

## **General data about the Mõniste Museum.**

The Museum was founded in 1948 and there are twelve thousand exhibits here. We introduce the life of South Estonian peasants at the end of 19. and at the beginning of 20. century. There are farm buildings from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the museum with all the equipment and furniture of that time. It was very small farm , witch had only 2 hectares of land. The family earned their living , working their fields. They sold the flax grown on the farm. The family made everything themselves, only salt and kerosene (or paraffin) were bought.

The farm buildings are made of logs, the roofs were thatched with straw (or reed). On bigger farms they used granite stones for building. At the turn of the centuries they began to use wooden singles for roofs.

The old farmstead consists of 4 buildings : threshing-barn-house, barn, sauna and summer kitchen. The newer buildings here were built in the thirties to house a local shop.

**The threshing-barn-house** was built in 1879 and lived in till 1912. There are 3 rooms in the house. The house had 3 purposes. First- the peasant family lived in it. Second- here the grain was dried and threshed. Third- farm animals were kept in the third of the part the house.

In the first room household utensils, horse harnesses, tools and working clothes were kept. In winter the women wove cloth in this room , too.

The room in the middle was living- room for the family. There is a big chimney less stove in the room, which was heated to warm the room, to cook the food and dry the sheaves of grain in autumn. The sheaves were placed on wooden poles under the ceiling and the room was heated hot. After the sheaves were dry

, they were pushed through an opening in the wall, on the third room- threshing -room.

When the stove was heated, the smoke came into the room and it was let out through the door. At an inspection on how the peasants lived a hundred years ago somebody has written that the room was very warm but dark and smoky. Colds were rare, but eye diseases were usual and often elderly people became blind.

A little about peasants clothing.

Their usual wear were unicoloured clothes made of flaxen cloth. Men a shirt and breeches, women a long shirt, a skirt upon it and an apron. In cold weather a woollen long jacket or coat was put on. For footwear they used sandals made of skin and flaxen wrappings. Married people never went out of house bare-headed. This was considered a great carelessness. Men wore hats, women caps or kerchiefs. On the occasion of great holidays and family celebrations embroidered blouses were worn and the women had striped skirts on. A wide patterned belt was tied around the waist. The patterns of the belts differ in different counties. The patterns of maidens and married women were different too. Men had their own special patterns for their belts.

In the third room the grain was threshed. The sheaves were first beaten against a special bench and then laid down on the floor. Grain was threshed by hand with wooden sticks connecting to a rod. This was a night-time job and had to be finished by the morning. In the morning a new layer of grain was put up to dry. One member of the family stayed up to heat the stove, the others lay down to rest. The stove was not heated at night, because the grain might catch fire. It sometimes happened that some house was burnt down that way. When the autumn was rainy, flax was also worked in that room.

**The sauna** was built in 1867. The sauna had five tasks :first- the people washed themselves here, second- the washing was done here, third- salted meat was smoked here in order that it

kept longer, fourth - people cured themselves with hot vapour in the sauna, fifth- mothers gave birth to their babies in the sauna.

**The barn** was built at the end of the 19. century . It consists of two rooms. The bigger was for keeping foodstuffs in the smaller clothes were kept. The foodstuffs were kept in wooden barrels. Bigger ones were for grain, flour, meat and cabbage . smaller ones were for fat, honey , cream, butter, vodka or spirits. Clothes and cloth were kept in wooden boxes. In summer bed was put in the clothes- barn and the daughters of the family who were planning to marry could sleep there.

**The summer kitchen** was made of wooden laths and it was used from spring to autumn for cooking food . Here food was cooked both for people and animals.

**In another barn**, were built in thirties , we keep the tools of the village smiths. There was a blacksmith in every village who made the necessary iron articles-horseshoes, chains, locks pitchforks, spades. Our local blacksmith was famous all over the Võru county for his skill of making the ploughs. He was even able to cast iron out of the local iron ore found in bogs. Carpenters were in demand as most of everyday utensils and things were made of wood. Carpenters had to make vessels and dishes , boxes for clothes, sleds and carriages, all kinds of tools.

Every community also needed a tailor and shoemaker.

**In shed** we keep all kinds of household things- separator, butter-making machines, a cheese press. There are also horse harnesses and different means of carriage- a cart, a wagon, a sledge, a sleigh. In the back room you can see agricultural implements that were used at the turn of the 19. century and a flax-working machine built in the thirties. This machine worked on horse power and it could pull other things too, for example set a thresher to work.

**In the main building** we have two rooms with exhibits. Here you can see furniture made at the beginning of the 20. century, women handicraft tools and items of handicraft.

**Thank you for visiting our museum.**