**My knowledge about immigrants in Europe**

During my High-school years we all had to do research and scientific work on one particular subject. I chose history as my main topic and went through historical events that happened in Latvia during 20th Century. I analysed how these events affected my family members – careers, personal lives and locations where they lived. I viewed old documents, did several interviews with the eldest and the youngest members of my family and found more information about my grandfathers sister who had emigrated to U.S.A during Soviet times in Latvia.

She still lives there in America, in Chicago. Her name is Valda Gaišs – Dundurs and she was born on year 1926 when there were a lot of changes in Latvia and Soviet army was in charge/ ruled over with Bolshevik Pēteris Stučka as the leader. It was the war and Soviet rule that made Valda cross the ocean and find better life for herself and her husband there. Valda emigrated when she was just married to Jānis Dundurs in year 1944. Valda’s husband Jānis was a scientist and when he did some research or exchange program with delegations in America they travled to Russia and sometimes made a little stop to Latvia as well. But then it was impossible to meet them, since it was risky and unsafe. Especially for a person who had been a legionary like my grandfather Ēriks. Valda’s grandchildren can not speak Latvian and her 3 daughters married Americans, but she herself still to this day remembers Latvian language and my grandmother still writes letters to her in the old fashioned way and they exchange with greeting cards during different celebrations.

The first time my grandfather, his parents and my mother could meet Valda and Jānis was in year 1971, but still then they were spied on and they weren’t allowed to go far from Riga, just because they were Americans with whom Soviet Union had „Cold War” with. When Jānis Dundurs (Valda’s husband) came to Latvia after proclamation of freedom, he went back crying because over seas there was new life waiting for him, but here – his motheland. After that he never came back because it was too painful for him to remember all that had happened.

The last time that Valda has been to Latvia was in year 1997 when I was jsut two years old and she met with my mother, brother and sister. I was in kindergarten at that time.