



Valga in the early 20th century

Did You know that
Estonia has a city that spans
more than one country?

That city is Valga / Valka. We share the city amicably with Latvia.

Tiesitkö, että Virossa on yksi kaupunki, joka ei mahdu yhteen maahan!

Tämä kaupunki on Valga/Valka. Jaamme tämän kaupungin ystävällisesti Latvian kanssa.

Знаете ли вы, что в Эстонии есть город, который не помещается в своей стране?

Это город Валга/Валка. Мы по-дружески делим его с Латвией.

Kas teadsid, et Eestis on üks linn, mis ühte riiki ära ei mahu!

See linn on Valga/Valka. Me jagame seda linna sõbralikult Lätiga.



Valga's oldest coat of arms from the 18th century

Having been one city for the majority of its history, in 1584 Valga was granted city status by Stephen Báthory, King of Poland, since South Estonia was part of the Kingdom of Poland from the late 16th century to the early 17th century. In the olden days, noblemen from all over Old Livonia (present-day South Estonia and North Latvia) would assemble there for conferences.

Walk - St. Johannis-Kirche



1816 saw the completion of St John's Church, unique because of its oval layout and features of both Baroque and Neoclassicism. The church was designed by the renowned Riga architect Christoph Haberland. The sound of the Ladegast organ in the church is one of the best in Europe.



Valga's historical station building in the early 20th century

Becoming a railway hub, Valga entered a phase of stormy development. Valga had railway links to Riga, Tartu and Pskov by 1889, and to Pärnu and Marienburg (Alūksne), Latvia, by the early 20th century.



Former building of Jānis Cimze's Teachers College, currently Valka Local History Museum

At the Teachers College of **Jānis Cimze (1814-1881)** in Valga (present-day Valka), over 500 parish school teachers of Latvian and Estonian extraction were trained from 1849 to 1890. Its graduates did much to organise the first National Song Celebrations in both Estonia (1869) and Latvia (1873). Aleksander Kunileid-Saebelmann, a graduate of Cimze's Teachers College, led the mass chorus at Estonia's 1st National Song Celebration.

Alfred Neuland with his son



The first Estonian to become an Olympic champion, **Alfred Neuland**, came from Valga! He won a gold medal in weightlifting in the light weight category in Antwerp in 1920 and a silver medal in Paris in 1924. In addition, he set a total of 12 world records.

Photograph 1912



In the early 20th century, Valga was a transport interchange, a hub of its time. Completed in 1865, Valga's wooden Town Hall is an outstanding example of Historicist wooden architecture and the venue for sessions of Valga's City Council.



Building of the Sæde Clubhouse. Photograph from the 1920s / 1930s.

Completed in 1911, the Sæde Clubhouse in the late art nouveau style was designed by Estonia's first professional architect **Georg Hellat**. Until 1948, a semi-professional theatre with seating for 600, a hotel and several banks operated there, and various shops were housed in the building as late as during the Soviet period. The building now houses the Valga Museum (www.valgamuseum.ee) and the Valga County Archives.



The Valga / Valka border checkpoint in the 1920s / 1930s

In 1918 to 1920, Valga's population was split nearly evenly between Estonians and Latvians, and there was no successful way to divide the city. The dispute was settled by a British Lieutenant Colonel, Sir S.G. Tallents, who split the city in two, with the name of the Estonian section styled "Valga" and that of the Latvian section styled "Valka".



www.isamaalinemuuseum.ee

The annual Military History Festival sees about 30 clubs from 11 countries converge on Valga. There are battle re-enactments, a march of the military through the city, an antiques fair and a plentiful cultural programme.



Foundation Valga Permanent Exposition of Patriotic Education

At the Valga Military Theme Park, you can view military equipment, visit a museum, climb inside a “forest brothers” bunker and an Mi-8 helicopter, try shooting with a shooting simulator, complete a military obstacle course with a 50-metre flight through the air, ride genuine military vehicles and do many other exciting things.



The Republics of Estonia and Latvia are member states of the European Union and the Schengen Area, and cooperation between the twin cities of Valga and Valka is close. There is no border control between the two cities.

ONE CITY, 2 COUNTRIES.