

AJAKAJA

SUMMER 2011 • ISSUE 34



ALBERTA ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY



Alberta Estonian Heritage Society, 2011

The Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS) was formally established on April 23, 2005 to preserve and promote the cultural heritage of Alberta's Estonian community, and to increase awareness of developments in Estonia.

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AjaKaja

AjaKaja is published semi-annually to inform members about Society activities and heritage topics.
Publication and distribution costs are covered by membership dues.

Members and friends are encouraged to submit articles, photographs and heritage-related items
to Eda McClung at emcclung@shaw.ca

Non-members may purchase AjaKaja for \$5.00 by contacting Eda McClung

Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS) website: www.aehs.ca

Visit "Alberta's Estonian Heritage" website: www.albertasource.ca/abestonians

Cover photograph: courtesy of Leah Hennel, May 2011, in the Pioneer Cemetery near Linda Hall. Assistance with graphic design provided by Janet Matiisen. Both Leah and Janet have won awards for their work at the Calgary Herald. They are representatives of the younger generation, proud of their Estonian heritage.



AjaKaja

Alberta Estonian
Heritage Society

Summer 2011
Issue Number 34

From the Editors' Desk

The evocative cover photo taken near Linda Hall by Leah Hennel is of a brooding sky, the sorrowing figure of a woman amongst aged gravestones, the brave little 1906 Chapel, green fertile fields, and above all, the Estonian flag waving valiantly: could this be a metaphor for the Alberta Estonian experience? Freedom, fields, faith, flag... These elements have stood the test of time and defined our past experience.

How are we doing in the present? AEHS was formed six years ago as a province-wide organization to preserve and promote Estonian cultural heritage. We have succeeded beyond all expectations with production of a DVD, a beautiful illustrated book, and a digital and traditional archive. These have contributed to knowing our past; but as importantly, this material is now available to a global audience. The Internet has become the tool of choice for communication, across distances, generations, and interests. It is central to almost everything that touches our lives. In AEHS we know where we are now but how do we plan for the future?

Our membership numbers have remained strong, with a stalwart core of volunteers at the helm. Because we are widely dispersed, face-to-face contacts are less frequent. In today's Internet culture, increasingly it is use of Facebook, YouTube or websites which form the basis of social connections or 'friends'. This is especially true for the younger generation.

How can AEHS become relevant to our 'youth wing'? How can the importance of youth, with their enthusiasm and fresh ideas be captured? One answer likely lies in making more use of today's technology within AEHS. How exciting to contemplate using the web to plan Jaanipäev 2012 at Gilby! Although it is a celebration of tradition and heritage, it could capture the interest of the youth wing through online planning. Specific events with appeal to this generation could be considered. Perhaps these could become the springboard for a fresh, interactive AEHS member website.

We can all attest to fond memories of childhood involvement in heritage celebrations. But nostalgia is not the reason for recruiting the youth wing. It is the future not the past that matters. Our beautiful cover design is an example of youthful talent and excellence. As we plan for 2012, let's be future thinking to attract our important younger generation.

We thank all who took time to contribute material for this issue! Your articles, comments and feedback are always welcome. Best wishes for an enjoyable, relaxing summer.

Eda McClung and Dave Kiil

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Riho Kruuv in Calgary!
Riho Kruuv, the Charge d'Affaires for Estonia to Canada, will be attending in Calgary on Monday, July 11, 2011 between the hours of 10:00 am and 4:00 pm to host a consular day for matters that persons within Alberta may wish to deal with. Riho will be at the office of the Honorary Consul to Estonia in Alberta located at 2900 First Executive Place, 350 - 7th Ave SW, Calgary, Alberta. Persons who wish to book an appointment with Riho are requested to contact Riho's Ottawa office at 1 (613) 789-4222. Either Riho or his assistant Helen Naarits can arrange the time for the appointment.

President's Message

Tere,



As an armchair psychologist and a cousin to identical twins, I've always been fascinated by the mannerisms and behavior of people with common genetics. Upon my involvement with the AEHS it became obvious that I was surrounded by a number of interesting, energetic and somewhat fastidious individuals. While these were a little disconcerting at first, there was something comforting about these attributes. The mystery resolved as I came to recognize traits of my aunts and uncles. We are so alike!

As our Society evolved, our aspirations progressed from theory to completion and are now on record as a significant historic contribution and a source of pride to us all. With tongue in cheek we promote our penchant for committees, but from my experience, results are the norm. Two recent articles prompt me to expand on that point.

The first was a link I posted on our Member website which outlines an impressive garbage cleanup operation undertaken in Estonia. It highlights the systematic and thorough organizational work required to make this happen. The history behind it details an old habit in Estonia of disposing of any unwanted items in the nearest forest. The volume was enormous.

The bottom line is that through GPS tracking and very detailed organization, the entire physical operation was concluded within one working day!

A few weeks later I was fed a link which I posted on our website which reports on the pending purchase of Skype by Microsoft. Skype is a successful telephone network provided over the Internet and is an Estonian creation. This 8.5 billion dollar deal is no trivial transaction and apparently the largest software purchase ever made by Microsoft.

As you can appreciate, it was no stretch for me to draw parallels between the examples from Estonia and the achievements of our Society. I concede that the genetic implication could be countered by coincidence and the focus of an over-zealous mind, but in any case, there is no denying the accomplishments. The results are definitive and I think we've earned the privilege to speculate on their roots.

Our longevity is not without some challenges. One of the realities confronting us is the negative birth rate in Canada. With Estonia enjoying independence and success, the potential for new membership from there will diminish as well. As you know, our talent pool has been stretched, but our 5-year plan is almost behind us. We will rest, regroup, and engage our collective creativity to continue our success. After all, no borders, continents nor generational disparity can dissuade a genetic predisposition!

As Albertans we feel compelled to impress outsiders with the harshness of our winters and the ferocity of our mosquitoes. I suspect it's an old turf protection ploy devised to deter invaders. We have a secret passion for the seasons and each of us has our favorite. I'm always roused by the excitement of spring. Everything is new, promising and loaded with potential. With that in mind, I'll roll up my sleeves, scoff the repellent and raise my glass to the promise of spring and to the future of the AEHS!

Tervitades, Bob Kingsep

Peter Pastewka Appointed Estonian Honorary Consul in Alberta.

Livia Kivisild



Left to right: Astrid Pastewka, Riho Kruuv, Estonian Charge d’Affaires in Canada, Peter Pastewka, Estonian Honorary Consul in Alberta, his wife Tiina (Jänes) Pastewka, son Daniel, daughter Katherine

A significant event early this year for the Alberta Estonian community was the appointment of Calgary lawyer Peter Pastewka as the first ever Honorary Consul for Estonia in Alberta.

Members of the Estonian community were invited to a reception at the Honorary Consul’s house. It was an opportunity for the Pastewka family to meet local Estonians and for the guests to get to know the new representative of Estonia

in Western Canada. In spite of snow and icy roads, guests came from as far as Canmore and Strathmore over 100 km away. Refreshments and wine were served and it was interesting for descendants of pioneers from several generations ago to mingle with more recently arrived fellow countrymen.

The official program was concise. Riho Kruuv, the Chargé d’Affaires of the Estonian Embassy in Ottawa, introduced Peter Pastewka and described the work the Honorary Consul has already undertaken on behalf of Estonia. The host then welcomed the guests and reminded all Estonians that they could turn for help to him at the Consulate, or in certain cases to the Embassy in Ottawa. He also asked for contact information so he could reach all Estonians when needed.

A closer relationship between Estonians and Albertans of Estonian descent has developed within the framework of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society. It is hoped that the new consulate under the leadership of Peter Pastewka will be a positive force in the Estonian community in Western Canada.

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Helgi Leesment Recognized

Livia Kivisild

At the January 25th reception hosted by Honorary Consul Pastewka, Riho Kruuv of the Estonian Embassy in Ottawa took the opportunity to present to Helgi Leesment an award issued by the Estonian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. It consists of a framed citation and the book *Our People: Estonian Stories*. The citation expresses appreciation on the occasion of Citizens’ Day, November 26, 2010 for “actively fostering and maintaining Estonian culture in

Canada”. Similar certificates were presented to recipients in seven different countries around the world. According to Foreign Minister Urmas Paet: "We appreciate the people who contribute to the promotion and conservation of Estonian culture abroad." Helgi Leesment has been a participant in the active conservation and promotion of Estonian language and culture in Calgary for over 30 years. Among other activities, she maintained the membership lists of

the Calgary Estonian Society and was the organizer for several activities for the Society.

She also organized events when the Society was inactive. In 2000, Helgi was in charge of arrangements for the visit of President Lennart Meri and his entourage to Alberta. In 2004 she was volunteer secretary for the organizing committee to celebrate the centenary of the Estonian settlement in Barons. For almost 10 years her home has been where the chargés d'affaires from the Estonian Embassy in Ottawa conducted their business in Calgary and where receptions have been held for visiting Estonian athletes, cultural and other representatives, including the Kalev basketball team, Ultima Thule, Rolling Estonians, Eri Klas, Kristjan Järvi, World Skills Estonian Team and many others. Helgi has taught Estonian to children as well as adults. She was in charge of the Estonian Language School for a time. Lately, she has been engaged in private language instruction to Albertans of Estonian origin.



Riho Kruuv, Estonian Charge d'Affaires in Canada, presents Helgi Leesment with a citation on behalf of the Estonian Government "for actively fostering and maintaining Estonian culture in Canada."

As Vice-President of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society, Helgi has been one of the contributors to the society's major projects, resulting in a collection of photos and documents, a documentary DVD, a book, a website dedicated to Alberta's Estonians and the establishing of an archive for Estonians. Helgi's activities are not restricted to Alberta. While

living in Vancouver for a few years in the 1990's, she was an executive member Vancouver Estonian Society where she also led many projects. In the last 40 years about 150 articles have appeared from her computer, mainly contributions to the newspapers *Eesti Elu*, *Vaba Eestlane* and *Meie Elu* of Toronto, plus the magazines *Läänekaare Postipoiss* of Vancouver and *AjaKaja* of Alberta. Some of her articles in *AjaKaja* focus on descendants of Estonian Pioneers, extending their knowledge of Estonian history and way of life. Such information has brought about travel to Estonia and reconnection of families with long-lost members. Helgi's translations of correspondence between ancestors have had similar consequences. Descendants living scattered in North America have been reconnected. Also, Helgi has helped pioneer families understand the significance of the preserved documents in the lives of their ancestors. She frequently encourages others to write their own family stories for *AjaKaja*.

Helgi Leesment is a recognized expert in rhythmic gymnastics. Introducing this to Canadians in Alberta is yet another way to spread Estonian culture. She has taught rhythmic gymnastics in clubs, in schools, in seminars, even in Libya in Africa. She was member of the board of the Canadian rhythmic gymnastics federation for 10 years, representing Alberta in countrywide meetings. Helgi was one of the two founders of the NorGlen Club now active in Calgary for 31 years although Helgi herself was intermittently away from Calgary and is no longer a member of the board. She has been recognized by the government of Alberta, by the Alberta and the Canadian rhythmic gymnastics federations and by Gymnastics Canada. In 1992 an award was created to honour outstanding Calgary area volunteers in Rhythmic Gymnastics. As a surprise to Helgi, it was named "The Helgi Leesment Award". Up to now 16 people have received this award. Helgi coaches the NorGlen women who, along with other gymnasts from NorGlen and three other clubs, is among the groups selected to represent Canada at the World Gymnaestrada this summer in Switzerland.

All told, Helgi Leesment deserves this recognition by the government of Estonia.

Alberta Estonian Dave Kiil Honoured.

Livia Kivisild

At the Independence Day Celebration in Toronto on February 27, Honorary Consul General Laas Leivat presented Dave Kiil with the Award of Merit of the Estonian Central Council in Canada. Seven others were also honoured. Dave Kiil has been active in the Alberta Estonian Community for over 12 years. He was President of the Edmonton Estonian Society and, in 2001, a member of the organizing committee to celebrate the Centennial of the Gilby Estonian settlement. For the Alberta Estonians' 100-year jubilee in 1999, he retrieved homestead documents for all pioneer Estonians and copies of the original titles were presented to representatives of each family at the opening ceremonies. In late 2004 Dave Kiil called a meeting to discuss the possible formation of an organization to include all Albertans of Estonian origin. And the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS) came to be the following spring.



Recipients of the Estonian Central Council in Canada Award of Merit at the 93rd Anniversary Celebration of Estonian Independence in Toronto's Estonian House, February 27, 2011. (Dave Kiil is fourth from left)

Along with other members of the AEHS Board, Dave has conducted several important projects and obtained funding to the extent of \$150,000 from the Canadian, Alberta and Estonian Governments as well as from the Estonian National Foundation



The Estonian-Canadian Award of Merit

of Canada. As a preliminary activity, photos and documents from local Estonian families were collected and digitized. The first project was to produce a 30-minute documentary DVD based on this collection. Then a web page was created: www.AlbertaSource.ca/abestonians.

This contains information of interest to historians, people in search of relatives, those involved in the arts, students and many others. The third project was a 298 page book

"Freedom, Land and Legacy: Alberta's Estonians 1899-2009" co-edited by

Eda McClung. With excellent content and well illustrated, the book was published in the fall 2010.

As a result of Dave's ability, the foundation has been laid for an Estonian section in the Provincial Archives of Alberta. Thus, in the fourth major AEHS project under his leadership, Dave Kiil is coordinating the organization of the contents and the indexing of the many types of documents for this collection.

In 2009 Dave Kiil presented a paper on the history of Alberta's Estonians at the Baltic Heritage Network Conference in Tartu and later that same year at the West Coast Estonian Days in Seattle. He has been director of communications for AEHS for several years and is co-editor of the organization's newsletter "AjaKaja" published twice a year. All of this highly productive, intensive work over five years has been accomplished on a volunteer basis. Thus, the Estonian Central Council in Canada honoured Dave Kiil to recognize his leadership and his outstanding contribution to the Estonian community of Canada.

Editors Note: AEHS members Eda McClung and Helgi Leesment received the Estonian-Canadian Award of Merit at the Barons Centennial Celebration in 2004.

AEHS Annual General Meeting

Red Deer, June 4, 2011

Dave Kiil and Eda McClung

About two dozen members of the Society gathered in the Sylvan Lake Room of the Red Deer Inn on Saturday, June 4, 2011 to review activities during the past year and to set an agenda for the 2011-2012 operating year.

President Bob Kingsep welcomed the 'congregation of familiar faces.' The attendees came from many corners of Alberta, spanning a geographic area many times the size of the country of our heritage.

Following opening comments, President Bob Kingsep introduced Peter Pastewka, guest speaker



Guest speaker Peter Pastewka at 2011 AGM

and recently-appointed Honorary Consul for Estonia in Alberta. Peter is a Calgary lawyer married to Tiina Jänes and representing the family business Janes Foods head-quartered in Toronto. Peter and Bob, along with Toomas Pääsuke and Riho Kruuv, the Estonian Charge d'affaires in Ottawa, had the opportunity to get to know one another on the ski slopes this winter. According to Bob, that

exposure licensed him to reveal Peter's sense of humor. Bob also described Peter as attentive and approachable, particularly in his new position.

Highlights of Peter's presentation included:

- He complimented the AEHS on its activities and had high praise for our heritage book.
- The role of the Honorary Consul is to reach out to the world as a point person for Estonia to identify business opportunities for Estonian companies, to assist local people deal with Estonia and its Government, and to network with other consuls, diplomats and provincial officials.
- Peter has just returned from Estonia where he attended a three-day conference with

60 of the 139 Honorary Consuls of 62 countries in attendance. This conference is convened every three years.

- Speakers at the conference included Estonian President Hendrik Ilves, Prime Minister Andrus Ansip and Foreign Affairs Minister Urmas Paet.
- Peter can assist Albertans with matters concerning travel documents to Estonia, and as well deal with cultural, educational, political or economic matters of interest to Albertans

Peter answered many questions following his presentation, and the session ended with well-deserved applause. It is expected a more detailed version of his presentation will be included in a future issue of AjaKaja. His contact information is as follows:

Peter Pastewka, Q.C.
Honorary Consul to the Republic of Estonia
in Alberta
2900, First Canadian Centre
350-7th Avenue S.W.
Calgary, AB, T2P 3H9
Telephone: (403) 206-3052
Fax: (403) 265-7335
Email: peter.pastewka@janefamilyfoods.com

Treasurer Toomas Pääsuke provided a statement of the AEHS financial position and discussed expenditures and revenues during the 2010-2011 fiscal year. The Society has a healthy bank balance and continues to generate income from AEHS memberships and donations, the sale of the documentary DVD, the heritage book and AjaKaja. Pärja and Enn Tiislar agreed to serve as auditors during the upcoming year.

Two Board members, Barbara Gullickson and Peter Asmus submitted their resignations during the year. Martha Munz Gue will assume responsibility for representing Medicine Hat and Barons, while Lorne Hennel takes on the job of Membership Convener.

A Reminder!
Freedom, Land, & Legacy:
Alberta's Estonians, 1899-2009.

**This soft-cover 10" by 8" 298-page
richly illustrated book is for sale at
\$40.00/copy.**

To obtain a copy:
Use Order Form posted on AEHS
member website: www.aehs.ca
E-mail queries: aebsbook@yahoo.ca
Books can be picked up at local
distributors.

Rein Pääsuke and Bob Tipman will review AEHS By-laws and recommend necessary revisions for the 2012 AGM.

Eda McClung thanked AEHS members for their contributions to AjaKaja. The magazine continues to be produced twice a year and is well supported by articles from its readership. There continues to be positive feedback about its content and appearance.

Dave Kiil reported that, following the publication of "Freedom, Land, and Legacy: Alberta's Estonians, 1899-2009" in late 2010, work on the Heritage

Project focused on updating the heritage website and collection of archival material not previously available. Fifteen additional stories about pioneer families and about 100 photos, along with revisions and corrections of website contents, have been added. The Society's application for a grant from the Estonian Government was approved.

The grant funds and additional AEHS funds will enable the Society to complete the heritage project during the upcoming year. This will include continued updating of the heritage website, the description and classification of archival materials donated to the Provincial Archives of Alberta, and the promotion and distribution of printed and digital materials about Alberta's Estonians to Estonian memory institutions and other organizations globally. Readers are asked to consider a "Last Call for Family Histories" on page 10.

On behalf of herself and Allan Posti, Eda McClung outlined venue options for 2012 Jaanipäev. It became apparent that members have fond memories of Jaanipäev/Centennial celebrations at Gilby Community Centre in 2001. **The availability of this venue is now confirmed and next year's Jaanipäeva celebration will be held at Gilby Community Centre on June 23-24, 2012.**

Peter Leesment, Eda McClung and Pärja Tiislar will investigate availability of bands and menu options to attract younger members and newcomers to the event.

Plan to Attend!
AEHS Jaanipäev/Midsummer 2012 Celebration at
Gilby Community Centre.
Saturday and Sunday, June 23 and 24, 2012

**Planning is underway for an exciting weekend of fun, recreation and heritage
events at historic Gilby Hall located in the lovely Medicine River Valley.**

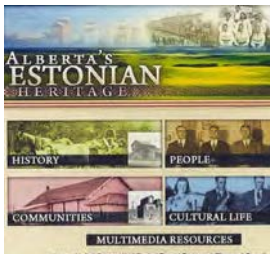
Everyone Welcome!

For updates view our member website at: www.aehs.ca. More details will be available in Winter 2011 AjaKaja. Volunteers able to assist with planning are encouraged to contact the member website or emcclung@shaw.ca.

Last Call for Family Histories

The AEHS Heritage Project, initiated some five years ago, is winding down and will be completed by the end of 2011. The concluding phase of this work is underway. The deadline for donating family or community histories, in printed or digital form, is September 30, 2011.

During the lifetime of the project, members and friends of our Society have contributed many historical records about Alberta's Estonian community and individual families. These donations enabled the Society to produce a documentary DVD, an illustrated book and a comprehensive digital archive. All records and



Home page of the AEHS digital archive website

materials used in the production of these deliverables were later donated to the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA) in Edmonton for preservation.

The production of "Freedom, Land, and Legacy:

of new material about Alberta's Estonians not previously available. Work is currently underway to update the heritage website, ie digital archive (AlbertaSource.ca/abestonians). Stories about 15 additional pioneer families, a number of articles about the provinces Estonian pioneers and about 100 new photos have been added to date.

At the recent Annual General Meeting of the Society, members unanimously agreed to allocate financial support (Estonian government grant, AEHS funds) to complete the Heritage project by the end of 2011. You are therefore invited to identify and donate documents and family stories, photos and other items for inclusion in the heritage website and archival collection for preservation at the PAA:

- Please consider donating records that you have kept over the course of your life.
- The records will be used to update the AEHS heritage website and will be donated to the PAA.
- All materials will be donated to the PAA in early 2012 and will be part of the 'Estonian Collection.'

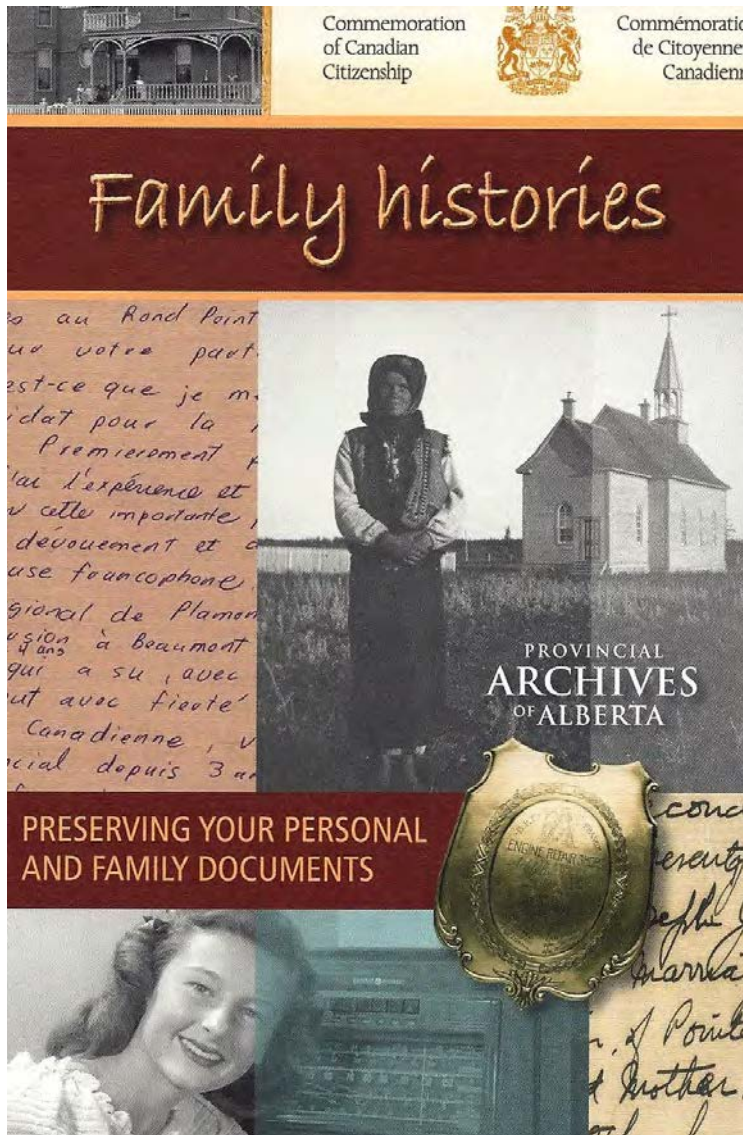


Please submit originals or copies no later than September 30, 2011 to:

Dave Kiil, 3229-112C St. NW
Edmonton, AB, T6J 3W2
e-mail: adkiil@shaw.ca
Phone: 780-988-0019, or

Eda McClung, 14631 McKenzie Drive
Edmonton, AB, T5R 5W3
E-mail: emcclung@shaw.ca
Phone: 780-452-2712

A Guide for Preserving Family Histories



Recently the Provincial Archives of Alberta issued an illustrated guide in the form of a booklet to help people preserve personal and family documents. The proposed system includes the following categories: 1) Identity and civil status, 2) Education and training, 3) Professional activities and employment, 4) Leisure, entertainment, travel and social life and 5) Family and Genealogy. This system can be used for both paper documents and digital records.

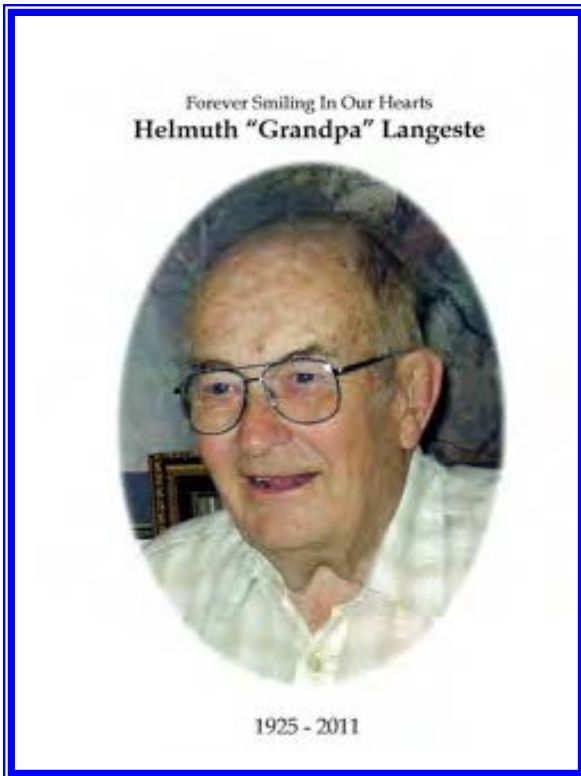
Personal documents are kept for sentimental reasons, or files you would like your descendants to access to better know you and your family. This material also documents the story of your extended family, their memory, and heritage.

Archives look for “any material, including digital formats, that an individual created, used, or received, and maintained during the course of a life.” The guide also provides a few rules on how long some records should be kept, and suggestions. Preservation of both printed and digital materials are discussed. Digital documents stored on CDs and DVDs should be transferred periodically to a new storage device. Descriptions of search aids for the AEHS records are available at <http://hermis.alberta.ca/paa/>

A directory of archival repositories in Alberta can be accessed by visiting the Archives Society of Alberta’s website at www.archivesalberta.org

Remembering Helmuth Langeste

Born August 15, 1925 in Kuusalu, Estonia; passed away May 8, 2011 in Edmonton, Alberta



On May 8, 2011, Helmuth Langeste of Edmonton passed away peacefully at the age of 85 years. Helmuth is survived by his loving family: wife Airi, sons Tom, Martin and his wife Debbie, and granddaughter Kristen. He will be forever remembered and sadly missed.

Helmuth will also be remembered by Edmonton's Estonian community of which he was a longstanding and much loved member. He and Airi contributed through their decade's long, stalwart support of social and cultural activities in both the Estonian and Finnish communities. Helmuth's love of photography provided a meticulous, invaluable record of this community over the decades. His love of books, reading and his intellectual curiosity were evident in quiet but fascinating conversations with him. He was a regular contributor to the Edmonton Estonian Society's newsletter 'AjaKaja'. The material was often biographical, historical, accounts of Estonia's lesser known but nonetheless,

significant figures. His love of history drew him to play a part in AEHS projects which compile a history of this province's Estonian community. He was a pillar of this community, a friend and mentor to young and old.

At the Memorial Service, son Tom recalled a line from the poem *Call of the Wild* by Robert Service, the Arctic poet:

'The simple things, the true things, the silent men who do things...'

This was Helmuth. The silent man who did things. He was not 'simple' himself, he had a profound intelligence. Before WW II intervened, he was a student at an agricultural college in Estonia. Instead of a career as an agronomist, he became a soldier in Finland fighting the Soviets, then a welder in Sweden where he met and married Airi in 1952, and a finishing carpenter in Edmonton after arriving here in 1953. That is what he did but not all that he was.

Helmuth enjoyed simple pleasures. He was self educated, well read especially in history; he enjoyed architecture; loved horticulture; was devoted to photography taking artful pictures of everything, everyone. He enjoyed Courvoisier Cognac: "if it's good enough for Napoleon, it's good enough for me". He was especially Estonian when it came to music. He loved choral music: sang in the Edmonton Estonian Men's Choir, loved opera, sang as he woodworked and even sang in hospital during his final days.

Tom eulogized his father as "Every inch an Estonian. He knew who he was, where he came from. Reserved, efficient, practical, excellent team player, dry humour, high standards, strong convictions. A deep introvert who could entertain himself for hours. Very kind and genuine".

Farewell to a silent man who did things...

In Search of Self and Reinglas Family

Donna Farry, Queensland, Australia



Donna Farry is one of five daughters born to Bertha (nee Hill) Ryan, daughter of Mary Hill (nee Reinglas), daughter of Otto & Mai Reinglas of Estonia.

Let me ask you, have you ever felt you did not know who you were? It is a feeling that I have known from time to time. I always knew that my maternal Grandmother came from Estonia and my Grandfather from Finland. I had no idea where these

places were but they always sounded so exotic. My Grandmother spoke with a foreign accent but that was the sum total of my knowledge of her. My sisters and I saw very little of her when we were growing up; she passed through our lives, staying only overnight or a few days on her way somewhere else. I don't ever remember speaking to her and there were certainly no hugs and kisses. She was not your average grandmotherly type and, other than the odd feeling of displacement and curiosity, I never thought about her much.

I was already married when she died. My sisters had some contact with her in her twilight years but I lived too far away for visits, but oh, how I wish I had lived closer! I would have liked to have asked about her life, to have heard her stories and so to understand this woman, my Grandmother.

In 1996, while my mother was still alive, my sisters and I organized a family reunion on my mother's side of the family, and here began the journey to find out just who we were by walking backward through time. My Grandmother, Mary Reinglas, was the daughter of Otto and Mai Reinglas from Estonia. She came to Australia from Canada in December 1912 after her marriage to a Finn, Andrew Hill, in Stettler, Alberta. This was their honeymoon.

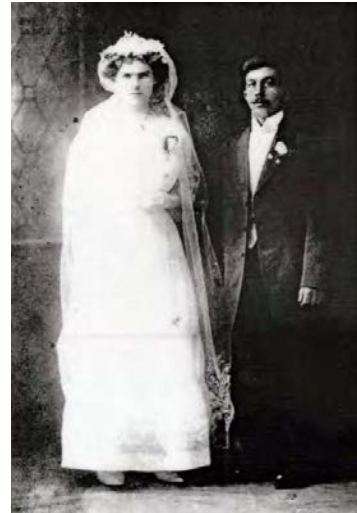


West Coast of Queensland, Australia. Reinglas family settled near Gympie in 1913

Arriving in February 1913 they took up a land grant in the same year at a place called Sandy Creek, Goomboorian, in the State of Queensland. The weather must have been very different from the Stettler area as they had come to the subtropics

where the coldest thing is the odd frost in the middle of winter.

The following year, Mary's parents Otto and Mai and two of Mary's brothers, William and Michael (Mick) arrived. Although Mick was too young, Otto and William applied and were granted land in the same area as Mary and Andrew. Unfortunately Otto died of a heart attack only nine months after arriving in Australia and is buried on a neighbouring farm. His grave is still there today with its simple brass marker, inscribed with his name,



Mary Reinglas and Andrew Hill wedding, Stettler, 1912

the date of death and his country of origin, Estonia. Mai continued working the farm after having the grant changed to her name; she worked that land until she was too old to do so. She then sold the farm and moved in with William, who had never married. Mick went to school and when it came time for him to leave he went to work for a photographer in Gympie, the nearest town. He married Iris Cathcart and had a daughter Faye.

In 1922 Mary and Andrew bought a new farm at Mothar Mountain not far from their original land grant. The work must have

been backbreaking, as the land was all scrub and hardwood timber that had to be cleared to make way for pasture. They seeded the paddocks with grass seed collected from the sides of the road or wherever it could be found. The seed was tossed into the ash from the burn off and with any luck the rain would do the rest. My grandmother still collected seed in her old age; old habits die hard. Their house was a cabin built off the ground on posts and it is said that my Grandfather put the floor in upside down so it was uneven. Fortunately he redeemed himself when he built a house that still stands on the farm today with three bedrooms and verandas. The family grew with seven children-five boys and 2 girls-born in ten years. All this, while the land was cleared, crops planted and harvested, and cows acquired for a dairy herd which then had to be milked. Mary worked side by side with her husband, as well as doing her domestic chores. Stews were made from local wildlife and the washing was done in the creek. To this day the family knows that water hole as "mummy's washing".

Visiting family was not a regular thing but my Mother would remember visiting old Mai when she lived with William. They walked the 20 kms from William's farm to Toolara and back. She could also remember Mai visiting them and staying for short periods. My Mother and her brother Roy used to tease Mai until she would shout at them in Estonian to go away.

The only holiday my Mother can remember was a 90-km trek to the beach at Lake Weba, Tewantin. They camped under canvas and ate what they caught in the sea, but the sand flies were so bad that after a short time they walked home, bartering for food along the way. All in all, a very disappointing holiday.

It was very hard work to make the farm a paying concern and, as the boys grew and were able to take on the work of the farm, Grandfather went to work for farmers west of Gympie at Kilkivan whilst Grandmother share-farmed at Pinbarren, south of Gympie, to make extra money. Unfortunately for my Grandmother, my Grandfather was a dreamer, very innovative in

his thinking and full of ideas, all of which required money. Their hard-earned savings were used in one scheme after another, with varied success. Eventually it became too much for my Grandmother and she walked out. According to family folklore Grandmother headed north, leaving the family in Gympie. She purchased land on the Atherton Tablelands in the mountains behind Cairns in the far north of Queensland, creating a dairy farm that is still in the family.

When my Grandfather died in 1935, my Grandmother returned but only long enough to sell the Mothar Mountain property to her oldest son Albert. She returned to the tropical north and her own farm. When it came time for her to retire she sold her dairy farm to her son Roy and moved to a one-acre property in Cooroy south of Gympie near the family's initial land.

As the next generations grew, they attended school, got jobs and made lives for themselves. Otto's and Mai's legacy includes a fine list of Lawyers, Doctors, Nurses, Teachers, Artists, Mechanics, Engineers, Farmers and many other walks of life. I am grateful to them for their bravery, grit and determination in leaving Estonia and taking a giant leap into the unknown.

All this we found in our research for the family reunion. It was exciting and informative and gave me a certain sense of belonging, but it also created more questions. What happened before Australia? And what of the family story that maybe there were relatives in Canada? And what about Estonia? We had a small glimpse of the past from a short story dictated by my Grandmother, but it was such a small snippet with too many gaps and therefore many more questions.

From time to time I would search the Internet in the hope of finding something. Then one day I found the name Otto Reinglas on Western Land Grants (Homesteads), Alberta, Canada. I can not tell you what a thrill it was. I immediately rang my sister very late at night to tell her, that much excitement had to be shared! But even better still, I found two more names: Jakob and Anton Reinglas, also with land grants. It was like finding gold! I had two Great Uncles who until that moment had only been part of Family Folklore. There was a map of the land grants, so I downloaded it and studied it intently. It took me some days to make sense of it but finally I worked out that Otto's land was on Lone Pine Lake south of Stettler, Anton's was the next block west and Jakob's was further west. This verified information in my Grandmother's story, written in her 80th year, that her family selected land nine miles south of Stettler and that they were among the first settlers in the area. This was very heady stuff, but I had no idea where to go from this point.

Then I made a major discovery, namely the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society's website (AlbertaSource.ca/abestonians). Joy of joys, I devoured it, reading every word, and you cannot imagine my excitement when I found a mention of the Reinglas name. Cause for another late night call to my sister. My whole body literally fizzed. Suddenly I was a person with a history, a very tenuous one but still a history. Then like magic I found more information about Alberta Estonians on the Internet and again Otto was given a very small mention. Jakob was listed as being buried in the Estonian Cemetery near Linda Hall, south of Stettler.

With these insights, it was time to think about how the family got to Canada. An Aunt always said that they came from Russia through Vancouver. It sounded reasonable, but most immigrant stories I had read made mention of a trip across the Atlantic. So I went with my instinct and started searching ship's passenger lists, starting in 1903 and arriving in Halifax – Montreal. Grandmother had said that they arrived in Canada in 1903

In the meantime a trip to Canada was being organized to visit my son, married to a Canadian and about to have his first child. Preparing for the trip, I searched the ships passenger lists daily, but without results. I was beginning to think that I would not find them or had missed them, when I found Tipman and Oro, names I knew. Tipman's had a farm near Otto in Australia. My flagging spirits were given a well-needed boost, and I plodded on, and, after a few days, Voila!!! My persistence was rewarded. On the 7th of August, 1903 the Reinglas family, consisting of Otto, Mai, Jakob, Anton, William, Niklas (Michael?) and Maria (Mary) arrived in Montreal onboard the "Lake Champlain" from Liverpool, England. They headed for Red Deer, Alberta.

Grandmother remembered a long train journey as a child that took many days; this could have been the trip from Montreal to Red Deer, but where did they stay until they took up their land grant? Maybe Sylvan Lake? And if so who did they stay with? Did they know someone there already? How is it that there always seem to be more questions than answers? These and similar questions remained unanswered as it was time to take that trip of a lifetime to Canada. As luck would have it, my son lives in Leduc, just south of

Edmonton in Alberta, a short drive to Stettler.

After arriving in Alberta, the first thing we had to learn was how to drive on the wrong side of the road, to tune into the Canadian way of speaking and get used to funny money. It took a week and a few short trips before we felt confident enough to hit the highway. Our first destination was the Red Deer Archives. This trip will always stay with me, as we passed miles and miles of open plains with hay baling in progress, small lakes everywhere, strange barns painted red, and thickets of poplar and pine. And a highway so straight it was like being on the Australian Nullarbor (Plains). It was a strange feeling of familiarity yet somehow different.

We found our hotel in Stettler and booked in, asking at the desk if they knew anyone who would be able to give us information about the cemetery on Linda Hall Road. The receptionist was good enough to give me a phone number, and after several calls I was put in contact with Allan Hennel. The Hennel name I knew very well as Elizabeth Hennel had been a witness to my Grandmother's wedding. Allan told me that Jakob Reinglas had been buried in 1910 and where I would find his grave.

From our hotel room we could see the Stettler Log House Museum and, although it was not the tourist season and most places were closed for the winter, we went to have a look at it anyway. When I mentioned to the receptionist my interest in Estonian settlers, she was good enough to open the Museum for us to have a look at the Estonian exhibition. While I was busy soaking up all this Estonian-ness our guide had been busy on the phone and when we returned to the reception area we had an invitation to visit the home of a couple who were very interested to meet descendants of one of the early settlers of the area. That is how I met two very lovely warm-hearted people, Irene and Deane Kerbes, whom I can now call friends. We spent a few hours with Irene and Deane, who gave me a map showing all the land divisions and so I was able to identify Otto's, Jakob's and Anton's quarter-sections. They were very generous, giving me copies of documents and many other things, as well as giving me my first taste of barley sausage. They also made me late for the cemetery, only kidding! When we finally drove out to the cemetery late in the afternoon, I looked at the countryside and tried to imagine how it would have looked back in 1903. As we turned into Linda Hall Road I wondered about the generations that had travelled this road leaving footprints, hoof prints and tire prints to mark their passage. Driving on past Linda Hall, on a slight rise, I found the tiny cemetery and the Estonian Chapel. It was so quiet and, even with



the farms so close, somehow the Chapel was so alone. I found Jakob's grave, a simple cross with his name and date stamped on it. I offered him the flowers I had brought and sat a while and talked to him, telling him about the family and asked him to help me find Anton. It was then that my husband brought to my attention that it was almost 100 years to the date that Jakob had been buried. I cried and wondered if he had had any other visitors in all that time. I tried to imagine my Grandmother walking here in the late afternoon as she told us she had done when she was seventeen, carrying cloth to be delivered to neighbours. I entered the Chapel, this tiny unadorned room and wondered if my family had been inside to pray? My mother had said that Mai, my Great Grandmother, had always carried her Bible and read from it every day.

My head was buzzing with all that I had seen and heard. But I still had not seen the land that Otto selected and I badly wanted to do so. We did so the following morning, with the sunlight bouncing off the surface of the lake. It was hard to envisage what it must have looked like back then. There is no cabin, no barn, no well, no horses or chickens. It is now just part of a much larger property and an oil well stands silent sentinel where once cattle had grazed. Otto, what made you leave? I tried to hear their voices but nothing came to me. As I looked up and down the road I thought about the wagon my Grandmother said they had, pulled by a cow and a horse with a foal in tow as they took their cabbages into Stettler to sell to the butcher, who made them into sauerkraut.

I picked up a couple of stones to take back to Australia. With our backs to the sun, we headed back to Leduc.

The very next day on the Internet we found an obituary for an Anthony Reinglas who died in 1963. Was this our Anton? And was Jakob helping us? Too spooky. We had to go to the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton to find out. That day we saw our first snow fall in Canada. You don't see much snow where I come from; you actually have to go looking for it! If Jakob was helping he was making it fun.

At the Archives the microfiche offered up just what we wanted. Anthony Reinglas had died in November, 1963, leaving behind two brothers William and Michael and a sister Mary. He was buried in Westlawn Memorial Gardens in Edmonton. This was definitely our Anton. With the snow falling gently around us, we found Anton's unmarked grave in a beautiful, peaceful spot under evergreen trees at the cemetery. Inquiries at the cemetery office revealed that his grave had been paid for from his own estate, but that was all. Later I applied for and received his death certificate and found that he had died in the Provincial Mental Institution in Oliver, Alberta at the age of approximately 78 years. He had been in that Institution for eleven years, four months and four days, was unmarried, and his birth place was said to be Russia. If he had been in an Institution since his family left for Australia he had been there for fifty years. Poor Anton, he did not know that his brother William had pre-deceased him by almost thirty years. William died of stomach cancer, two months before his mother Mai died in 1939.

While in Canada I visited Dave Kiil, another wonderful Estonian Canadian. He kindly presented me with copies of the Reinglas homestead papers and, for the first time, I saw the signatures of Otto, Jakob and Anton. How strange it felt, the handwriting of family long dead.

In my search in Canada I was lucky enough to find several small anecdotes about the family. There was the story told to me of my Grandmother divesting herself of her shoes, hitching her skirts up in a most unseemly fashion and crossing a creek near their home with a parcel above her head to the amusement of bystanders. I think that she may have been a bit of a wild child in her teen years. Years later she laughingly talked of rolling in the hay, obviously a happy memory. She also loved to sing in Estonian and then would say "no, that's naughty." She was quite a character! Another story concerns Otto who was a harness maker.

In an effort to make some money, he and the boys spent considerable time skinning cattle frozen during the previous very bad winter. He knew nothing about tanning, but did the best he could. During the winter he made harnesses and sold a couple of them the following summer. They turned out to be of inferior quality and unusable. According to the story, this helped in the decision to move to Australia.

Now the Canadian family connection was well under way, and it was time to make sense of the time before that. Here the journey becomes harder to verify and the trail more difficult to follow. Grandmother gave us some clues with the story she left us.

She said that they came to Russia from Estonia some time before her tenth year. It must have been a very hard life as she could remember often being very hungry. At ten years of age she was expected to mind the cows as there were no fences on the property.

She told a story of meeting a bear while out minding the cows, and although she was very afraid she kept her head or maybe fear froze her feet to the ground. Anyway her luck was in and the bear left her alone, passing her by. She arrived home to find a dead bear, on a sled outside their house. Her father Otto had shot it and was hoping to claim the reward. It seems that there was a problem with bears in the area and the authorities were offering a reward of twenty five rubles for every bear killed. Grandmother knew of an Estonian man who was badly mauled by a bear in Russia, she said she saw him many years later in Canada. I wonder who he was?

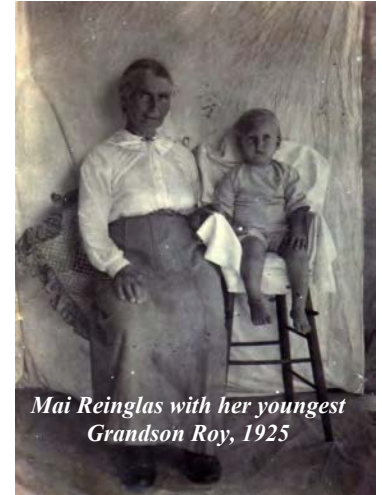
One of Mary's brothers died and her youngest brother Michael (Mick?) was born while they were in this place. His birth was entered into the family bible and then registered back home in their church in Estonia. Maybe this is the same church in Tallinn where both Otto Reinglas and Mai Kungas were confirmed in 1875. Mai would later become his wife in 1884. Now the story is getting very thin and will need a lot of hard work to flesh it out. As usual, there are many questions still left unanswered, but that is for another time, something to look forward too, bringing the past into the future.

I guess this is a strange way to tell a story, starting in the middle and working both ways, but it follows the path I took to find my roots, to understand who I am, and to finally find a sense of place.

In the days of pioneers the Estonian language was not spoken in the home as total assimilation was encouraged. Unfortunately for later generations, this meant that we have missed out sadly on many wonderful parts of our heritage. Now I have the joy of discovery and reconnection.

Before this journey began I used to think that my Grandmother was born before her time, an independent thinker, who cared little of the opinions others had of her. She was her own person. Now I realize that with these attributes she was born to be a pioneer, with grit and determination to make things work, never afraid to put her shoulder to the wheel. She never squandered anything and always worked with the end in view.

If I can come to the end of my life and can say that I have contributed something to future generations by being as worthy and hard working as the generations that have gone before me, then I will have lived a very good life.



Riina (Peet) Krisby and Alexander Krisby:

Our family's Alberta History, 1905-1939

Mary Lynne (Krisby) Jewell, 2010



Mary Lynne Jewell, 2009

Anna Matison (b. May 10, 1859, d. November 15, 1926) was the daughter of a professional soldier who made his living as a laborer and fisherman. [The birthdate of 1865 on her gravestone in Stettler is questioned.] Her mother was widowed

when Anna was two years old and never remarried because few men of marriageable age had survived the conflicts in the region. Anna was orphaned at sixteen and lived as her mother had by working in homes, dairies or in the fields in return for temporary shelter.

At an age considered old for the period, Anna married Jaan Peet, a widower living on the Baltic Sea near Pärnu, Estonia. He had three children by two marriages: Martin, Lisa and John. His oldest son Jaan and daughters Lena and Anna had already left home. Together he and Anna had three daughters: Maria (b. July 14, 1884, d. December 5, 1952), Juuli (Julia) (b. July 3, 1887, d. December 23, 1983) and Katrina (Riina) (b. September 16, 1891, d. November 7, 1971).

Jaan was a third-generation strip farmer serf living on a feudal property known as "the Rautsop Place", although the Rautsops had not owned it in the memory of the people working there. The property had changed owners several times and the tenant families were told they could buy the land but were not financially able to do so. This land was finally revoked in 1894 because the new owners had their own serfs and the Estonians relocated to Nurmekunde, Russia, where they had hopes of starting a new life. Property had become available near Basu about 200 miles from St. Petersburg, Russia, under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church. The Peets sold everything they could to make a small down payment on some of this land but Jaan died suddenly only seven weeks later in 1895. Some people said Jaan died of a broken heart because he had not wanted to leave Estonia.

With the distress of Jaan's death and the forced move, this was a difficult situation for Anna but she found work wherever she could and was helped by 11-year-old Maria who found a job babysitting and nine-year-old Julia who herded cattle. Then Martin, at age 17, was conscripted to serve three years in the Russian army. He was soon exempted and identified as the sole male support of his family when the land was put in his name. So the Peets were together and the land payments were made. They seem to have been very popular, good workers and well

liked. They had well-constructed buildings and owned their own cattle and farming equipment. They also had arable acreage and a habitable home with a walk-in fireplace. But when the army exemption years were over Martin married and left the family.



Alex and Riina Krisby with, l to r: John, Anna and Lilly, early 1920s

Subsequently Anna had to provide another home for her children and in 1898 she married cabinet-maker Andres Negols (b. September 29, 1838, d. April 11, 1915). He was a widower with grown children who was well-read, kind and who welcomed Anna's young daughters. An Estonian from Tallinn, he owned his own property close to the Peets. Riina loved her stepfather and always spoke well of him.

But even the children had to work on the farm. Andres kept bees and Riina's job at the age of four was to report when the new queen bees were ready to swarm. This was a tedious job and she had to keep quiet. Over time she learned to crochet as a way to manage the boredom. Maria continued babysitting so the mothers could work in the



Anna(Peet) and Andres Negols, ca 1898

fields. Julia herded cattle on open pasture with few fences.

Maria Peet, Riina's oldest sister, married Estonian farmer Edward Martin Oliver (b. November 7, 1882, d. May 10, 1965) on March 25, 1902 and immigrated to Montreal, Quebec. Hearing satisfactory reports about Canada the Negols' family decided to follow. At the same time immigration was encouraged by the Canadian government to hasten prairie settlement so many Europeans took advantage of the homesteading opportunities.

By selling everything they had and saving in every way they could the Negols' party arrived in Halifax three years later. (Before the Negols' left Russia they had packed pails of pork and lard. They also had loaves of hard bread, and this is what they ate on board ship.) The arrivals included Riina, her mother Anna and stepfather Andres, her sister Julia, stepbrother John, and three friends: Alex Klaus, August Antouk, and Dan Kask. The Negols' were nearly turned back because of Anna's vision problems, but after an expensive delay they were allowed to proceed to Red Deer. They arrived on April 10, 1905 with few resources. (Dan Kask stayed behind in Montreal but he later also settled near Stettler. Lisa Peet separately immigrated to Montreal and had four children. The youngest daughter married a Raadik who came to the Stettler area in 1949.

The homesteaders already living in Red Deer were kind to the Negols' party and found them a place to sleep and something to eat. None of them could speak English, which was a great handicap. Other Estonians—the Oros, Rahos, and Kinnas—had settled the Eckville and Stettler regions three years before and helped the Negols' establish a homestead near the future site of Linda Hall. Although this was virgin woodland, plentiful ducks and wild mushrooms meant they did not have to worry about food. And they were able to trade one of their sows for a milk cow.

Maria and Martin Oliver arrived in Red Deer at approximately the same time and had taken a homestead further away from Linda Hall where they built a log house. (They had eleven children.) For a short time Martin helped Anna and Andres manage their farm as best he could, while still working his own property.

Anna was not in good health and Andres had a leg

prosthesis, which was a serious handicap. So Riina stayed with them on the homestead and helped her parents clear the land by hand, because they had no horses, and build a two-room log house from small poplars growing on the property. (Her stepbrother John had left home and later returned to Russia.) Julia was able to find work as a maid in Stettler although she found the new language and customs difficult.

In 1910 Julia married August Antouk, an Estonian who had come to Canada in the Negols' party. Anna and Andres offered them the Negols' farm but the newlyweds moved to Bellevue, Alberta, where August worked in the coal mine. A few months later he was killed with 29 others in the explosion that included 16 Estonian miners.

After she was suddenly widowed Julia returned to Stettler where she worked in hotel dining rooms until she married August Klaus (b. March 29, 1889, d. November 1, 1971) in 1915 and moved to the United States. Her two children, Elmer Franklin (b. May 5, 1916, d. October 4, 1981) and Hilda Evaline (b. August 5, 1919) were born in Montana.

In 1911 Riina married widower Alexander Krisby (b. September 26, 1884, d. May 8, 1937) who had emigrated from Texas and arrived in Stettler as an itinerant worker. (Julia bought her the material for a wedding dress.) To Anna and Andres, Alex appeared foreign and mysterious, but he could speak the Estonian language and was fluent in English.



Back, l to r: Alexander Krisby, Martin Oliver, August Klaus; middle, l to r: Riina Krisby, Maria Oliver, Juuli Klaus (nee Peet sisters); front: Anna Negols (mother), ca 1926

Alex Krisby was born in Yestorokinton, a Russian satellite, to Estonian parents who may have come from Estonia to settle in Russia about the same time as many Alberta Estonians. As a toddler he experienced rebellion and revolution. He saw his family shot but escaped with his life because his mother had hidden him in a cupboard. Neighbors later cared for him. [At some point in this early period Alex was able to cross the border and spent some time in Finland. He could speak the language and is identified in a Seattle passenger list from 1918 as Finnish. It is also certain that he was fluent in Russian.]

Alex traced a sister living in the United States so he immigrated to Colorado probably in 1907. [A passport document gives this date as October 3, 1907 leaving from Stavropol, Russia. This document also lists his name as Alexander Karlovich Krisbi, his wife's name as Maria and son as Karl.] Alex's first wife and baby died in childbirth in Colorado and his son likely died en route from Russia. Alex later worked on the docks in Galveston, Texas before moving to Canada. [Alex shoveled grain at the docks in Galveston, dug wells and sewer lines and farmed in Alberta, sharecropped in Texas and also worked as a coal miner.]

Riina and Alex Krisby had three children. Anna was born at the Negols' farm (b. January 24, 1912, d. August 23, 1974). John (b. June 29, 1914, d. December 3, 1994) and Lilly (b. December 14, 1916, d. October 31, 2000) were born at the homestead in Hanna, Alberta. A daughter Rose and son Albert died in infancy in the United States between 1918 and 1921.

After his marriage to Riina, Alex helped on the Negols farm for about a year while he built his own homestead with a one-room sod house on open prairie near Hanna. Riina later said this house was cool in summer and warm in winter. Her only complaint was that she couldn't wash and sweep the dirt floors.

Julia looked after young Anna at the Negols' farm for three months while Riina was pregnant with John and had found temporary housework with an English-speaking family to help her learn the language. In the spring of 1914 Riina, Alex and young Anna moved to their new homestead in Hanna.

Andres died in 1915 and Anna Negols rented her farm to August Nicklom. (August met his future wife Polly at John Krisby's christening party in Hanna.) During this interval Julia was at home with them. Later the Negol's farm was sold to the Wagensteins.

Anna went to Hanna to live with the Krisbys. But Riina's health was poor and Alex wanted to follow the Klauses to the United States. So in 1917 the Krisbys sold their unfinished homestead and moved to Galveston, Texas. Anna Negols then relocated to Maria and Martin Oliver's farm where a small outbuilding had been made into a house for her and where she lived until her death in 1926.

In Texas the Krisbys grew rice, cotton and watermelons. It was very hot and dry and there were no buyers for their crops. Riina had to bake bread every day because it would not keep overnight. Even the flour had to be sifted to get the vermin out. The well water was always warm enough to wash dishes. The house was on stilts because when the rain did come everything was flooded. So in 1919 the Krisbys decided to move back to Canada. [Records indicate that Alexander Krisby applied for Naturalization as a U. S. Citizen from an address in Denver, Colorado in 1921.] The Krisbys were back in Alberta by 1922. At the border they were able to buy a wagon and horses but otherwise arrived in Stettler penniless.

Alex found work in Stettler laying down sewer lines and apparently was very good at grid surveying. Riina did domestic work, taking Lilly along. Anna and John went to school where they were tormented because they knew no English.

In 1920 August Klaus' stepfather Johannes Klaus died so Julia and family had returned to Alberta to help Lena Klaus run the farm in Wooded Hills. This farm was later owned by Ado Tipman.

In 1922 the Krisbys moved to Big Valley, Alberta where Alex worked in the coal mines. Big Valley was a booming mining town but the collieries cut back production in 1923 and closed in 1927. This was the most prosperous time of their lives. They started paying for some farmland and built a log shack on it. They were also able to buy a "tin lizzie" Ford Model T.

Lilly was struck by a milk wagon soon after the move to Big Valley and developed osteomyelitis in her hip. She was admitted to the Holy Cross Hospital in Calgary where she had major surgery to repair the injury followed by many others at the Crippled Children's Hospital and she did not finally return home until 1930. (In the days before Medicare this put a serious financial strain on the family.)

The Krisbys moved from the Big Valley farm to stay in 1924. A granary was moved onto the land and Alex mixed mud and plastered it himself. The log shack was used for chickens so they always had lots of eggs. Anna and John walked four miles to school or rode there on an old work horse.

In 1927 August Klaus bought his own half-section, five miles northwest of Big Valley. But their farm was hilly and not too productive because it lacked a good water supply. During the Depression years Julia raised turkeys, knit suits and did babysitting in order to make a bit extra. August did weed inspecting and sold firewood.

In 1934 while digging a well August suffered an injury to his back so then he and Julia and their family auctioned off their belongings and moved to Edmonton where they ran a rooming house. August later worked for Silver Heights Peony Gardens. He became a landscape architect and relocated to Winnipeg.

Julia and Hilda moved to Vancouver, British Columbia in 1943 and Hilda found a job working for the Vancouver Sun newspaper. She married Oscar Swen Kilgren (b. April 7, 1915, d. June 20, 2003) on November 29, 1944 and moved to Creston where they established a cherry orchard. (They had two daughters.) Julia continued to work as a maid at the Devonshire Hotel in Vancouver and at other hotels until the age of seventy. She died in 1983.

Elmer enlisted in the Air Force during the War and later used this training to teach electronics at the Vancouver Vocational School. He married Dorothy McArthur (b. August 8, 1920, d. October 3, 2002) on June 12, 1945. (They had four daughters.)

When Lilly returned home in 1930 she started school in the one-room schoolhouse in the Wooded Hills District with Anna and John, where she was put in the same grade as the other two children her age. Alex arranged a horse and sleigh in winter and a buggy in the summer to make the trip easier for her. (The winters were so severe that they frequently missed school.) Alex also made her a desk with long legs so she could sit and keep her leg straight. Lilly had learned to sew and knit and compensated for her disability by being clever, which delighted her parents.

After so many years in the hospital Lilly had expected her home to be a nice painted house like those she had seen in the city. Instead she found a rough, three-room shack with a gable, which was divided in half for the children's bedrooms. Downstairs there was a little living room, a little kitchen, and a tiny bedroom for Riina and Alex. There was no electricity, no bathroom, no running water, and no radio.

In 1925 John had contracted measles and also serious influenza, which left him with impaired hearing. His health was often poor and like Lilly he was not able to do farm work. He and Lilly played marbles, card games and told stories. The Klaus and Oliver cousins were also frequent companions during those years.

[Alex would entertain the family by scaring them with stories of the paranormal. One example describes Alex as unmarried at the time and living in Russia. He and his brothers used to walk everywhere and got work where they found it. Wages might be one ruble for a month's work. They were very superstitious people. Unexplained phenomena included finding a wagonload of brick stuck up to its axles in what was solid clay or rock preventing construction on that hill site. Or ladders would mysteriously be pushed away. The brothers were hired to dig a well. Alex was talented at digging straight and deep. The first day they dug thirty feet but each morning for three days they'd find the well full of fresh dirt, unlike any dirt they had dug out or any dirt in the area. The fourth day they gave up, describing it as "sacred ground".]

John graduated from Grade 10 without difficulty in 1930, the highest grade available in Wooded Hills. John loved nature and liked to fish in the Red Deer River. He developed an interest in poetry and writing and tried to publish his work. His favorite authors were Edgar Allan Poe, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Jack London. Oscar Kilgren was John's close friend during this period. (He later married Hilda Klaus.)

When John worked in Alaska before his marriage he became an accomplished skier. Because of his analytical mind and skill with his hands he was adept at solving any mechanical problem. When John moved to Vancouver in 1937 he bought and sold real estate and trained to become a machinist. For health reasons he was not able to enlist in the army, which he tried to do when Canada entered the war in 1939. He married Ukrainian teacher Ellen Chahley (b. June 6, 1921 in Smoky Lake, Alberta) in Vancouver in 1948.

John died in 1994 but passed his love of nature on to his two children, Mary Lynne (Krisby) Jewell (b. November 5, 1949) and Dennis John (b. June 21, 1952).

In 1928 Anna Krisby completed Grade 10 in the country school in Stettler. She then did housework for a year so she could pay for the things she needed for nurses' training. In 1929 at the age of seventeen Anna entered the Royal Alex Hospital in Edmonton where she graduated in 1932.

In the spring of 1933 Riina had an attack of pleurisy and was hospitalized. Shortly after this John became critically ill with appendicitis and Anna came back to Stettler to nurse him.

Anna later found a job in the hospital at Ponoka where she met English-born Benjamin George Taylor (b. May 15, 1900, d. May 2, 1970), a psychiatric nurse and a talented painter. He was a Christian Scientist and Anna adopted his religion. They were married on May 18, 1936 in Edmonton. Their daughter Rosemary Florence was born in Ponoka on February 4, 1937. After spending some time in England the Taylors moved to Vancouver in 1943.

In June 1933 sixteen-year-old Lilly married August Kerbes, a farmer, (b. September 8, 1901, d. October 2, 1983) and they moved to their own farm in Big Valley a mile and a half from the Krisbys. Alex and Riina gave Lilly her first new coat and three cows. Lilly's baby girl Charlotte was born that September but was killed the following year when the Kerbes' farmhouse was destroyed by fire. (They had four other children.) Lilly moved to Vancouver in 1969 and divorced in August in 1972.

Alex, Riina and John were deeply affected by Lilly's tragedy and worried about her but in 1935 the Krisbys had an auction sale, loaded what they could into their old Ford and left for Creston, British Columbia.

After Alex died suddenly in 1937, Riina returned to Calgary where she worked as a housekeeper before joining John in Vancouver in 1940. Riina worked in domestic service until the age of 62 and died in 1971.



Standing, l to r, Ellen (John's widow), Ben, Lisa and Rosemary Taylor.

Front, l to r: Mary Lynne (Krisby) Jewell, Dennis Krisby, 1999.

LINDA HALL

100 Years of Community Service

Linda Hall was built by Estonian Pioneers who arrived in the Stettler area of central Alberta during the first few years of the 20th century. As farmers, they needed knowledge in crop production, harvesting and marketing, as well as government and politics. In 1910 they formed the "Linda Estonian Farmer's Association" (Linda Eesti Põllumeeste Selts). To facilitate meetings and other major events, they decided to build a community hall. A small rectangular building- Linda Hall- was built entirely by volunteer labour and opened on June 20, 1911. Five years earlier, in 1906, these same pioneers had built a Chapel, the oldest place of worship for Estonian pioneers in North America. (Source: History of Linda Hall by I. and D. Kerbes, AjaKaja, Summer 2006).



AEHS President Bob Kingsep presents Stettler contingent with a plaque in recognition of the 100th anniversary of venerable Linda Hall



Plaque presented at the 2011 Annual General Meeting of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society in appreciation of a century of community service provided by Linda Hall.

Opposite page: A century of activities at Linda Hall, a durable landmark involving Alberta's Estonian community.



Mother Estonia Sends Money to Enliven Expat Culture

The Ministry of Culture allocated 21,251 euros to support 15 cultural projects of Estonian organizations abroad.

A grant was given to the annual West Coast Estonian Days to be held in Portland, Oregon this summer, as well as to the Estonian Days in Crimea, Ukraine. Giving Estonians in Russia and Ukraine something to read, the ministry sliced off a portion of the fund for the St. Petersburg Gazette and the Crimean Estonian (both printed in Estonia).



Photo: Postimees/Scanpix

Other projects included a film about Estonian villages in Abkhazia; a concert appearance in the US by Kadri Hunt's children's radio; the Estonian choir Beene in Brussels; the Munich Estonian school's summer program in Tallinn; and cooperation between the western Estonian island Saaremaa's municipal theatre and the Gothenburg Estonian theater in Sweden.

Supporting cultural associations in foreign countries is important, as they contribute to preserving the Estonian language and traditions while stimulating interest towards the country, said Anne-Ly Reimaa, the ministry's undersecretary.

Over the years the ministry has funded

Estonian theatres, orchestras and dance groups, so that they could make guest appearances at festivals and gatherings around the world. The Compatriots Program organizes language and culture summer camps for young Estonians living abroad.

Ingrid Teesalu

ERR News (Estonian Public Broadcasting). Published 30.3. 2011.

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AEHS Heritage Project Receives Grant from Estonian Ministry of Education and Research

Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium
Estonian Ministry of Education and Research

Last fall we initiated work to update our (AlbertaSource.ca/abestonians) digital archive website and to donate all remaining archival materials to the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA) in Edmonton for preservation. Another objective is to inform interested individuals and organizations of the availability of the history and cultural heritage of Alberta's Estonians in print and digital form.

Recently-approved financial support in the form of a grant from the Estonian Government will enable us to complete our heritage project by the end of 2011. The Alberta Estonian Archival Collection at the Provincial Archives of Alberta can be accessed on-site, and online via the Internet: <http://hermis.alberta.ca/paa/>.

Dave Kiil

150th Jubilee of Estonians arriving in Crimea

Martha Munz Gue

Estonians are a people on the move. They are also a people who remember and value their heritage.

In 1999 Canadians of Estonian descent celebrated 100 years since the arrival of the first Estonian pioneers in Canada. They settled in the parkland of central Alberta. At the centennial celebration at Linda Hall, Stettler, an invitation was read from the Estonian Cultural Societies of Crimea and of the Ukraine to attend the 140th anniversary celebration of Estonians arriving in the Crimea, to be held in 2001. As my great grandparents were among the children in the trek from Estonia to Crimea in 1861, I was moved to accept the invitation. My two daughters, Lisa and Anita, attended the celebration with me.

At the opening ceremony in Beregovoye, on the shore of the Black Sea, I was given the opportunity to bring greetings from Canadians of Estonian descent. It was a moving experience for me. My grandmother's sister, Emilia, remained in Crimea with her husband and new baby when the rest of the family, including her parents, 7 siblings, and some close family friends emigrated to North America in 1901. Emilia's grandson and great granddaughters were our hosts, a hundred years later, in 2001! I remember early correspondence between my grandmother in Barons and her sister in Crimea. As the Iron Curtain stiffened, all correspondence ceased. After the crumbling of the Iron Curtain, reconnection was made through subsequent generations. How that happened is another story.



Martha Munz Gue (sitting on left side with daughters Lisa (sitting on far right) and Anita (standing 2nd from left), socializing with relatives in Crimea, 2001

For the purpose of this introduction, let me limit myself to say how thrilled I was to visit the land where my grandmother was born and to meet relatives who grew up in Crimea. Sessions at the conference were in

Russian and Estonian. A translator from University of Kiev was provided for us to understand some of the proceedings in English. Field trips were taken to a small museum of Estonian culture and to a cemetery where stories were told of early Estonian settlers and writers in Crimea. Busloads of choirs came directly from Estonia to Crimea for the celebration. We were fortunate to be on the post conference trip with one bus to visit the historical resort areas of the Yalta coast.

This year, Canadians of Estonian descent are again invited to Crimea, now to celebrate their 150th Jubilee. (It is hard to believe that it is already 10 years since the memorable 140th. Sponsored by the Estonian Society of Ukraine, their supporters and friends, the celebration of Estonians in Crimea will be held from September 9 through September 11, 2011. The celebration will begin on September 9 in Beregovoye (previously known as Samruk). An academic conference is planned on the following day in Eupatatoria to review the 150-year history of Estonian education in Crimea. The celebration will conclude on September 11 with a tour of Krasnodarka area (previously known as Kontshi-Shavva). Participants will be able to learn more about Crimean Estonian settlements.

The Estonian Society in Crimea is collecting histories, documents, photographs and memories (even memory fragments) about school life in Crimea between the 1860s to 1930s. This information—where and when students were taught, information about teachers, what was included in the lessons, the role of home schooling and teaching by siblings--will be included in a book about education in the Estonian settlements, which will be available at the 2011 Jubilee. For more information go to www.kredor.ee and choose *Krimmi eestlased* (Crimea Estonians: vast majority of articles in the newspaper are in Russian) #18 (page 10) and #19 (page 8). Look for the article titled *Kogume mälestusi kooliajast* (We are collecting memories of the school time).

Don't miss the ethnographic museum in Simferopol, if you travel to Crimea. It has displays of the 50 cultural groups that settled Crimea, including a lovely display from early Estonian settlements. The curator asked us to send pictures and artifacts from people who once lived in those early Estonian settlements.

Persons interested in attending the 150th Jubilee of Estonians' arrival in the Crimea need to contact Mare Litnevskaja, chairperson of the Estonian Society of Ukraine: litnevskaja@yahoo.com

EMIGRATION OF ESTONIANS TO CRIMEA

Ottomar Laaman, 1973



Map of Crimea



Ottomar Laaman,
1919

Until the beginning of 19th century, Estonians were farmer-serfs whose lot was especially hard under Russian domination since 1721, and particularly from the time of Czarina Katherine II. Serfdom was abolished in Estonia by the Russians in 1816 but Estonians were still dominated by Baltic-German landowners to whom Estonian farmers had paid rent, mostly in the form of excessive forced labour on the landlords' fields (known as 'corvee'). The partly gained personal freedoms actually put Estonian farmers in economically worse conditions; landlords even used physical punishments- floggings, etc. against them.

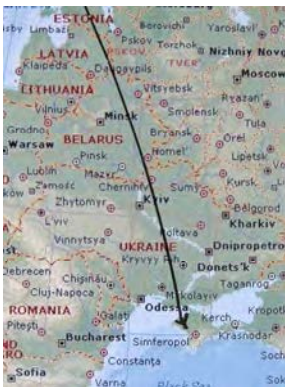
Economic oppression by the feudal landlords resulted in agrarian disturbances in many places in Estonia. These were suppressed by Russian

military expeditions. As a result Estonians tried to find respite in religious movements. One of these was headed by "Prophet Maltsvet" (Johann Leinberg) in the districts of Järvamaa and Harjumaa (northern Estonia). The Maltsvet movement likely had its roots in "Herrnhutism" and its beliefs. Among the simple Estonian farmers, this produced some unusual results.

New agrarian laws in 1856 (in northern Estonia) and 1860 (in southern Estonia) gave Estonian people somewhat more freedom of movement. This opened opportunities for them to emigrate to Russia. In northern Estonia, rumors circulated among farmers that the Russian government was giving free land to settlers somewhere in south Russia. After a while, some Estonians even went to see the Czar in St. Petersburg and sent scouts to Crimea. In Crimea there was some free land abandoned by Tatars who emigrated or fled to Turkey after the Crimean War. This wave of emigration to Crimea also caught the attention of followers of Prophet Maltsvet. They terminated their contracts with the landowners even before there was any certainty that they could get land in Crimea. Some of the so-called "Maltsvet people" got the

idea that the Prophet (who was at that time with the scouts in Crimea) would come with a “white ship” to take them to the promised land. Waiting for the arrival of the Prophet, they gathered in the spring of 1861 at the seashore near Tallinn. Mostly they were from the district of Järvamaa.

At the same time another group of Maltsvet people from the district of Harjumaa gathered by the seashore near Kolga and went to the island of Äegna to await the arrival of the “White Ship”. But the “White Ship” never came. After painful waiting, the Maltsvet people would start their journey to Crimea, one year later, in 1862.



Journey from Estonia to Crimea, 1861-62

Tallinn to St. Petersburg by boat and to Moscow by train. In Moscow they bought horses and carts, and arrived via Harkov in Crimea at the beginning of August 1861. Abram Nort bought his family of three sons and a daughter a small farm near Simferopol. The other families rented land from landowners in the same district. But Abram Nort was disappointed with life in Crimea and went back to Estonia in 1867.

Most of the Estonians who emigrated to Crimea, settled on crown lands in five villages:

- **SAMRUK** - on the west coast of Crimea, about 25 miles north of Sevastopol. Twenty-three Estonian families came here mostly from the village of Tiskre near Tallinn. They travelled to St. Petersburg by boat, from there by train to Tver and by boat on the Volga river to Tsaritsyn. They then travelled overland to the River Don and by boat to Feodosia in Crimea. They

left Tallinn on the last days of June 1861 and arrived at Samruk November 1, 1861. Among them were some Maltsvet-believers.

The following people emigrated from Samruk village to Alberta in 1904: Peter Lentsman and family; Julia Reinstein with two daughters. Most of the Maltsvet-believers left Estonia in 1862. There were two groups: Gustav Määrman's and Ants Valkmann's.

Gustav Määrman's group of approximately 500 people were from the district of Järvamaa. With them were 16 families totalling 80 people from the district of Harjumaa, Kolga county.



Graduation/confirmation photo of Crimea Estonian young people in Crimea, 1916

They travelled with horse-carts via Võru, Pskov, Vitebsk, Mogilyov and Kiev. The journey was hard for them. They suffered hunger, diseases (typhus) and many died on the way, especially children and the elderly. They reached Crimea at the beginning of August 1862.

This group had an agreement with landowner Mrs. Belovodsky who promised to rent them land at the village of Burlyuk (site of the battle of Alma some years previously). But she couldn't dislodge the former renters-Tatars from the village.. So the emigrants stayed there only some weeks and moved to the city of Simferopol. There they spent the winter of 1862-1863, still suffering from typhus and burying their dead all the time.

Ants Valkmann's group was somewhat smaller than Määrman's group, totaling approximately 50 families. They were all from the Järvamaa district. Travelling via Võru, they reached

Crimea in the middle of August 1862. In Crimea they were promised land by landowner Mrs. Dalayev in the village of Kara-Kiyat near Simferopol. They were to rent land and buildings as sharecroppers, but as with Määrman's group, here too the previous renters were still occupying the houses. Somehow they stayed in this village living together with Tatars in their huts through the winter of 1862-1863.

After such miserable beginnings, the Maltsvet people eventually received crown land made available by Tatars who emigrated to Turkey.

There were four villages in the northern part of Crimea, not far from each other:

- DZURTCHI - settled in 1863 by approximately 40 Estonian families.
- KONTCHI-SHAVVA - settled in 1863 by approximately 23 families.
- SYRT-KARAKTCHORA - settled in 1864 by approximately 20 families.
- KIYAT-ORKA - small village one mile from Dzurthi, settled by approximately 6 families.

The above- mentioned Estonian settlements in Crimea were all on crown land and the farmers had to pay rent to the Russian government.

Many Estonians in Crimea rented land (with buildings) from big landowners in different locations and at different times. As they became richer they bought land and houses in towns. One such Estonian settlement was the village of UTCH-KUYU-TARHAN, settled in 1879 by 24 Estonian families.

From 1904 onward, some Estonians from Crimea emigrated to Alberta and settled at Barons. From the Estonian village of Dzurthi came John and Alex Kivi, Jaan Kotkas (1905), Krasman family (1911), Jaan and Philip Nugis (around 1909), Mihkel Palkman (1903) and Hans Pärtel (whose parents lived in the village of Kiyat-Orka).

From the village of Utch-Kuyu-Tarhan came Jakob Erdman and family of 8 people; (J. Erdman was born in Estonia and went to Crimea as a child); Anton Kulpas and family of 4 people and Jakob, John and Edward Malberg. From elsewhere in Crimea came Flink, Keldreauk (1909), Krikental, Minnik, and John Saffel (1914)

Editor's Note: The above article appears courtesy of Wilma (Pertel) Costello of Calgary. It was written by Ottomar Laaman at the request of Wilma's family when they were researching their Estonian heritage in the 1970's.

*Ottomar Laaman was born in Samruk, Crimea in 1900; his grandparents had immigrated there from Estonia in the 1860's. Otto left for Estonia in 1920, eventually escaping in 1944 during WWII. He immigrated to Calgary because a Crimea relative and former Crimea schoolmate was already living there. Ottomar Laaman was president of the Calgary Estonian Society for 25 years from 1953 to 1978 and researched the history of Alberta Estonians as time permitted during that period. He wrote the definitive article about early Alberta Estonians' history for the Estonian language books *Eestlased Kanadas*, 1975 (*Estonians in Canada*) and *Mälestused Krimmist* (*Memories from Crimea*), 1981, both published in Toronto. Laaman's chapter on Alberta Estonians appears in English in Alberta Estonian Heritage Society's 2010 publication "Freedom, Land and Legacy: Alberta's Estonians 1899-2009" compiled by Dave Kiil and Eda McClung.*



Envelope from Crimea to Mrs. K. Linderman in Alberta, 1935



Descendants of Crimea Estonians during a reunion in Calgary. l to r: Evelyn Erdman, Wilma Pertel-Costello, Donna Koper, Lillian Munz

An Exhibition: Siberian Estonians

Curators: Anu Korb (the Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu) and Kadri Viires (the Estonian Academy of Arts, Tallinn)
Designers: Tiit Rammul, Eva Sepping
Supported by: the Estonian Ministry of Culture, the Compatriots Programme and the Cultural

Endowment of Estonia. The exhibition was created in 2008, and has been displayed at the University of Tartu's History Museum, the Narva Museum, the Estonian Literary Museum, and at the Academic Library in Krasnoyarsk Krai.



A section of the “Siberian Estonians” exhibition

In the minds of many people, Siberia is a vast space with a harsh climate, a place of deportations and prison camps. Deportations, cattle wagons, nameless graves — memories of Siberia published in both the diaspora community and Estonia confirm this negative image. No wonder, then, that the words *Siberian Estonians* are automatically associated with the mass deportations of the 1940s. Actually, most of those who were lucky enough to survive in the harsh conditions returned home. And yet, there are many Estonians in Siberia today. Who are they?

The foundations for colonisation of Siberia was laid by the Cossack ataman Yermak's journey across the Urals. In 1582, he conquered Sibir, the capital of the Siberian khanate, and it became part of Russia. At the end of the 17th century, Siberia became Russia's deportation destination of choice. There are records of Estonians in Siberia from as early as the 18th century. They ended up there as a result of fleeing war, as settlers forced there by the tsar and as deportees to the 'Siberian void'. Siberia's great resources (land assets, forests, etc.) were first explored using forced labourers/prisoners, which of course didn't work

out. **The number of deportees was never large in relation to the total population of Siberia.**



The large landmass of Siberia lies east of the Ural Mountains, north of Mongolia and China, and west of the Verkhoyansk-Kolyma Mountains

“With the imposition of Soviet power, the diligent and successful were the first to get caught in the machinery: their property was expropriated, the head of the family was arrested or the family was sent away with no means to support themselves.”

Most of today's Siberian Estonians are the **descendants of emigrants**. Extensive emigration of Estonians to the lesser-populated parts of Russia began in the mid-1850s. With the construction of the main Trans-Siberian railway, Siberia became a more important area for emigration during the last decades of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Many Estonians made their home in Siberia, where they were hoping to get by through working the land.

With the imposition of Soviet power, the diligent and successful were the first to get caught in the machinery: their property was expropriated, the head of the family was arrested or the family was sent away with no means to support themselves. The repressions of the 1930s affected everyone, poorer people as well. To be arrested, all it took was correspondence with 'bourgeois' Estonia, possession of books in the Estonian language, groundless complaints, etc. to mention a few reasons. The Second World War followed, where the remainder of men were sent to the fronts and women and children were left to take care of village life. The post-war national politics of the Soviet Union aimed to get rid of small ethnic villages and focus on the development of collective farms with workers of different

nationalities. Many Estonians returned to their homeland, others found work and housing in Russian cities and towns.

As mentioned previously, there are Estonians in Siberia even today. In these Siberian villages, built in the last decades of the 20th century and the early 21st century, the curators of this exhibition met warm and good-hearted people. It is with these positive emotions that we invite you on a journey to Siberia, to visit the Estonians.



A view of the “Siberian Estonians” exhibit

The original article was written by Anu Korb in Estonian and translated into English by Laura Neill.

Editors Note

According to SIRP (Estonian Culture), tens of thousands of Estonians left their homeland in the mid-nineteenth century in search of productive land and freedom. Destinations included Crimea, Caucasus, northwest-northern- and central Russia, and Siberia. In Siberia alone, Estonians established over 100 settlements. According to the 1939 Russian census a total of 33,600 Estonians lived in this region. Even today, the 'Estonian' villages have clear identities: some can be identified by south- and north-Estonian dialects, rural and urban communities, and even single- and multi-ethnic villages.

Plans are underway to bring the exhibition to Toronto in fall 2011 and to make it available to interested museums and other organizations in Canada. A possible venue for the exhibit is AEHS's planned celebration of Jaanipäev in 2012.

Tallinn: European Capital of Culture 2011



This year Tallinn takes on its role as European Capital of Culture, giving the city a chance to showcase the best of its creative spirit to the rest of the world. This is the biggest cultural event in the history of Estonia. Something will be happening in Tallinn every day in 2011, and some of the world's biggest names will be involved.

Information about the events of European Culture Capital 2011 is available on the cultural calendar created by Foundation Tallinn 2011 and the Estonian Institute.

Noteworthy events scheduled during summer of 2011 include:

- St. John's Day (Jaanipäev) at the Open Air Museum. The mysterious night is filled with beliefs, omens and rites that can be used to turn fortune in your favor.
- 11th youth song and dance festival- 'The land and the World.' The festival tells seaside stories about Estonia and its people.

- Medieval Days in Tallinn's Old Town.

The journey back to the Middle Ages is a discovery of the 500-year-old Reval (Tallinn). It brings Hanseatic artisans' market to life. Town hall musicians, travelling minstrels and troubadours will tantalize the senses.

- 'People of the Sea' trilogy at the Muhu Future Music Festival 2011. This was inspired by Estonian president Lennart Meri in his book Hõbevalge involving Muhu and Saaremaa.
- Estonian Pops Festival 2011. Estonian and foreign artists will contribute to the soundscape on a special day.
- Tallinn Maritime Days and Nargen Festival water carnival.
- Traditional culture day. The traditional culture day will introduce the lively and unique cultural legacy of various regions and ethnic minorities in Estonia. Groups and performers from Kihnu, the Seto region, Viru and Võru, Tartu and Tallinn, and the larger islands will be featured.
- Readers of Ajakaja will recall recent guest performances of Estonian conductor Anu Tali with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. In Tallinn, she conducts the Nordic Symphony Orchestra (NSO). This international orchestra, consisting of musicians from ten countries, also promotes Estonian music and culture around the world.



- Old Town Christmas Market (Jõuluturg) is held from the last week of November to the first week of January. Handcrafts, hot wine and souvenirs are sold.



2011 West Coast Estonian Days

August 3-7, 2011, Portland, Oregon

WWW.LEP2011.COM

The Portland LEP 2011 festival organizing committee has been working diligently to create a profound and memorable festival, which we hope will take this 56 year old tradition into the hearts of the new generation of Estonian-Americans. We have many new events planned to spark the interests of our youth all the way to our elderly. We hope to rekindle Estonian passion in our West Coast communities, and also with the many Friends of Estonians among us!

LODGING

LEP 2011's home base will be the **Doubletree Hotel** in central Portland. We have arranged special convention pricing. Relax in one of the hotel's 476 beautifully appointed guest rooms and suites featuring large work desks, high-speed internet access, two phones, in-room coffee/tea, hair dryers, on-demand movies, and incredible views of either the city skyline or the Cascade Mountain range. The hotel also provides ATM, baggage storage, elevators, gift shop, laundry/valet service, lounge, luggage hold, news stand, room service, safety deposit boxes, fitness room, pool, and rowing machines.

The DoubleTree Hotel (1-800-996-0510) is now accepting hotel room reservations for participants of the West Coast Estonian Festival. Reduced room rates are available in accordance to the hotel's agreement with the Estonian League of the West Coast. During your reservation request, please indicate that a) your reservation is for the DoubleTree Hotel at Lloyd Center in Portland, Oregon, and b) your reservation is part of the Estonian League group rate. Room rates are \$104 to \$119/night plus 12.5% tax.

INVITATION TO PERFORMERS

The LEP 2011 organizing committee invites folkdancers, singers, musicians, and other performing groups to participate in cultural performances during the festival. Performance opportunities are available at numerous venues, including Rahvapidu, Laulupidu, and Tantsupidu. If you do not currently participate in a folkdance troupe or choir, you can still perform at LEP 2011!

Folkdancers and musicians, please contact liinateose@LEP2011.com.

Choral groups, please contact katitamm@LEP2011.com.

INVITATION TO CLERGY

We invite all members of the clergy to participate in this celebration. LEP 2011 provides many opportunities for spiritual fellowship. These include an ecumenical outdoor worship service, prayer services, and several discussion groups.

Members of the clergy, please contact kallemerilo@LEP2011.com

PERFORMERS FROM ESTONIA

The folk band **Kihnu Poisid** was established in 1996 in Kihnu, a small island southwest of the mainland. The music group's main focus is to restore old Kihnu sailor songs and bring these to their audience. "... the songs of the sea, the sailors and our brides who were left behind at the shore are particularly close to our hearts." In the past 15 years they have performed at all major Estonian folk festivals and have released two CDs, which tell stories about the adventures of Kihnu sailors.

Pärnu folk dance ensemble **Kajakas** was founded in 1951 and its current director is Rita Mändla. The ensemble is composed of six dance groups with dancers aged 12 through 58. Of these six troupes, the advanced youth folk dance troupe will be coming to Portland. Kajakas has performed in Europe, in Africa and also in America. The dance group performs traditional Estonian folk dances, as well as theatrical and choreographed dance performances.

LEP 2011 PROGRAM OF EVENTS

LEP 2011 begins Wednesday evening with a gala **Opening Ceremony** with a regal procession of LEP emblem banners from 1953 to date. The ceremony will feature an orchestral and mass choral performance composed by the Estonian composer, Cyrillus Kreek, and directed by our own Lonnie Cline.

The next day, we travel by buses to Alderbrook Park to celebrate **Rahvapidu** within the old-growth forest of the Cascade Mountain range. Many fun-filled activities for children and content-rich programs for adults will keep everyone entertained.

On Friday, we prepare for the evening's performance of "**Hõissa, Tuljak!**", the

laulupidu and tantsupidu musical interpretation of Tuljak.

Saturday starts with an outdoor **ecumenical worship service** at The Grotto, a beautiful natural sanctuary within a rock cliff. We then continue to the DoubleTree Hotel for numerous performances and workshops, ending with the traditional **LEP Ball**.

On Sunday morning, LEP 2011 culminates with an inspiring **Closing Ceremony**, which reflects on the current festival and festivals of years past.

Throughout the course of our festival, the **Kuld Lõvi** hall is available for us as a festival "Living Room". This hall will be filled with ongoing performances, forums, and workshops to enhance your festival experience! You will enjoy this facility as a wonderful place to meet your friends throughout the day and evening.

The organizers of LEP 2011 seek to present a culturally rich and multi-faceted festival celebrating our heritage in both the Estonian and English languages.

TICKETS

Event tickets will become available as the program schedule becomes finalized.

WWW.LEP2011.COM

Visit the website for the West Coast Estonian Festival 2011 to get the latest updates about events and performers! Join Facebook and share your ideas and suggestions to help create a wonderful Estonian cultural experience!

*For further information, please contact
kallemerilo@ LEP2011.com*

World's First Skype Booth Installed in Estonia

Leslie Horn - PC Magazine

Someday, we'll all be explaining the concept of a "phone booth" to our children. Perhaps that day is already here, now that the first Skype booth has been installed in the Tallinn Airport in Estonia.



Photo Courtesy of Scanpix

It's a modern spin on the outdated concept of a payphone. You can use the booth in much the same way you would use Skype from your personal device. When you sign-in to your account at the terminal, calls can be made on a 22-inch touch screen using Skype credits.

A sensor of the floor detects when someone is in the booth and it's enclosed behind a wall to help maintain privacy. There's also a headset included to keep others from eavesdropping on your conversations.

Although the Estonian capital might seem like an odd choice, the location was chosen because it's where the company got its start back in 2003.

"It was quite logical that the initial home of Skype would have a Skype station in Estonia at Tallinn airport, which is named after Lennart Meri, the former Estonian president, who urged people to find some useful innovation to put Estonia on a map," Merilin Parli of Estonia Enterprise, one of the companies behind the booth, [told Deutsche Welle](#). "If that isn't Skype, then what is?"

The company plans to place Skype booths in malls, hotels, and hospitals throughout Estonia, as well as other airports around the world.

Meanwhile, Skype has recently reached a milestone. On Monday, the company announced that it had a record 30 million people online at one time.

Public Broadcaster Makes Archives Accessible via Internet

19 November (BNS) - **Audiovisual heritage held in the archives of the Estonian Public Broadcasting Company, ERR, can be accessed over the Internet starting Friday, 19 November, 2010.**

The materials can be accessed via the web page arhiiv.err.ee, spokespersons for ERR said. Web-based access to the audio and video archives has been created on the initiative of ERR in order to make digital audiovisual cultural heritage accessible to everyone free of charge. Right now the material that can be accessed consists of television and radio broadcasts.

ERR is ready to start negotiations with all major

content producers, television and radio stations and film archives who are interested in preserving and publishing their audiovisual material in the digital archives of ERR. Cooperation toward this end is already under way with the Estonian Film Information System (EFIS) being created by the non-profit organization Eesti Filmi Andmebaas (Estonian Film Database).

The ERR archives can be accessed over the Internet both anonymously and after identification. Anonymous users can access content that ERR is free to release to all parties.

Estonian Review, Nov 19, 2010

Skype's journey from tiny Estonian start-up to \$8.5 billion Microsoft buy

Jaani Tallinn, one of the founders of Skype, explains how Estonia's post-Soviet gusto helped give rise to a company that revolutionized online communications.

Isabelle de Pommereau, Correspondent / May 11, 2011

In The Christian Science Monitor

Tallinn, Estonia

It was in a grim Soviet-era complex on the outskirts of Tallinn, Estonia, that a quiet high-tech revolution bubbled. In the research park where the USSR secretly assembled its first computer and designed its first space mission, a group of young Estonian computer buffs launched Skype and ushered in a communications revolution.



Newscom

Skype has been acquired by Microsoft for a whopping \$8.5 billion

Eight years later, Microsoft is set to pay \$8.5 billion for the Internet phone company, which has about 400 million users worldwide, in its biggest acquisition in history. Looking back on Skype's rapid rise, Jan Tallinn, one of its founders, credits a spirit of entrepreneurship that filled Estonia in days after the Soviet Union's collapse, giving rise to a spirited community of computer developers who in some cases helped write the country's new technology laws.

"Because we started anew, we got new laws, new leaders, and new technology," says Mr. Tallinn in an interview via Skype from his home in Tallinn. "The big winners were the start-ups."

To be sure, there was great uncertainty in the early days of Estonian independence from Russia. There was criminality, there was a black market,

but there was also unbridled creativity. "It was the wild, wild west," recalls Tallinn, who also helped develop Kazaa, the online music site that began as a peer-to-peer file-sharing application.

"If you happen to start a new country in the 1990s, you have the advantage of drafting new laws with the knowledge that the Internet is out there," says Tallinn.

Skype put Estonia on the map. Within the country, its success began influencing other technology entrepreneurs. "If you were an entrepreneur who wanted to do crazy things and people used to say, 'come on, it's not possible' – well, you couldn't say this anymore," says Tallinn.

When eBay paid about \$2.6 billion in 2005 for Skype, about \$150 million stayed in Estonia. Most went into Ambient Sound Investment (ASI), an investment firm owned by Skype engineers, including Tallinn. ASI has provided about \$25 million to fund 30 technology or Web-based companies, many in Estonia.

How to use Skype

- You need a computer with speakers.
- Skype works with or without video cameras.
- Participants need to have Skype installed on their computers and to create a Skype account.
- Skype uses account names instead of phone numbers.
- Skype is free. Plans are available to make calls to any phone worldwide.
- Spontaneous calls only work when the other person is online or within earshot of their computer.

Volunteer Cyber Army Emerges In Estonia

Tom Gjelten



istockphoto

In April 2007, the Baltic republic of Estonia became the first country in the world to experience cyberwar. Government, financial and media computer networks were paralyzed by a series of attacks, which authorities ultimately concluded originated in Russia. In the years since that cyber assault, Estonia has distinguished itself once again: Now it is a model for how a country might defend itself during a cyberwar. The responsibility would fall to a force of programmers, computer scientists and software engineers who make up a Cyber Defense League, a volunteer organization that in wartime would function under a unified military command.

"[Our] league brings together specialists in cyberdefense who work in the private sector as well as in different government agencies," Defense Minister Jaak Aaviksoo says. The force carries out regular weekend exercises, Aaviksoo says, "to prepare for possible cyber

contingencies."

The unit is but one division of Estonia's Total Defense League, an all-volunteer paramilitary force dedicated to maintaining the country's security and preserving its independence.

2007 Cyber attack Targeted Country

Aaviksoo says Estonian civilians are willing to be mobilized to defend their country because of their experience of invasion and occupation: by the Soviet Army in 1939, followed by the Germans in 1941 and then again by the Soviet Union, which occupied Estonia until it broke free in 1991.

"Insurgent activity against an occupying force sits deep in the Estonian understanding of fighting back," Aaviksoo says, "and I think that builds the foundation for understanding total defense in the case of Estonia."

The 2007 cyber assault followed a controversial government decision to relocate a Soviet war memorial, and authorities ultimately traced the attacks to Russia, which was angered by the government decision. In a speech last September, Aaviksoo described the attacks as "a coordinated attempt to destabilize our government."

Whoever the attacker was, the choice of cyber war methods made sense. Estonia is one of the most wired countries on the planet. Eighty percent of Estonians pay their taxes online and engage in electronic banking.

The sense of cyber vulnerability in Estonia has been a key rallying point for the Cyber Defense League. No

democratic country in the world has a comparable force, with computer specialists ready and willing to put themselves under a single paramilitary command to defend the country's cyber infrastructure.

Aaviksoo says it's so important for Estonia to have a skilled cyber army that the authorities there may even institute a draft to make sure every cyber expert in the country is available in a true national emergency.

"We are thinking of introducing this conscript service, a cyber service," Aaviksoo says. "This is an idea that we've been playing around [with]. We don't have the mechanism or laws in place, but it might be one option."

Private Sector Cooperation

In the United States, most top cyber security experts work in the private sector and are not available for government duty, even in times of an emergency. Stewart Baker, who tried to coordinate cyber defense efforts at the Department of Homeland Security under President George W. Bush, says a Cyber Defense League like Estonia has would have been helpful.

"It means people are keeping their skills up to date in the private sector, and those skills can be called on in an emergency, which is the only time the government really needs all of them," Baker says. "That's a very sensible approach, and I only wish we had the same kind of relationship with our [Information Technology] sector that they obviously have with theirs."

When top cyber security experts are

willing if necessary to put themselves under a single paramilitary command, a country's computer networks can be defended more efficiently. In Estonia, as in the United States, the information technology underpinning the power, transportation and financial systems is largely in private hands. With the responsibility for defending that I.T. infrastructure split between government and private industry, there are always security gaps.

But Baker, a former general counsel at the National Security Agency, says it's been hard in the United States to promote public-private collaboration in cyber security.

"The people who work in IT in the U.S. tend to be quite suspicious of government," Baker says. "Maybe they think that they're so much smarter than governments that they'll be able to handle an attack on their own. But there's a standoffishness that makes it much harder to have that kind of easy confidence that you can call on people in an emergency and that they'll be respond."

Estonia's firsthand experience with cyber war has probably made it easier for authorities there to implement innovative security measures, from its Cyber Defense League to a new requirement for using digital IDs to carry out many online transactions. Many countries would face resistance to such efforts. But that only means Estonia now has the opportunity to serve as a model, and NATO has recognized Estonia's efforts: The alliance's new Cyber Defense Center for Excellence has its headquarters there.

Source: National Public Radio, January 12-13, 2011

LOUIS KAHN: POINT COUNTER POINT II

A Return Home To Estonia.

Recently Estonia, the birthplace of world renowned architect Louis I. Kahn has been given a rare opportunity to own one of Kahn's most unique creations, the POINT COUNTER POINT II. When commissioned by Robert Boudreau, founder and director of the American Wind Symphony Orchestra (AWSO), Kahn worked closely with Boudreau to make his idea of a floating arts center and concert stage that integrates music, art and community a reality. Since its construction in 1975, it has covered more than 500,000 miles of the world's waterways including the US, Canada, Caribbean, and the Baltic and Irish Seas and commissioned over 400 new musical compositions, including that of Estonian Erkki-Sven Tüür.

This still futuristic 195' long 35' wide steel vessel contains a 75' wide stage and reveals a retractable acoustical shell raised by hydraulic lift allowing the concerts to be viewed from the waterfront. Although stage performances are the most awaited events, galleries on the barge invite visitors to familiarize with the work of local artists. Traditionally, musicians often mentor children of families that play the same instrument, lead workshops at local schools and perform throughout the towns. Poets, artists and composers in residence lead workshops and discussions. Continuing such a tradition could bring a wealth of cultural exchange not only within Estonian communities but also abroad.

The Estonian Architecture Union first approached Robert Boudreau about doing a tour in Estonia as part of the Cultural Capital of Europe 2011 events. Discussions developed into the possibility of Estonia becoming the new home for the vessel and Boudreau in visiting Estonia met with

politicians and cultural heads both in Tallinn and at potential port cities for the tour, including Pärnu, Narva and Kuressaare. Although there are interested buyers in the United States the AWSO has offered to sell the vessel to Estonia for half the cost, at \$1.5 million dollars with an additional \$400,000 necessary to sponsor the project.



Wind Symphony, Cape Girardeau

Robert Boudreau said that conducting the AWSO and leading tours through communities has not just been about creating music, it is about 'creating magic', and this stands true to the potential sale to Estonia. He stated that "My greatest joy would be to know that Lou Kahn lives on in his homeland". Louis Kahn was born in Estonia and lived in Kuressaare, Saaremaa until his family immigrated to Philadelphia in 1906.

Since Boudreau's visit to Estonia, a real desire has been created on the part of several influential Estonians to purchase the floating arts center and a Foundation in Kahn's name is being formed to oversee and lead the project. Great strides are being made on both sides of the Atlantic to capture this fabulous opportunity and make it a reality.

Individuals and organizations are welcome to

support this project with a tax deductible contribution to the AWSO toward the sale of the vessel to Estonia. Possible contributions include having a plaque underneath one of 20 round windows on the vessel (\$5,000); a plaque with your name or organization on one of 6 doors leading to the galley, pilot house and art gallery (\$10,000). Five Commissions are available to Estonian composers, including works of poetry set to music (\$10,000). All works will be published by C.F. Peters Corporation, New York and the dedication to the commissioner or his family or organization will be on the first page. A \$20,000 contribution would include one week living aboard and being a crew member of the POINT COUNTER POINT II during the 8-week season from the end of June through the end of the Baltic Tour in August.

In light of the developments, Robert Boudreau is planning on bringing the vessel and the AWSO to Estonia in late June to participate in festivities relating to Tallinn's designation as the Cultural Capital of Europe for 2011. The orchestra would then perform in three additional ports – Narva, Pärnu and Kuressaare – and continue throughout the Baltic, revisiting communities in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark where the AWSO performed in 1989 and 1990.

Musicians having interest in auditioning for this tour, or individuals or organizations wanting to support this project should contact the AWSO at awso@consolidated.net. More information can also be found on the organizations' website at www.americanwindsymphonyorchestra.org. Articles regarding this project have also been recently published in several Estonian papers, including SIRP and Eesti Ekspress and can be found on their websites.

The purchase of the Point Counterpoint II by Estonia not only would ensure the

preservation and continued use of a work by a world renowned architect, it would bring a work of Louis Kahn to his birthplace and give Estonia an extraordinary vessel and venue with which to activate its waterfronts and with which to spread its great music and art at international events.

-Heli Ojamaa

In Free Estonian Word, Weekly Internet Edition.

Estonia Tops List for Internet Freedom

Freedom House, a New York-based watchdog organization for human rights, has rated Estonia the most free of 37 countries it surveyed in its "Freedom on the Net2011" report.

The survey used three criteria to measure freedom-obstacles to Internet access, limits on content and violations of user rights. The report noted Estonia's highly-developed online culture and the fact that content restrictions are among the lightest in the world.

The US, Germany, Australia and the UK followed Estonia at the "free" end of the scale, while China, Cuba, Burma and Iran bottomed out the list as "not free."

Source: Steve Roman, Estonian Public Broadcasting, Published 19.04.2011.

Sean Connery, Estonian Icon:

According to the Associated Press, Sean Connery was honored with a bronze sculpture in Tallinn. The bust of Scotland's most famous actor was unveiled by British Ambassador Peter Carter outside Tallinn's Scottish Club. The bust by Estonian sculptor Tiit Kirsipuu was financed privately.

