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A Little Village not on Any Tourist Path, Except MINE

Tuesday, February 02, 2021



Many of us are pondering where we might go once it's safe to travel again

This little village in a Lithuanian forest area is our destination.

The village Nova has only 65 inhabitants now



Joe and I have been taking a course in Lithuanian Language and Culture for the last 5 weeks through a university program in Vilnius. Some have asked why Lithuanian?

My paternal grandparents emigrated to the USA from Lithuania in 1907 and 1910
Grandpa came first to earn enough money for grandma and their 2 children to join him.
They had 7 more children in the USA. My father Pranas (Frank) was number 7 of 9.

When we visited Lithuania in 2018, we saw most of the major sites recommended for tourists which I documented on my website (link at end)

Grandpa used to speak of Zapyškis which is a town 13 miles west of Kaunas (a major city) on the south side of the Nemunas River, but it is also the name of the county in which Nova is located. Nova is another 10 miles further, accessible over a very tiny road.

I do not have any documents to prove this is my ancestral village, but I do have a letter from 1922.



I had the letter translated. It quite sad but the details are not that important after 100 years.
Two brothers went to America and 2 stayed in Lithuania
When Grandpa was asked about his family, he just said that they were all dead.

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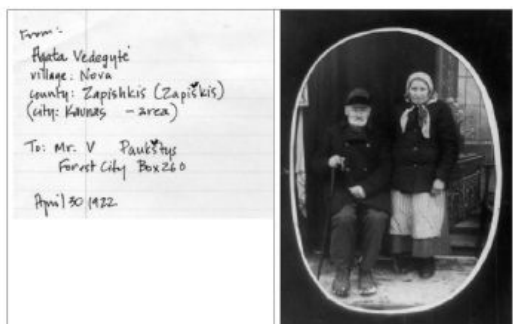
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I have no idea if this was true or if he just lost contact with them



I have other pictures as well. This is the family of Grandma's sister Rose. I have no idea what happened to them either



I once had similar questions about Slovakia, the land of my maternal grandparents. There had been no contact between the families since 1935 because of the depression, WWII and Communism. Because of church records I was able to reconnect with family, cousins with whom I share a common grandfather. They took me to his grave. He had returned there, bought land and built a house expecting my grandmother and mother to join him. He did not like working in the PA coal mines. "You never saw the sun"

Joe and I studied Slovak Language and Culture for 2 summers in the university in Bratislava and took our children and grandchildren to meet their relatives. Now the younger generations are all friends on Facebook.

Maybe I will be similarly fortunate when visiting Lithuania again. However, even if it is impossible to find relatives given my lack of documents, I want to go to their village. I want to walk where they walked and see the land that they saw before leaving behind everything and everyone they knew and seeking a new life in America. Our 2018 visit to Lithuania is documented on my website at this link

www.brigs.us/2018-May-Europe/Lithuania-index.htm

There is a lot to see in that little Baltic country that struggled for its independence for so long against all odds.

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JOE14250

What a great blog! Keep going!
117 days ago



CHERIRIDDELL

This is fascinating. We are all descendants of people from other places. Your learning is so interesting to me. I too have returned to the homes of my grandparents. It is intriguing to know I am not the only one with the compulsion to see where those who came before me came from.
121 days ago



WANT2BTRIM

My best friend and I are planning a girls trip next year. No destination yet :)
121 days ago



ELSCO55

Wonderful
121 days ago



MYBESTME4LIFE

How wonderful to have these pictures and a thread to follow. I love learning family histories.
121 days ago




MARITABETH76

I love family history!!!!
121 days ago



DONNA_CPS2

Family history is fun! 
121 days ago



BONIFIANT

All I can say is that is truly wonderful that you have found those links and have been able to follow up on them. I am excited for you.
121 days ago



SHERRI1BEE

How exciting! You will have to blog your trip when you do visit!
121 days ago



THOMS1

You write such interesting blogs Eileen. Love reading them.
121 days ago



OVERWORKEDJANET

Thanks for the link. I love you can share your travels.
121 days ago



YELLOW09RED

Good morning Eileen,
this is a wonderful family blog. Bless you as you wait to travel there. Praying it will be sooner.
I'm glad you and Joe went in 2018.

Hugs and smiles,
Debbie



121 days ago



BESSHAILE

What a wonderful goal to work towards. How simply marvelous that you can explore not just your roots, but the thriving vines of friendship and family.

The first trip I want to take when we are all free to travel again is to visit my in-laws again in Romania. They are the family of my daughter in law and they made us so welcome in 2015. I can't wait to visit them again, but I am now inspired by you to study more about their world. (we had a pretty vivid crash course when we were there before but it would be fun to learn more)
122 days ago





DSJB9999



Interesting, hope you get chance to travel soon. x

122 days ago



GETULLY

That is so cool!

122 days ago



QUARTERMASTER3



122 days ago



NANANANA

Impressive. I wouldn't know where to find one set of grandparents' relatives in Warsaw & Kiev. So many Jews were exterminated since they left about 1905 & 1907. In contrast, my father's family goes back 5 or 6 generations in Texas. They are so easy to trace.

122 days ago



JPPERSELL

That little town sounds like it will be so interesting for you. I hope that you and your husband get to go. It is so exciting to learn a new language. Your ancestry sounded fascinating to me.

122 days ago



MARTHA324

Wow! You have my admiration for learning a new language...that was hard enough for me in my teens!

We did a river cruise in 2019 and did a bike trip in Bratislava and went behind what was the "iron curtain." Fascinating, but we didn't get to see any of the city. The whole trip was wonderful and really educational as well as great fun.

That would be wonderful if you were able to reconnect with relatives.

122 days ago



SYNCHRODAD

Besides the beauty of the story, your writing is excellent. Thank you for your story.

122 days ago



TRAVELGAL417



122 days ago



PHATPAT18

Interesting.

123 days ago



AKA_TROUBLE

My mom's uncle on her father's side traced his family back to Bern, Switzerland, emigrating to America in the 1780s and my dad's family came from Scotland - his grandfather was a doctor who got his degree at University of Glasgow, then moved to Canada, and then to Michigan. I don't think anyone traced their mom's side of the family - maybe I should+ look into that.



123 days ago

Comment edited on: 2/4/2021 6:48:52 AM



DRUMMERCHK

How wonderful that you actually got to see Lithuania in person. All my grandparents (both sides) came from there between 1909 and 1922. Liking languages, I attempted to learn Lithuanian when we first moved up to Ohio two years ago. After 6 months or so, I admitted defeat. With the variety of different possible endings for every noun, it was way too frustrating for me. I did enjoy learning about the country though. Did you ever do your DNA on any Ancestry or 23andme?

123 days ago



THINCPL2004

Love the story, and here's to you continuing that journey and story!





123 days ago



AMUSICALLIFE

What a great story and I hope your adventure will happen soon.
123 days ago



MARKSMOM3



123 days ago



BKNOCK

Wow, so interesting!
123 days ago



JSTETSER

I love family history. I love your story!
123 days ago



GINA180847

How very interesting that story was. We are the generation of this time and maybe if we are

lucky our grandchildren will find out a lot about us.
123 days ago



ALIHIKES

A great blog! Thank you for sharing it with us. What a great hobby to investigate your ancestors, your homeland, and learn a new language! I particularly enjoyed visiting your website with the photos of your past trip. It is wonderful that you will be going to a small village off the main tourist track.
123 days ago



JUNETTA2002

Thanks for sharing. Love planning travel to small villages.
123 days ago



PATRICIAAK

fabulous!!!
I so enjoyed reading about traveling with the purpose of relationship!
123 days ago



KITTYHAWK1949



123 days ago



RACHNACH



123 days ago



CHERYLHURT

Get us back on a cruise ship!
123 days ago



UPTOIT59

Planning and anticipation are great ways to make this inside time bearable!



123 days ago



DEE797

Loved reading about your family history. I do hope you get to visit soon. So exciting!
123 days ago





SAMMILESSACH

This is so cool. I wish you the best when you can travel.
My dad(stepdad) whom had been long gone from this earth now. Grew up in Jamaica Ny , he said his mom was from Lithuania and something about Checkoslavokia?(Sorry about the spelling.

Thanks for sharing your story.
124 days ago



SUMMER33

What a wonderful journey you have planned and learning the language is terrific...my relatives on my mom's side from sweden...and pretty well documented history and my dad's side goes back to the late 1500 landing in mass.. once had a "family" related to the original immigrant from england and had over 300 people attend...so i guess we 're all related more than we will ever know..

124 days ago



RHOOK20047

Your blogs are so informative and you can tell you love of travel and your fellow man. I always look forward to them.

124 days ago



MSLZZY

So much history to discover.

124 days ago



AZMOMXTWO

this is amazing family history have you ever shared what you have on Ancestry or Family search (family search is a free site)

124 days ago



SHAKERATTLEROLL



124 days ago



ETHELMERZ

I hope very much that you can travel soon to visit that village! My goodness, so very interesting!

124 days ago



PLCHAPPELL

Sounds worthwhile

124 days ago



FRITZYS_MAMA

How nice for you to be able to learn about your ancestry and to learn the language and revisit the land and such. It can be cathartic to get back to our roots. It will be something for you to look forward to after the coronavirus clears up and it's a good hobby to have studying the culture and

history in the meantime.

124 days ago



LIS193

It takes a lot of dedication to learn your ancestors languages and trace the history! What fun projects!

124 days ago



NANCYPAULINE



I think it's wonderful that you're studying your grandparents' origins. Sometimes the discoveries are enchanting, but others can be disappointing. I wish you great success when you are able to go.

124 days ago



1CRAZYDOG

So neat! I wish I knew more about my family, but am glad for what I did learn.

124 days ago

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