

[Letters from Estonia: A Video Odyssey for Generations to Come!](#)

View a heart-touching story of a family researcher who traced the line of her grandfather, who left Estonia during World War II, and starts corresponding with cousins in Estonia decades later during the “Cold War.” She finally is able to visit Estonia and meet her relatives in person decades later as Russia finally opened up visas to the west to visit Estonia. This video establishes an important point of reference that it is essential to trace ones roots back to their homeland for there might also be stories to be discovered and shared. The video is located at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3qBjqojUzo>. There we learned that her ancestors had their own trials and tribulations that are important to be preserved, recorded and distributed. Perhaps you might also have potential opportunities to discover and preserve some important stories accompanied by some photos to share ones heritage for future generations to cherish. This video is remarkably well presented in just 5:59 minutes that is priceless for her family memories.

My Testimony of Preserving Eastern European Roots

In 1996, my son completed his mission in Munich Germany. Having done extensive research in the United States since 1970, I was motivated to pick him up in Munich along with my entire family and travel to Poland and Slovenia to learn about anything about my family roots in Eastern Europe. The oddity is my parents and grandparents shared no information with me about my roots except what I established with my American civil and church records that I searched diligently for along with a few conversations that my parents inadvertently shared some information with me. Since I was a schoolteacher and of modest means, my family performed firesides in the manner of “The Spoken Word” of the Tabernacle Choir in Munich for the Munich Stake, Germany, for the Warsaw Mission in Warsaw, Poland and for the Slovenian mission in Ljubljana, Slovenia, its capital. Somehow we were able to obtain housing from families there to keep our expenses down and we took trains on throughout the continent to travel everywhere. Our luggage bags were very humble with shuffle bags and anything that could carry our musical instruments. I was very fortunate to have a Polish translator in Poland who was the editor of a prominent Polish jazz magazine and he drove his car and I followed in a rented a car and we traveled many hours to southern Poland on the Slovakia border and met individuals in the villages where both my paternal and my maternal grandparents were born. We even met a family that we were related to distantly. Naturally we took many pictures and had many memories of meeting people who we will never see again but these memories still live in our hearts today. It was a fantastic experience to travel to Europe together as a family and become a stronger family unit. This trip was so successful, resulting that we took subsequent trips in 1998, 2001, 2009 and 2012 to obtain even more genealogical information.

The Importance of the Estonia Letter Testimony

I could share many faith-building stories but the most important story here is I took the initiative to contact relatives in Eastern Europe, visited them and broke bread together and above all, shared our love and compassion for them. The letter from this Estonian video that you have the URL cited above is an incredible story about love, concern and compassion for their family even though there was no obvious way to contact people for decades following World War II. The Russian government made it impossible to communicate and travel for decades following World War II but when the opportunity came, the person who compiled this history of her relatives promptly communicated with her grandfather’s mother before she passed away and actually arranged for a trip to reestablish their family roots again, which is a warm, touching story that reminds me of my heritage and ancestors. Had I not traveled to and made the effort to travel to visit my family roots, I would have no deep appreciation for their lifestyle, their sufferings of what they went through with their meager existences that they had while I live comfortably in America. I have so much to be thankful for that my family lives in a country founded on democracy and freedom. If the Berlin had not fallen in 1989, I probably would never had the opportunity to travel to Poland and other Eastern European countries. And I took advantage of this opportunity when my children were most receptive for

learning of their family roots. Now they all have their families and now unrealistic to travel together to Eastern Europe to pursue original family research.

Do Not Hesitate to Explore and Discover Your Family Roots Before Elderly Relatives Pass On Which Hinders Original Research for Family Stories and Personal Memories Forever!

In closing, I encourage you to do your American genealogy, extend your reach to potential places where your relatives originated from and never give up hope that there are heart-warming stories, photos and relatives available that need to be learned, preserved and shared with your extended family. Hopefully you have read my testimony previously posted on this Facebook group of how I found my Ukrainian relatives after 100 years of not knowing that they were even existing between 1898 to 1998. And likewise, they didn't know they had American relatives. See the post that was posted as [Faith Going Far Beyond The "Iron Curtain"](#): or see *the July 30 posting* for an adjunct story of how my family history roots grew exponentially from my 1996 Eastern European odyssey. ; Because in 1998, my entire family traveled again to Eastern Europe which developed into a living story for my children, grandchildren and future generations to learn from about the importance of their family history roots. Likewise. TAKE advantage of opportunities to explore your family roots with living relatives both near and far and most important, share those experiences for generations to come! If you hesitate, those personal memories may no longer be readily or personally available for you to ever record and cherish.