti septembris, keset viljapeksu, kuid hilissügis oma kauni indiaani suvega päästis olukorra. Püsiva talvega tuli arvestada juba novembris. Temperatuur kõikus - 45° C ja 36° C äärmuste vahel.

See oli saja aasta tagune pildike Kanadasse Alberta provintsi, toleaegsesse Loodeterritooriumile ümberasunute elust. Eesa kogukond Alberus, pea Vaikse ookeani rannikul, mis kõrgajal - Esimese ja Teise maailmasõja vahel koosnes seitsmest asunduscst. jäi ainukeseks eestlaste kogukonnaks Kanadas Teise maailmasõja lõpuni. Tanavu tähistavad eestlased saja aasta möödumist oma esivanemate saabumisest Albertasse. 25 - 27. juunil Albertas Stettleris toimuvale juubeliüritusele on oodata üle 500 ümberasunu järeltulija.

Calgary ülikooli ajaloo professor Howard Palmer on oma uurimuses Alberta provintsi kulturi- ja majandusarengust märkinud väikese, kuid tä tähelepanuväärsc eesti kogukonna osa provintsi tänase näo ja elanikkonna kujunemisel.

Kogukond, kelle lapsed sajandi esimesel poolel ingliskeelsed kooliõpetajad eestukeele vadinaga klassitoast põpetajad eestikeelse vadinaga klassitoast põgenema ehmatasid, algas Nuustaku koolmeistrist Hendirik Kingsepast ja tema meremehest verinast Krisjanist Kristjan saabus New Yorki kusagilt Lõuna-Ameerikast. Hendrik koos oma naise ja kahe lapsega Eestist, kaasas villased ja linased kangad, natuke lugemisvaraning kartuliscemet. Üheskoos mindi Kanadasse, kus tahtjaile anti poolmuidu kasutada riigimaad.

Noil acgedil olid koloniseerijad asustanud vaid Kanada idaranniku ja kagupiirkonna Preeriaalad ning kõrgmaa Kesk-ja Lääna-Kanadas olid indiaanlaste asuad. Koht, kuhu eestlased elama läksid, oli preeriahuntide, mustade karude ning preerina-ja met satulekahjude pärusmaa olndu aastatuhandeid.

Igai maatahtjal, kes oli vähemalt 21 aastat vana, tuli tasuda vaid 10 dollarie asjaajamiskuludeks ning kai asunik oh kolme aastaga suutnud üles harida vähemalt 15 aakrit maad, võis ta selle oma nimele kinnitada. Need suurepärased tulevikuvaated silmapinnril, kirjutasid vennad Kingsepad 9. mail 1899 Alberta provintsis Sylvan Lake i ääres alla 160 aakri suuruse maatüki kasuruslepingule. Samal aastal saabusid Eestist Kristjanile järele tema naine ja viis last, kes jäid Sylvan Lake i elama ku pärast seda, kui rhutu pereisa jäädavalt Ühendriikidesse kadus.

Kahe aasta pärast elas Sylvan Lake'i ääres juba viis eesti peret, 1901 aasta sügisel tuui töötatud maale lisaks rahvast Saaremaalt ja Venemaalr, eestlaste Nurmekunde asulast. 1903 aastal

kutsuti eestlaste 16 jõudsast talust koosnevat küla juba Livoniaks.

Kuid majanduslikust õitsengust oli tollal asi veel kugel. Kodumaa tolmu jalgelt pühkinud mehed lohutasid end rahvatarkusega, et kõik ei mahu marjamaale, ka karjamaal tuleb hakkama saada. Hobused surid, karud ründasid sigu, koiotid murdsid kanu.

Suviti kasvatati oma tarbeks aedvilja ja kartulit, lehmapiima müüdi ja vahetati poekaupade vastu. Taivel töötasid mehed 250 miili kaugusel asuva linnakese söekaevanduses, saades tasuks dollari päevas. Hiljem jäid mehed kas kaevandusse või raudtee-ehitusele ka suveks tööle, nii et kogu majapidamine püsis naiste-laste õlul.

1902. aasta märtsikuus asutai Hendrik Kingsepa eestvõttel esimene eestlaste kommiunaalfarm. Uhisus ühisel jõul peeti karja ja hariti põldu veoloomad ja põllutööriistad olid ühised. Uhisus tegutses vaevalt pool aastat - Tiina Kingsepa poja Lembitu sõnul tegi ta ema kommuunale lõpu, set Tinna lapsed olid kommuunas ainsad töötajad.

Samal sügisel hakkas Hendrik Kingsep koos Tartumaalt saabunud värske taluniku August Postiga otsima uut elupika. Sellest ajast on eestlaste tegemistest suhteliselt hea ülevaade, sest väsimatu kirjarnees August Posti tähendas kõik märkimiväärse oma päevaraamatusse üles. Posti kirjutas - Mis ma siin näen on pea aegu sama nii kui kodu maal.

Sylvan Lake'i ääres olid eestlastel ka tuttavad naabrid - lõhtus (Alberta eestlased ütlesid ikka idakaare asemel jommik ja lääne asemel ohtu aga elas kaheksa soome peret. Kuid Sylvan Lake'i asula hakkas lüga suureks kasvama ja eestlased otsustasid stsida uue kodukohta, kus olla omaette. Sobiv paik leiti Medicine'i jõe orus, 24 miili Sylvan Lake'ist õhtus, kus laineline. haavasaludega kaetud maastik meenutas veelgi rohkem kodukohta meenutas veelgi rohkem kodukohta Eestis ja jõekaldail oli kümne miili ulatuses mustmullamaa August Posti kirjatah sel puhul Tullime Medisini!! Ohh Külma ilm tulla saije onneligult. Laius sealgi võsa ja tulekahjust laasalud rühermaa, kuid asunikusilm nägi selle all saagirkast huumusekihti.

18 aasta pärast elas kolme mehe - Hendrik Kingsepa, August Posti ja Hendrik Kinna - rajatud asunduses 160 - liikmeline kogukond. 1909. aastal asutasid Medicine'i oru eestlased oma kulu ja kirjadega ümberkaudsetele lastele kooli, mis eestlaste auks nimetati Estonian Schooliks. Ka esimese maatelefoniliini vedasid piirkonda eestlased. Iseäranis edukad olid eestlastest veskimehed Esimene veski hakkas tööle 1911, põhiosa tarbijaid tuli lähedalasuvast suurest soome asundusest. Karl Moro rajatud suur vesiveski varustas hilisemal ajal aga kogu naabruses asuvat Eckville'i linna elektrivooluga.

Nisu lokkas, seltsitegevus õitses ning seapeasültil, millest keegi kohalik varem kuulnudki poolnud, ja Väikese vereva kartuleid söövate eestlaste eesnimed olid juba paari aastaga ameerikapârasteks muutunud. Nii laskis Hendrik Kingsep end Henryks kutsuda, tema vennast sai Christian, Mihkel muutus Mikcliks, Kindlus Kennethiks, Juhan Johniks ja Anton Tonyks.

Kui Lõuna-Eesti mehed liikusid läände, siis Nurmekundest tulnud Magnus Tipman ja Mihkel Kutrast otsisid uut elupaika lõunas ja idas lagedas preerias. 1904 aastal siirduski kuus Nurmekunde päntolu peret Steulen linna lähedusse. Uut asundust hakau kutsuma Lindaks. paarl aasa jooksul tuli Sylvan Lake'i aarest elanikke lisaks. Agaras kinavahetuses kodumaaga ültstati uut elupaika ja nii järkus ümberasujaid väikeste vaheaegadega kuni 1920 aastate

keskpaigani.

Mõnedel andmetel oli Stettleri ehk Linda asundus oma kõrgaegadel suurim eestlaste asundus Põhja-Ameerikas. Alex Oro kirjutab Minu isa sai veebruaris 1901 Canadast John Kase käest kirja, kus sees oh, sun void sa omale parudirsi reha.

Ja paradus saabus, kui raudtee chitarnine Sieulerini välja jõudis ning nisu kasvatamine seetõttu isearanis hoogu läks. Samal ajal tekkis lähikonda uus eestlaste asundus Kalevn ning üheskoos rajau eestlaste kalmistu ja ehitati kirik ning loodi ka Püna Johannese luteriusu kogudus 1910, aastal asutari Linda Eesti Põllurneeste Selts ning aasta pärast ehitati ka seltsimaja, miilega käisid kaasas jalgpallimeeskond, pasunakoor, näitemanguselts, raamatukogu ja naisklubi.

Kuid ka paradiisis kulgeb clu iõusude ja möönadega Enne Esimest maailmasõda viis majanduslik kehvus paljud pered tagasi Eestisse trobikond julgeid otsustas õnne katsuda Austraalias. Sõja ajal küll viyahinnad lõusid, kuid paljudel taiunikele sai saautslikuks uhkeldamine. Nii ostis mõnigi mees maad junrde, er viljast rohkem raha reenida ja naabrimehe ees kelkida, ning kaotas võlgade kattcks hiljem kogu talu. 1920, aastail löi clu uuesti õitselc, kuid 1930. aastate majanduskriis tõl taas kehvad ajad.

Medicine'i oru eestlaste paradiisi lagundasid erinevad usulised ja poliitilised vaated.

Hendrik Kingsep kes ei jäänud juhust kasutamata, et kaaskondlastele sotsialismi olemust ja Marxi Kapitalisrurvusrada, püüdis asurada kohalikkn gotsialistlikku organisatsiooni söödikute ja vägistajate klassi vastu. 1910 aastal asutarud Medicine'i Oru Eesti Seltsi tegevust hindab Howard Palmer aktuvesimaks tollases Eckville'i ürnbrukonna ühiskonnas. Eesti tantsuorkester oli hinnatud ja otsitud kõigil paikkonna pidudel. Kuid kõrvuti laulu-ja muusikakooriga ning õpetlik-kultuurilise eneseharimisega käis seltsis poliitiline hanmine Hendriku eestvõtul.

Noorem rahsas tahtis aga pidu pidada ja nine saadu enam ühe saltsiga hakkania.

Samal ajal kui noorem seltskond chitas ühisel jõul ja ühise rahaga oma maadele Eesti Saah, rajas Hendrik Kingsep koos kanadalastega oma seltsimaja.

Venemaalt tsaarivõimu eest pakku tulnutele läks aga hinge New Yorgi solsaillistlike vaaderega eestlaste üleskutse minna Nõukogude Venemaale ehitarna esirnest eesti komrnuuni Koie 1923. aastal lahusid esimesed mehed mõni üksi, mõni perega, elles oma maad ja majad müünud Alberta osarugi valitsusele. Teiste scas läks August Posti, kelle lapsed aga Kanadasse jaid ning lalle poole aasta pärast tagasisõidupileti saatsid. Kui Posti pärast poolcaastast väljasõiduloa ootamist Moskvast Medicine'i orgu tagasi jõudis, küsis poeg temalt hapul irvel. Kuidas maitsest. Paljudel polnud aga enam kohta kubu tagasi tulla ega kedagi kes pileu saadaks Nil jäid Megicine'i orgu elama vaid mõned nalihingelised nõukogude-vastased ning endine tegus eesti kogukond sulas kiiresti kohalikku ühiskonda Tänapäeval osutab kunagisele eestlaste asupaigale Medieine'i orus teevitt idas läünak killgeval niaante.

Ent Linda asundus säilitas oma identiteedi. Kuigi 1966 aastal oli Eiodas 19 eesti talu millest nohas ohd mõlernad abielupooled eestlased on mingil määral eestudt runda veel tanapäevalgi.

1930 aastai ehitas seits uue seltsimaja Linda Hall, seltsi nim muutus Linda Hall Societvks ja

sellest sai kõikide ümberkaudsete inimeste kooskõimiskoht. 1953 aastast on seltsi ametlik keel inglise keel Linda Hall on ka tänavuste juubelipidustuste keskpunkt. 1909 aastal ehitatud Estonian School sai 1946. aastal uue hoone kuid nimi hoiti alles kuuekümnendail korrastati Linda Hall Society eestvõtul vana Linda surnuaed ja kink.

Tänapäeval tegutsevad lisaks Linda Hall Societyle Eesti seltsid veel kahes Alberta suuremas linnas - Calgarys ja Edmontonis.

Ning kuigi ümberasujate laste Eesti päritolule viiab vaid kanadalase jaoks võõrapärane perokonnanimi ning nad ise on eesti keelt parimal juhul kuulnud vaid suguvõsa kokkuvõtteks kinnitab Stettleni ajaleht et eestlased etendavad kohaliku kogukonna elustiili olulist rolli. Eestlased on andnud iurure panuse meie kultuuriellu, täitnud juhtpositsioone maakonnas ja edendanud ettevõtlusi kirjutab ajaleht juubeliürituse puhul. Enesestmõistetavalt on eestlased olnud jahtfiguurid Stettleri linna ümbruste aastapäevade ürituste korraldamisel, sest just nende esivanemad panid linnale alguse.

Need vähesed, kes veel maad harivad, kasvatavad põldudel endiselt Väikese vereva kartulit.

EESTLUSE TEINE SAJAND ALBERTAS

Esimesed Eestlased Hakkasid Kanadas Vilja kasvatamama 1899. aastal

Karmid Elutingimused on Eestlastele Kontimooda olnud

Esimesed eestlased joudsid sajanditaguse horeda asustusega Kanadasse 19. sajandi 15pul ning valisid oma elukohaks tulevase Alberta provintsi.

1899. aastal saabusid Vorumaalt parit vennad Hendrik ja Kristjan Kingsep Edmontoni ja Calgary vahel asuva Sylvani jarve aarde ning alustasid seal uut elu. Alles kuus aastat hiljem moodustati Alberta provints ja tanase suurlinna Edmontoni sOnniaastaks kirjutatakse 1910. Kaks aastat tagasi tahistati suurejooneliselt eestluse esimest sajandit Kanadas.

EESTI ELUS PETTUNUD TALUMEHED votsid Kanada tee esmakordselt jalge alia 19. sajandi lopul. Kauge tundmatu maa ahvatles vabaduse ja piiramatu voimalustega Eesti talupidajaid. Samuti ka Krimmi onne otsima lainuid ja sealsetes oludes pettunud valjarandajaid. Teekond horeda asustusega Kanadasse oli jUba omaette julgustokk, kuid kohalejoudnuid ootas Kesk-Kanadas viljakas 160 aakri suurune pollumaatokk, mille eest tuli esialgu tasuda vaid 10 dollarit. Kui talunik oli kolme aastaga utes harinud vahemalt 15 aakrit maad, vois ta selle jaadavalt oma nimele kinnitada. Samas oli voimalus soodsalt maad juurde osta.

Esimeste eestlastena said Edmontoni ja Calgary vahel asuva imekauni Sylvani jarve aares endale hingemaa Vorumaa kooliopetaja Hendrik Kingsep ja tema meremehest vend Kristjan. See oli 9. mail 1899. Kaks aastat hiljem elas jarve aares viis eesti perekonda ja aastal 1903 oli Livonia asunduse nime teeninud eestlaste koloonias 16 talu. Vahepeal jouti aasta isegi Ohisuses elada.

Eestlaste elu-olu talletas Tartumaalt parit August Posti, kes pidas paevaraamatut, kuhu ta tegi esimesed sissekandeid juba oma tormisel merereisil.

"See oli Whi, Orgne maa, tais pajuvoosa ja metsatulekahjudest jaanud suitsenud risu ja kannustikku. Kliima oli karm: hilishallad olid sagedased juunikuu algul ja varajasi ookOlmi tuli ette juba juulikuu lopul. Lund sadas pahatihti septembris, keset viljapeksu, kuid hilissOgis oma kauni "indiaani suvega" paastis olukorra. POSiva talvega tuli arvestada juba novembris. Temperatuur koil

EESTI IDENTITEEDI ARENGURAJAL KANADAS ESK TOETUSEL

Kohalikud uudised 23 May 2008 Andres Raudsepp

Kaks peamist eestlaste ajaloolist asukohta Kanadas on L6una-Alberta ja Montreal. Esimese külge võiks riputada aasta 1899. Montrealis, kus eestlased hakkasid liikuma veerand sajandit hiljem, oli kulminatsiooniks Montreali Eesti Seltsi asutamine aastal 1933. Vahepeal on need kaks teineteisest kaugel paiknevat kogukonda arenenud üpris erineval moel.

Albertasse suundunud eestlased moodustasid peamiselt kolmes asukohas agraarOhiskonna 20. saj. algul. Nende kui Kanada eesti pioneeride staatust tunnustati tanavu 3. mail toimunud tseremoonial mahuka kodulehekOlje avamisega internetis, millest anti juba marku mbOdunud sOgisel, kui filmifestivalil estdocs linastus Alberta vanaeestlaste elu kasitlev film.

Tollel sisukal sündmusel tekkis soov omandada põhjalikum teavet eesti paritoluga kanada pioneeride kohta ning isiklikult kohtuda filmis k6nelevate Ain Dave Kiili ja Eda McClungiga Alberta Eesti Kultuuriparandi Seltsist (*Alberta Estonian Heritage Society*).

Kuna film oli vändatud ilmse professionaalsusega, soovisin veel andmeid selle tekkeloo kohta. Avastasin, et siin oli Eesti Sihtkapitali ettenagelikkus mangus.

Seltsi välissuhete juht Dave Kiil selgitas, et algatuseks tuli ESK kohe vastu majandusliku toetusega, mis jargnevalt kaivitas suurema toetuse Alberta provintsilt. Peale filmi tegemist saadi veer toetust vastavalt fbderaalvalitsuse organilt ja algas interneti kodulehekOlje kujundamine, mille aadress on: www.AlbertaSource.ca/Abestonia...

Tunnustust eestluse identiteedi tugevdamise eest vaarivad Alberta Eesti Kultuuriparandi Seltsi juhid ja kaudselt ka Eesti Sihtkapital Kanadas.

Eesti identiteedi areng Montreali piirkonnas on hiljuti votnud erineva p6örde. Heidaksime vaid pogusa pilgu minevikku. Kui 1947. a hakkas sinna saabuma eestlasi pogenikelaagreist, algas seal markimisvaarne uhiskondlik taus. Uustulnukatega uhinesid 1933. a. asutatud Montreali Eesti Seltsi "Koiti" liikmed. Pool sajandit nautis Montreali eestlaskond vilgast uhiskondlikku elu. Ent seda hakkas mojutama 1960. aastate lopu poole alanud valjarandamine Toronto suunas. Eriti vahenes teise ja kolmanda polvkonna eestlaste arv, kohalejaanud noortel katkes aga uhendus eestlaskonnaga.

Kuid ajad ja asjad muutuvad, ja seekord dramaatiliselt. Kuulnud paar aastat tagasi taaselustunud Montreali Eesti Seltsi (MES) tegevusest, helistasin seltsi esimehele, muusikapedagoog Karl J. Raudsepale ja abiesimehele Anton Tikovtile. Selgus, et Montrealis on palju organiseerimist66d tehtud. Sain ka aru, et seltsi nimekiri on vorreldes lahiminevikuga oluliselt taienenud noortega. Tegevusest tostab esimees esile huvitava naitena eesti keele eduka kursuse. Tema s6nul on ullatav naha, kuidas nooremad, keda pole pikki aastaid eestlaste Oritustel nahtud, tunnevad nuud eesti keele ja kultuuri vastu suurt huvi. Keelekursust juhendab Enel Onu Ottawast. Siingi on manginud olulist rolli Eesti Sihtkapital Kanadas oma majandusliku toetusega.

Kui Kanada paritoluga eestlane peab eesti identiteedi margi kandmist enesestmoistetavaks, siis Karl Raudsepp jutustab uhest huvitavast erilaadsest seigast. Prantsuse-kanadalasest Eesti Vabariigi aukonsul Montrealis Monsieur Maurice Forget on hakanud eestlaste tegevusele kaasa looma. Ilmselt on ka tema silmis eesti identiteet oluline. Ta võttis agaralt osa Eesti Vabariigi 90. aastapäeva kontserdi korraldamisest, mis kulges suure eduga.

Sellest kontserdist ilmus 7. martsil Eesti Elus Roxanne Martelli sulest ingliskeelne artikkel. Karl Raudsepp mainib: "See oli haruldane kontsert, mille ule eestlased olid ulimalt uhked. Kolmandik publikust olid latlased, leedulased, prantsuse-kanadalased ja teised kohalikud mitte-eestlased. Armas Maiste on Montrealis hasti tuntud ja hinnatud."

Teatavasti on tuntud klaverikunstniku ja pedagoogi Armas Maiste elukoht nuud Ottawa eeslinn, mis on ka lahedal Montrealile, kus ta oli sumfooniaorkestri pianist ja ulikooli oppejoud.

Oli huvitav, et kontserdisaal, mis kandis jazzikuulsuse Oscar Petersoni nime, oli hetkel muutunud eesti jazzikuulsuse voidutrooniks. Elagu Maiste! Karl Raudsepa hinnagul taitis publik kaks kolmandikku 600-kohalisest saalist. Selle esindusliku kontserdi labiviimiseks saabus samuti majanduslik toetus Eesti Sihtkapitalilt.

Hiljutises vestluses ESK esinase Lia Hessiga avaldas viimane soovi toetada just neid eestlaste asukohti, kust Sihtkapitalile tulevad parandisummad. Arusaadavalt on Montreali eestlastelt tulnud ka vastavat toetust.

Soovitan siinjuures lugejail tutvuda ka Montreali Eesti Seltsi koduleheküljega: www.mtlmes.ca.

Jaame ootama, mida ponevat Montreali eestlased lahitulevikus veel ette votavad.

ALBERTA ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY



**Estonians
reconnect in
Calgary**



Queen of 4 A.M



**"Alberta's
Estonian
Heritage"
website launch**



**'Queen of 4 AM'
winner!**



4K's performing



**A cheerful
evening!**



A family reunion



**A medieval feast
in Tallinn**



**A Medieval Feast
in Tallinn,
Estonia**



**A Memorable
Evening in
Tallinn, Estonia**



**A rendezvous at
the Golden
Piglet Pub**



Adriana Davies



**AEHA Heritage
Book**



AEHS AGM 2009



**AEHS Annual
General Meeting,
2009**



**AEHS Board
meeting**



**AEHS Board
Member, 2008**



**AEHS
Executives and
spouses**



**AEHS Formative
meeting**



**AEHS formative
meeting**



**AEHS Formative
Meeting**



**AEHS
Incorporated**



AEHS logo



**AEHS meets in
Los Angeles**



**AEHS President
attends West
Coast Estonian
Days**



AEHS Special meeting



Alberta Estonian Heritage Website



Alberta Estonians at West Coast Estonian Days in Seattle, 2009



Alberta Estonians in Hollywood!



Alberta's Estonians DVD



Alberta's Estonians DVD Label



Alice and Susan Kenzle



An Edmonton welcome



Arne and Eda (McClung) Matiisen



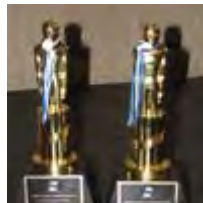
Art show and sale in Los Angeles



Astrid and Stephanie Ustina



Attendees at the Annual General Meeting



Awards of Appreciation



Baltic Heritage Network Summer School Participants at Sangaste Manor, 2011



Baltic Heritage Network Summer School. 2011



Bob Kingsep at the podium



Bob Tipman



Bon Appetit!



Bruce and Judy (Kerbes) Graham



Celebration Flame



Ceremonial Stone Exchange



Ceremony at the original Estonian cemetery near Gilby



Cheers!



Cheers!



Crowded Song Festival



Dave Kiil



Dave Kiil at 2006 AGM



Dave Kiil at Wst Coast Estonian Days



Dave Kiil receives Award of Recognition



Dinner at Golden Piglet Inn



Estonian costumes



Estonian Dance Festival



Estonian Folk Dancing



Estonian folkdancing



Estonian woman's headgear



Extended Kingsep family



Father and Son at Jaanipäev



First AGM of AEHS



First recipient of AEHS pin



Folkdance performance



Formation of AEHS



GESE- a symbol of unity and reconnection



Gilby cemetery



Golden Piglet Pub



Group of Alberta Estonians in Tallinn



Happy Hour in Tallinn



Harry and Irma Ruus



Harry and son Ivar Ruus



Helgi Leesment in Los Angeles



Helgi, Dave and Martha



Hennel family



**Heritage Website
Launch in Red
Deer**



**Horma Ott
headstone**



**Horma Ott
headstone in
Võrumaa**



I give up!



**Inaugural
Annual General
Meeting**



Jüri Kraav



Jaanipäev 2005



Jaanipäev 2007



**Jaanipäev at
Linda Hall**



**Jaanipäev at
Linda Hall**



**Jaanipäev
Registration
Desk**



Janet Matiisen



**Kilplased in Los
Angeles**



**Kingsep's in
Tallinn, Estonia**



**Kingsep's
incognito**



**Letter of
Appreciation**



**Letter of
Appreciation**



**Letter of
Appreciation**



Livia Kivisild



**Log-sawing
competition**



**Log-sawing
competition**



Map of Estonia



**Martha Munz
Gue at West
Coast Estonian
Days**



**Nail pounding
competition**



**Our own
Olympic
Medallist**



**Peter and
Jeanette Asmus**



**Pig's Knuckles
and Sauerkraut**



**Planning of 2009
Jaanipäev**



President Ilves



**Presidential
hosts**



Queen of 4 AM



Queen of 4 AM



**Queen of 4:00
AM Winner**



**Rasmus Lumi
and Bob
Kingsep**



**Rasmus Lumi
visit**



**Rasmus Lumi
visits Alberta**



**Reader's Theatre
presentation**



Reminiscing



**Rendezvous in
Tallinn**



**Reunion of
friends**



Roller Blading



**Sõmerpalu
Pühajõe
Lastekoor**



Salmon Vendor



**Saue School,
Estonia**



**Song and Dance
Festival Parade**



Song celebration



**Spirited
conducting at
the Song
Festival**



**Stephanie and
Astrid Ustina**



**The Book
Launch**



The Book Presentation



The Golden Piglet Pub



The Great Estonian Stone Exchange (GESE) event



The Kraav's in Los Angeles



Thrice Pioneers Reader's Theatre, Los Angeles



Thrice Pioneers Reader's Theatre, Los Angeles



Victoras Snieckus



Welcome to Jaanipäev!



West Coast Estonian days



West Coast Estonian Days



West Coast Estonian Days Folk Dance



West Coast Estonian Days in Los Angeles



West Coast Estonian Days in Seattle



Women's nail pounding competition

ARTS AND CRAFTS



**Violins by
Matthews family**



**'Moon
Reflections'**



**1999 Centennial
logo**



A Clay Jug



A Hinton Sunset



**A large
chip-carved box**



A Table Setting



**A wooden
necklace**



AEHS lapel pin



Amaryllis Flower



An Ostrich Egg



Andrea Tamme



**Antelope and
Deer**



**Artist Lillian
Munz**



Autumn colors



Beer stein



Beer Tankard



**Bruce and Judy
(Kerbes) Graham**



**Bust of Rein
Sasok**



**Canadian
Rockies**



**Carved Wood
Plate**



**Carved wooden
treasure chest**



Centennial logo



Clay Pottery



**Coffee Table
Cloth**



**Dave Kiil
painting**



**Ellen Erdman
Painting**



**Engraved
brooches**



**Estonian art and
crafts display**



**Estonian beer
tankard**



**Estonian
Costumes and
Crafts**



**Estonian
craftsman**



**Estonian display
in Calgary**



**Estonian
embroidered folk
design**



**Estonian
embroidery
pattern**



**Estonian
Graphic**



**Estonian
jewellery**



**Estonian
Landscape**



**Estonian
leatherwork**



**Estonian silver
brooch**



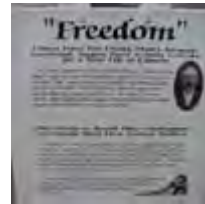
**Estonian
windmill**



Folk art



Fred Tippie



Freedom Poster



Gold Pendant



**Intricate
Needlework**



**Judy Graham
painting**



**Leather covered
Guest Book**



My First Home



**Needlework
Patterns**



**Painted cream
can**



**Painting of
"Püha Järv"**



Pottery Craft



Rita Matiisen



**Rita Matiisen's
weaving**



**Silver beer
tankard**



Stained Glass



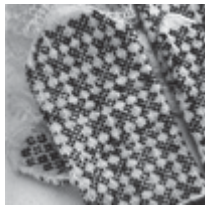
**Tallinn Old Town
Plate**



**Tallinn, Estonia
Skyline**



**Traditional
Estonian
Jewelry**



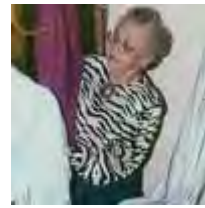
**Traditional
Estonian
Knitting**



Wall Hanging



**Waterton Park
Landscape**



Weaving display



Woodburning



**Woodburning
fantasy**



**Woodcrafts by
Dave**



**Wooden hope
chest**

CELEBRATIONS



Queen of 4 A.M



"Princess" Eva Kivi



'Queen of 4 AM' winner!



2005 Jaanipäeva Celebration



2009 Jaanipaew Committee



4K's performing



93rd Anniversary of Estonian Independence



A social evening



A summer picnic



AEHS Executives and spouses



Aino and Viktor Virak Christmas



AjaKaja



An Estonian chariot



Baltic Babes



Baltic Choir



Baltic Choir conductor Ludmilla Kivi



Baltic Choir performing



Baltics regain their Independence



Betty Ann and Lisa Kiil



Bob Kingsep



Calgary Christmas



Calgary Lithuanian Independence Day



Christmas in Calgary



Christmas in Calgary



Christmas party



**Christmas Party
in Edmonton**



Christmas Time



**Christopher
Gullickson**



Dave Kiil



**Dave Kiil at the
podium**



**Diana Kiil and
Tiina Payson**



Eda McClung



Edgar Dunning



**Edmonton
Estonian Society
function**



Estonian choir



**Estonian Hall
party**



**Estonian
Independence
Day**



**Estonian
Independence
Day Celebration**



**Estonian
Independence
Day celebration
1991**



**Estonian
representatives
at Calgary
Lithuanian
independence
day gathering**



**Estonian
wrestling Team**



Eva Weir



Flag Bearers



**Flags at Linda
Hall 2005**



**Freedom for
Estonia**



**Garry Raabis
Band**



Gue Crew



Hay ride



Helmut Langeste



Helmut Langeste



**Holy Spirit
Christmas**



**Ida and Jay
Murray**



**Independence
Day Celebration**



**Independence
Day
Celebrations**



**Independence
Day Gathering**



**Independence
Day in Calgary**



**Independence
Day in Calgary**



**Independence
Day, Edmonton**



Inge Zach



Jaanipäev 2005



Jaanipäev 2005



**Jaanipäev 2007
sing along**



**Jaanipäev at
Linda Hall**



**Jaanipäev at
Linda Hall**



**Jaanipäev at
Linda Hall**



**Jaanipäev at
Linda Hall**



**Jaanipäev
Celebration at
Fort Edmonton
Park**



**Jaanipäev
Celebration at
Stettler**



**Jaanipäev in
1990**



**Jaanipäev in
Eckville**



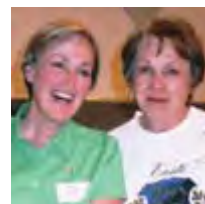
**Jaanipäev in
Edmonton**



**Jaanipäev in the
Country**



**Jaanipäev
participants,
1990.**



**Jaanipäev
Registration
Desk**



**Jaanipäev
Sing-song at
Linda Hall**



**Jaanipäev with
Estonian
wrestlers**



Jaanipäev 2005



**Ladies
Tug-of-War**



Linda Hall Stage



Linda Hall, 2006



**Lisa Kerbes
Headstone**



Log sawing



**Log sawing
competition**



**Log-sawing
competition**



**Log-sawing
contest**



**Marguerite
Kerbes**



**Marguerite
Kerbes Quilt**



**McKay School
Christmas**



**Midsummer at
Linda Hall**



**Nail pounding
competition**



Ottomar Laaman



**Our own
Olympic
Medallist**



Queen of 4 AM



Queen of 4 AM



**Queen of 4 AM
aspirant**



**Queen of 4 AM
contestant**



**Queen of 4.AM
competition**



**Queen of 4:00
AM Winner**



**Reader's Theatre
presentation**



**Remembering
Estonian
Independence**



**Reverend Walter
Johanson**



**Roy and Barbara
Gullickson**



Roy Klaus



**Santa Claus has
arrived!**



**Selection of
salads**



**Shadow
Productions
Crew**



**Sing-song at the
Jaanipäev**



**Singing around
the bonfire**



The 4K's Band



The Head Table



Thrice Pioneers



**Toomas
Pääsuke**



Tug-o-war



Volleyball



**We have a
winner!**



**Welcome to
Jaanipäev!**

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS



**"Kilplased"
folk dancers**



"Queen of 4 AM"



**1999 Centennial
logo**



**1999 Centennial
mug**



**A centennial
breakfast**



**A Centennial
Crowd**



A Centennial trio



**A footrace for
youngsters**



A job well done



**A Musical
Interlude**



**Alberta's
Estonian
Centennial
celebration**



Art and Crafts



Award of Merit



**Barbara
Gullickson**



**Barbara
Gullickson**



**Barons
Cemetery**



**Barons
Cemetery gate**



**Barons Centennial
Group**



**Barons Centennial
logo**



**Barons
Centennial
planning group**



Bonfire in Gilby



**Canadian
Estonian Award
of Merit**



**Canadian-Estonian
Award of Merit**



**Canadian-Estonian
Award of Merit
Medal**



**Centennial
breakfast**



**Centennial
Co-chairs**



Centennial logo



**Centennial
Organizing
Committee**



**Centennial
Planners at Work**



**Centennial
sing-along**



**Church Service
in Barons**



**Cross country
skiers**



**Dedication of flag
poles**



Erdman brothers



**Erdman
Cultivator**



**Estonian beer
tankard**



**Estonian
Canadian
Centennial**



**Estonian folk
dance**



**Family story
boards**



**Folks, breakfast
is ready!**



**Gilby
Anniversary
2001**



Gilby Centennial



**Harry Jaako in
Barons**



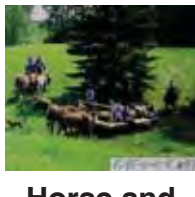
Helmut Langeste



**Homestead
Certificate**



**Horma Ott
Kanksep**



**Horse and
wagon convoy**



**Horse-and-wagon
days**



Jaanipäev bonfire!



**Jakob Erdman
family**



**Joosep and
Anna Tipman
Family**



**Julia Saar-an
accomplished
vocalist**



Kinna family



**Kinna-Raabis
Family**



Koots Family



Kotkas Clan



Let the good times roll!



Lillian and Albert Munz



Linda Hall



Martha Munz Gue



Mottus Family



Nail pounding competition



Nicklom Family



Original Estonian Cemetery,



Original Gilby Estonian Cemetery



Perry Kotkas



Perry Kotkas



Peter Leesment



Pig Roast



Pihooja family



Presentation of Centennial plate



Re-dedication of Barons Cemetery



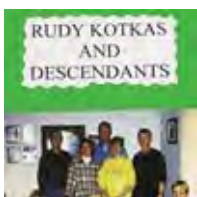
Rededication of the Barons Cemetery



Rev. Don Koots



Roasted Pig



Rudy Kotkas



Sala kõrts (secret pub)



Sauna Planning



Sestrap Family



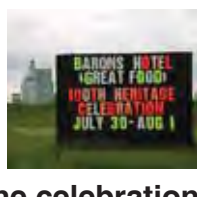
Silberman Family Storyboard



Sillak Family Storyboard



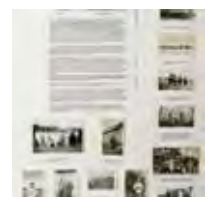
Tall Herman flag



The celebration is on!



The Raabis Band



Tipman-Klaus Journey



**Two pioneer
descendants**



**Unveiling the
Gilby Cemetery
Plaque**



**Vancouver
folkdancers**



**Well-deserved
recognition**



**Youngest
descendant of
pioneers?**

VIDEO

- Barbara Gullickson

Barbara Gullickson grew up on a farm north of Barons, Alberta. She graduated from high school in Barons. Following a secretarial program at Mount Royal College in Calgary she married Leroy (Roy) Gullickson. Currently, Barbara is a member of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society and the Barons & District Historical Society. She is the Chairperson of the Barons 2010 Group, an organization planning the 100 year celebration of Barons as a community.

- Dave Kiil

Dave Kiil was born in 1936 on the island of Saaremaa, Estonia - the largest island in the Baltic Sea. In 1944, Dave's family made the difficult decision of fleeing their country when Soviet forces arrived commencing an unwelcome occupation that lasted some fifty years. Dave attended high school and university in Toronto, graduating from the University of Toronto with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry in 1960. His career in forestry took him to Calgary to initiate a forest fire research program in the province of Alberta. Following several trips to the land of his ancestors, Dave's interests shifted to family history research and involvement in the Edmonton Estonian Society. In 2004, he contributed to the formation of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society, a province-wide organization dedicated to preserve Estonian heritage.

- Robert Kingsep

Robert (Bob) is a grandson of Henry and Emilie Kingsep, the first Estonian pioneers to homestead in Alberta. Bob attended high school in Eckville and continued his education in Edmonton, establishing a career as a computer systems analyst. As a descendant of Alberta's first Estonian pioneers, Bob was invited to co-host the 1999 Alberta Estonian Centennial celebrations in Stettler. Inspired by the events in Stettler Bob became an active member of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society and became president of the newly formed organization in 2007.

- Arne Matiisen

Arne Matiisen was born in Tallinn to Voldemar (Volli) and Rita Matiisen. Arne completed Grade 12 in 1957 and attended the University of Alberta on a Wheat Pool Scholarship. Upon graduation, he began what turned out to be a 40 year career in the oil industry, working in both Canada and abroad. At the University of Alberta, Arne met his future wife Carolyn Ray Wilfley. They married in 1962 and have two daughters, Janet Ray and Melanie Gail, and a granddaughter Arabelle Ray. In retirement, Arne and Carolyn split the summer season between their home in Calgary and their cabin at Hidden Valley. Winters are enjoyed in their RV touring the southern United States.

- Eda McClung

Eda Matiisen McClung was born in Tallinn, Estonia to Voldemar (Volli) and Rita Matiisen in 1943. The following year, her parents along with their sons Hendo and Arne fled to Sweden to escape Soviet occupation. Continuing political uncertainty in Europe convinced the family to immigrate to the Eckville/Gilby area of central Alberta in 1948. Eda completed school at Eckville in 1962 and like her brothers before her, attended the University of Alberta. She graduated with a Masters degree in Counselling Psychology leading to a career at the University Hospital in the area of Adult Psychiatry. In 2005, the province-wide Alberta Estonian Heritage Society was formed. Eda serves on its Board and is active in several projects including the 2007 production of the DVD "Alberta's Estonians" and the Heritage Community Foundation website project entitled "Alberta's Estonian Heritage".

- Evelyn Shursen

Evelyn Shursen was born in Stettler, Alberta in 1939, the eldest child of Paul and Agnes Klaus. Her grandfather, Juri Klaus, immigrated to Canada from Estonia in 1902. As a child growing up in Alberta, Evelyn heard numerous stories about her Estonian heritage, particularly on the life of her grandfather. Evelyn graduated from high school in Stettler and enrolled at the University of Alberta where she became a teacher. She taught at Stettler Junior High School for 35 years before retiring in 1994.

- Lori Sparrow

Lori Sparrow is a fifth generation Estonian descendant. Her great great grandfather, John Kinna, was one of the original pioneer families that settled in the Medicine Valley near Eckville, Alberta. Lori maintains fond memories of growing up in this area and retaining her Estonian heritage. Lori is a registered nurse for the David Thompson Health region and resides on a farm north of Eckville with her husband Rick Sparrow and their three young children, Lexi, Evan and Reed.

- Robert Tipman

Bob Tipman is a descendant of the Tipmans, an Estonian family who migrated to Canada from Nurmekunde, a village near Tver, Russia in 1902. Bob grew up on a farm near Stettler, Alberta. He enrolled at university and obtained a PhD in Mineral Engineering. Bob represented Alberta's Estonian community as a member of the Alberta Cultural Heritage Council from 1979 to 1984, and the Alberta Cultural Heritage Foundation from 1985 to 1988. From 2005 to 2006, he served as the first ever president of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society. Bob is married to Cathy and they have two children who reside in Calgary and Saskatoon. He remains semi-retired living in Calgary but spends his winter months in Mexico.

- Trailer

BARBARA GULLICKSON

Produced by: [Polar Bear Entertainment Inc.](#)

Barbara Gullickson grew up on a farm north of Barons, Alberta. She graduated from high school in Barons. Following a secretarial program at Mount Royal College in Calgary she married Leroy (Roy) Gullickson.

Currently, Barbara is a member of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society and the Barons & District Historical Society. She is the Chairperson of the Barons 2010 Group, an organization planning the 100 year celebration of Barons as a community.

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DAVE KIIL

Produced by: [Polar Bear Entertainment Inc.](#)

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ROBERT KINGSEP

Produced by: [Polar Bear Entertainment Inc.](#)

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ARNE MATIISEN

Produced by: [Polar Bear Entertainment Inc.](#)

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In retirement, Arne and Carolyn split the summer season between their home in Calgary and their cabin at Hidden Valley. Winters are enjoyed in their RV touring the southern United States.

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EDA MCCLUNG

Produced by: [Polar Bear Entertainment Inc.](#)

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EVELYN SHURSEN

Produced by: [Polar Bear Entertainment Inc.](#)

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LORI SPARROW

Produced by: [Polar Bear Entertainment Inc.](#)

Lori Sparrow is a fifth generation Estonian descendant. Her great great grandfather, John Kinna, was one of the original pioneer families that settled in the Medicine Valley near Eckville, Alberta. Lori maintains fond memories of growing up in this area and retaining her Estonian heritage.

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ROBERT TIPMAN

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Bob is married to Cathy and they have two children who reside in Calgary and Saskatoon. He remains semi-retired living in Calgary but spends his winter months in Mexico.

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TRAILER

Produced by: [Polar Bear Entertainment Inc.](#)

This video provides an introduction to the history of Estonian settlement in Alberta. Relatives of early Estonian settlers discuss the journey of their ancestors, and identify the areas they settled in long ago.

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CONTACT US

If you have any questions or comments about the *Alberta's Estonian Heritage* Web site, you may contact our Webmaster. We welcome your feedback.

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INFORMATION

The Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS) is a nonprofit organization established in 2005 to preserve and promote the cultural history of Alberta's Estonian community, and to increase awareness of developments in Estonia.

Since 2006, a major focus of the AEHS has been the development of a heritage project to research, collect, describe and communicate information about the history and activities of Alberta's Estonians. The deliverables include an richly illustrated heritage book, a documentary DVD, an Estonian Collection preserved at the Provincial Archives of Alberta, and a comprehensive virtual archive with online access worldwide.

The Heritage Community Foundation is a charitable Trust (Charitable Number: 87082 2541 RR0001) committed to connecting people with heritage. As a new kind of community foundation, it is not bounded by geography but based on interest in the value of heritage for individuals, their communities and society.

The Foundation's goal is for heritage to be valued by everyone. Heritage is broadly defined in all its aspects-historical, natural, cultural, scientific, and technological. To enable the greatest possible access to the resources of heritage institutions and organizations, the Foundation has become a leader in the development of online learning resources. The Foundation's extensive collection of websites can be found at AlbertaSource-home of the *Alberta Online Encyclopedia*.

PARTNERS

This project was made possible thanks to the financial contribution of the Community Initiatives Program-Alberta Lottery Fund, the Human Resources and Social Development Canada- New Horizons Program, the National Estonian Foundation (Sihtkapital) of Canada and the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research.

The Alberta Estonian Heritage Website was developed by the Heritage Community Foundation, Alberta's heritage charity. The website is a part of www.Albertasource.ca - the Alberta Online Encyclopedia. This Heritage Community Foundation initiative is giving a World Wide Web presence to the historical, natural, cultural, scientific, and technological heritage of Alberta. It is also a vehicle for ensuring that our heritage is valued by everyone.

This community cultural memory and living tradition project application was accomplished by a partnership with the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society.

PROJECT TEAM

Website update from 2009 to 2011

- Dave Kiil: Compiler
- Eda McClung: Compiler
- Clifford Barnett: Senior Web Developer
- Anita Jenkins: Writer, Editor
- Astrid Blodgett: Writer, Editor

Administration and Development 2007-2009

- Adriana Davies, PhD, Executive Director
- Nena Jovic-Andrejevic, BA, Acting General Manager

Graphic Design

- Jason Neal, Web Designer

Project Team

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- David Mantello, MA, Researcher, Writer, Editor
- Rachelle Drouin, BA, Editor
- Marla Epp, Editor
- Julie Rossignol, BA, Editor

Technical Development

- Clifford Barnett, I.S.P., Senior Web Programmer
- Chace Groves, Web Developer
- Kayle Wert, Technical Intern
- William (Wai-Lin) Maw, Systems Administrator

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