Turning a Passion into a Research Project

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TURNING A PASSION INTO A RESEARCH PROJECT

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The Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania

- Estonians – 1 mil.
  - In U.S. – 26.7 K
  - In Canada – 20.5 K
- Latvians – 1.7 mil
  - In U.S. – 96 K
  - In Canada – 27.8 K
- Lithuanians – 4.1 mil
  - In U.S. – 723 K
  - In Canada – 65 K

* From each country’s Wikipedia
Parents born in Latvia, came to U.S. after WWII

Raised in Latvian community in NYC area

Attended WMU Latvian courses in 1970’s

Became house mother then librarian at Latvian Studies Center 1982-97
Largest collection in North America
- 43,000 books donated
- Periodicals
- Music, art
- Archives

Networked with other Latvian collections

Visited a few Estonian and Lithuanian libraries

Active in Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies (AABS) and AAAASS
Baltic States regained independence in 1991

Worked with National Library of Latvia
- Exchanged materials and employees
- Participated in conferences

Compiled Baltic Libraries Directory 1994

Latvian program, Studies Center closed, library dispersed by late 1997
- To Univ. of Washington, Immigration History Research Center, NYPL & other research libraries, Latvia

Started working for WMU
What happened to Soviet era book chambers?

- Slavic librarians asked
- Researched the three Baltic countries
- Book chambers responsible for statistics, deposit copies, cataloging of books and indexing all periodicals
- Presented at American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies
- Could not answer what is in their catalogs and indexes, and how much is full text?
New scholars interested in the Baltic States
Baltic Heritage Network formed to study émigré populations
Many changes since late 1980’s when compiled list of Latvian collections
- 3 major collections liquidated
- 3 Latvian community buildings with libraries sold
- Didn’t know fate of large collections in Germany and Australia
Have tenure, need sabbatical research project!
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

Quick history of publishing for each country
Visited 3 Estonian, 6 Lithuanian, and various Latvian collections

Libraries, archives and museums

Focus moved from libraries to archives

Attended two conferences
  - In Germany on Baltic émigré research
  - In Chicago on Lithuanian Archives & Libraries – in Lithuanian!

Helping organize Latvian Archive conference in April at IHRC
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
- Sent a good portion to Immigration History Research Center in Minneapolis
Once a week over a dozen volunteers come to organize the collection
Tartu Institute in Toronto

- Tartu College named after one of oldest universities in Northern Europe (1632)
- 18-story student residence
- Supports cultural & educational activities for Estonian community
- Event hall, offices, sorority & fraternity rooms
- Lending library (only new books)
Archive established in 1970

Piret Noorhani – archivist from Estonia

Established Bibliography Club – 35 members, that come work on collection on Tuesdays
Tartu Institute in Toronto

- 7,000 books in the catalog using Inmagic
- Journals and newspapers
- Photos & music
- Archives, art
- Have sent thousands of boxes to Estonia
- In parking garage!
- Climate control, good lighting, but sloped floors
Estonian House in Toronto

- Active social space for Estonian community
- Was unable to get into library & archive
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
Little Castle - Putnam, CT

- Built by priest to remind him of home
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
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 16th century
- Periodicals
- Pamphlets
- Manuscripts
- Genealogy service
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
Oldest Lithuanian library in U.S. (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
Lithuanians love amber!

- Balzykas
- ALKA
- St. Casimir
Latvian collections

- Closed & liquidated: Latvian Studies Center, Boston, Toronto, New York City

Latvian Center in Muenster, Germany
Latvian collections

- Museums – in MD, NJ, IL & Three Rivers, MI
  - Folk art – folk costumes, historical, scouts
- Archives – church, otherwise none, sent to IHRC or to Latvia
  - Holding conference at IHRC in April
Catalogs, indexes and full text

- No one has an online catalog
  - Most trying to put something into a computer
- A few publications digitized
- Some newspapers microfilmed
- Minimal indexing
  - on individual computers and on cards
- Unclear how much émigré periodicals indexed in Baltic countries themselves
Estonians most systematic and good at using volunteer help
Lithuanians have some amazing collections, usually part of some larger center
Latvians seem to have lost the most collections and have no archival plan

Philadelphia Latvian collection
Summer Sabbatical Project

- Three months in the Baltics
- Visit main collections in each country
  - Compile list of best resources for researchers
  - Understand catalog and index systems
- Participate in Baltic Heritage Network conference
- Participate in IFLA conference (maybe)
- Write Handbook!!!
Questions?

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