

Anatoli Kraemer



That's me playing the part of an Estonian peasant lad in an amateur theater performance. The photograph was taken in Otepää in the 1950s.

I was a great patriot of Estonia. I saw the poor performance of kolkhozes. Estonia, having been world food exporter until 1940, could barely cover domestic needs. I decided that I should go to the villages. My friend was assigned the first secretary of the regional party committee in Otepää district, now a famous ski training area. He asked for my help. I moved there from Tallinn and worked there for four years.

I went to Otepää with my family. I got married in Tallinn. I am not willing to tell you anything about my first wife. We parted a long time ago. We had two daughters: Ilona, born in 1949, and Viola, born in 1951. I was appointed the director of the people's theater in Otepää. It was an amateur theater, the producer was the only professional there. They needed an organizer, who could make it work. I started organizing work enthusiastically. We repaired the theater building, chose a couple of plays and started rehearsals. It was very interesting; I even played some minor parts. I worked all day long.

Of course, it hurt my family. My relationship with my wife got very tense. What woman would like her husband to come home for sleep and then run away to work in the morning. Thus, things went well at work, but it was vice versa in the family. Our group became very famous not only in our district, but all over Estonia. We got prizes and honorary mentions at all amateur contests.