Learning from Each Other: Baltic Collections in North America

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Conference on Latvian Diaspora Archives
and Material Culture
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April 12, 2012
Overview

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Canada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estonians</td>
<td>28,000</td>
<td>24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvians</td>
<td>91,000</td>
<td>28,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuanians</td>
<td>709,000</td>
<td>47,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
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
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 16th century
- Periodicals
- Pamphlets
- Manuscripts
- Genealogy service
Lithuanian National Library, Baltimore, MD

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

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
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
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: maila.bundza@wmich.edu
- Baltic Heritage Network: http://www.balther.net/
- Baltic Research Resources (being created) http://libguides.wmich.edu/baltic/