

# AJAKAJA

SUMMER 2012 • ISSUE 36



ALBERTA ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY



# Alberta Estonian Heritage Society, 2012

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](http://www.aehs.ca)

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# AjaKaja

**Alberta Estonian  
Heritage Society**

**Summer 2012  
Issue Number 36**

## Editorial

## In this issue:

Last week it was announced that several newspapers, including Edmonton Journal and Herald in Calgary, would stop printing the Sunday edition. The reasons included economics as well as the availability of and competition from digital, online news. Another story asks, 'What should we do with all these books?' with the success of e-books such as Kobo, iPad and Kindle. Is print material becoming obsolete? These changes make us wonder about the future of AjaKaja in it's current form. For the past 20 years or so, Society members, interested individuals and organizations globally, have received a print version by mail. It may be timely to ask if this is the most effective way to serve and reflect the community we serve. With our redesigned, informative and attractive member website, new options are open to us.

AjaKaja was begun by Mare Maxwell in 1989 as a four page, bilingual newsletter of the Edmonton Estonian Society. The light-hearted, easy-to-read newsletter informed the local Estonian community of its social happenings as well as developments in Estonia. Mare, who was completing studies in graphic design, applied her skills to the newsletter, making it an appreciated bonus of membership. When asked recently about the genesis of AjaKaja, she e-mailed (from Luxembourg where she now lives and works) that 'the end of the 1980's in Estonia were exciting times. Winds of change gathered speed, awakened slumbers in the land of Kalev, fresh winds which were also felt east of the Rockies'. There was a surge of excitement and sense of connection to Estonia, and AjaKaja tapped into this. It was a thread that drew the community together.

Following the establishment of AEHS in 2005, AjaKaja has continued as the newsletter for our organization. Its focus is local events, heritage topics and news from Estonia. The contributors are primarily our own members. The content is a reflection of our shared interests and the involvement of our readership. The positive feedback suggests it has a valued role in our organization and beyond. In recent years, production of the now 40-page magazine is facilitated by computer processing and the Internet. Most AEHS members use Internet routinely, so perhaps the time has arrived to consider some blend of digital and traditional print, so as to attract the widest possible readership. This would be consistent with many newspapers and magazines available in print and online.

This is a view shared by Jan Matiisen, Assistant News Editor/Design, of Calgary Herald. She notes that 'the future of newspapers is clearly not in print'. Although 'print' still pays the bills, digital products such as websites, apps, Twitter, etc. are competing for the dollars and audience. These sources can tell you, immediately, what is going on in the rest of the world. 'Print will need to adapt and reclaim their audience' she writes, and can do so by being the best source of local news and telling the stories that are meaningful locally.

We believe that AjaKaja has succeeded over the two decades by doing this, and more. First and foremost, we are for and by our readers. However, if our readers are shifting to online sources, it may be time to follow them there. We welcome your thoughts about future directions for AjaKaja. We can be reached by mail, e-mail or at [www.aehs.ca](http://www.aehs.ca). Thank you all who contributed material for this issue.

Wishing you an enjoyable summer and a festive Midsummer celebration!

Eda McClung and Dave Kiil

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**Alberta's Estonian  
Heritage Exhibit**

## 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 this was a little disconcerting at first, there was something comforting about these peculiarities. The mystery dissolved as I came to recognize the traits of my aunts and uncles.

As our society evolved, our aspirations progressed from theory through to completion, and are now on record as significant historic contributions and a source of pride to us all. With tongue in cheek, we promote our reputation for committee building, but from my experience, results are the norm. Two recent articles prompted me to expand 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 impending purchase of Skype by Microsoft. Skype is a successful phone 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, that potential for new membership will diminish as well. As you know, our talent pool has been stretched to meet our objectives, 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 or 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 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 the future of the AEHS!

Tervitades, Bob Kingsep

**Statement by Riho Kruuv, Chargé d’Affaires of Estonia  
in Canada, at opening of exhibit ‘Alberta’s Estonians  
1899-present’,  
Provincial Archives of Alberta, April 4, 2012.**

Members of AEHS,  
Friends of Estonia,  
Ladies and gentlemen,



*Riho Kruuv*

It gives me great pleasure to greet and congratulate you on behalf of the Government of Estonia and Estonian Embassy in Canada, on the opening of the exhibit, “Alberta’s Estonians 1899-present“.

Estonia is a small Northern European country, with a population of about 1.3 million people. Due to our size, Estonia

and our people have not been able to play a major role in world history, nor have we discovered any new continents. Rather, as a result of complicated geopolitics, European history and the Eurasian continent, our people—Estonians—have been forced to flee the country to find a new place to live, to survive, and to provide a better living standard for their families and a future for their children. This was the primary reason why many Estonians emigrated directly to Canada, the promised land of opportunities and freedom, with some arriving from the Russian Empire, including Crimea. They did not discover North America, but they did discover a new life for their families. As a result, they also helped to extend the western frontier for Canada and Canadians, and build up Canada as we know it today.

Now, 113 years after the first documented arrival of Estonians in Alberta, we can stop for a while and look back at what this small group of people has achieved, how they lived, what kind of literature they read, and types of toys that their children played with.

This exhibition serves as an important milestone for both Alberta and Estonia. We all know that this exhibit is only the tip of the iceberg. There are thousands of pages of archive materials, gathered by AEHS leaders and members, fully sorted

and organized by the talented professionals working at Provincial Archives of Alberta. Although most valuable, they remain unseen today.

These materials represent an important piece of history for Albertans and Canadians, but they are also valuable for Estonians and Estonia. For us, it is important to know that the history of Estonians in Alberta has been collected and saved for present and future researchers in Canada and Estonia, and family members of Alberta's Estonians. The people that stood behind this hard work, have provided a precious gift to all of us and in particular, for those coming after us.

***“These materials represent an important piece of history for Albertans and Canadians, but they are also valuable for Estonians and Estonia.”***

Please let me conclude by thanking, namely, Mr. Dave Kiil and Mrs. Eda McClung for leading this project for long years. Our thanks also go to all other contributors to this project, both in Alberta Estonian Heritage Society and Government of Alberta. This project would not have been possible without strong support and hard work by the management and archivists of Provincial Archives of Alberta. Thank you for that!

Our thanks also go to all guests and participants in today's event, and we wish you an exciting tour back to more than a century-long history of Estonians in Alberta.

Enjoy the exhibition!

Thank you!

## **AEHS receives grant from Estonian Foundation of Canada.**



The Estonian Foundation of Canada (EFC) recently approved a grant application submitted on behalf of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society. The grant, in the amount of \$2,400, will be used to defray costs associated with our Midsummer Festival at Sylvan Lake and Gilby Hall on June 22 and 23, 2012.

To learn more about the EFC, please log onto their bilingual (English, Estonian) website: <http://estonianfoundation.ca/>.

### *EFC Vision*

*“The Estonian Foundation of Canada is recognized as a vital institution and catalyst, linking Canadians of Estonian descent in a network that affirms, inspires and supports their achievements and aspirations.”*

Previously, the Foundation also provided substantial financial support for the AEHS Heritage Project. These funds were instrumental in the development and production of our DVD, our heritage book, and the heritage website.

Based on the Foundation's mission and strong track record in support of Alberta's Estonian community, members of the AEHS and friends, are encouraged to support the EFC online or by downloading a donation form. Estonian Foundation of Canada is a charitable organization, and all donors will receive a tax receipt.

*Dave Kiil*

## Opening comments by Bob Kingsep at launch of 'Alberta's Estonians 1899-present' exhibit, April 4, 2012

Thank you Leslie\*, good afternoon everyone,

The Alberta Estonian Heritage Society's (AEHS) heritage project was, as you know, a five-year initiative covering several phases, each, like our ethnic predecessors, a story in itself.

There are a multitude of people and organizations who have brought this together; so many in fact, that when I listed them, it was apparent I would spend most of my time reading a list.

I will address the progression of the project later.

After some deliberation I concluded that most of us here would fall into one of two groups, namely 1) those who have been instrumental in constructing the detail of the project and 2) those of you who are here because of your interest in history and heritage, or plan to explore these topics later.

Therefore, I will outline a more philosophical view of our journey.

Let me start by talking about my mother's mixmaster. One day, a long time ago, in our farm kitchen, I teased my mother by humming in the same pitch as her electric mixer.

In doing so, I started raising and lowering the pitch I was humming and in the process began to notice an interesting resonance between the mixer and me.

For a moment I would hear myself and in the next moment I would hear the mixer. It created a pulsing sensation which would vary with the pitch I was humming. I learned later that this resulted from synchronizing the sound frequencies.

When it all came together it was soothing and pleasant; in between it was chaotic.

My mother tolerated my humming variations, but when I started altering the speed of the mixer to see if I could achieve the same result, she kicked me out of the kitchen.

*\*Leslie Latta-Guthrie, Executive Director and Provincial Archivist, Province of Alberta.*



Bob Kingsep , President, AEHS

So there is something about "bad vibes" that gets people irritated. Human experience suggests "bad vibes" determine history.

While mankind's aspirations have usually been the pursuit of harmony, reality has played out in a multitude of modulations in which good and bad harmonics either cancel one another out-or induce an extreme.

The highs of Roman civilization were impressive, - roads, aqueducts and democracy, whereas the lows of the Dark Ages included sewers, rats and plagues.

Our European ancestors of the late 1800's also found themselves at a low point in life, but in this scenario, the push for settlement in North America provided an option for them to settle here.

Another example of lows, highs and timing occurred here much more recently.

By 1999 the multiple regional Estonian societies within Alberta had diminished to one society, marking the centennial since the arrival of the first Estonian pioneers. The remaining organization, here in Edmonton, along with remnants of the previous societies, organized a highly successful Centennial celebration.

Two other centennials, coupled with a memorable visit by the President of Estonia, led to the organization of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society, the provincial organization we are today.

Over time, history's highs and lows, and the synchronizing of each, are the factors that have brought us here.

Today we are riding a high! A high in which we are the beneficiaries of opportunity-and opportunists.

Our heritage now spans some 7 generations and our effectiveness has been enhanced by a revival of interest in heritage. We have built on that.

We inherited a legacy. A country of freedom, a province of prosperity and multiple cultural and historic organizations designed to enhance our opportunities. But

opportunities are but pathways and pathways yield nothing unless they are travelled. It is the “travellers of the pathways of opportunity” whom we are celebrating today; travellers of different eras and different generations. Those with the vision to see beyond, -- those with the fortitude to take the risk -- and those with the initiative to make it happen. Our heritage project has proven this out -- both in the history it portrays and in the efforts of our membership in bringing it to fruition - all of us here are the beneficiaries of “the good”, “the bad”, and “the ugly circumstances”, which have played out and evolved into the society we enjoy today.

One cannot ignore the irony—that some of the worst scenarios have initiated some of the best scenarios—and perhaps our best tribute to this evolution is a carefully chosen word in our name:

***“heritage” - all the factors that got us here; not merely a series of dates and hard facts but reality at its best – the forces at play, the intrigue, mystery, action and drama of people being people.***

Those of us here are stakeholders in our past and have played a role in the completion of our heritage project.

AEHS is particularly appreciative of the initiative and leadership provided by Dave Kiil for the entire project. Those of you who have worked with Dave will appreciate the time, effort and expertise he has provided.

We love you Dave. However...this is my best opportunity to extract a little vengeance...and tell the world about the real Dave Kiil... Dave never got around to telling us he was on a five-year project...it started with a simple little DVD; at the completion of the DVD, he casually mentioned he had procured another grant... and this is what we could do with it...so we went with it...Then came grant number three...and...well you get the picture...

But in my own words...the highs and lows worked out perfectly.... thank you Dave!

Eda McClung has been a close collaborator and advisor with Dave on this project. Her knowledge and communication skills have helped us all remain cool.

Our Vice President Helgi Leesment has been a tireless writer, provider of material, and historian for the southern half of the province.

Juri Kraav, our Secretary, has kept track of our activities and kept us on topic, while Toomas Paasuke, our Treasurer, ensured our financials were in order. Many other AEHS members have also donated a great deal of time and energy.

I'm of the opinion that this is not the completion of our heritage project. I suspect this is the completion of the foundation of our heritage project - a base for our successors. More opportunities will present themselves and adventurous eyes will continue to scan the horizon.

We are appreciative of the efforts of many people and organizations who have been with us throughout the entire project. We have had the opportunity to express our appreciation to Polar Bear Entertainment Inc. for the creation of the DVD and the Heritage Community Foundation for the heritage database highlighted at previous events, so I will refrain from repeating those in detail.

Our hardcopy book came into being with the assistance of grants from the Governments of Canada and Alberta, Estonian Foundation of Canada and the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research. Graphic design by John Luckhurst (Graphic Design Inc), editing by Anita Jenkins, and maps by David Jackson (The Wired Cup) rendered their expertise. Dave Kiil and Eda McClung compiled the material.

The exhibit we are here to view today, is a display of six panels produced by Glen Millar of Display Design Systems and funded by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research. The framed photos were contributed by members of the AEHS, including those of professional photographer Leah Hannel of the Calgary Herald. Artifacts in the display cases were made available by Helle and Juri Kraav, Eda McClung and Dave Kiil.

A postcard handout, printed with compliments of the Estonian Credit Union (Toronto), introduces the AEHS and the components of the heritage project.

Finally, Alison\*, we are appreciative of the professionalism and hospitality shown by the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA). All the material collected for the heritage project has been donated to the PAA. Tom Anderson has co-ordinated the acquisition of the Estonian Collection and supervised its description and classification. Sara King organized the data base. I understand that recently-retired Irene Jendzjowsky, helped get the exhibit started.

References to all aspects of the project, including a link to the PAA website, is available on the AEHS website [www.aehs.ca](http://www.aehs.ca).

And now, as President of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society, I extend a very appreciative thank you to all for playing your part in orchestrating this significant event.

*\*Alison Freake, Provincial Archives of Alberta*

# Estonian heritage on display at the Provincial Archives of Alberta

Helgi Leesment

The Provincial Archives of Alberta are giving the Estonian community royal treatment. Currently, and continuing until June 1, 2012, it is housing an exhibition of Alberta Estonian heritage in its main foyer.

The Archives staff graciously hosted an official opening event on April 4, 2012, attended by approximately 30 people. Leslie Latta-Guthrie, Executive Director and Provincial Archivist, Province of Alberta, as the opening speaker, welcomed the exhibit and that day's visitors with an account of the Archives' role in the production, and inviting everyone to stay for coffee, tea and sweets after the ceremony. She also introduced several of the staff members involved in the archives and exhibit project. Leslie Latta-Guthrie was followed by Alberta Estonian Heritage Society President Bob Kingsep who noted that many historical factors, some negative, had eventually resulted in the positive stories of successful Estonian settlers and their descendants in Alberta. He also read out the official congratulations from Riho Kruuv, Chargé d'Affaires, on behalf of the government of Estonia.



*l to r: AEHS Board members: Toomas Paasuke, Dave Kiil, Juri Kraav, Alison Freake (Provincial Archives of Alberta), Bob Kingsep and Helgi Leesment at launch of Estonian exhibit, April 4, 2012.*

The exhibit was created as a joint project between the Provincial Archives of Alberta staff and members of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS). Its purpose is best indicated by part of the text on one of the display panels:

“The word ‘heritage’ is central to the aims and goals of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society. In 2006, the Society initiated a project to research, produce and communicate the history and legacy of Alberta’s Estonian community. A documentary DVD, a richly illustrated heritage book, a comprehensive online archive and an Estonian Collection at the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton have been completed. This historical record is now available in digital and written form, preserving the legacy of six generations of Alberta’s Estonians.”

The display at the Archives consists of six large wall panels, two glass display cases of ethnic artifacts and nine photos. All items were selected, prepared and designed by AEHS and assembled for the display by Archives staff.

The first panel introduces the socio-economic conditions of Estonians during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The next ones tell the story of early arrivals to the area now called Alberta (it was part of North West Territories until 1905) as pioneers acquiring their own homestead land in an effort to seek a better life than they experienced in Estonia, Crimea and Nurmekunde in Russia. The display then proceeds to a brief overview of settlers’ daily lives and cultural heritage activities. The three centennials,

celebrated in Alberta respectively in 1999, 2001 and 2004, are the topic of the fifth panel. The last panel is titled “Time Marches On” and mentions later immigrants, with a focus on recent AEHS publications: the half-hour DVD documentary *Alberta’s Estonians*, the book *Freedom, Land, & Legacy: Alberta’s Estonians 1899-2009*, the online website ([www.aehs.ca](http://www.aehs.ca)), select ‘Heritage’, then click on the image titled ‘Alberta’s Estonian Heritage’), the *archival collection* now located at the Provincial Archives site and the twice yearly issued magazine *AjaKaja*.

The two glass cases display Estonian cultural artifacts: a knitted winter hat in a style typically worn by Estonian girls and women up to approximately 50 years ago, other knitted items such as gloves & socks, a doll in Mustjala regional folk costume, a hand-woven belt, jewellery, wood handicrafts and various books including an 1825 Bible and a publication detailing the lives of a 150 member Estonian clan whose forefathers immigrated to southern Alberta in 1904.



**Display table with postcard-sized handout and guest book**

Strategically positioned between the larger panels are smaller framed photographs of various Estonian families, workers, inquisitive children, farmhouses etc.

The exhibit further includes a supply of a post-card sized handout describing the AEHS and the products of the Heritage Project for handy future reference.

The panels are intended as a travelling exhibit, and will be available to interested groups and organizations.

How did this exhibit come about?

Thousands of images, artifacts and documents were collected over the span of five years from 2006 to 2011 by hard-working volunteers of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society under the direction Ain Dave Kiil. He continuously and successfully applied for funding from the Alberta, Canadian and Estonian governments plus the Estonian

Foundation in Canada. AEHS secretary Jüri Kraav’s application to the Estonian Credit (Toronto) Union resulted in funds for the printing of the postcard handout. The AEHS is grateful for the positive responses from all these sources. Dave’s main assistant has been Eda McClung with great support from the AEHS executive and many other members.

The initial goal was solely to create a professionally produced documentary DVD which premiered at the West Coast Estonian Days festival in Los Angeles in 2007. However, one thing led to another.

Because much written material, thousands of photographs, documents and artifacts had been collected for the DVD, it was a logical progression to make use of them for another purpose: namely a heritage website. Funding grants permitted the AEHS once again to hire professionals to handle the editing and technical aspects for high quality results. A few errors occasionally crept in as the hires were not familiar with Estonian language, history, geography or culture. Considerable volunteer time was spent providing them with sufficient background information. Additions, revisions and edits will be ongoing.

Meanwhile, AEHS leaders were working smoothly as a team under the able guidance of president Bob Kingsep. When the idea of producing a book arose, the board was in complete agreement that would be another worthwhile project. Dave Kiil and Eda McClung set to work commanding articles, gathering suitable previously written works, arranging translations, selecting illustrations and doing preliminary editing. Funding from subsequent grant applications once again permitted the hiring of professionals to design and edit the book, with excellent results.

Having created three products depicting the lives of Estonians and descendants of Estonians in Alberta, the next question that arose was what to do with the gathered collection. No one wanted to risk storing the artifacts and images in their homes. An archive of some kind was needed. With this thought, Dave Kiil approached Tom Anderson, Team Lead of Private Records Collections Management at the Provincial Archives of Alberta, and received an interested response. Tom Anderson evaluated the gathered materials and declared them all acceptable

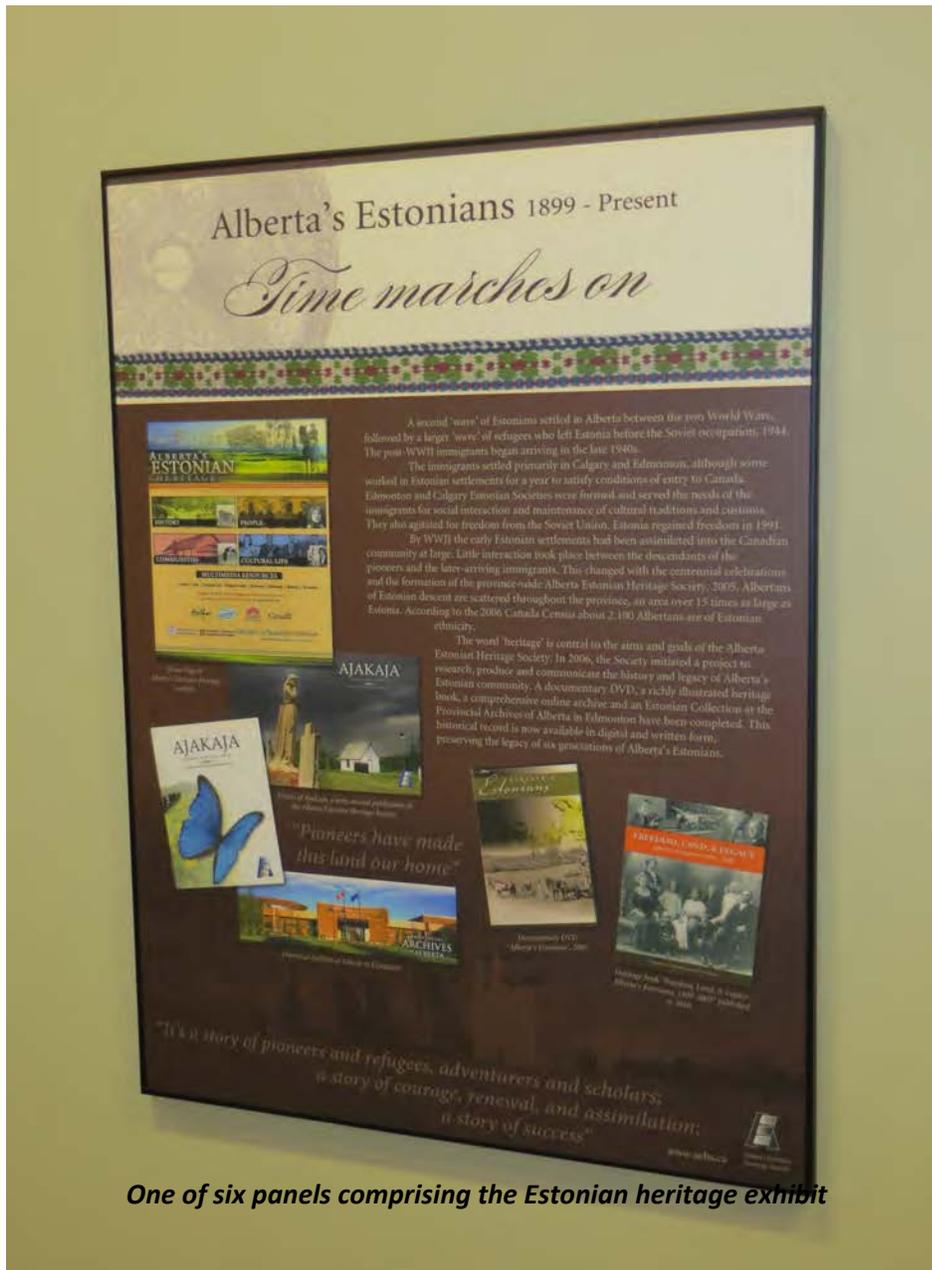
for incorporation into the 'Estonian Collection' of the Provincial Archives. Considerable dialogue ensued regarding the costs, appropriate levels of indexing and online access to the materials. Once again, funding from grants enabled accelerated processing of the materials, with about half yet to be tackled. AEHS own funds will be used for this final thrust in spring, 2012.

exhibits, met in different combinations to discuss and develop the AEHS proposal for an exhibit. Such projects are possible in Alberta because its archives institution has a more inclusive collection principle than most other provincial archives.

Further funding was needed to cover the special expenses involved in producing a worthy exhibition. Dave to the rescue with another grant application! To no one's surprise, it too was approved. Several Provincial Archives staff became involved with the planning and execution of the display. The AEHS is highly appreciative of their dedication, skills, enthusiasm and professionalism in dealing with the Estonian heritage exhibit.

The Estonian heritage exhibit at the Provincial Archives of Alberta is like the final period at the end of a long story. Over those last five years the attitude of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society developed from "Let's collect" to "Let's educate a broader audience". It has fulfilled both mandates magnificently.

*Provincial Archives of Alberta*  
 8555 Roper Road  
 (southeast corner of 51st Avenue and 86th Street)  
 Edmonton, Alberta T6E 5W1  
 Telephone 780-427-1750  
 Email [paa@gov.ab.ca](mailto:paa@gov.ab.ca)



**One of six panels comprising the Estonian heritage exhibit**

In the fall of 2011, searching for a suitable way to conclude this massive five-year undertaking, Eda McClung, Dave Kiil, Tom Anderson and recently retired Irene Jendzowski, Director responsible for

Website [www.cd.gov.ca/paa](http://www.cd.gov.ca/paa)

*Estonian Exhibit will be on display until June 1, 2012*

# Welcome to new AEHS Website!

Bob Kingsep

For those of you who are comfortable using the Internet, our new website is likely a welcome improvement. If you've never had much reason or desire to spend time on the Internet, you may have concerns with our increasing dependence on it. Perhaps you are questioning why the website has been consuming an increasing amount of our time and attention.

I suppose a simplistic and sardonic reply might suggest that the telephone and automobile were once considered redundant and unnecessary devices but over time they have become essential components of our lives. It is now apparent that the Internet and social media are also evolving into an integral part of our lives.

The reality of operating an entity in today's environment, has indeed forced many of us to accept and adapt to these changes. Our organization is spread over a geographic region that is larger than many countries. The Internet has been the undisputed backbone of the Heritage Project and all the resultant credit and recognition that we have received. It would have been impossible to consider taking on and accomplishing the projects we did, within the time and budget that was available to us, without the Internet.

Further to that, the most significant component of our five year project is the building of our heritage database and making it available to the world via our website.

For those of us who have been mucking about the electronic trenches to bring the Heritage Project to life, the reasons for expanding our involvement with the Internet and by association, our website, are obvious and compelling.

We also recognize that the world of the Internet has not been as 'close to home' for many of our members, as it has been to our project team. For some, it is not even 'in the home.'

Subsequently, we are venturing into this realm with considerable trepidation. Through the natural evolution of communication, we are committed to the Internet. On the other hand, we are a Society of our members. Each member is a relevant and integral part of the AEHS. We can't afford to sever our contact and communication with any of our members.

Most of our technical challenges are behind us now. For the sake of expediency, some of our communication and society involvement was left on the back burner. We appreciate your patience during that time. The society's communication and involvement is an area we must address in the upcoming months, and we will be embarking on that project this fall.

I'm confident that through our collective ingenuity, creativity and experience, we will be able to approach and adapt to the new opportunities available to us. We're excited about the possibilities, and I'm looking forward to it.

Thanks to software and development improvements over the years, our new site is much more friendly and intuitive than the first one. We have included some sample pages, but we encourage you to go on-line and go through the real thing. There is even an option for you to ask questions on-line! Don't hesitate to use it. AEHS website address: [www.aehs.ca](http://www.aehs.ca)

Enjoy!



# ALBERTA ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

SINCE 1899

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## Welcome!

**Jaanipaev 2012 June 22nd, 23rd - to register click [Events](#)**

**Estonian Heritage Display at the Provincial Archives - Check [Notices](#)**

**Membership lapsed? - click on [Membership](#) and register**



*Welcome to the Home page of the new AEHS website ([www.aehs.ca](http://www.aehs.ca))*



# ALBERTA ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

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## The Heritage Project

The Heritage Project has preserved the history and cultural heritage of Alberta's Estonian community in written and digital formats. A documentary DVD, an archival website, a heritage book, an archival collection and a province-wide exhibit are described in detail:

[READ MORE.....](#)

[Insights From Four Perspectives](#)

**Hover over the images below then click to proceed.**



1. We have compiled an extensive archive of our Alberta Estonian Heritage and made it available.

It is an On-Line Historical Repository of Estonians in Alberta. Well organized and searchable.

Click on the image to immerse yourself in heritage that began in Alberta in 1899.

Enjoy!

*The Heritage Project has preserved the history and cultural heritage of Alberta's Estonian community in written and digital formats. Explore and enjoy!*

# The August Posti family arrives in Medicine Valley in 1902

Anna (Posti) Tipman

*Anna (Posti) Tipman, the second child of Estonian pioneers, August and Miili Posti, was born in 1900, in Võru, southern Estonia. In 1902, the Posti family joined the Kingsep and Kinna families in Sylvan Lake. Shortly after their arrival, the group moved to Medicine Valley, where other Estonian pioneers soon joined them. Anna attended the Estonian School and became a teacher in the district. She married Juhan (John) Tipman, son of Estonian pioneers in Stettler, and they raised a family of three daughters (Myrtle, Sophie, Edna) and two sons (Rudy, Victor). She was honoured with a personally signed 100<sup>th</sup> birthday card when President Lennart Meri of Estonia visited Stettler in 2000. Anna was a remarkable lady, with a great sense of humour and a gift for storytelling.*

August Posti, his wife Emillie (Miili) and their two small children, Hugo and Anna, came to Canada in 1902. They had been living in Estonia on his father's farm, who owned his 'small holding.' This tract of land was too small to be divided among his sons, so August Posti, not wanting to work and live on a Baltic baronial Estate, decided to come to Canada where free land was to be had.

Land in Estonia was mostly owned by landlords, the Baltic-German barons. The Estonian people were either vassals or serfs who worked and lived on these estates, producing

wealth for the barons and getting a bare living in return. They had no freedom to move from estate to estate, or even to go to a village unless permission was granted by the lord of the manor.

In 1863 passport freedom was given to the common people of Estonia; now they could move from place to place. This freedom did not help them economically, as the land still belonged to the barons. But in 1865, land reform came into existence. The land was divided into small unit holdings, and the Estonian people could either rent or buy these unit holdings. Those who were fortunate enough to be able to buy this land, felt free and independent, although land taxes were quite high. They worked their land according to the best cultivation procedures known at the time. By the time August Posti was of the age to farm, 'land' holdings had become scarce, so he decided to look for farmland elsewhere. The newspapers advertised that in Canada 160 acres of land was available for \$10 for "immigrant settlers," subject to three years spent making improvements such as building a house, clearing and cultivating 15 acres of land and fencing the homestead.

August Posti and his wife decided to face the hardships of pioneering and come to Canada with their family.

The Postis went first to Finland and from there by small ship to Liverpool, England. From there, with other immigrants, they crossed the Atlantic



*August Posti and family, Medicine Valley, 1915. Back row, l to r: Anna (Posti) Tipman, Henry Pallo, Hugo Posti; front row, l to r: Karl Posti, Miili (Pallo) Posti, Henry Posti, August Posti, Olga (Posti) Mottus.*

Ocean in a ‘cattle ship’, which had been cleaned and whitewashed to transport human cargo. They took the Canadian Pacific Railway from Montreal to Red Deer, and from there they went to Sylvan Lake, Alberta. At Sylvan Lake they were met by the Kingseps, Walters’ and Kasks, who had arrived earlier.

August Posti started to look for free homestead land. He chose the SW 16-40-3 W5, because it had the Medicine River running through it, abounding in fish, such as pike and suckers. There were spruce trees growing on it, providing logs for his house. The pea-vine grew three feet high in the river valley, providing rich nutritious hay for his stock. They had brought with them sturdy home-made cloth, garden seeds, such as cabbages, turnips, carrots, beets and potatoes, which provided their first food when planted in virgin garden soil. They also brought flax and hemp seed. These plants provided the fibre from which August made rope.

Money was a scarce commodity, much needed for buying machinery, cows, oxen or horses. August Posti worked, helping to build the Canadian Pacific Railroad west from Calgary during the winter months. Miili Posti kept the home fires burning, spending her time looking after the cows, pigs and hens. She carded and spun wool to knit mitts, stockings and vests for the family. She churned and salted butter; money from butter sales was used to buy sugar, salt, white flour and fresh and dried fruit, or even payments for machinery. The cows were milked three times a day, as cattle food was so plentiful that

the cows would arrive home in the middle of the day and “bawl” to be milked.

After proving up on the homestead, August cleared and cultivated more land. He sowed by hand, broadcasting rye, barley, oats and flax. These were harvested by means of a sickle, sheaved by hand and threshed by a flail. The whole family joined in the harvesting operation. Later more up-to-date machinery was used.

The August Posti family increased to four boys and two girls, namely: Hugo, Anna, Olga, Karl, Henry and Rudolph. Of the original family of eight only three are living as of May, 1977. Mrs. John M. Tipman (Anna) of Stettler, Mrs. Alex B. Mottus (Olga) of Eckville and Mrs. Karl Posti of Gilby. All are living on farms.

August and Miili Posti were very conscientious parents and were kind to their children. They believed in the equality of sexes; both boys and girls had to know how to do outside farm tasks or inside household duties. The girls were taught to milk, feed cattle, clean barns, rake hay, stock grain, drive oxen or horses, chop firewood and, of course, do all the myriad household duties. The boys had to know how to sew on buttons,

mend a tear in work clothes, sew on a patch, or even iron a shirt. They had to know how to clean fish, rabbits or wild game for cooking and even how to cook it.

“We, as children, found these chores challenging, and felt the pride of accomplishment. We joined with our parents in

planting gardens, weeding, and later, harvesting. Every task on the farm was shared.

Money to buy “boughten” toys was scarce, but



*Back row, 1 to 3 Hugo Posti, Henry Kinna (with vest), Anna Posti with child, Miili Posti, Karl Posti ; front: Henry Posti, August Posti, 1936*

who cared! We made our own toys; cows, horses, pigs, hens and other things were cutout of double layers of birch bark, which provided four legs to enable the animals to stand. Often a whole farm of animals was produced. The home was marked out on the dirt, into as many rooms as the heart desired. Barns were produced the same way, and stocked. Our imagination did the rest! But our greatest interest was in the great outdoors. We had to know and observe the wonders of nature such as: how and where the birds built their nests, raised and fed their young; the “courting dances” of the prairie chickens and wood partridges; the life cycles of frogs, bugs, and mosquitoes in the ponds; how the small fish grew in the river. Anthills had to be supervised for war parties between different tribes. Of the animals, the muskrats and the beavers provided the most interest. Many hours were spent watching them build their homes and fill their pantries. Our parents taught us not to harm, molest or destroy any wild bird, beast, flower or vegetation. All were sacred and had a useful purpose in life.”

August Posti was a great believer in community work. He realized that enterprises done co-operatively took the least output from each individual and produced the greatest good individually to the greatest number of people. The first project with which he helped was the building of the Estonian School in 1909, where a great deal of volunteer work was done by him and others. He wanted all the children to be educated, realizing the value of education due to the meager education he himself had acquired.

The building of the Estonian Hall in 1918 was another community project. The first neighbourhood meetings had been held in the Posti’s living room. Here agriculture problems were discussed, such as grain varieties, methods of harvesting, marketing of crops and, of course, politics. Physical training was provided by a trapeze hanging from ceiling beams. People came to realize that a building bigger than their homes was needed for all these community activities. Plans were made to build a hall with a stage and a library. August was one of the key men in planning and erecting the Estonian Hall. He also was the first librarian.

The threshing of grain was a big problem for these early pioneers. Twenty-six farms banded together and bought a threshing machine run by a steam engine. This portable outfit was moved by horses from farm to farm. Thus a grain-threshing society was formed. August was a member and almost in the centre of a threshing run. His son Hugo later acquired steam engineer’s papers to run the outfit. A wheat pool for marketing was formed and a co-operative store was organized; a municipal hospital was built, with August Posti being a firm supporter of all of these projects.

August passed away in 1943 and his wife Miili in 1945. Both are buried in the Gilby Kalmu Cemetery.

Sources: 1) *Homesteads and Happiness*, Eckville and District Historical Society, 1979  
2) *Bob Tipman*



*Miili and August Posti headstone at Gilby (Kalmu) Cemetery*

*Photo: Arnold Mottus*

## Tribute to Allan Posti, Gilby Hall - March 24, 2012

Bob Kingsep

The banks of the Medicine River are just across the road from here. The Medicine River was one of the factors that attracted Allan's Grandfather and many other Estonian homesteaders to this area. It was a source of water for livestock, fishing, and in some cases, power for grinding grain.

The river ran through the Posti homestead. Allan grew intimately familiar with the river, the seasons and the character of its flow. Over time Allan found his way to other parts of the world, but his roots were always fixed in the dark loam bordering the Medicine.

We older folks often marvel at how easily the young people of today pick up on technology. I think we get caught comparing different mediums. Our age, new technology and the speed of change make it more difficult for us to keep up, so it's understandable that we conclude that today's minds are more observant than those of the past.

Lets consider this for a moment. At about the age of nine, those of us who walked along the dirt roads to the one room Estonian School knew the tire tread markings and the owners of every vehicle within a radius of about three or four miles of the school. By observing the characteristics of the tread marks, we knew which direction they were travelling, how old the tracks were and roughly how fast the vehicle had been travelling.

We were on the road in all types of weather conditions. We learned what type of spring ice would support a bicycle and what speed you would need to scoot over it before it disintegrated. There is a whole study in that art alone. Some day, Howard Posti and I will conduct a seminar on it.

And as a matter of course, we knew how to dress for a full day outside in any weather. We carried .22 caliber rifles and took pride in our knowledge of the safe handling of them. Many a snuffbox fell prey to our lethal aim. None of the snuffboxes were registered.

We knew the habits of rabbits, beavers, muskrats,

weasels and coyotes. We watched hawks soar and knew their nesting sites. We could make a whistle out of a spring willow branch. We knew how to dive into shallow water.

We understood the social strata of the community and learned how to respond to each. We valued friendship and honored inter-dependence without question.

While this could only be obtained through specialized classes today, if available at all, we just considered it to be common knowledge, nothing more and nothing less.

Allan savored these experiences and appreciated the value they provided. I believe it was that foundation of self-reliance that helped him through the challenges that life brought to the table.

I noticed Allan's interest in his heritage long before the rest of us cared, and when the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society looked for support, he was in.

When we gathered in Stettler, in 1999 to celebrate the Centennial of the first Estonian homesteaders in Alberta, we hired a motor coach to transport us from Stettler to the old original cemetery. It lies on the Waldo Raabis home quarter just south of here.

The only visible evidence of the cemetery was one headstone, and it was lying on its side. Allan and I had discussed the intention of bringing the group to the site and we were dismayed at the state of disrepair it was in. There was no fence, and none of the other original grave markers were evident. We rather

casually mentioned that it was too bad we didn't know where any of the graves were located or we could put up some crosses. Allan said he might try to tidy the place up a little before the event.

When I arrived with the busload of people and a minister, Allan was already there and I was pleasantly surprised to see that he had cleared out the dead trees, pulled the weeds and trimmed the grass. As the



*Allan Posti and Bob Kingsep at the Old Gilby Cemetery in 1999, the first burial site for Estonian pioneers in Alberta.*

passengers disembarked from the bus Allan quietly pulled me aside and mentioned that he had made some crosses, but he wasn't sure what to do with them. As we talked we noted that the number of crosses corresponded to the number of seats of the bus. I said that I thought I could work that coincidence into our program.

As we stood as a group under an overcast sky in a mild drizzle, the minister gave his blessing on the site, and concluded his segment of the event. I then asked each couple from the bus to come forward, collect a cross and place it in a location they felt might represent a gravesite. It was a solemn moment. The rain gave several stoic men an acceptable reason wipe their cheeks.

As the last couple placed their marker and we stood back to view our work, the clouds parted just enough to bath us in sunlight. I looked over at Allan, and we shared one of those moments. He didn't give me a physical 'thumbs up' but from years of communication, I knew from the subtle smile on his face that it was exactly what he was thinking.

A few years later the Society decided to make the site more official. We erected a fence and Allan brought new iron crosses and arranged them in tidy rows. We wanted to place a plaque on the site to explain what the site was about. The plaque needed something to be anchored to. Allan mentioned that we might use the large rock that we used to pass on our way to the Estonian School. He knew that the Langer brothers had planned to use it as signage for their farm, but had never gotten around to using it. Allan took it upon himself to locate the rock, obtain it, and arrange for the equipment to move it to the cemetery.

The Society decided to have a professional DVD made about Alberta's Estonians. The producers suggested a story line was needed and we eventually decided that one of us would take a chip of the rock and bring it to the farm in Estonia from where the first Alberta Estonian

homesteader had originated.

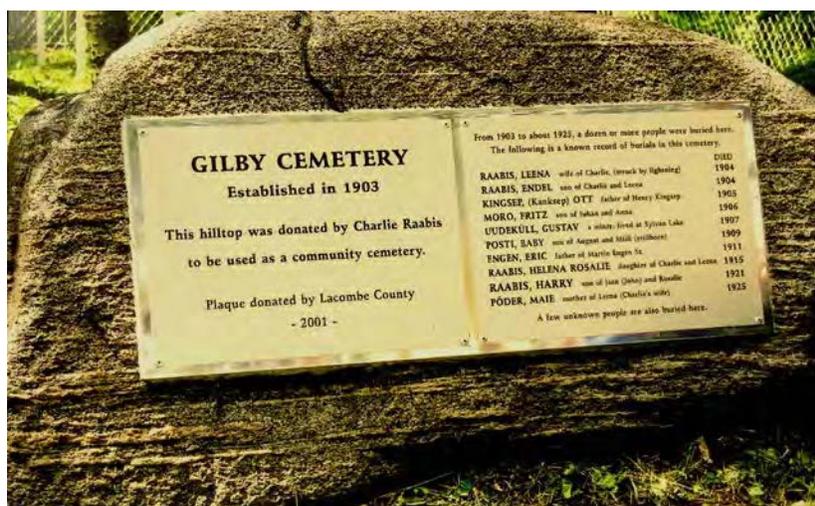
The DVD was a success both here and in Estonia. Were it not for Allan's diligent work, we would not have had the rock option as our storyline. The next time you watch our DVD 'Alberta's Estonians', you will see Allan early in the story, quietly assisting in the production. That was Allan; on the sideline, quietly going the distance.

Allan's heritage interests eventually led him to Europe where he was able to sit with his cousins and take in the culture he was part of.

Going back to our Estonian School days. I recall one day as we walked home from school, stopping briefly at each telephone pole to target the insulators, that Allan decided we should form a club. We were always dreaming up new projects or planning new adventures, so it made sense that we should form a club. We would call ourselves the Medicine River Rats.

No physical or habitual changes resulted from our decision, but to four guys kicking pebbles down the dusty road that afternoon, it was the day we came home with a sense of purpose and confidence. We were Medicine River Rats.

Some 50 years later, the spirit of the Medicine River Rats is alive and well. My cohorts today represent the new blood of the River Rats. Ryan Posti, Rhett Newton and I weren't able to build a tree house or lash together a raft as we might have if Allan were here, however we did put together a video tribute for 'Papa'.



**Plaque on a large rock at the Old Gilby Cemetery contains names of pioneers buried there from 1903 to the early 1920's**

*Post Script.  
Perhaps Allan's last contribution is a message. We are the next link in our chain of descendants and our generation's story needs to be told. We have been participants of an exciting era and travelling our old familiar roads is both therapeutic and inspirational. Our infrastructure and experience is*

*perfectly positioned to capitalize on the timing.*

# Estonian Exhibit

*Launched in Edmonton*



Launch of the Estonian heritage display at the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton, April 4, 2012.



## Alberta's Estonians 1899 - Present

# Introduction

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(Photo: [unclear], 1914)

Estonia was occupied by several empires during its history. For the local sector of Estonia's population, economic conditions through the 19th century were hard, indeed often hopeless. Sections of the peasantry was completely enslaved by 1861, but their working conditions were difficult and their wages very low. While they were part of the Russian Empire, the land was administered by Baltic-German landlords who owned the land, the factories, and some of the businesses.

Beginning in the mid-1800s, land became available east of Estonia in Russia, and Canada. Tens of thousands of Estonians migrated to these areas during the last half of the 19th century, but were often disappointed with the conditions there.

In the late 19th's homestead land became available in USA and the Canadian prairie. About 500 Estonian pioneers, partly triggered by the promise of success leading to the 1901 Russian Revolution, arrived in Alberta (part of the Northern Territories until 1905) between 1899 and 1901. They travelled on foot, by wagon, train and ship across continents and oceans to reach the "promised land".

"They crossed an ocean and most of a continent... and they did it before our travel!"



Front

# Alberta Estonian Heritage Society

*Tere!*

The Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS) was established in April 2005 to preserve and promote the cultural heritage of Alberta's Estonian community.

The unique aspect of the AEHS is the switch in emphasis from an Estonian Society serving the needs of newer arrivals from Estonia, to an organization composed of descendants of Estonians united for the purpose of celebrating their unique and rich cultural heritage. Up to six generations of Albertans can look back to their Estonian heritage.



**Alberta Estonian Heritage Society website**  
The website contains information about AEHS, including the purchase of the DVD, the book, and login to the heritage archive and the Estonian Collection at the Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton.

[www.aehs.ca](http://www.aehs.ca)

Alberta Estonian Heritage Society



Back

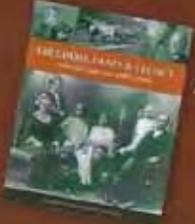
*AEHS is proud to present The Heritage Project:*



**Alberta's Estonian Heritage website**  
Online historical repository of Alberta's Estonian Heritage  
An extensive website with hundreds of pages of illustrated articles and over 1000 images about the history of Alberta's Estonian community from 1899 to the present.



**Alberta's Estonians**  
A 30-minute documentary DVD, produced in 2007, involving current members of Alberta's Estonian community.



**Freedom, Land, & Legacy: Alberta's Estonians, 1899-2009**  
A 300-page richly illustrated book, published in 2010, about the history of Alberta's Estonians.



**Estonian Collection at the Provincial Archives of Alberta**  
All historical materials collected for the Heritage Project are stored at the Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton.

For further information about The Heritage Project, go to [www.aehs.ca](http://www.aehs.ca) and select Menu Option 'Heritage'

*Two-sided 'post card' presents information about Alberta Estonian Heritage Society website and Heritage Project*

## Jaak Kinna joins family in Medicine Valley

Jaak Kinna's son, Henry (Hindrik), was the first of the family to immigrate to Canada. He arrived in 1902, and took out a homestead north of Eckville. Henry wrote his brother, John, that 160 acres of land can be acquired for three dollars. John decided to join Henry, as did their brother Sam and their sisters, Tiina and Eva. Jaak's wife Helen and four of their daughters had died before their departure. Not wanting to stay behind without his children, Jaak came to Canada in 1903 as well, at the age of 73!



*Jaak Kinna, 1830-1917*

Jaak took out a homestead west of Gilby and served as acting minister for the Estonian pioneer community in the Medicine Valley. In 1914 Jaak donated two acres of his homestead land to the Gilby (Kalmu) Cemetery. He died in 1917 and was one of the earliest Estonian settlers to be buried there.

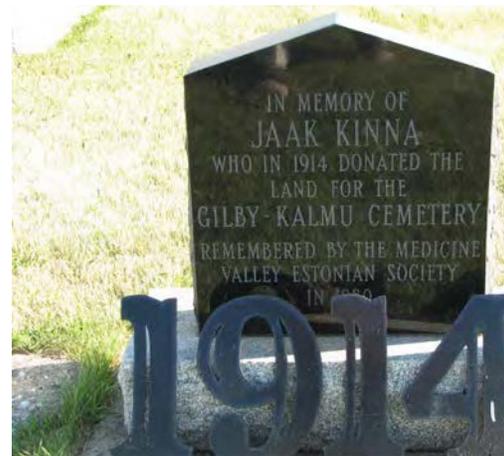
Following the Russian Revolution, Henry went back to Russia for two years, only to return to his homestead in Alberta. A

bachelor, he moved to Eckville when he retired from farming. Henry died in 1948 and is buried in the Gilby (Kalmu) Cemetery.

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

The eldest son, John (Juhan), took out a homestead with his wife and five children. Daughter Tiina, took out a homestead in the Eckville area and later moved to Wyoming, where she lived for the rest of her life. She had a daughter, Emma who married John Tomingas.

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



*Plaque in memory of Jaak Kinna who donated the land for the Gilby (Kalmu) Cemetery in 1914*

*Source: Red Deer Centennial Project Archives: Pioneers of Red Deer & District*

## John and Maria Kinna came with five children

A pioneer family who contributed in many ways to the needs and development of the Eckville district, was that of John (Juhan) and Maria Kinna.

Both, were born on farms in Estonia. The old European calendar records, show John was born on January 31, 1854; Maria on March 29, 1858.



*Maria and John Kinna, 1933*

With their family of five children they moved to Canada in 1903, to a homestead north of Eckville. Their son Fritz, took the northwest quarter of the same section. The Medicine River wound through both lands. Beside the river on Fritz's quarter, the father and sons built a five room, two-storey house out of logs found in the vicinity. Here, John and Maria Kinna lived with Fritz, and later his wife and family, until their retirement to Eckville in 1942.

John's European background helped him cope with life in the wilderness.

He had done leatherwork, so repairing shoes, mitts or a harness presented no problem. He loved to knit fish nets, and use them to catch suckers and pike from his river and nearby Wood Lake.

John Kinna's first big purchase was four cows and several chickens. In 1903, Red Deer was the nearest trading centre, but by late 1905, old Eckville, three miles south of the farm, began to develop and Killick's General Store and Post Office started to trade eggs and butter for groceries.

In order to earn cash, the Kinna's contracted a mail route - Eckville, Evarts, Burnt Lake, Red Deer-and back three trips a week. A horse-drawn two-seated homemade sleigh, or a democrat, was used for the trip. "We carried a small tent, food and bedding with us," Fritz later recalled.

"The first day we got as far as Red Deer. We disposed of the mail and then pitched our tent near the C.P.R. locomotive coal chute. The horses, and they deserved it, were treated royally in Hewson's Livery Stable."

"The next day we bought necessities, picked up the mail, then headed homeward. Five dollars was paid for the round trip. Homestead seekers and other passengers paid one dollar."

"One very dark night, John lost his way. After driving many hours he came to a haystack where he stopped, rolled in some hay and slept. On awakening he could hardly believe his eyes. The surroundings were familiar. The haystack was his own!"

"I've worked part time with a bridge gang near Calgary until 1908. With my first pay I bought a shotgun and shells; rabbits, ducks and prairie chickens were added to the menu at home. All the rest of my earnings went towards the purchase of farm tools, implements, horses, cattle and sheep."

"We sheared our sheep for wool which the women washed, carded, spun, dyed and knit

into socks, scarfs, sweaters and mitts. Many homemade woolen quilts were needed and made. Pillows were filled with our duck and chicken feathers. Mattresses were ticking bags filled with long rye straw.”

For many years the Kinnas hauled pig’s heads and feet from the Red Deer slaughter house. These were free of charge because no one wanted to buy them.

“What do you do with these?” the butcher once asked. That was the first time he had heard the word “headcheese” which today is as expensive as any cold meat.

When a hog was butchered at home Mrs. Kinna made sausages, lard, smoked hams and blood sausage with barley added to it - a special Estonian food.

Since no canning was done for several years, mostly root crops were seeded as vegetables. These kept reasonably well in the cellar under the house.

The first field crops were rye and oats. Rye bread was a must and an oat dish “kiisla” was served frequently.

In 1909, Fritz Kinna wrote to the federal department of the interior, asking permission to dam the Medicine River and to construct a mill operated by water-power for the purpose of “running a feed grinder, wood saws, threshing mill and other farm machinery for the benefit of myself and farmers in the district.”

An engineer came to examine the site and eventually permission was granted. Fritz drew the plans for the entire project and built the building.



*Dam built on Medicine River by Fritz Kinna, ca 1914*

Charlie Raabis helped John build a turbine box and two wheels from logs. Red Deer Iron Works supplied gear wheels, bearings and steel shafts. The entire family participated in the building of the dam and a 50 -yard canal.

When the project was completed about 1914, the undertaking was a great success and farmers came from a radius of 30 miles to grind grain. First 40 then 50 cents was charged for 100 lbs. of white unbleached flour, and 10 to 35 cents for brown flour.

One dam was washed away by high water and ice. The next one was made with a more solid base and specially-constructed planks.

At high water the mill building was tied to trees by a cable to prevent it from sailing away. The highest water was in 1920. The mill became obsolete when tractors appeared on the farm scene and farmers did their own grinding. Also Moro Bros. new modern mill at Eckville was more dependable and a welcome convenience.

In his younger days, John was a member of a village band and learned to play the clarinet. This knowledge he imparted to his children.

Although all were familiar with and enjoyed concert music there arose a need for dance music.

In about 1912 the Kinna Orchestra came into being. This band, which included interested musicians from the area, served a radius of 30 miles.

Maria died on August 6, 1950. John suffered a stroke a few months later and passed away at an age of 96 years. His funeral was held at the Estonian Hall in Medicine Valley and officiated by Lutheran Pastor E. Lootsma, of London, Ontario.

At John’s lengthy funeral service, several well-known Estonian hymns were sung, such as *‘Jumal sul ligemal’* and *‘Las me läen’*. In addition he had composed a song to be performed at his farewell service. It was a four-verse expression (in Võro dialect) of his acceptance of life, its ending, and a belief in the hereafter. It begins with *‘Siin ei ole jäädvat paika inimese sugule’* and ends with *‘Jääge*

*Jumalaga nüüd, see on mu viimne hüüd; minu surelikust rinnast nüüd ju viibin teises ilmas'.*

Both Maria and John were buried in the Gilby Kalmu Cemetery, which his father Jaak donated to the Estonian community in 1914.

Fritz was born September 30, 1881, at Waimela County. In his grade school and high school, he learned both Estonian and Russian. He married Julie Yurkin. Julie died in 1942 in a car accident. They had three sons and a daughter.

Fritz contributed significantly to the community. He served on the Eckville School Board for many years. He was a shareholder, a director and for a time president of the Eckville Co-operative Association. He was the first secretary of the

Eckville Rural Telephone Association.

In 1928, Fritz completed a two-year course in electrical engineering at the Calgary Institute of Technology. He opened a store, "Kinna Electric" at Eckville in 1937. He sold his farm to Ernest Dorchester. Fritz passed away at age 90 in 1971 and is buried at the Gilby Kalmu Cemetery.

*Source: Fritz, Olga and Ernest Kinna were interviewed by Ena Kinna in January, 1968. The article is based on this source material.*

*The entire article was earlier published in Red Deer Advocate, May 1, 1968, as part of articles on pioneers in the Red Deer region.*



*Four generations of Kinna family, left to right: Jaak, John (Juhan), Robert (standing) and Fritz, ca 1915*

## Remembering Galina Koddo (1916-2012)

Livia Kivisild



*Galina Koddo, mid-1980s*

The Calgary Estonian community has lost a treasured member, Galina Koddo: artist, teacher, cook, gardener, wife, mother, and grandmother. Educated as an artist in Estonia, Galina specialized in portraiture. In Canada, she developed as a painter of still-life, flowers, and landscapes. She was a member of the Alberta Society of Artists from 1949 to 1963. Her work was exhibited in Canada, the United States, as well as in Europe. Galina is remembered by her many painting and drawing students in Alberta. She was also skilled in handicrafts, particularly in creating wooden implements decorated with traditional, engraved Estonian designs.

Galina was born in St. Petersburg, Russia in 1916 and her family moved to Tallinn when she was very young. At the end of World War II, the family fled to Germany, where she met and married fellow Estonian refugee Ross Koddo. The Koddos immigrated to Canada in 1947 and settled at first in Edson, Alberta, later moving to Calgary.



*Galina Koddo painting a mountain scene at Two Jack Lake, Banff National Park, Alberta, early 1970's*

Galina Koddo was predeceased by her husband Ross. She is survived by a daughter and son-in-law, Galina and Reinhard Oberherger, a son Alex Koddo, two granddaughters, Jonquil and Jacinthe Koddo, and extended family in the United States and Europe. She passed away in April 2012 at the age of 95.

# Estonian heritage celebrated in exhibit at Provincial Archives

by Steve Dills  
Sylvan Lake News

Sylvan Lake figures prominently in the province's Estonian heritage which is being celebrated with an exhibit at the Provincial Archives of Alberta beginning next Wednesday (Apr. 4).

The exhibit marks completion of a five-year heritage project by the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society. "It explores the reasons Estonians chose to immigrate to Alberta, highlights Estonian communities and contributions to Alberta, and features social, political, cultural and economic history

historical significance, particularly in reference to Estonian migration," states the website Alberta's Estonian Heritage ([www.ahs.ca](http://www.ahs.ca)).

"In 1899, Hendrik and his brother Kristjan Kingsep were some of the first people to establish permanent settlements in the Sylvan Lake area. Attracted by the abundance of fish in Sylvan Lake, the Kingseps were not alone as French-Canadian and Finnish families had also recently settled here. Kristjan's wife Tiina and their five young children arrived one year later. Other Estonian families — Ivan, Alex and Anton Kask, Peter and

most, families from Saaremaa in Estonia and Nurmekunde in Tver province in Russia, purchased more homesteads and, by 1903, there were

Kingsep brothers and Johan Neithal, originally from Nurmekunde. Other early community initiatives saw the construction of a school on land granted

young daughters, Linda, three years old and Selma, 11 months old. Like other Estonians who would soon follow, Henry was interested in developing a homestead in western Canada. The family travelled by train to Red Deer. Henry promptly found a settlement two miles east of Sylvan Lake (then known as Snake Lake). His brother, Kristjan, arrived shortly thereafter with his family and settled adjacent

the Medicine Valley Estonian community."

The website makes fascinating reading for all those interested in the history of the region and heritage of past residents.

"John Michael Kask and his wife Minnie Pilt emigrated from Maasi Vald, Saaremaa in Estonia to Staten Island, New York in the late 1890s. John operated a modest ship-building business in New York City but the promi-

Kask and Elizabeth Kask Wortnow and her husband Michael all arrived in Red Deer in 1901 and walked miles to their designated homestead.

"Working collectively was paramount for the Kasks; doing so allowed them to adapt to the challenging life of homesteading. The Kasks frequently participated in numerous community initiatives and established co-operatives for their mutual benefit. Maintaining a convivial relationship with the local Estonian community was crucial to overcoming the language barrier present in the public sphere... Johan was instrumental in organizing a school district. He donated two acres of land for the Norma Public School, thereby facilitating its opening in 1903."

A photo archives on the website features 20 pictures of homesteads, pioneers, maps and of Norma School in 1903.

The exhibit at the Provincial Archives will be on display until June 1. It's open Tuesdays to Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Wednesdays until 9 p.m. Admission is free. The archives is located at 8555 Roper Road (corner of 86th Street and 51st Avenue) in Edmonton.



Raabis family harvest, Medicine Valley, early 1920s.



Estonian School, 1949-1950. The School was built by Estonian Pioneers in 1909.



Gustav Setrap and friends at Michael Setrap's General Store, Medicine Valley, 1907.



Estonian School in Medicine Valley, built by Estonian pioneers in 1909.



Tiina Kingsep, Sylvan Lake, 1937

and personal stories," said a bulletin from the archives.

The heritage project also involved production of a 30-minute documentary and a richly illustrated, 300-page book about Alberta's Estonian community (Freedom, Land & Legacy). A comprehensive heritage website was also completed. All archival materials collected for the project have been donated to the Provincial Archives to ensure public access to this rich historical information.

Sylvan Lake pioneers



Alex Kask family, Sylvan Lake, 1913

61 individuals residing in Sylvan Lake. Available land soon became scarce as an influx of Swedes, Finns and Estonians flocked to the open west. Families arriving after 1903 opted to relocate at Settle; to the east, and Medicine Valley, to the north.

"The pioneering families of Sylvan Lake formed an agricultural collective to ease the burden of farming. Without proper equipment and often facing unfavourable weather conditions, profitable farming was a challenging enterprise in the pioneer era. The agricultural collective was established by the

by Johan Kask.

"When Kristjan Kingsep left Sylvan Lake in 1903, his wife, Tiina, remained on the farm and opened it up as a 'midway' house to new settlers. When the railroad eventually arrived at Sylvan Lake in 1911, Tiina sold goods and supplies to construction workers camping in the vicinity."

According to a section of the website (People Pioneers) which contains family histories, "The Kingseps were the first documented Estonian family to settle in Alberta. Henry Kingsep and his wife Emilie moved to Canada with their two

to Henry's property. Kristjan, a sailor, had visited Canada previously and was impressed with its seemingly boundless landscape.

"In 1902 the Kingsep family moved 20 miles west and settled on the banks of the Medicine River. Their arrival here marked the beginning of

ing lure of free land in western Canada took the family to Sylvan Lake in 1900. The Kasks were the second Estonian pioneer family to settle at Sylvan Lake. During the next few years, John and Minnie's siblings left Estonia to join pioneer homesteaders. Vassily, Michael Pilt, and Anton and Aleksis (Alex)

Sylvan Lake  
Centennial Celebration  
June 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013

# Estonian heritage celebrated in exhibit at Provincial Archives

by Steve Dills  
Eckville Echo

Eckville figures prominently in the province's Estonian heritage which is being celebrated with an exhibit at the Provincial Archives of Alberta beginning next Wednesday (Apr. 4).

The exhibit marks completion of a five-year heritage project by the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society. "It explores the reasons Estonians chose to immigrate to Alberta, highlights Estonian communities and contributions to Alberta, and features social, political, cultural and economic history and personal stories," said a bulletin from the archives.

The heritage project also involved production of a 30-minute documentary and a richly illustrated, 300-page book about Alberta's Estonian community (Freedom, Land & Legacy). A compre-

hensive heritage website was also completed. All archival materials collected for the project have been donated to the Provincial Archives to ensure public access to this rich historical information.

"The Medicine Valley Estonian Society (MVES) beginning in 1910 was really the central organization for the whole Estonian settlement," wrote Voldemar Mattisen, in his History of Medicine Valley Estonian Settlement.

"The trio (Brothers Hendrik and Kristjan Kingsep and August Posti) who at the turn of the century were the founders establishing the Sylvan Lake and Medicine Valley Estonian settlement came from South Estonia.

Mattisen's research, which is featured on the website Alberta's Estonian Heritage ([www.aehs.ca](http://www.aehs.ca)), contains extensive information culled from records provided by

families of the original settlers.

He wrote that the collection and preservation of data from the 1900-1920 period of the Medicine Valley Estonian settlement had been a project of his for some time. "The creation of the Estonian Historical Commission in 1965 provided the final stimulus to implement the project. The assignment became my responsibility and was completed in the 1970s."

It makes fascinating reading for all those interested in the history of the region and heritage of past residents.

"The first to settle in Medicine Valley from Sylvan Lake in October 1902 were the Hendrik Kingsep and August Posti families and Hendrik Kinna. The first two and Kristjan Kingsep's family had already been to Medicine Valley in the summer of that year to stack hay and put up buildings in prepara-

tion for resettlement in the fall. Medicine Valley did not yet have a single settler and all of the land was still available."

"... From 1910 to 1916 there was a wave of young settlers since there was fear that Russia would enter the Balkan War and tension preceding the First World War was starting to build. During the years from 1916 to 1923 there were no new Estonian arrivals in Medicine Valley. However, two families (a total of ten members) and five single individuals left to resettle elsewhere and 11 people passed away.

"By the end of this early period the Medicine River Estonian settlement had grown to approximately 160 members with 45 households consisting of 30 families and about 15 single individuals. This number does not include the third generation born here of whom there were only a few. At the end of this period all of the families and most of the single individuals had started farming. In addition to



Raabis family harvest, Medicine Valley, early 1920s.



Estonian School, 1949-1950. The School was built by Estonian Pioneers in 1909.



Estonian School in Medicine Valley, built by Estonian pioneers in 1909.

farming, some did own small enterprises such as watermills. Some of the single young men went out to do seasonal work in mines and for-

ests.

"At the end of this period the 33 Estonian households in Medicine Valley owned 57 quarters of land for an average of 1.7 quarters or 272 acres per owner."

A section of the website, titled Co-operative Endeavours, chronicles the founding of Eckville Co-operative Association which is celebrating 100 years of operation this year.

"The formation of the Medicine Valley Estonian Society not only established the groundwork for preserving and celebrating Estonian culture, but the Society also spurred the development of a co-operative association. The Eckville Co-operative

Association was created in 1912 with numerous Estonian settlers serving as board members, including Fritz Kinna, Henry Kingsep, Charlie Raabis and Carl Langer. Alberta's Estonian community firmly believed that a community would attain greater economic prosperity and flourish culturally if it voluntarily united through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise to meet common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations. ... Shortly thereafter, the Eckville Co-operative Association operated a general store and, later, a lumber yard..."

Formation of the Estonian School District in 1910, pioneer school memories, and construction of Gilby Hall are also chronicled on the website. A photo archives features 39 pictures of homesteads, pioneers, events and celebrations.

The exhibit at the Provincial Archives will be on display until June 1. It's open Tuesdays to Saturdays from 9 a.m.



Estonian Pioneers, Eckville, 1905-1955

## Google Launches 'Street View' in Estonia



*Photo: Postimees/Scanpix*

**Google Street View launched its service in Estonia today, allowing Internet users from anywhere in the world to navigate around 360-degree photos taken of streets throughout Estonia.**

The free service - useful for tourists and locals, hikers and businesses alike - can be viewed at [maps.google.ee](http://maps.google.ee) by clicking and dragging the yellow stick figure onto the map.

The photos were taken with 360-degree cameras attached to roofs of cars. Pictures are all taken from public roads and the faces and license plates of passersby are blurred out to protect their privacy. First launched in 2007, Street View currently covers 30 countries.

Regio, a geospatial mapping company, finished photographing Estonian streets and sights for Google Street View last month. Privacy advocates over the world have protested the service, which could potentially capture men leaving strip clubs, protesters at abortion clinics, sunbathers, and so on.

*Ott Tammik, ERR News  
Estonian Publishing Broadcasting  
May 15, 2012*

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## Google service enabled me to view my ancestral Saaremaa home!



*Google photo*

During my initial use of Google Street View I located photos of my parents ancestral home and the still-standing stone structure of a Holland-type windmill built by my Grandfather in 1910 near the west coast of Saaremaa. Viewing my family's homestead and the 103-year-old windmill structure enabled me to navigate around 360-degree photos taken of the countryside in the Jõgela Village area. Amazing!!

I believe that the wooden scaffold on the windmill was installed to facilitate repairs of the stone structure and possibly to open a restaurant in close proximity of the Pilguse (Hoheneichen) and Lahetaguse Manors, previously owned by the von Bellingshausen family. A son, Fabian von Bellingshausen, spent his early years at Pilguse Manor and is credited with the discovery of Antarctica in 1820.

*Dave Kiil*

### **You Tube 'Estonian Presentations 1.0 and 2.0'**

**Look, listen and rejoice! Experience Estonia.**

Music and video feature Estonia- location, landscape features, history, people, culture, tourist attractions.....

**Visit You Tube site and search for 'Estonia Presentations 1.0'**

(At the time of writing, Estonia Presentation 2.0 is not listed but should be available soon)

# Did you know.....

Laas Leivat

.....that the combined choir of the Estonian Song Festival has the largest number of singers (sometimes up to 30,000) in the world.

.....that Estonia is an egalitarian country in which 51% of engineers and scientists are women. The European Union average is 29%.

.....that Estonia is populated very sparsely, having one of the lowest settlement densities (30.9 inhabitants per sq. km.) for personal space in the world – four times less than Denmark and 12 times less than The Netherlands. Although Estonia is small, both by area and population, it still has more than 100 different parishes, each one with its own regional dress.

.....that one of the lowest settlement densities in Estonia itself is Hiiumaa with only approximately 10 inhabitants per sq. km. Here visitors can find isolated beaches of their own, with no one else in sight. It's like a Nordic Bora Bora.

.....that by taking into account the farthest points and islands of Europe, the central point of Europe is Saaremaa, specifically, Mõnnuste village.

.....that the last giant meteorite in the world that fell into a populated area impacted in Saaremaa, creating the massive Kaali crater some 4000 years ago. The power of the blast was comparable to a nuclear bomb, leaving clear evidence to influence the tales and mythology of the nations in the region.

.....that Estonia is about 50% forest. It has 1500 islands, some very tiny, 1000 lakes (5% of Estonian territory), 700 rivers and streams. Lake Peipsi is Estonia's largest lake and the biggest transboundary lake in Europe. By contrast, Latvia, Estonia's immediate

neighbor hasn't a single island.

.....that the Estonian language contains about a thousand words that date back to the last ice age? One of the first known daily newspapers in the world was published in Tallinn as early as 1675 (in England – 1702). The Estonian literacy rate in the 1850s was 80% of the population, exceeding almost all of the grand European civilized nations with the only equal ones being French and German.

.....that the latest Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index places Estonia third in the world, sharing the spot with The Netherlands. Of the 179 countries ranked, Finland and Norway share first place. Estonia has held its position in the top ten for five years being one of very few countries to have been this consistent. Canada is placed at 10, Lithuania is at 30, the U.S.A. at 47, Latvia at 50, Russia at 142, and China at 174.

.....that Estonians are champion wife-carriers, and have come to dominate the World Wife Carrying Championships. Estonia is home to the game of ice cricket. This is precisely as it sounds – cricket played on ice.

.....that in 1913, before Estonia's independence, Encyclopedia Britannica wrote "that Estonians as a race exhibit evidence of their Ural-Altaic or Mongolic descent in their short stature, absence of beard, oblique eyes, broad face, low forehead and small mouth. In addition to that they are undersized, ill thriven people with long arms and thin short legs". (The writer probably got lost on the wrong continent.) What has changed in 99 years? Well, at least the legs have grown longer.

*Eesti Elu, 25 Feb, 2012*

## Come to San Francisco

[WWW.LEP-ESTO2013.COM](http://WWW.LEP-ESTO2013.COM)



**SAN FRANCISCO, CA**  
**JUN 28 – JUL 1, 2013**

Estonians from San Francisco and West Coast invite you to join us for the West Coast Estonian Days (LEP) and the world-wide ESTO joint festival from June 28th to July 1st 2013.

Over the years LEP and ESTO goals have always been to connect Estonians in foreign countries.

The official program starts with a gorgeous and formal evening gala show. The guest performer will be our

beloved Principal Dancer of San Francisco Ballet, Tiit Helimets, who will promote our event goals and will introduce Estonia to San Francisco. On the same day everyone can also participate in the business conference in Silicon Valley, the world's technology and electronics center, with its information and research opportunities for visitors with technical interests.

The festival center will be in the Grand Hyatt hotel in the heart of the city, close to many unique sightseeing attractions and public transportation. At the same time we are planning to offer both traditional and contemporary Estonian music, dance, theater and the creative arts. We definitely will not miss the habitual speakeasy nights. There will be general interest lectures and seminars, meetings of affinity groups, a ball as well as the Song and Dance Festival familiar to all Estonians.

On the last day there will be a blessing ceremony of our festival, continued by traditional folk picnic at the picturesque Diablo Foothills Regional Park. We are going to be organizing gripping sports events, offering swimming opportunities, education workshops and joint singing and dancing. Also, there will be morning and evening activities for children so that their parents can have fun and a good vacation

Get more information on our evolving website [LEP-ESTO2013.COM](http://LEP-ESTO2013.COM) and on Facebook. If you have questions please don't hesitate to ask Evelin Kasenõmm via email [evelin@lep-esto2013.com](mailto:evelin@lep-esto2013.com).

One of the world's favorite tourism cities, San Francisco, is expecting all of you to come to meet old friends and find new connections!

*Estonian World Review-Eesti Elu, 30 March, 2012.*

# Estonian Air chosen to be the most innovative airline in Europe

VickyKarantzavelou

The **Airlinetrends.com**, an independent industry and consumer trends research agency, has chosen **Estonian Air** to be the most innovative airline in Europe. Airlinetrends.com ranked top 11 innovative product and service concepts for 2011. Launched by airlines and airports around the world, Estonian Air was ranked for its social loyalty program, AirScore, as the most innovative company in Europe.



Tapping into the ‘gamification’ trend, Estonian Air is the first airline in the world to launch a social loyalty system by rewarding Facebook fans for posting and sharing reviews and deals of the airline online.

In parallel, Estonian Air clients can also be members of EuroBonus loyalty program, where points are collected for flying.

*“Estonia and Estonian Air has been consistently a source of practical innovation. We will continue our work in*

*adding innovation and inventiveness into airline travel to make it more convenient and cost effective for our customers,”* says **Tero Taskila**.

Estonian Air has been recognized for excellence in social media also earlier this year. On 30 November 2011 in Miami, USA, Estonian Air’s social media loyalty programme AirScore won a Mega Award in the category of the Best Social Media Campaign. The 2nd Annual SimpliFlying Awards for Excellence in Social Media honoured Estonian Air as the best airline in the world in driving revenue via social media.

AS Estonian Air, Estonia’s national carrier, provides both business travellers and tourists direct air link from Estonia to European cities. Estonian Air is the biggest operator at Tallinn Airport.

Estonian Air focuses on improving the connection between Estonia and the rest of the world with the aim of increasing competitiveness as a network carrier hub. In 2012 Estonian Air will increase flight frequencies and open new destinations in Europe’s most important cities as well as regional centres in Scandinavia.

Estonian Air flies to 25 destinations in CIS, Scandinavia and Europe.

*TravelDailyNews, International.com  
Wednesday, December 28, 2011*

# The Story of the Estonian Language

*On the territory of Estonia, with Finno-Ugric culture, East meets West.*

## Act One: Finno-Ugric Europeans

The word for Estonia, Eesti, originates with the ancient Estonians who called these tribes living to the east of Scandinavia esti. In 98 AD, Tacitus in his “Germania” used a slightly different version of this word-aestii. The widespread use of the name of the country Eesti by Estonians themselves dates from no earlier than the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

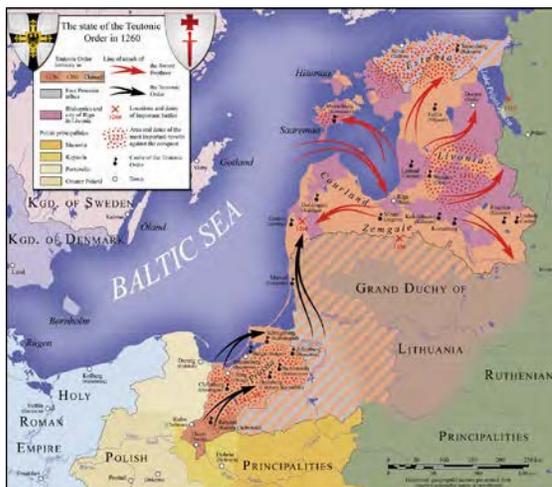
During the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Estonia was conquered

of the German aristocracy who stayed changed into Baltic German, where Low German, now becoming archaic, blended with elements of Estonian.

## Act Two: From the rise of the written language to literacy

European culture rests on a foundation of written texts, whilst Finno-Ugric culture is based on the spoken word. Estonia stood at a geo-political crossroads, bordering onto powerful neighbours such as Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Russia and Poland and was, at various times, coveted by all of these. Estonians grew used to being surrounded by a multiplicity of European languages.

Demands for a written version of the Estonian language came initially from foreign clergymen. The Reformation reached Estonia in 1523, the first known book written in Estonian was one with Lutheran content, printed in Lübeck in 1525. The first extant Estonian book is the Wanradt-Koell catechism which appeared in 1535.



*The state of the Teutonic Order in 1260. Arrows show the lines of attack of the Sword Brethren in Estonia, Livonia and Courland*

by and formally Christianised by the Teutonic Knights-and a number of them continued to reside in the country. Estonia was in effect divided up into two separate communities: foreign-born Germans and the indigenous Estonian peasants. About one quarter of the roots of the words that form the present-day Estonian vocabulary come from Low German. The Estonians succeeded in assimilating these new and foreign language influences and thus did not lose the genuine Finno-Ugric base of the language. Over time, the spoken language

The fact that the Reformation penetrated Estonia so rapidly spurred Catholics of the Counter-Reformation to attempt to create a “Northern Florence” in Tartu as a religious bridgehead in the region. Owing to the continued weakness of the Roman Catholic Church, these grand plans were never realized. But the shock waves nonetheless spilled over into secular matters: in 1632 the King of Sweden turned the building of what had been a Jesuit grammar school into the seat of the famous University of Tartu.

In 1710, Russia conquered Estonia. Conditions began to deteriorate in

Estonia, but the tradition of educational and cultural endeavor continued.

The first periodical in the Estonian language which was of general interest was the Lühike Õpetus, a weekly which first appeared in 1766. And the world's first regular farming newspaper was the Estonian Tartu Maarahva Nädalaleht which started in 1806!

By this time, the literacy level of Estonians was among the highest in Europe, reaching between 70 and 80 per cent by the 1850s. The central Russian authorities saw a self-conscious nation that purposefully broadened its outlook, which would become steadily harder to manipulate with regard to the demands of the state.

### **Act Three: From cultural autonomy to independence**

Civil society developed apace during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Networks of educational societies, brass bands, choirs, and temperance movements spread throughout the land. The number and editions of newspapers increased and in 1880, with a rural population of some 760,000, the popular newspaper Sakala had to answer 713 reader's letters from farmers alone!

The Estonian national movement had to sail skillfully between the reefs of the Russian authorities and the Baltic Germans, the former attempting Russification, the latter Germanisation of the Estonian people.

The primus motor of the Estonian movement was a belief in language. Estonian was thought as a powerful means of communication on its own, as a way of achieving better education and the nation's own cultural space. Estonians thus could distract the attention of both the Baltic Germans and the Russian authorities by means of their "secret" language and gradually attained a position of strength-until independence was achieved in 1918.

And that is how Estonian politics was born.

*Written for the MFA by Mart Meri, linguist*

## **Oldest Pharmacy in Europe Marks 590th Anniversary**



On Saturday Estonia's oldest pharmacy, the Raeapteek (Town Hall Pharmacy) situated in the centre of Tallinn's

Old Town, is marking 590 years since it was first mentioned in written records. The first mention of the Raeapteek in town council records dates back to 1422, when a pharmacist called Nyclawes expressed readiness to serve the town council, the Tallinn city government said. However, as at least two persons ran the pharmacy before him it is not known to this day exactly when the pharmacy was established.

As far as is known, the Raeapteek is the oldest continuously operating pharmacy in Europe and medical institution in Estonia, as well as the oldest business in Estonia that has continuously occupied the same premises.

In addition to their role as pharmacists, owners of the Raeapteek actively participated in governing the city and in its cultural and social life. For nearly three centuries the property was owned and the pharmacy run by ten successive generations of the Burchart family.

In addition to medicines, the pharmacy sold paper, ink, precious stones, spices, gunpowder and other goods. Spiced wine and marzipan are two products sold to this day whose recipes date back to the 15th century.

The Raeapteek continues operating as a pharmacy and a museum.

*Estonian Review, April 7, 2012 (BNS)*

# Estonia Might Have The Most Efficient Tax Filing System In The World

Rob Wile

It's true.

It turns out that one reason why **Estonia** has been the lone feel-good story amidst the Eurozone crisis is that its tax filing system is scarily efficient.



*View of Old Town, Tallinn*

Introduced in 2000, the system allows individual income taxes, business taxes

and excises to be filed electronically.

Using a secure ID, a filer simply completes pre-made forms and approves the document with a digital signature.

The process takes **an average of five minutes**, and last year **94% of tax declarations were filed electronically**.

The system is part of the country's impressive e-government initiative, which allows Estonians to do everything from vote to fill out prescriptions to look up school grades online.

Estonians began filing their taxes on February 15.

*Business Insider, Europe, February 17, 2012*

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## Estonian Epic Poem Published in Hindi

The presentation of a Hindi-language publication of the Estonian epic poem "*Kalevipoeg*" ("*Kalevputra*") took place in Delhi Saturday evening. The translator of the epic poem is Vishnu Khare and it was published by Udbhavana Publications, a spokesman for the Ministry of Culture said.

The Cultural Endowment of Estonia foundation supported the translation and publication of the Hindi-language

"*Kalevipoeg*".

"*Kalevipoeg*" has been translated into German, Russian, Hungarian, Latvian, Finnish, Lithuanian, Romanian, Ukrainian, English, Swedish and French. There are abbreviated translations in Danish, Czech, Yiddish, Italian, and Esperanto.

*Estonian Review, March 5, 2012*

## Võru County, Estonia

*Many of the Estonian pioneers who settled in the Medicine Valley area immigrated from Võru County*

The **Võro Institute** is dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the Võro language and culture, which are tightly connected with its historic center, the rural and mostly agricultural south-eastern Estonian county of Võromaa.



*Võromaa and Setomaa counties in SE Estonia*

The Võro grassroots movement was embraced by the Estonian government, which founded the Võro Institute in 1995. The Institute is engaged in a wide range of activities to meet the challenges facing lesser-spoken languages, including (to name just a few) establishing school programs, conducting linguistic and regional research, preserving place-names and their corresponding stories, publishing Võro-language scholarship and school textbooks, and organizing annual language conferences. The aim of these activities is to encourage the Võro people to speak their own language and to preserve their characteristic life-style.

The **Võro language**, like Estonian, Hungarian, and Finnish, is a Finno-Ugric language. Võro is a descendant of the old South Estonian tribal language and is the least influenced by North Estonian. In addition to Võro, other contemporary South Estonian languages include the Mulgi, Tartu and Seto. The earliest written evidence of South Estonian is a translation of the New Testament published in 1688. Although the status of South Estonian began to diminish after the 1880s, the language began to undergo a revival in the late 1980s. Today, South Estonian is used in the works of some of Estonia's most well known playwrights, poets, and authors.

There are approximately 70,000 active and passive **users of the Võro language** all around the world. The bulk of the Võro-language speakers, however, are found in **historical Võromaa** (Võro Shire), which refers to the territory bounded by the same county lines from 1783 to 1920. The Võro language is spoken in the eight parishes of historical Võromaa: Karula, Harglõ, Urvastõ, Rõugõ, Kanepi, Põlva, Rāpinā, and Vahtsõliina. These parishes are currently centered (due to redistricting) in Võru and Põlva counties with parts extending into Valga and Tartu counties. The Võro language was also once spoken further south and east of historical Võromaa in what is now Latvia and Russia. Today, many Võro-language speakers can also be found in Tallinn, Tartu and the rest of Estonia.

*Source: Võro Institute*

## Võro Cheese Debuts in Walmart



*Lacey Swiss - an Estonian cheese - hit the shelves in Walmart last year.*

Designed to suit American taste buds, the cheese entered the US market a year before Walmart picked it up.

"It shows that our product fits in with premium class cheeses," said Mairo Solovjov, director of Valio Eesti AS, in a press release. Valio, which said it accounted for 52 percent of all Estonia's cheese exports last year, produces the Lacey Swiss cheese in its Võro factory. The company increased turnover from cheese exports by 18 percent, 36.1 million euros, in 2011, compared to the year before.

Other major destinations for Estonian cheese are Russia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania and Greece.

*Estonian Public Broadcasting, 27.03.2012*

## Alberta Estonian Heritage Society

### List of members, May, 2012

Allen	Dianne	Spruce Grove	AB
de Launay	David	Peterborough	ON
de Launay	Geoff	Kanata	ON
Clark	John	Denver	Col
Derksen	Colin & Linda	Edmonton	AB
Dinning	Shirley & Leonard	Edmonton	AB
Elvey	Ruth	Sidney	BC
Erdman	Evelyn	Calgary	AB
Fodor	Evelin & Steve	Calgary	AB
Franchini	Karen	Burnaby	BC
Graham	Judy	Surrey	BC
Gullickson	Barbara	Barons	AB
Hall	Gwen	Ashmont	AB
Hennel	Daryl & Gloria	Myrnham	AB
Hennel	Lorne, Leah	Calgary	AB
Hennel	Rodney & Liz	Stettler	AB
Hennel	Ron W. F.	Stettler	AB
Jaako	Harry	Vancouver	BC
Kaert	Mati & Linda	Edmonton	AB
Kalev	Tiiu	Eckville	AB
Kalvee	Willy G.	Calgary	AB
Kenzle	Alice	Creston	BC
Kerbes	Deane & Irene	Stettler	AB
Kerbes	Richard	Saskatoon	SK
Kiil	Dave & Betty Ann	Edmonton	AB
Kiil	Glenn & Ingrid	Edmonton	AB
Kiil	Lisa	Edmonton	AB
Kingsep	Bob & Annette	Redwood Mdws	AB
Kivisild	Livia	Calgary	AB
Koper	Donna	Cochrane	AB
Kraav	Jüri & Helle	Calgary	AB
Krasman	Leslie	Champion	AB
Kruuv	Riho	Ottawa	ON
Kuester	Matt F.	Edmonton	AB
Langeste	Helmut & Airi	Edmonton	AB
Leesment	Peeter & Helgi	Calgary	AB
Leilop	Aino	St. Albert	AB
Leffler	Edna	Manson	WA
Maddison	Anneliese	Edmonton	AB
Madill	Anita & Wallace	Calgary	AB

Magi	Enzio	Calgary	AB
Maki	Jean	Eckville	AB
Matiisen	Arne	Calgary	AB
McClung	Eda	Edmonton	AB
McElroy	Elve	Camrose	AB
Mottus	Arnold & Vera	Red Deer	AB
Mottus	Brian	Whitehorse	YT
Nicklom	Otto & Gladys	Stettler	AB
Päsuke	Elizabeth	Edmonton	AB
Päsuke	Mark	Vancouver	BC
Päsuke	Rein & Janice	Calgary	AB
Päsuke	Toomas	Canmore	AB
Pallo	Jack Henry	Red Deer	AB
Pastewka	Astrid	Calgary	AB
Peet	Ethel	Edmonton	AB
Pelto	John & Margaret	Sherwood Park	AB
Pihooja	Ralph & Nella	Whitecourt	AB
Pilt	Shirley	Edmonton	AB
Robertson	David & Christine	Leduc	AB
Ruus	Ivar & Lea	Calgary	AB
Saar	Lembit & Iris	Calgary	AB
Saar	Rein & Patricia	Calgary	AB
Shongrunnen	Astrid	Penticton	BC
Tiislar	Enn & Pärja	Canmore	AB
Timma	Olev	Calgary	AB
Tipman	Liisa	Calgary	AB
Tipman	Bob & Kathy	Calgary	AB
Ustina	Astrid	Edmonton	AB
Ustina	Judy K	Edmonton	AB
Ustina	Stephanie	Victoria	BC
Virak	Viktor	Toronto	ON
Visser	Mari & Igor	Cochrane	AB
Wartnow	Floyd C	Delta	BC
Watson	Maret	Spruce Grove	AB
Zach	Inge	Calgary	AB
Zielinski	Michel & Kristine	Spruce Grove	AB
Zoumer	Anne	Calgary	AB

