



# BALTIC HERITAGE NETWORK

NEWSLETTER NO. 3 (4) 2013



## SUMMER SCHOOL IN THE FOREST

BaltHerNet organised a highly successful information session from 7-10 July 2013, on Estonian databases and correspondence, all primarily focused on the expatriate Estonian community. It was a gathering with representatives from Estonia's major memory institutions present for four days at Alutaguse, a well-known small, yet comfortable resort located in the north-east part of the country, near the town of Jõhvi. Also represented at this gathering were leaders from Estonian heritage organisations in eight other countries: Australia, Canada, Germany, Great Britain, Russia, Sweden, Ukraine and USA, totalling 42 diverse participants. All presentations and ensuing discussions were in Estonian.

Senior researchers and managers from the Estonian National Library, National Archives, National Museum, Literary Museum, and the Universities of Tartu and Tallinn introduced detailed aspects of their respective databases pertaining to, or of major interest to, expatriate Estonians. One is based in the United States of America (the database of the Immigration History Research Centre in Minneapolis, MN); the remainder are based in Estonia. All are constantly being updated. Of future interest to BaltHerNet members is a particular database, under development

at the National Archives, not yet publicly available. It will be a central place where Estonian archival collections abroad will be able to house their databases.

BaltHerNet has the pertinent links at [www.BaltHer.net](http://www.BaltHer.net). Click on "Memory Institutions," next choose either "Estonia" or other countries from the column on the left and follow the links to the various databases.

The third day of the event was dedicated to letters - the handwritten communications of ordinary people and of culturally prominent individuals prior to the Internet age. We heard examples of correspondence between Estonians located in various parts of the world.

The sum of many collections of such correspondences becomes a valuable source of historical, and sometimes, biographical information. The Estonian National Museum is actively requesting donations of original correspondence between Estonians in Estonia and abroad. For further information, contact: Riina Reinvelt at Tel: +372-735-0406 or Email: [riina@erm.ee](mailto:riina@erm.ee). Donations of such correspondence may also be made to or via various local Estonian archives or organisations throughout the world.

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### *A Note from the Editor:*

The submission deadline for the next issue is November 15, 2013. We welcome news articles, conference information, calls for papers, new publication information, and images. Please send articles in English with high quality images to:

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The Non-Profit Association Baltic Heritage Network was founded in Tartu on January 11, 2008. NPA BaltHerNet was established to foster cooperation between national and private archives, museums, libraries, and institutions of research, public associations and organizations collecting and studying the cultural heritage of the Baltic diaspora. It aims to facilitate the preservation and research of the historically valuable cultural property of the Baltic diaspora, as well as to ensure accessibility of these materials to the public. NPA BaltHerNet is also committed to the organising of conferences, seminars and workshops, and to developing and administering the electronic information website Baltic Heritage Network, a multilingual electronic gateway for information on the cultural heritage of the Baltic diaspora.

The Baltic Heritage Newsletter is distributed quarterly, on-line. The newsletter is compiled and edited by Kristina Lupp. Please send all related enquiries and submissions to Kristina Lupp: [kriss.lupp@me.com](mailto:kriss.lupp@me.com)  
[www.balthernet.net](http://www.balthernet.net)  
ISSN 2228-3390

For relaxation, the Alutaguse gathering had the privilege of watching Ilmar Raag's full length feature film "An Estonian in Paris" with the director present to provide background information. There was an evening of singing and a day dedicated to tours of the Kuremäe Convent, Narva College (a new branch of Tartu University) and the Narva Museum.

For some participants of the 2013 BaltHerNet summer school, this was their first inside glimpse at online resources of this type. Others added to their previous knowledge. Post session discussions revealed that everyone benefited from hearing about the many databases. Even those, whose careers pertain to developing and maintaining these resources, were pleased to learn details about other databases and how their collection policies intertwine. All the database providers are looking forward to increased use of their online resources and encourage members of the public as well as researchers to log in.

■ Helgi Leesment

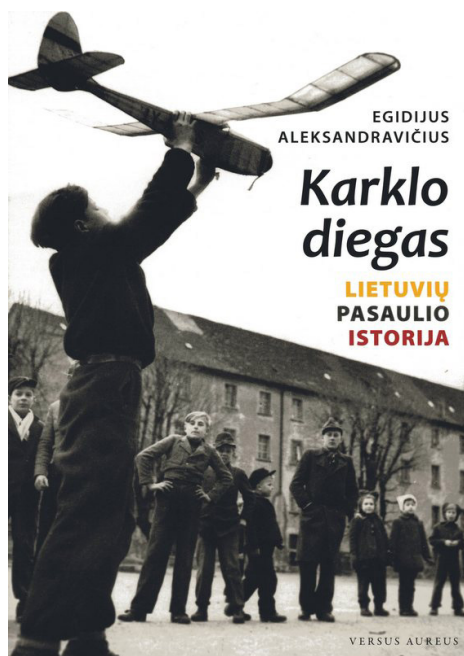
## NEW PUBLICATIONS

*"LITHUANIANS IN DP CAMPS IN GERMANY, 1945–1951" (LITH. "LIETUVIAI DP STOVYKLOSE VOKIETIJOJE, 1945–1951") BY VINCAS BARTUSEVIČIUS*

In 2012, the publishing company "Versus aureus" published the book "Lithuanians in DP Camps in Germany, 1945–1951" (Lith. "Lietuviai DP stovyklose Vokietijoje, 1945–1951"), which was written by the historian, sociologist, and Head of the Lithuanian Cultural Institute in Hüttenfeld, Dr. Vincas Bartusevičius. World War II not only destroyed Europe, but also painfully affected the Lithuanian nation, causing many citizens to immigrate to other countries. The author of the book, Vincas Bartusevičius, focuses on more than 80,000 inhabitants of Lithuania, who, after the end of World War II, had found themselves in the areas of Germany and Austria under control of the Western Allies and had been compactly accommodated in the camps. Under such conditions, the inhabitants of the DP camps had created a distinctive cultural autonomy: their own education system, press, social, professional and political organisations, and political parties. This type of living lasted a few years. The author used especially abundant archival materials

for his own monograph — manuscript documents kept at the Lithuanian Cultural Institute, the Lithuanian Central State Archive and the Unit of Manuscripts of the Library of Vilnius University, the works not only by Lithuanian authors, but also by foreign authors, which examined the issues of the organisation and activities of the DP camps in Germany during the years 1945 through 1951. The monograph by V. Bartusevičius is an important work in recording and summarising this historical period, especially complicated for the Lithuanian nation, and provides new possibilities for future trends of research into the Lithuanian diaspora of the middle of the 20th century. The new book is very important to and awaited by the readers and employees of the National Library. "Lithuanian DP Press Collection, 1945–1952," as evaluated by the National Programme "Memory of the World" of the UNESCO organisation and included in the Lithuanian National Register in the year 2011, is kept at Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, where the National Archival Fund of Published Documents is collected.

*"THE SPROUT OF THE WILLOW TREE. THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD OF THE LITHUANIANS" BY EGIDIJUS ALEKSANDRAVIČIUS*



The book "The Sprout of the Willow Tree. The History of the World of the Lithuanians" by the Director of the VMU Lithuanian Emigration Institute, Prof. Dr. Habil. Egidijus Aleksandravičius, which researches the migration of the

Lithuanian nation from ancient times to present, was published in 2013. The version of the inverted title of the history of the world of the Lithuanians had been chosen as the title of the book. According to the author, the title had been chosen consciously. The history of Lithuania is variable, having both great victories and painful experiences, and downfalls. The Lithuanians are the actors of the history of eternal migration; however, wherever they find themselves, Lithuania has always been the centre of everything. The metaphor of the willow-tree in the title of the book is not random — Lithuanians throughout the world may be compared to the willow thickets. They built up and rose in spite of the toughest conditions. This metaphor formed throughout the narrative of the world of the Lithuanians with the detection of the Lithuanian youth society, called by the same name — "The Sprout" in two places at once — Buenos Aires and Klaipėda — right before World War II. The monograph is the real intellectual provocation revealing the flamboyance of the historical imagination of the Lithuanians. The book was prepared accurately and carefully. It sought to find and use all accessible historical sources. The end of the study includes the list of literature and the index of personal names; the book was illustrated with the photographs of that time. E. Aleksandravičius has a polycentric viewpoint. Each text in the book is a proposal to look at the history differently. This book is used as an attempt to challenge the stereotypes related to the migration and those nationals who found themselves there. According to him, even a person not speaking Lithuanian can still be a representative of the diaspora. The basis of national identity is historical memory.

■ Deimantė Bandzevičiūtė, Senior Bibliographer at the Lituanica Department of The Lithuanian National Library of Martynas Mažvydas

## LATVIANS VISIT VEMU

A group of Latvians visited VEMU on 13 June. They were shown the collections, and the use of volunteer-run archives and libraries was discussed. The Latvians are also considering starting their own archival workgroup. The staff at VEMU is hoping to be of some help to them and wish the Latvians much success in their upcoming archival work.





In the photo: Andris Kesteris, George Juris Kenins (organiser for the Latvian Song Festival in Hamilton 3-6 July, 2014), Aija Karklins, Skaidrite Terauds, Ilze Maksins, Inta Purvs together with VEMU head archivist Piret Noorhani (second from the left in the front row).

## DISCUSSING ESTONIA IN MINNESOTA: A SYMPOSIUM AT THE CENTRE FOR IMMIGRATION HISTORY

The Immigration History Research Center, IHRC, is an institution in Minneapolis where a large part of the archive collections from the Estonian Archives in the U.S., or more widely known as the Lakewood Archive from 2003 to 2005, were deposited.

It is one of the largest collections of Estonian archives outside of Estonia. History doctoral student Maarja Merivoo-Parro from Estonia spent last winter as a Fulbright fellow at the University of Minnesota, researching the Estonian collections there. In addition to her research, Maarja has done good work at the helm of the youth group of the Baltic Heritage Network. This time she proved her organisational capabilities as the main coordinator for the symposium's content.

The IHRC is known as a storage location for the collections of Eastern European immigrants in America. The centre collaborates with very different nationality groups. In spring 2010, the author was able to participate at the seminar "The Migration Letter: Archiving Intimacy in the Postal Era," which brought together a very multifaceted group of nationalities that all work with the collection and research of letters as documents of history.

In spring 2012, there was a large meeting of Latvians at the same location. This time the focus was on the historical heritage of Estonians and its research. The symposium "Researching & Archiving the Estonians

## LETTERS FROM ABROAD

Until recently paper letters were the only possibility to stay in touch with family members or friends, who were forced to leave their homeland.

Letters are important research sources since, in addition to autobiographical information, they also give information about the surrounding society and social circumstances. But in letters written mainly from a personal collection, one can get information also about collective attitudes and values through them. In difficult times written letter correspondence provides an idea about topics which required silence and which topics needed to be written with select words.

The Estonian National Museum in Tartu wishes to supplement its collections with letters that were exchanged between Estonians

who remained in their country and those who escaped in the heated environment of the Second World War. Also of interest are objects exchanged among displaced persons. If there are letters in someone's possession that made it to the West before the Second World War and in the Soviet Era, they are also of interest to the museum.

Especially valuable are letter correspondances that have lasted through many decades, out of which both sent and unsent letters have been preserved. If a two-sided letter correspondence has not survived, then one side of the letter exchange is also a valuable source for researchers.

Supplemental information can be received from the director of museum collections (Riina Reinvelt, tel: +372 7350406, e-mail: riina@erm.ee) or writing to the address: Estonian National Museum, Veski 32, Tartu 51014, Estonia.

## "PRESERVING OUR HISTORY" VEMU ARCHIVAL COMPETITION

2013 is the year of cultural heritage in Estonia. The goal of this year's theme is to promote cultural issues to the general public – to recognise that culture concerns us (in one way or another), and that it is worthy of appreciation and preservation. Throughout the year of cultural heritage, many events will take place to explain what cultural heritage is, introduce its importance and, broaden its understanding. You can read more about the year of cultural heritage at: [www.parandiaasta.ee](http://www.parandiaasta.ee).

In honour of the year of cultural heritage, VEMU/The Estonian Studies Centre is organizing the archival contest "Preserving our history." In keeping with the motto "No heritage without heir," we are looking for contributions from Canadian Estonians, but in particular from children and young people, as they inherit Estonian culture from the previous generation. The contest aims to consider the daily lives of Canadian Estonians over the decades, including quotidian aspects like food and daily chores, and Estonian grocery stores in Canada. Estonian culture is not only preserved in fighting for Estonian freedom, singing and dancing, reading Estonian literature, and teaching children the Estonian language. Culture grows while eating sauerkraut and blood sausage, baking kringel and pirukad, and decorating your home with Estonian handicrafts. It grows while following and understanding the culinary traditions and consumer culture of our homeland.

Collected materials will be preserved at VEMU and will be used in an upcoming exhibit.

The deadline is November 1, 2013. Please send entries to: VEMU/Estonian Studies Centre, 310 Bloor Street West, Toronto, ON M5S 1W4. To keep all entries anonymous we ask that you choose a keyword by which to name your entry, for example "Home." Do not put your name on your entry, but rather your keyword. Include a separate envelope labelled with your keyword and inside please include the following information: name, age, address, telephone number, and email.

Winning entries will be announced November 17, 2013. Cash and book prizes will be awarded to the best entries!

Info: [piret.noorhani@vemu.ca](mailto:piret.noorhani@vemu.ca), t. 416 925 9405, <http://vemu.ca>

in America” was held on 15th May on the campus of the University of Minnesota in Heller Hall. Around 40 people from the University of Minnesota and the local Estonian community came together in addition with visitors from afar –from the National Archive in Tallinn, Stanford University, and Lakewood.

Welcoming words were given by the organisers Maarja Merivoo-Parro, IHRC director Erika Lee and the IHRC archive and special collections director Kris Kiesling. Enda-Mai Michelson Holland, the director of the EAU, brought greetings from Lakewood.



Liisi Eglit ja Maarja Merivoo-Parro

The author gave a longer overview of the situation of the Estonian diaspora in the Year of Cultural Heritage, mainly focusing on three themes: how the Estonian foreign communities and cultural situation has changed in the world, the creation of VEMU (Museum of Estonians Abroad) in Toronto and the preservation and propagation of expatriate Baltic cultural heritage with the Baltic Heritage Network (BaltHerNet).

It is a well-known fact that Estonia's re-establishment of independence placed diaspora societies into a new situation, reaching new ways of thinking and activities from them. During President Toomas Hendrik Ilves's visit to Canada, a roundtable was held at the Toronto Estonian House. It was repeatedly mentioned that Estonian diaspora communities could, in addition to their typical national activities—including keeping language and culture intact from generation to generation—commit more to propagating collaboration with Estonia. Or, more specifically, these traditional national goals would be meaningful to bring life in to collaboration with Estonia. In the archives, this has already become a reality: both BaltHerNet and VEMU are examples in the preservation of the

cultural heritage of Estonians abroad, indebted to collaboration between native and foreign archivists and archive volunteers. In addition to maintaining the cultural heritage of Canadian-Estonians, another task of VEMU is cultural exchange: presenters and exhibits move from Estonia to Canada and vice-versa, new books and film projects are being started. Presenters tugged at the heartstrings of listeners, noting that one of the more important functions of dwindling Estonian communities today could be preserving its history in a forward-thinking manner. BaltHerNet has supported such memory institutions in smaller Estonian communities by offering help and advice. In the early days of the joint operation, main principles were put in place and created on the basis of secure and trustworthy cooperation: to ensure the preservation of expatriate Estonian archives and its accessibility to users, regardless of their location and according to both the laws of the country where the archives are located, and to good archival practices in collaboration with expatriate Estonian communities and memory institutions in Estonia and elsewhere.

For already five years, the IHRC, National Archive, and BaltHerNet have worked to make the IHRC Estonian collections more accessible. Every spring there are two specialists from the National Archives who spend a month organising and describing the collections at the IHRC. This has worked for now, as the data for 289 collections in the IHRC databases has become more accessible. The visiting archivists from Estonia this year, Peeter Väljas and Aet Trans Tõnissoo, discussed the successful collaboration project. In Estonia the project is funded by the Compatriot's Programme and in the United States by the IHRC. Parties are convinced that the collaborative work will continue until all 580 collections are set and the data is available on the Internet. Those interested can access IHRC Estonian collections at the website <http://www.ihrc.umn.edu/research/vitrage/all/em/ihrc97.html>

After the coffee break, IHRC archivist Daniel Necas came to the podium to give a thorough overview of the Estonian collections and their history. Collecting Estonian materials began in the early 1970s with the University of Minnesota professor and IHRC co-worker Michael G. Karni, who himself has Finnish roots. The

Estonian collection, having been for many years one of the smaller national collections at the IHRC, is now one of the largest—ostensibly thanks to the materials that came from Lakewood. About 800 metres of shelf space of document archives, as well as publications, photographs, art and audio-visual materials belong to the Estonian collection. After lunch, Daniel took us for a tour of the archive. The IHRC uses a part of a very good and extensive underground storage facility. Unfortunately, this does not mean that it is ready to accept new Estonian materials—space is limited. Nor is there a single storage location for Estonian archives in the United States that could accept a large-scale collection either. The situation could change if the Stanford University Library, which got a new curator for its Baltic collections this February, formulates its collection policy and is guided by such.

The next speaker at the symposium was the recently chosen Stanford University Library curator Liisi Eglit. Liisi has worked at the National Archives and is also currently writing her dissertation. She gave an overview of the Hoover Institute archive and the Stanford University Library Estonian-related materials and future plans for two institutions. Some ventures have already been realised. One such collaborative project between the Stanford University Library and the Tallinn Museum of Occupation was an exhibition and documentary on Olga Kistler-Ritso, an avid supporter of cultural history, whose donation created the curatorial position at both the Museum of Occupation and the Stanford Library. Liisi is one of the organisers of the 2013 archive day under the auspices of ESTO/LEP. Thus the deliberations on the future of American-Estonian cultural heritage continue at the end of June in San Francisco.



Daniel Necas (second from the left) introduces the IHRC collections.

Maarja Merivoo-Parro was the next to present, discussing the results of her



research about the second generation of ethnic Estonians in the United States with a patriotic upbringing. In her presentation she convincingly demonstrated how important the various archival sources are, such as in the researching and mapping of Estonian finishing schools and other national sites (camps, Estonia Houses, and so on). She stressed the need for continued collecting—especially in those areas that were previously overlooked or omitted. She demonstrated that eloquent and admirable research sources may be found in amateur home videos, offering a view of one vivid example of the IHRC collections—a film about an Estonian girl growing up in a small American town. Maarja also reminded that the investigation of Estonianness is actually part of a much broader theme—ethnic issues in America.

The next speaker was Bernard Maegi, a historian of the younger generation with Estonian roots from Normandale Community College. He continued the question set by Maarja: how research into the immigration of Estonians can benefit from advancement in dealing with U.S. immigration history. Bernard pointed out that although it is a numerically small and relatively inconspicuous ethnic group, who have not brought their important holidays to American calendars nor opened powerful international restaurants chains, the investigation of Estonians' arrival to and acclimation in the U.S. is not only important for Estonians but for others as well.

The last statement by Kalju Kubits was of a personal nature. Being a child who was forced to leave Estonia, he recalled his escape as it felt and seemed. Kalju was forced to adapt, like other refugee children living between two languages and cultures. He has lived through decades of the lasting activities of the Minnesota Estonian community. Reminiscing about Richard Nixon's participation in the opening of the Estonian House in 1964 and Mihhail Gorbachev's visit to Minneapolis in 1990 led to a flood of memories for the Minnesota Estonians that had been present at these events. Kalju's presentation was followed by a discussion where the need to start a diligent collection became apparent. We hope that the Estonians present were inspired and will start to do archival work both in their own homes and elsewhere together.

Yet the symposium had not ended. Choir director Kelley Sundin, recipient of the

Hildegard and Gustav Must Estonian studies grant at the IHRC, elaborated on her Master's thesis, collections of Estonian music and put together an introductory programme of our history and choir music, which was presented in November last year. Participants were able to listen to selected songs at the University of Minnesota music university students' concert. It was moving to experience how the power of our song does not only affect us but foreigners as well—the singers were young Americans with no Estonian roots who, under the direction Kelley, had worked hard to understand the Estonian language and frame of mind. Then the question remained: how do we bring these people interested in Estonian music to perform in Toronto? The choir director seemed to like this idea. We'll see what the future has in store.

Buisnesslike meetings with new and old colleagues are not only educational but also inspiring. That's how this symposium was in Minneapolis. And even if people have now gone back to their everyday lives, we are connected by common activities.

■Piret Noorhani

## FROM AUSTRALIA TO ESTONIA. THE EXPATRIATE ESTONIAN LITERATURE CENTRE AT THE TLÜ ACADEMIC LIBRARY

Chairman Aleksander Peel of the Estonian Society in Australia had the idea to establish Estonian archives in Australia in 1952. Real work with the archives began in 1952 when Dr Hugo Salasoo became the head archivist and held this position for 38 years until 1991. In the autumn of the same year, just before his 90th birthday, the archivist passed away. The archives moved into the Sydney Estonian House in 1994 and Maie Barrow became the head archivist.

Thanks to the rate at which Hugo Salasoo received new materials, the archives received new valuable resources. Through his perseverance, he was able to find information about all of the Estonian material he collected. He often presented archival reports and appeals in Estonian publications abroad, where he explained the need for archival collection and preservation of Estonian writing. It was because of his endeavors that archiving among Estonians began across the world.

As a research archivist, he was able to value international research activities. He acquired research monographs and reprints directly from the academics themselves or found published materials. He also reminded his correspondents frequently that archives must never be forgotten.

This is how most of the archival collection was put together, which Salasoo himself organised well. New life was brought into the archives when they were moved to the Sydney Estonian House in 1994. Materials began to be systematised, and research was done on paper preservation. There were many duplicates among the books and there was not enough room to preserve and store them in the archives. These books were then sent to Estonian libraries. The Tallinn University Academic Library received 355 books in 2007; of which 120 were the first copies in Estonia, along with 116 periodicals. Other libraries in Estonia also received books: the Estonian Literature Museum, the Tartu City Library, and the National Library of Estonia. The Compatriots Program paid the shipping costs of the literature.

The research papers at the Estonian Archives in Australia were one of the more interesting and unique collections. It is difficult to say how many Estonian researchers abroad or researchers of Estonian origin there are. In 1984 T. Künnapas edited the catalogue "Estonian scholars outside of their homeland," which registered the details of 578 foreign Estonian academics. It is most probable that there was a larger number, most likely over 1000. For various reasons about 300 names were left out of the catalogue, but there were those of course who did not answer the questionnaire, as well as those that had details missing. Hugo Salasoo turned to Estonian expatriate newspapers around the world every year in search of researchers so as to include their work at the Estonian Archives in Australia. About 700 researchers responded to the call for papers and over 10,000 research papers and reprints were received. This is a unique collection, which shows how widespread Estonian research activities are and how seriously Estonians participated in the activities of the world's universities and research institutions. This collection inevitably does not hold all of the researchers' work, but there are top researchers among them, who are known throughout the world, like the economist Ragnar Nurkse, geologist

Armin Õpik, astronomer Ernst Õpik, chemist Adolf Parts, mathematician Edgar Krahn, diamond investigator Arthur Linari Linholm, and structural engineer August Komendant.

The Estonian Archives in Australia, located in the Sydney Estonian House operates without a large storage facility. The future of the Estonian House is also problematic because the building is hard to maintain for the ageing Estonian population. There is a contract with the Australian National Archives, that if the Estonians cannot maintain their own archives, then they will take on those archives and print materials that are tied to Estonians in Australia. However, the majority of research work is not tied to the Australian Estonians at all. There is also a lack of volunteers and resources in Sydney. Through discussions it was decided to bring the research collection to the Centre of Estonian Exile Literature at the Tallinn University Academic Library. Interest in Sydney for the research papers was not big, whereas the collection in Estonia offers researchers much interest about what Estonians abroad have been doing and what they are doing now.

The research papers arrived in Tallinn in 2012. The Compatriot's Program covered the shipping costs. The organisation of research is complicated and time consuming, for which we received monetary help from the Compatriot's Program. In addition to the reprints, the shipment contained monographs and copies of articles. Currently we are dealing with the enormous task of organising this library – registering monographs, sorting reprints, and placing them into folders according to author name, after which they must be searchable in a catalogue and database, to truly digitise the material.

Much of the research work has been done by scientist Johannes Piiper, medical scientist and radiologist Jüri Kaude, folklorist and linguist Felix Oinas, religious scholar Arthur Võõbus, medical scientist Mart Männik, atomic physicist Indrek Martinson, botanist Elmar Leppik, physicist Rein Silberberg, medical scientist Matti Anniko, historian and archivist Vello Helk, linguist Jaan Puhvel, astronomer Ernst Õpik, sociologist Rein Taagepera, medical scientist and writer Enn Nõu, mathematician Jaak Peetre, linguist Ilse Lehist, agronomist Elmar Järvesoo, medical scientist Peep Algvare, zoologist and ecologist Hans Kauri, biochemist

Lembitu Reio, psychologist Endel Tulving, and linguist Alo Raun. The registry of researchers can be searched by birth year, specialty, and number of reprints.

It is important to also add the research papers into the electronic catalogue ESTER, which makes it possible to search for information internationally. The base material for the catalogue is still missing, but one can search the materials in the Expatriate Estonian Literature Centre at the TLÜ Academic Library.

■ Anne Valmas

## ESTONIAN CONFERENCE AT STANFORD



On June 27th Stanford University Libraries in partnership with Baltic Heritage Network, National Archives of Estonia and VEMU/Estonian Studies Center in Toronto held a conference on collecting and researching Estonians abroad.

Estonian Minister of Culture Rein Lang gave a talk about Estonian museums with particular emphasis on legislation and the database [www.muis.ee](http://www.muis.ee), which reflects the collections of Estonian museums. Tõnis Lukas, director of the Estonian National Museum focused his presentation on diaspora Estonian museum collections and their potential.

Piret Noorhane, chief archivist at the Toronto-based Estonian Studies Centre and VEMU, spoke about Baltic Heritage Network as a mediator of archives, museums and other memory institutions that have holdings pertaining to the Baltic diaspora. She also elaborated on [www.balthernet.net](http://www.balthernet.net) which is the most comprehensive portal for finding information on Estonian materials outside of Estonia. The Baltic Heritage Network is active in facilitating cooperation between community members and heritage specialists through summer schools, conferences, seminars and archival assistance. The next speaker Maarja

Merivoo-Parro shared her insights on both Baltic Heritage Network and the Immigration History Research Center as a board member and young diaspora researchers seminar organizer in the former and a Fulbright scholar in the latter. She focused on exploring the realm of possible outputs for diaspora research.

The National Archives of Estonia was represented by the Head of the Acquisitions Department Tiiu Kravtsev and public relations adviser Birgit Kibal who provided an overview of the present state of Estonian archives. They also introduced original databases to be found at [www.ra.ee](http://www.ra.ee). Researchers can use these free of charge to get access to thousands of digitized archival materials regarding Estonians in Estonia and abroad. The National Archives offers archival assistance to diaspora communities and is currently developing a database specifically designed for Estonian archives outside of Estonia.

The next speaker was Taavi Kotka, Deputy Secretary General for Communication and State Information Systems at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications. He took the audience on a journey of the dangers and possibilities of the digital world all the while emphasizing memory institutions' need to keep up with wider developments in the IT world. He then yielded the floor to hosts Liisi Eglit from Stanford University Libraries and David Jacobs from the Hoover Institution. Liisi provided the listeners information about the Estonian collection at Stanford. One of her missions as Assistant Curator of Estonian and Baltic collections is to collect literature, periodicals and archival materials about the history and present of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Archivist David Jacobs focused his presentation on the Baltic collections at Hoover Institution and brought out that Estonian-themed materials were among the first ones that were registered as holdings. Now the Hoover Institution has several fascinating Estonia-related documents on a wide array of topics, for example Radio Free Europe, Displaced Persons camps and Karl Robert Pusta.

The conference confirmed that Estonian archives are doing very well with regard to digitalization. It also became obvious that there is still a lot of confusion in diaspora communities about what is valuable and deserves preservation and what is not. Too often extremely unique material such as diaries, letters and postcards are discarded

to make room for printed material, some of which is not considered rare at all. It is crucial that members of diasporas always consult with professionals from the Baltic Heritage Network, Estonian National Archives, Stanford University or University of Minnesota, who are aware of each others collections and can give good advice as to what can be done with materials.

There is hope that the three large repositories of Estonian materials in the US - the Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota, Stanford University Libraries and the Hoover Institution will begin to coordinate activities with one another in order to create a system that would help donors of materials as well as researchers in the planning of their activities.

■ Maarja Merivoo-Parro