



Who left these footprints here?

Footprints in Rääma

1. Allika Street 2^a – Pärnu Aianduse ja Mesinduse selts (Association of Gardening and Beekeeping)

The first board meeting of Pärnu Aianduse ja Mesinduse selts (hereon: AMS) took place on February 21st 1919 at the theatre Endla. The association's activities were cancelled during the war in 1944. In 1951 it was attempted to restart the activities, but it was too soon for decorating homes.

Members of the association gathered again on February 1st 1959 and a new board was elected.

In 1967 Pärnu town government provided AMS with land at Komsomoli Street 8, but it was soon decided that the communist party's local headquarters should be built there. AMS was provided with a new patch by the banks of Rääma creek covered in quicksand. Busy working days were ahead. The members of the association put in money and several thousands of working hours. The wish to have a place for gateherings was so great that the hard work paid off. In 1972 an office building with a meeting hall was finished. A juice collection point was established. In the winter the same room was used for a weaving class on 11 looms and 40-50 participants. Other fruits of the collective work were a greenhouse and a woodwork workshop. In 1973 AMS got itself the flag that is still in use today.

There were around 900 members in the association and many gardening and domestic exhibitions were held with almost 1400 visitors.

A second floor was added to the juice collection point. The money from this was lent from the board and members. The members donated money and building materials: wood and glass. The 1980 election meeting was already held in our own hall. These were busy days for AMS and on the national level AMS was frequently featured among the three most culturally active associations.



The building owned by Pärnu Aianduse ja Mesinduse Selts. Photo by Terje Ojaste



The downfall began in 1990, because the association's new leader was a government official businessman J. Kruus, who was not interested in the association's history, thus not knowing how it all had begun and who had built the house. He hired 20 paid workers and in only three years he was able to ruin the association. The former active members gathered in October 1992 and demanded the board to be hired. The new elected board sold the association's kiosk that was situated in the marketplace to pay back the debts. There was some money left over to secure the foundations of the building in order to prevent it from falling apart.

Today AMS hosts six groups, among which are folk ensembles, dancing crews and a violin ensemble.

We care for nature and pass on our ancestor's traditions and values to the younger generation.

2. Ilvese Street 3 – birthplace of Valter Ojakäär

Valter Ojakäär was born in 1923 in Pärnu. His address was Ilvese Street 3 in Rääma part of the town. Valter Ojakäär studied in Rääma basic school.

In 1940 when Estonia was occupied by the Soviet Union he joined the Young Communist League and later in June 1941 he was recruited to the destruction battalion. He fought in

Liivamäe battle. During the German occupation he was recruited to the German military service and he first served as a horseman and later was sent to the front in Vaivara. He became a clarinet player at the Border Control orchestra.

During 1951-1956 he studied composition in Tallinn National Conservatory.

Ojakäär played the clarinet and the saxophone in several orchestras and bands.

During 1945-1970 he was the concertmaster of the sax group of the Estonian National Television and Estonian National Radio estrada orchestra.



Valter Ojakäär. Private photo



From 1964 to 1967 and 1975 to 1980 he was the popular music and orchestration professor at the Tallinn National Conservatory.

During 1982-1992 Ojakäär led the big band „Kalev“.

Thanks to the diary of Mart Ojakäär – the father of Valter Ojakäär – we can read juicy details about his life from his birth on. Historical interest is peaked with Mart Ojakäär's diary entries during different occupations: „/.../ Valter was brought to Pärnu Ülejõe prison (Beti ait). /.../ The guard were volunteers or officials sent to serve a 24-hour shift. /.../ Thus we found ourselves in a tragicomic situation in which the son was sitting in the cell which his father was guarding with a gun /.../“. Mart Ojakäär tried to free his son. We can read from the diary: „To soften the case I stressed that the boys were forced into battle and in this unexpected situation they were not able to fight anyway /.../“.

Valter Ojakäär remembers that when he was waving the white flag (being a white napkin attached to the gun barrel) he got shot in his right forearm. Ojakäär says being shot is the best thing that could have happened to him in the summer of 1941. If a musician to whom losing an arm would mean losing a living admits such a thing we can really understand the graveness of the situation.

Talking about his childhood in Rääma Valter Ojakäär compares it with the descriptions of another famous Rääma inhabitant writer August Jakobson. Ojakäär writes: „The first reader of the manuscript of August Jakobson's sensational novel „Vaeste-patuste alev“ was August Rööp, Estonian teacher in Pärnu Gymnasium for Boys who also was our class teacher during 1935-1941. I also gasped the book early on and discovered familiar scenes from my home surroundings. Drinking, fighting and cussing that was heard over several narrow streets was nothing extraordinary in Rääma.“

Ojakäär has great respect for his teachers. Pärnu Gymnasium for Boys in its day was one of Estonia's elite schools. Several famous people have graduated from the school. The superstar of the school is definitely chess player Paul Keres who won international chess tournaments already during his schoolboy's days. In addition to everything the school had an exceptionally high level of music teaching.

Valter Ojakäär is the author of the hymn of Rääma Basic school.

3. Roheline Street 1^b – Nooruse maja (House of Youth)

The association was founded on October 14th 1923 in Rääma old school building.

There isn't another library in Estonia that has been led by a future writer, foreman of the Supreme Soviet of Estonia, laureate of the Stalin prize,

author of the best-selling „Vaeste-patuste alev“ August Jakobson. He was a librarian for some years until he became a writer, wed the cashier of the association and they left the life in Pärnu behind together.

Estonians are thought to be a singing nation. People from Rääma are also Estonians,

thus the association Noorus (meaning „youth“) was not able to get by without a choir. The choir was one of the most participated activities. Members participated singing days and song festivals.

In the old days it was customary to perform a play before dancing. Noorus couldn't discard this habit, thus an acting group was established right away.

The association became well-known in Pärnu after building its own house. The members were tired of moving around all the time, so they took a loan to buy a small house in the land Noorus uses today. As common to Estonians, they used collective work to build a nest for themselves. The project was financed by raffles, exhibition-sales, parties etc.

It took a lot of hard work and a lot of time, but the building was finally finished and the association had its own place to gather at. It was small and dear to all, however, later the tiny hall became too cramped for the popular events. So, the building got addition.

During the Soviet period cultural life continued in Rääma. The house had as many different signs on it as many different owners it had. Later on the name „Noorus“ was restored and the original activities were resumed.



A training for youth workers at Nooruse Maja. Photo from the internet

4. Rääma Street 38 – Wendre

The company dates back to 1935 when the cooperative of linen farmers opened a factory in Vändra (formerly called Wendre).



In 1993 the company was renamed Wendre and started producing quilts and pillows. Wendre employs 500 people from Pärnu and the need for quick hands is evergrowing.



Production faculty of Wendre at Lina Street 31. Private photo

Wendre has been cooperating with

the local vocational school and labour office since 2014.

Wendre also employs people with partial disability and is willing to continue hiring them.

Finding well-prepared employees is very important for Wendre, so it hires on a national level. A great help for preparing labour is the local vocational school where they train seamsters and other skilled laborers. In cooperation with the vocational school and the labour office Wendre creates good conditions for people to train and start a job at the factory.

According to the poll „Top employer“ Pärnu county people assessed Wendre that employs 900 people to be the best employer in the area. Most of the county citizens that answered the poll assessed Wendre as a good employer. They explained their rating with the size of the salary, the image and good microclimate of the company.

Peter Hunt is a charismatic Estonian businessman born in Sweden who became the sole proprietor of Wendre in 2002. Hunt started out as a sportswear salesman, joined Wendre in 1996 and began building an international sales network right away.

Peter is active in the leading of the business. He is a visionary who dreams big and persistently brings his ideas to life. Under Peter's lead Wendre has quickly become one of the biggest and most successful textile industries in Europe.



5. Rääma Street 38^b – Männipargi kindergarden

Pärnu Männipargi kindergarden was opened on January 20th 1964. At that time it was called Pärnu's 14th Children's Daycare. From the very beginning the kindergarden has had four Estonian-speaking groups.

In 1995 the kindergarden was renamed Pärnu Männipargi Children's Daycare.

In 1999 it got its contemporary name Pärnu Männipargi Kindergarden.

The kindergarden participated educational projects „Garden Stories in Nature“, „Ecomonster“, „Be Brave“ and „Safe Childhood“ between 2008-2010.

In 2009 the kindergarden joined the network of kindergardens promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Between 2011-2013 the kindergarden participated educational projects HARED(2) and „Reading Nest“.



In 2011 the concept of „Let's go to the number's land“ was introduced.

The kindergarden has been a part of the project „Bully-free Kindergarden“ since 2013.

Playground at Männipargi kindergarden. Photo from the internet

6. Raba Street 3 – Rääma Basic School

A school building that had one classroom, headmaster's room and a kitchen was built in Rääma parish in 1875. School began in October of the same year. The headmaster was Hans Kudevita. The next year Pärnu town government bought Rääma manor and the school had new owners.

In 1879 a summer school was established in order to help slow pupils catch up.

The schoolyear of 1883 ended in February, because a new classroom was added to the building. The headmaster was Georg Tannbaum.

In 1920-21 the school was named VIII Elementary School of Pärnu.



Representatives of Rääma School at the parade of the song and dance festival in 2017. Photo from the school's web page

In 1922-23 the school had 165 pupils, a fifth grade was added.

In 1929 the new „school palace“ was built according to the project of the famous architect Olev Siinmaa. The school moved in on October 5th 1929, the building's facade was finished two years later. A sixth grade was added, there was room enough for 232 pupils.

In 1944-45 the school was named V Partial High School of Rääma.

In 1960-61 the school was named V 8-grade School.

In 1990-91 the school celebrated its 115. Birthday. For the first time in its history the school had 23 classes of pupils, 591 in total. The name Rääma School was restored. A stone plaque with the name was placed in front of the school.

In 2004 the attic of the building was finished. Elmo Joa became the headmaster, there were 523 pupils in the school.

7. Behind Rääma Basic School, next to Agape church – Rääma manor house/orphanage



The reconstructed main building of Rääma Manor in 1977. Photo from the internet

Rääma manor house was a white two-storey building with an older wooden part on one side. The house had two entrances: one in the front and one in the back.

The main building was finished in 1898, the kitchen and canteen in 1760, the sauna and bathing house in 1931, the barns for pigs and chicken in 1875, the shed in 1910. The manor owned 5,6 ha of

land.



In the winter of 1920 seven children and three female caretakers walked across Pärnu river to Rääma, carrying the little that they owned on the sledges behind them. One of the caretakers was the headmaster Emilie Laan, working until November 1st 1923.

There were soon more children, so by the end of the winter of 1920 there were 20 children between the ages of 5 and 12 in the shelter. In March the orphanage received 560 pounds of rye flour, 160 pounds of barley flour, 120 pounds of grouts and 15 pounds of grains. In addition to that the orphanage received 30 pounds of petroleum. The caretakers got free accommodation and food, their salary was 997 marks. Some other rooms of the manor were adjusted to the needs of the orphanage and a second storey was added to the part of the building used by the orphanage.

In 1926 the whole manor house was given to be used by the orphanage. Most of the land was covered in trees, 2,5 ha was used for growing potatoes and other vegetables. There were many flowers and animals in the garden. The children kept the whole house. In the summer they would work as shepherds in farms or cut wood in the forest for heating the orphanage.

In 1928 the orphanage was given to Pärnu town government that covered all the costs. There were already 80 orphans.

8. Männi Street 2 – Pärnu Agape church

Agape church is an open and creative active congregation. Agape congregation is based on historical Christian traditions and treats their neighbours in other churches with respect. The story of why Rääma part of town hosts a church among other important



organisations dates back to 1921 when the Methodist

congregation was first established in Pärnu. The Methodist church that originates from England has always been characterized by a social lifestyle. For example trade unions have grown out of the Methodist



movement. Thus it came naturally that building the church in Pärnu the congregation was looking for a place with enough space for the church to be open to churchly activities as well as work with people from different age groups.

In 1995 Agape church was opened in Rääma, next to Männi Park. Today the church hosts children's events, brings together young people with an active set of mind, opens its doors at 11 every Sunday for men and women, big and small, old and young. Agape church has exhibitions, provides concerts in December, so everyone has a reason to step inside.

The word „agape“ means the love of God and today it is important that the message about the kind God would reach as many people as possible, so joy and peace could rule people's hearts, so the needs of a person's body, soul and spirit would be satisfied reasonably.

9. On the right bank of River Pärnu – Jaanson's track

The fitness track on the right bank of river Pärnu, also known as Jaanson's track, together with the fitness track on the left bank is one of the favourite places of recreational sportsmen as well as nature enjoyers. People come here to ride their bicycles, rollerskate, do Nordic walking or just for a stroll. The track follows along the right bank of River Pärnu, connecting the central bridge with Papiniidu bridge. The path is 4km long. There are benches for resting and pavilions for picnics.

Part of the track goes through Niidu landscape reserve area, so there are more trees and greenery here compared to the track across the river.



The run of the two bridges on Jaanson's track. Photo from the internet



10. Rääma Street 27 – Pärnu Rowing Club

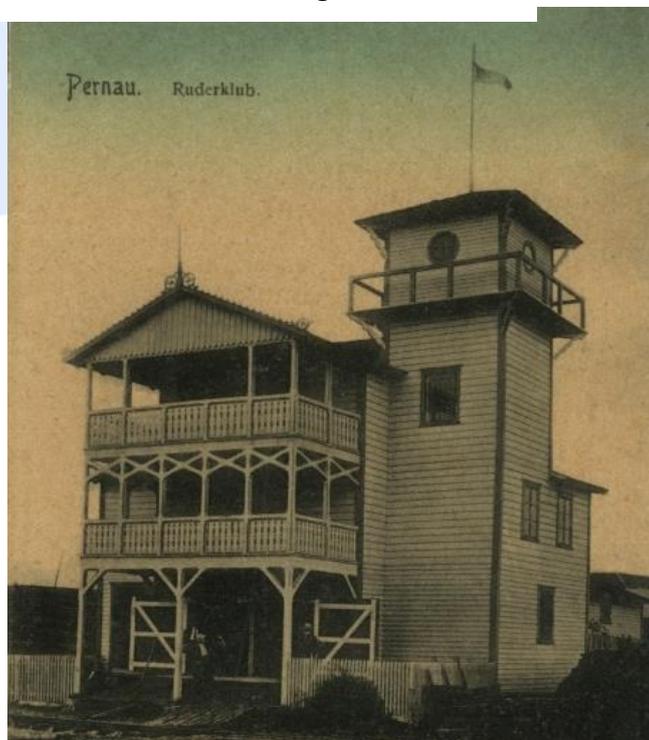
The rowing sport in Pärnu started in 1884. By the 80s of the 19th century Pärnu was a lively harbour town. Pärnu River with its location in the centre of the town and wideness provided excellent opportunities for water sports. Thus, on August 16th 1884 the local Germans gathered and together established the association of rowers in Pärnu, full German Pernauer Ruder Club. The government approved the club's charter on November 20th 1885.

The club had its ups and downs, networking mainly with the Riga rowing club until WWI (1914). The rowing club restored its activities in 1919. The period between two world wars is characterized by a diverse development. Pernauer Ruder Club was finished in 1940 when the Soviet government ended all clubs in Estonia.

The third attempt to start a rowing association in Pärnu was in the autumn of 1948. The sports life in the after-war Pärnu was improved by a well-known sports activist Arnold Ebrok whose main goal was to reestablish water sports, i.e. rowing. Since rowing was popularized among pupils, many talented young people who later on played a significant part in further development of the sport were drawn to rowing. In 1951 M. Leppik began his work as a coach.

The facilities of his club Spartak were given to the club Pärnu Kalev, so Leppik needed a new place for his club. In 1952 he found the perfect spot on the right bank of River Pärnu – next to today's Pärnu Rowing Club's base. In 1958 Spatak's facilities were once again given to Pärnu Kalev. During 1959-60 M. Leppik joined Pärnu Kalev against his will. At the same time he was already building

the new rowing base for his new club Dünamo. This is the same base where



Pärnu rowing club in approximately 1910. At that time the club was situated near the central bridge. Photo from the internet



Pärnu Rowing club is situated today. In 1991 Dünamo collapsed and Pärnu Rowing club was created.

11. Rääma Street 31 – the former ski factory

As the matter of fact, ski production in Pärnu began already before WWII in 1939 in the sawmill „Lennuk“, however none of its products have survived.

The most controversial exponate is the skis secretly produced for the Soviet military. Those skis never made it to the shops. After the Soviet Union lost the Winter War against Finland they began to prepare for battles in the forests and all of the 21 ski manufacturers of the Union were forced to produce wide wooden skis.

In 1968 the factory was named „Viisnurk“ and became known as a pioneer of innovations. For example they produced skis for children. During the Soviet times the main problem was the high cost of ski manufacturing, because there were many leftovers of the production process. When Viisnurk started producing skis for children from the leftover wood, the cost of skis dropped so that everybody could afford a pair of skis and the sport was introduced to the masses.

The oldest exponate is a pair of wide wooden skis made by a local Pärnu county woodworker in 1940. Next to it is a pair made by the predecessor of Viisnurk, Pärnu ski and furniture factory in 1946. The two pairs are similar, but one can see that the woodworker has put in more labour and decorated the skis with small carving. The mass production is more robust. Time has worn the old wooden skis out and stretched them into almost flat planks. Ski craftsmen used to tell stories about how they boiled the skis in hot water and dried them in a boiler room in order to curve the tips or noses of the skis.

At the beginning of the manufacturing thatch ski poles were also produced in Pärnu.



Ski factory Viisnurk. Photo from the internet



According to Pärnu Museum the manufacturing of skis began as handcraft in the boat manufacturing saw mill „Lennuk“ in Raeküla part of the town. In the Soviet times it was continued there until the end of 1950s when the production was moved to Niidu.

In order to raise the profitability the ski factory was united with the center of wood industry in 1958. In 1968 the ski factory was moved to Rääma and united with the wood processing factory „Viisnurk“. The quantity and quality of ski manufacturing in Pärnu peaked in the 1980s when up to 800,000 pairs of skis were produced per year. Most of it was sold in the Soviet Union, a tenth in other Soviet countries, also in Finland and Central Europe.

In 2000 Viisnurk produced more than 300,000 pairs of skis and ranked as the biggest ski manufacturer in the world. The loss increased over the next few years forced the owners to stop manufacturing skis in Pärnu in 2004.

Based on:

Web page of Pärnu Rowing club www.rowing.ee

Web page of Nooruse Maja www.noorusemaja.ee

A research paper on the Rääma orphanage by Annabel Einola, 2014

Web page of Rääma Basic School www.raama.ee

Archives of Pärnu Aianduse ja Mesinduse selts

Web page of AGAPE congregation in Pärnu www.agapekirik.ee

Web page of Wendre www.wendre.ee



Jäljed Räämal

2019 Kes need jäljed siia jättis,
kes neid jälgi mööda käis?



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Leia Rääma jäljed www.raekylavanakool.ee/jaljed või

