

**Western Michigan University**

---

**From the Selected Works of Maira Bundza**

---

April 12, 2012

# Learning from Each Other: Baltic Collections in North America

Maira Bundza, *Western Michigan University*



Available at: [https://works.bepress.com/maira\\_bundza/25/](https://works.bepress.com/maira_bundza/25/)

# LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER: BALTIC COLLECTIONS IN NORTH AMERICA

Conference on Latvian Diaspora Archives  
and Material Culture

Maira Bundža

Western Michigan University

April 12, 2012



# Overview

- ▣ Background
- ▣ Baltic Research Handbook Project
- ▣ Lithuanian Collections
- ▣ Estonian Collections
- ▣ Latvian Collections
- ▣ Learning from others
  - Space
  - Staff
  - Organization, etc.

# Background

- ▣ Raised in New York City area Latvian community
- ▣ Librarian at Latvian Studies Center for 15 years
- ▣ Was largest collection in North America
  - 43,000 books donated
  - Periodicals
  - Music, art, archives





# Projects while at LSC

- ▣ Compiled list of Latvian collections
- ▣ Visited a few Estonian and Lithuanian libraries
- ▣ Compiled Baltic Libraries Directory 1994
- ▣ Worked with National Library of Latvia
- ▣ Dispersed Latvian Studies Center library 1997
  - Univ. of Washington
  - IHRC
  - NYPL & other libraries
  - Latvia



# New Environment

- ▣ Baltic Studies Conference 2010
  - New scholars interested in the Baltic States
- ▣ Baltic Heritage Network
  - Formed to study émigré populations
- ▣ Changes in Latvian collections since 1980's
  - 4 major collections liquidated
  - Latvian community buildings with libraries sold
  - Fate of large collections in Germany and Australia?
- ▣ Have tenure, need sabbatical research project!

# Baltic Research Handbook

- ▣ Collections
  - Émigré collections outside of Baltic countries
  - Collections in research institutions
  - Collections in the Baltic countries and how to use them
- ▣ Catalogs, indexes, finding guides, full text
  - Visit countries and find what is available
  - See what catalogs available for émigré collections
- ▣ Short history of émigré communities and publishing for group



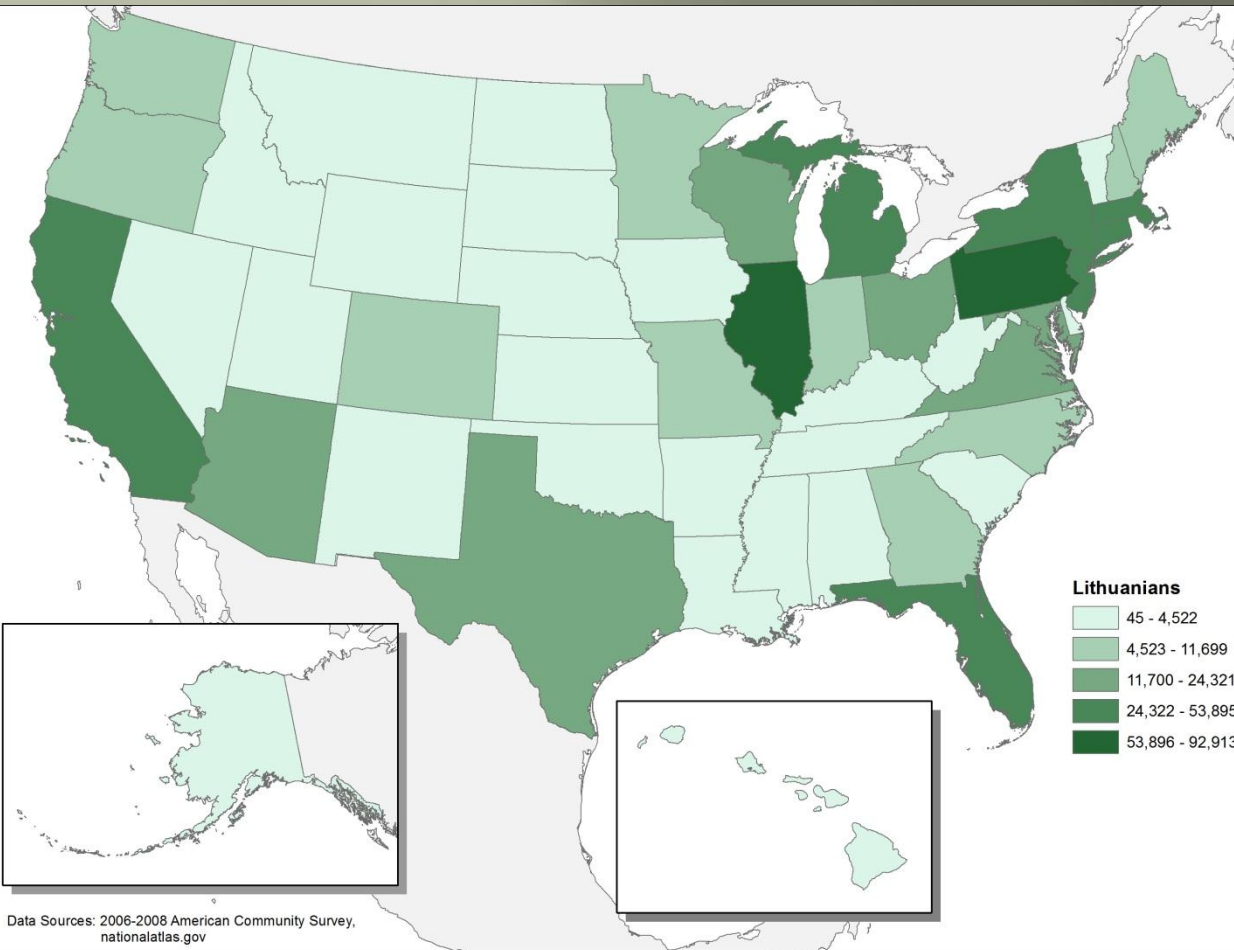
# Progress Report

- ▣ Visited 3 Estonian, 8 Latvian, 7 Lithuanian collections, 3 embassies, 3 American institutions with special Baltic collections
- ▣ Libraries, archives, museums and cemeteries
- ▣ Focus moved from libraries to archives
- ▣ Attended two conferences
  - In Germany on Baltic émigré research
  - In Chicago on Lithuanian Archives & Libraries – in Lithuanian!
- ▣ Three months in Baltics this summer

# Balts in North America

| Ethnic Group | United States | Canada |
|--------------|---------------|--------|
| Estonians    | 28,000        | 24,000 |
| Latvians     | 91,000        | 28,000 |
| Lithuanians  | 709,000       | 47,000 |

# Lithuanians in the U.S.



|                |         |
|----------------|---------|
| Illinois       | 92,913  |
| Pennsylvania   | 82,290  |
| Massachusetts  | 53,895  |
| California     | 51,747  |
| New York       | 48,825  |
| Florida        | 43,399  |
| New Jersey     | 35,622  |
| Connecticut    | 32,136  |
| Michigan       | 31,966  |
| Ohio           | 24,321  |
| Maryland       | 19,582  |
| Texas          | 15,098  |
| Virginia       | 14,636  |
| Wisconsin      | 14,584  |
| Arizona        | 13,206  |
| Indiana        | 11,699  |
| Washington     | 10,573  |
| Colorado       | 10,148  |
| North Carolina | 9,457   |
| New Hampshire  | 8,433   |
| Total          | 708,905 |



# Lithuanian Research & Studies Center – Chicago

- ▣ Established 1987
- ▣ In complex with church, rectory, event halls, exhibit space, Lithuanian school, café
- ▣ Largest collection seen so far





# Lithuanian Research & Studies Center – Chicago

- ▣ Library
  - Over 110,000 books
  - In many small rooms & separate collections
  - Lithuanian World Archives – archival copy
  - Dainauskas Library of Lithuanian History
  - Lending library
  - Catalog on DOS



# Lithuanian Research & Studies Center – Chicago

- ▣ Musicology archive
- ▣ Photo archive
- ▣ 2300 periodical titles
- ▣ Organizational and individual archives





# Lithuanian Research & Studies Center – Chicago

- ▣ Museums
  - Museum of Medicine
  - Military Museum
  - Lithuanian Museum
- ▣ Educational activities
  - Research
  - Publishing
  - Educating teachers
- ▣ Employees
  - Skirmante Miglinas + part time cataloger
  - volunteers



# ALKA – American Lithuanian Cultural Archives – Putnam, CT

- ▣ Established 1922
- ▣ Museum – folk art, materials from 1939 World's Fair





# ALKA – American Lithuanian Cultural Archives

- ▣ Library – 60,000 books
- ▣ Extensive periodical collection
- ▣ Archives of individuals and organizations
- ▣ Mirga Giruviene, her husband and cataloger



# Little Castle – Putnam, CT

- ▣ Built by priest to remind him of home





# Balzykas Museum of Lithuanian Culture – Chicago

- ▣ Open Monday-Friday, on Chicago's "to do" lists
- ▣ Privately owned and operated





# Balzykas Museum of Lithuanian Culture – Chicago

- ▣ Museum in many rooms
- ▣ History, folk art, military,
- ▣ Hand's on children's museum



# Balzykas Museum of Lithuanian Culture – Chicago

- ▣ Library of 40,000 volumes
  - May use catalog from Lithuania
- ▣ Rare books go back to 16<sup>th</sup> century
- ▣ Periodicals
- ▣ Pamphlets
- ▣ Manuscripts
- ▣ Genealogy service





# Lithuanian National Library, Baltimore, MD

- ▣ Established in 1908 – oldest
- ▣ 4,000 books



# Lithuanian Hall Museum, Baltimore, MD

- ▣ Folk art
- ▣ Documenting Baltimore Lithuanian community activities





# Lithuanian National Library and Hall Museum, Baltimore, MD

- ▣ Librarian – Maria Patlaba
- ▣ Museum curator – Henry Gaidis with private military collection



# Sisters of St. Casimir – Chicago

- ▣ Established in 1911
- ▣ 4,000 books, not collecting actively
- ▣ Delightful reading room, card catalog





# Sisters of St. Casimir – Chicago

- ▣ Museum –folk art and history of order
- ▣ Sister Theresa Papsis





# Lithuanian Museum – Archives of Canada

- ▣ Part of large complex – church, event halls, cemetery, rent rooms to a school
- ▣ Museum, library and archives closed
- ▣ 3,000 books + periodicals, archives, artifacts

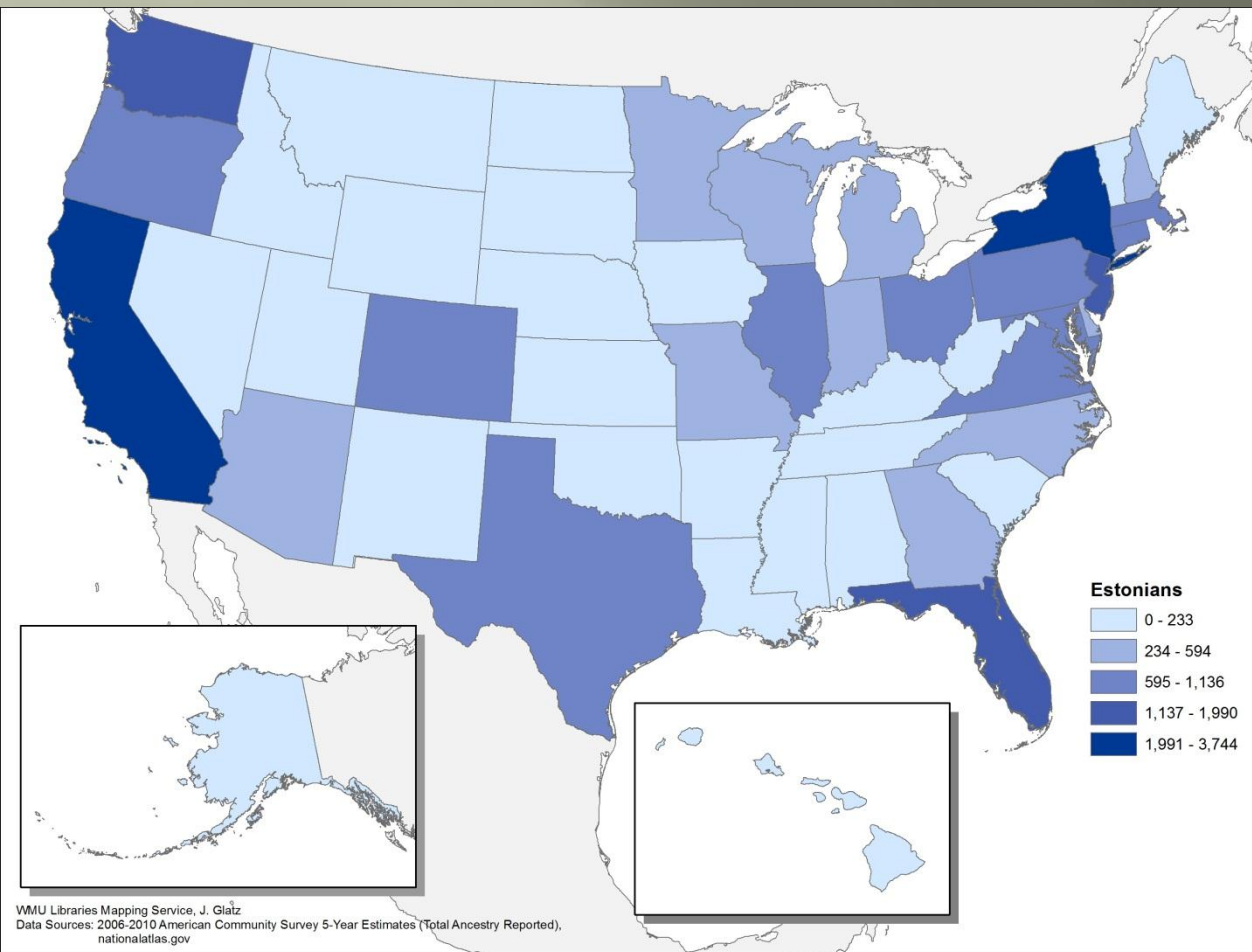


# Lithuanian Canadian Community Cemetery





# Estonians in the U.S.



|                |        |
|----------------|--------|
| California     | 3,744  |
| New York       | 3,462  |
| Florida        | 1,990  |
| New Jersey     | 1,770  |
| Washington     | 1,536  |
| Pennsylvania   | 1,136  |
| Maryland       | 998    |
| Texas          | 977    |
| Illinois       | 947    |
| Virginia       | 917    |
| Colorado       | 832    |
| Connecticut    | 779    |
| Massachusetts  | 705    |
| Oregon         | 683    |
| Ohio           | 663    |
| Minnesota      | 594    |
| Wisconsin      | 560    |
| Michigan       | 461    |
| North Carolina | 450    |
| Missouri       | 423    |
| Total          | 28,312 |

# Estonian Archives in the U.S. Lakewood, NJ



- Established 1969
- Next to church
- Open four hours a week: Mondays 10-2



# Estonian Archives in the U.S.

- ▣ Books – 9,000 titles, 13,000 volumes
- ▣ Periodicals, archives, art, photos, some ethnic objects
- ▣ All Estonian organizations in U.S. contribute funds and materials
- ▣ Working with Estonia and IHRC
- ▣ Sent a good portion of archives to IHRC, books to Estonia



# Estonian Archives in the U.S.



- ▣ Once a week over a dozen volunteers come to organize the collection



# Tartu Institute in Toronto

- ▣ Tartu College established in 1970
- ▣ Elmar Tampõld – architect & sponsor
- ▣ 18-story student residence on Bloor St. in downtown Toronto
- ▣ Cultural & educational center on lower level





# Tartu Institute in Toronto

- ▣ Side entrance to lower level for Estonian community
- ▣ Event hall, offices, sorority & fraternity rooms
- ▣ Lending library (only new books)
- ▣ Dr. Endel Aruja Archives and Library



# Tartu Institute Archives & Library

- ▣ Endel Aruja began archive and developed it over many years
- ▣ Established Bibliography Club – 35 members, that come work on collection on Tuesdays
- ▣ Piret Noorhani – archivist from Estonia



# Tartu Institute Archives & Library

- ▣ 7,000 books in the catalog using Inmagic
- ▣ Journals and newspapers
- ▣ Photos & music
- ▣ Archives, art
- ▣ Have sent thousands of boxes to Estonia





# Tartu Institute Archives & Library



- ❑ In parking garage!
- ❑ Climate control, good lighting, but sloped floors

# Museum of Estonia Abroad (VEMU – Välis-Eesti Muuseum)



- ▣ In planning stages
- ▣ Same architect
- ▣ Raising funds
- ▣ Addition to Tartu College
- ▣ Gather materials from Estonians around Canada



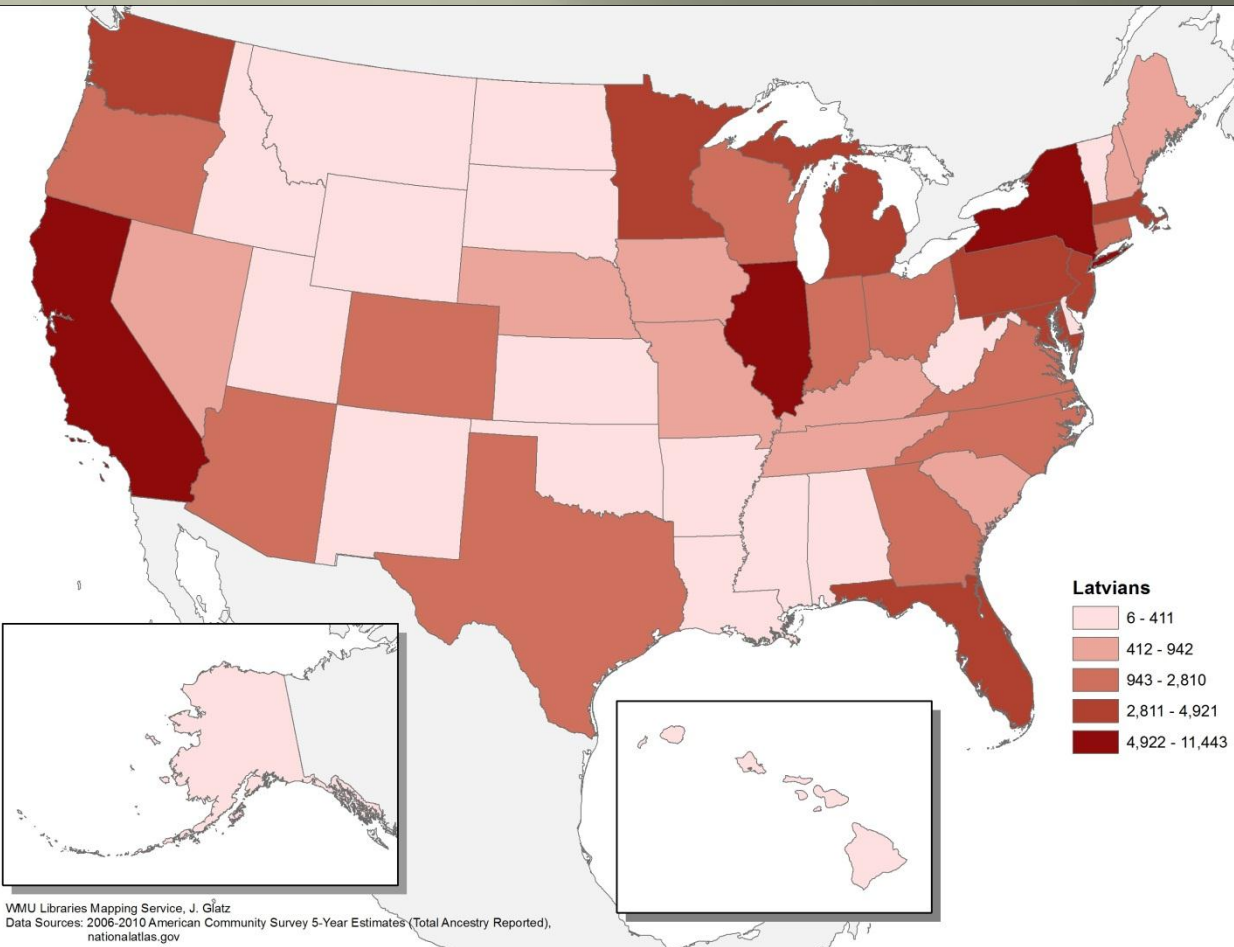
# Estonian House in Toronto

- ▣ Active social space for Estonian community
- ▣ Was unable to get into library & archive





# Latvians in the U.S.



|               |        |
|---------------|--------|
| California    | 11,443 |
| New York      | 9,194  |
| Illinois      | 6,982  |
| Florida       | 4,921  |
| Massachusetts | 4,706  |
| Michigan      | 4,265  |
| New Jersey    | 3,946  |
| Pennsylvania  | 3,754  |
| Washington    | 3,380  |
| Maryland      | 3,289  |
| Minnesota     | 3,010  |
| Wisconsin     | 2,810  |
| Ohio          | 2,580  |
| Texas         | 2,300  |
| Colorado      | 2,142  |
| Virginia      | 1,911  |
| Connecticut   | 1,876  |
| Oregon        | 1,701  |
| Georgia       | 1,603  |
| Arizona       | 1,588  |
| Total         | 91,102 |

# Latvian museums



- Latvian Museum, Rockville, MD
- Latvian Ethnography Museum, Freehold, NJ (Priedaine)
- Latvian Folk Art Museum, Chicago



# Latvian Center Garezers, Three Rivers, MI



Art museum & gallery



Folk art musuem



Scout museum



# Latvian libraries

- ▣ Latvian Canadian Cultural Centre – Toronto
- ▣ Chicago – 3 may be consolidating
- ▣ Garezers – recent floods forced reorganization
- ▣ NYC, Philadelphia (shown), Cleveland, Minneapolis, Portland, Los Angeles
- ▣ Closed, liquidated:
  - ▣ Latvian Studies Center
  - ▣ Boston
  - ▣ Toronto LNAK
  - ▣ NY Luth. Church  
Brooklyn collection



# Latvian archives

- ▣ Lutheran Church Archives – Chicago
- ▣ “Bunker” at American Latvian Association
- ▣ Sent to IHRC, Historical Society of PA, Canadian Archives in Ottawa or to Latvia



# Catalogs, indexes and full text

- ▣ No one has a functioning online catalog
  - Most trying to put something into a computer
- ▣ Some publications digitized
- ▣ Some newspapers microfilmed
- ▣ Minimal indexing
  - on individual computers and on cards
- ▣ Unclear how much émigré periodicals indexed in Baltic countries themselves



# Learning from each other

## ▣ Space

- Usually part of something larger
- Helps if other renters can cover overhead for space
- Need climate control
- Close to people – visitors and staff
- Open year round

## ▣ Staff

- Teams of volunteers
- Professionals from Baltic countries
- Non-professionals need guidelines

# Rethinking our collections

## ▣ Books

- How much do we need to collect if in research libraries?
- Need current books
- Support reading clubs
- Need a unified statement about where to send old Latvian books
- Need to get our collections (that we choose to keep and support) into online catalogs, so users can find
- Work with Latvia

# Rethinking our collections

- ▣ Periodicals
  - How much do we need to collect ?
  - Need current periodicals
  - Main publications in many copies
  - Need to compile small local publication
  - Digitize
  - Index or find where indexed and link to full text
- ▣ Archives - Discussing here
  - Need to organize locally
  - Need finding aids
  - Genealogy services



# Questions?

- ▣ Contact information:  
[maira.bundza@wmich.edu](mailto:maira.bundza@wmich.edu)
- ▣ Baltic Research Handbook Blog:  
<http://balticresearch.blogspot.com/>
- ▣ Baltic Heritage Network:  
<http://www.balther.net/>
- ▣ Baltic Research Resources (being created)  
<http://libguides.wmich.edu/baltic/>