



BaltHerNet youth seminar in Kaunas in October 2010.

LITHUANIAN HERITAGE ABROAD: CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

A round table discussion about Lithuanian heritage outside Lithuania organized by the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania on January 26, 2018, was a good opportunity to assess not only the situation of the Lithuanian heritage abroad and to identify the challenges and problems, but also to talk about the achievements and the future work.

Augustinas Žemaitis, the leader of the project “Destination – America,” started the event. He told about a 16-day trip to the United States that he took last fall visiting Lithuanian places, recording material heritage and listening to the stories of local people of Lithuanian descent. Žemaitis, who has been interested in Lithuanian heritage outside Lithuania for five years, is convinced that his project is important not only to Lithuanians in the US, but also Lithuania. In his opinion, it is necessary to find new ways of preserving the Lithuanian heritage abroad. He suggested volunteering or tourism as good tools to do it.

Ramojus Kraujelis, the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, noted that today, unfortunately, there are no resources to describe Lithuanian heritage abroad. He commended the private initiative “Destination – America” and proposed to continue this project covering not only US but other countries which also have many objects of Lithuanian material culture.

Despite the lack of financial and human resources in Lithuania and abroad, a number of projects have already been accomplished in this area. In 2010-2011, a joint plan was created with Lithuanians living abroad regarding the Lithuanian archives in emigration. Its goal is to identify and describe Lithuanian heritage in the US, Australia and other countries. Each year, at

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The Baltic Heritage Newsletter is distributed quarterly, on-line. The next deadline for submissions is 15 April 2018. Please send all related enquiries and submissions to Piret Noorhani: piretnoorhani@gmail.com

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 administrating the electronic information website Baltic Heritage Network, a multilingual electronic gateway for information on the cultural heritage of the Baltic diaspora.

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*The participants of the discussion.
Photo: National Library of Lithuania*

least one and usually two groups of Lithuania's archivists travel to different places to identify and describe Lithuanian heritage. Mr. Kraujelis also pointed a new trend, according to him, more and more of the written cultural heritage accumulated in the emigration finds its new home in Lithuania. Only recently, Lithuania has received a few hundreds of boxes with such material from Australia. Brazil is also expecting the archivists from Lithuania.

A Lithuanian American Arvydas Reneckis, who is currently filming a documentary about the history of Lithuanians in the US and who in the discussion represented the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center (Chicago, USA), said that the Center is one of the most important Lithuanian cultural institutions in North America. "If we move the entire heritage accumulated for several decades to Lithuania, we will wipe out ourselves," Mr. Reneckis said. Instead of rushing, he suggested to start with one precedent which would serve as an example for future joint projects. He had already started negotiations with the Lithuanian Central State Archives about the digitization of audio and video archives held at the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center.

Ramūnas Kondratas, the director of the Vilnius University Museum, did not hide the fact that the Lithuanian heritage abroad (in particular, in the United States) is undergoing difficult times, for example, there is a huge problem of where to store archives or unfit storage conditions. According to Mr. Kondratas, it is very important to

immediately start digitizing written and audio-visual heritage and make it accessible online for everyone.

The participants acknowledged the necessity of a private initiative in preserving Lithuanian heritage abroad. As one participant noted, personal interest runs much further and deeper than a paid one, and the project "Destination – America" is a great proof of it.

THE TOPIC OF FOODS OF ESTONIANS ABROAD IN THE ESTONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM YEARBOOK

The most recent issue of the Estonian National Museum Yearbook (nr. 60, 2017) focuses on Estonian food heritage. Two out of five articles discuss the food culture of Estonians who have built new homes far from their homeland. Aivar Jürgenson's article "On Estonian Food Culture Abroad" focuses on the food traditions of Estonians in Siberia, the far east of Russia, Caucasus, and South America (Argentina and Brazil). Jürgenson discusses how these Estonians adapted to their new circumstances, which inevitably changed their diets. Riina Reinvelt's article "Our Food and Their Food: Food Experiences of 1944 Refugees According to ERM Resources" based on surveys and memories collected at the museum, analyses the initial experiences refugees had with foreign flavours in their first stopping points in Sweden and Germany, as well as in their final countries of residence in Canada, Australia, and the USA. While the first generation of refugees typically continued eating Estonian foods, for the generations born abroad, typical everyday Estonian foods were not lost, but became foods served primarily at special events.

PAUL LILLAKAS GAVE AN EXCITING LECTURE ON LIFE AS A FOOD EDITOR

On February 7, Paul Lillkas gave an exciting and long awaited lecture on life as a food editor to a hall full of

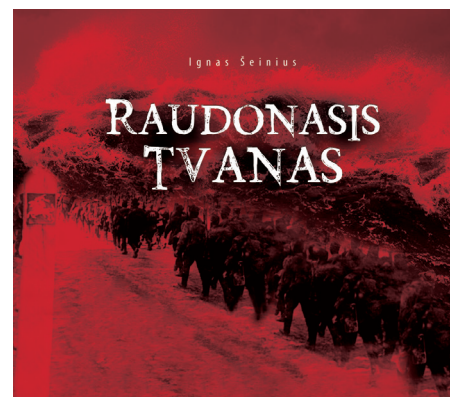


interested listeners at Tartu College. Paul is an award-winning Canadian-Estonian chef, who won Chopped Canada in 2014 and has since worked in a number of interesting places. One such place, was Canadian Living where he was the food editor for just over a year. At the lecture he gave the audience a taste of "Secrets From the Test Kitchen: A Month in the Life of a Food Editor." The lecture was followed by a question-answer period and a chance to discuss the lecture over coffee.

THE PRESENTATION OF "THE RED FLOOD"

The Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania together with the publishing house "Briedis" presented a book "The Red Flood" by Ignas Šeinius (1889-1959), a Lithuanian diplomat to Sweden and other Scandinavian countries, on January 25, 2018. The book "Den röda floden" first published in Stockholm, Sweden in 1940 is author's authentic account about the events that took place in Lithuania in 1940.

The book opens a window to one of



the most tragic periods in Lithuanian history, the Soviet occupation of the country. Šeinius describes how the Soviets destroyed country's independence, trampled nation's patriotism, forcefully introduced Soviet way of life; how they Sovietized country's economy and expropriated private business. Once the Iron Curtain descended on Lithuania, a wave of surveillance, arrests and crackdowns began. "The Red Flood" serves as an eloquent testimony of those terrible events.

In 1952, the memoir was translated into Lithuanian and published in the United States. It was republished in Lithuania in 1990. The current, the third Lithuanian edition of the book is supplemented with historical photographs.

NEW BOOK: "ENCOUNTERS IN SIBERIA"

The book "Kohtumised Siberis" ["Encounters in Siberia"] is published as part of the series "Estonian Settlements" and introduces Estonian Communities in Siberia through folklorist's eyes. It covers a period a little over 20 years.

The majority of Estonians in Siberia are the descendants of people who emigrated from Estonia in the final decade of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, but there are also those who had been deported by the Russian Tsar's government and those who had left to study or work in Russian cities in later periods. According to the 1989 census there were 17,000 Estonians living in Siberia, by the year 2002 the number had reduced to 11,400.

Since 1991, the Estonian communities in Siberia had been the focus of collecting and research at the Estonian Folklore Archives with 16 field trips carried out in the period of 1991–2013.

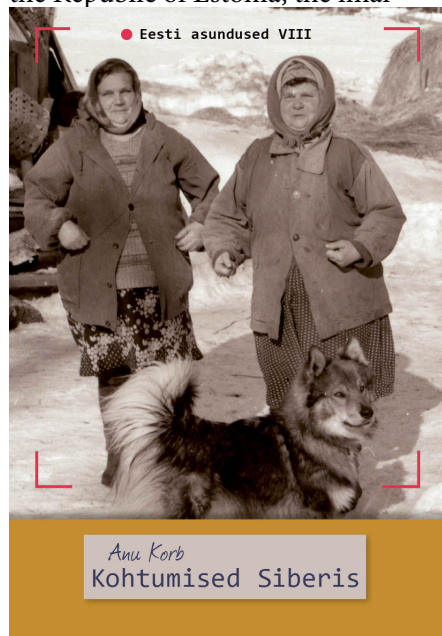
Folklorists, of course, cannot take credit for being the first to investigate Estonians living in Siberia, but the fieldwork of the Estonian Folklore Archives can be regarded as one

of the most systematic ones: we have tried to locate all the possible Estonian communities still existing in Siberia and record their folklore and significant recollections.

As native Estonians travelling in Russia in the 1990s we could not help but witness the insecurities brought on by the dramatic changes in the lives of Siberia's Estonians stemming from the collapse of the Soviet Union, the changing political situation and economic recession.

Estonians living in Siberia felt cut off from their relatives in homeland, especially after the visa regime was introduced between the Republic of Estonia and the Russian Federation. They complained that they could no longer visit their relatives in Estonia owing to the economic recession and the complicated visa process. Remaining in the sphere of influence of Russian media, Estonians in Siberia were nearly completely cut off from information about Estonia, they also found themselves in a cultural isolation. The villagers were eagerly interested in what was happening in Estonia, so we were regarded both as representatives of Estonia and the direct link to their relatives living there. Many villagers had relatives or acquaintances in Estonia with whom they used to keep in touch and visit one another.

One might agree that in the early days following the reinstating of the Republic of Estonia, the final



decade of the 20th century, the interest of the Estonian general public towards Estonians living in Siberia was insignificant. The observations of folklorists about Siberia during this period are among the very few and should capture wider general interest for this reason only. The book shed light on the customs and traditions of Estonians living in a multicultural environment, the people's use of language, everyday life in the villages, highlight changes that have occurred both in Siberia and the Estonian Folklore Archives (e.g., in the use of recording technology) in the course of time, and describe specific situations experienced during fieldwork and the impact of international relations to folklore collection.

At the turn of the century and in the early decades of the 21st century, Estonians in homeland started to take more notice of their compatriots in Siberia.

Anu Korb

EXHIBITION "DIPLOMACY OF LITHUANIAN EXILES IN THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM"

On January 9, 2018 the traveling exhibition "Diplomacy of Lithuanian Exiles in the Fight for Freedom" by Vytautas Magnus University Lithuanian Emigration Institute and the Valdas Adamkus Presidential Library-Museum was opened in the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania.

According to Arūnas Antanaitis, the director of the Valdas Adamkus Presidential Library-Museum, when creating the exhibition, the most difficult task was to decide what to include and what to leave out – so vast is the archival material about Lithuanian political, lobbying and other activities in exile spanning for over a hundred years.

The exhibition is aimed at highlighting the most important activities of émigrés in the fight for freedom in the US, Australia,



Arūnas Antanaitis, the director of the Valdas Adamkus Presidential Library-Museum.
Photo: National Library of Lithuania.

Canada, Brazil, Great Britain, France, and other countries. The creators of the exhibition wanted to show not the official efforts of the émigrés, but the so-called citizen diplomacy, i.e. the contribution of ordinary people to Lithuanian statehood. Alongside material, moral and political support, they helped to establish Lithuania's name in the world and used all possible means to support Lithuania's independence abroad.

“KEYS” SERIES BROADCASTS EPISODE ON BALTIC UNIVERSITY

On the 25th of January at the Latvian television station LTV channel 1, a programme was broadcast about the Baltic University as part of a series called “Keys” - a TV serial in 50 episodes about important stories for Latvia in the past 100 years. It is a recognition of the Baltic University as such, but also of the importance of this institute for teachers and students and the value it still has as an example for everyone who wants to achieve something.

The producers had asked whether it was possible to include episodes of the film I made about the Baltic University and I agreed. Unfortunately they forgot to mention which episodes came from the film and they made a new version which can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/252481011/781b0cbac3>

Helga Merits

EERIK PURJE'S GIFT TO ESTONIA “AJA PUUDUTUS”

On January 17 at Tartu College, Eerik Purje released his new novel “Aja

puudutus” based on true events. A number of interested readers gathered for the event. Piret Noorhani greeted the guests and introduced the author,



who graciously thanked all his supporters. The evening naturally included some reading from the book, which was done by Laas Leivat, Tamara Norheim-Lehela, and Eerik himself. The evening concluded with a book signing. This is only the first of two books dedicated to the Republic of Estonia's Centennial, the second “Puudutuse aeg” is set to be released by the end of the year.

A GENEROUS DONATION

Arminio Sciolli, residing in Switzerland, decided to donate his collection of Russian exodus literature to the National Library of Lithuania. The collection consists of rare books new not only to the National Library of Lithuania but Lithuania in general. The geography of the collection covers a wide range of places – from



South Africa to China – where Russian communities lived at the beginning of the 20th century. The new donation will significantly broaden the knowledge about the publishing in diaspora and open new horizons in researching the cultural history of multi-ethnic and multicultural Lithuania.

ESTONIAN MUSIC WEEK IN TORONTO TO CELEBRATE ESTONIA 100

On February 15, the Estonian Music Week Team introduced the exciting upcoming festival taking place from May 24-29, 2018 in Toronto. This extraordinary festival will feature artists from Estonia collaborating with Canadian artists to celebrate the Republic of Estonia's Centennial. EMW is the first of its kind to take place in North America. From left to right: Linda Litwack (Public Relations), Tom Treumuth (EMW Artistic Director), Viive Sarv (EMW Team), Jaan Kittask (Graphic Designer), sitting Kati Kiilaspea (EMW Team), Marika Mayfield (EMW Team), Max Rubino (21C Festival, the Royal Conservatory of Music), Anne Rimmel (EMW Team), Kaili Kinnon (EMW artist), Heather Kelly (Bloor St. Culture Corridor Founder, RCM), Matthew Moore (RCM). In front: Piret Noorhani (EMW Festival Coordinator), Reet Lindau-Voksepp (EMW Team).





Thank you for standing together with us on this celebration of Estonia's 100th anniversary of independence.

Let's celebrate! **Palju õnne Eesti Vabariik 100!**
Save the date: Saturday, 23 June 2018 to join us for our Estonia 100 Jaanipaev Celebration at Linda Hall, Stettler, Alberta, Canada



With warmest regards,
AEHS President and Board of Directors
Alberta Estonian Heritage Society
www.aehs.ca

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Greetings from Alberta

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Thank you for making our Estonia 100 Event possible, to:

