

## Locations and Functions of the U.S. Mission to Estonia, 1920-1940



*U.S. and Estonian staff members of the U.S. Legation to Estonia stand in the courtyard behind the Legation's building at Kentmanni 20. U.S. Consul Harry E. Carlson is in the front row, third from the right. (Eesti Filmiarhiiv, ca. 1936)*

### **Locations of the U.S. Mission in Tallinn**

Following common practice, the U.S. Consulate and the U.S. Consul's residence were located together in the same building.

The first known location of the U.S. Consulate in Tallinn was Pikk tn. 19 - the current home of the Russian Embassy to Estonia. U.S. Consul Charles Albrecht and his staff worked there. The U.S. Consulate was located on Pikk from 1920 to 1921 (dates approximate).

By February 1922, U.S. Consul Charles Albrecht had moved the U.S. Consulate to Väike Pärnu mt. 19A (present day Sakala tn. 23A). The U.S. Consulate was located on Väike Pärnu from 1922 to May 1923.

During U.S. Consul Harold B. Quarton's tenure, the U.S. Consulate moved to Viru tn. 5 in May 1923. U.S. Consul Joseph G. Groeninger and his staff also worked there. The U.S. Consulate was located on Viru Street from May 1923 to December 1927.

Under U.S. Consul Harry E. Carlson, the U.S. Consulate moved twice - first to Uus tn. 2 in December 1927. The U.S. Consulate was located on Uus from December 1927 to March 1930.

In April 1930 - three months before the U.S. Consulate was formally upgraded to a U.S. Legation on June 30, 1930, the U.S. Consulate moved to the second floor of 20 Kentmanni Street. The U.S. Mission would remain there until it was forced to close in September 1940. The U.S. Embassy opened for business at Kentmanni Street in February 1992 - sixty years after first moving to this location. The U.S. Embassy has been at the same location ever since.

### **The Work of the U.S. Mission to Estonia**

In the Pulitzer-prize winning first volume of his memoirs, George F. Kennan provides the following descriptions of the work of the U.S. Mission in Estonia located on Uus Street:

*“In the little combined consular and diplomatic office that the United States government then [1928] maintained at Tallinn, there were only two Americans: the consul, who also held the diplomatic titles of secretary of legation and was thus accredited to the Estonian government, and myself, who had only the consular status. (The minister at Riga was accredited as chief of mission to all three Baltic countries; but his residence was in Riga, and he came only occasionally, as a visitor, to Estonia and Lithuania.)”*

*“The work was at least varied (that is the advantage of a small office) and often amusing. [...] I rather loved it.”*

*“My recollection is that Estonia harbored, at that time, a total of nine native-born Americans, five of whom – the consul and his wife, a YMCA couple, and myself – lived in Tallinn.”*

### **Local Staff of the U.S. Mission**

Throughout its twenty-year history, first the U.S. Consulate and then the U.S. Legation relied on locally-hired Estonian staff to provide support for the U.S. Foreign Service Officers assigned to Tallinn.

In February 1922, the U.S. Consulate on Väike Pärnu mnt. employed four local staff members in addition to the U.S. Consul and Vice Consul. These employees were: Alexandra Landsberg (clerk), Edmund Meywald (clerk), Mary Zernetz (clerk), and Vladimir Kozlovsky (messenger).

By February 1929, the U.S. Consulate on Uus tn. grew to include a U.S. Foreign Service Clerk in addition to the U.S. Consul and Vice Consul. The U.S. Consulate employed six local staff: Alexandra Landsberg (clerk), Eduard Hunt (clerk), Johannes Reintam (clerk), Alide Saukas (clerk), Erica Pärn (clerk), and Adolf Liiver (messenger).