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APRIL, 1980

BRIDGES IS PUBLISHED BY THE LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY OF THE U.S.A., INC. THROUGH THIS NEWSLETTER, THE PUBLISHERS HOPE TO RE-ESTABLISH TIES BETWEEN THE DETACHED, MOBILE LITHUANIAN-AMERICANS AND THEIR LITHUANIAN HERITAGE BY PRESENTING ITEMS ON LITHUANIAN CULTURE, CONDITIONS IN THE HOMELAND, EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES IN AMERICA, AND THE ASPIRATIONS OF ALL WHO SUBSCRIBE TO THE IDEA THAT LITHUANIA DESIRES TO BE AN INDEPENDENT AND FREE NATION AGAIN.

GOING BEYOND THE ROOTS

Every summer since 1974 has brought several dozen young people from around the world to a secluded retreat nestled among the woods, lakes, and rolling farmlands outside of Akron, Ohio. It isn't just the idyllic setting that's drawing these people, it's also the opportunity to spend two weeks steeped in Lithuanian culture, history and language. These **Lithuanian Seminars**, taught by professionals, scholars, and experts in their fields, have proven to be invaluable experiences in a continuing Lithuanian education.

In the past, the Lithuanian Seminars have been conducted exclusively in the Lithuanian language. This year, organizers of the Seminars, the Communication Center for the Lithuanian World Youth Association, are offering an innovation . . . **an intensive six-day Seminar on Lithuanian Culture and Civilization to be conducted in English.** "The seminar hopes to provide an intellectual basis for the Lithuanian ethnic experience," says Mindaugas Pleškys, chairman of the Seminar Steering Committee. "We hope to attract those individuals who wish to go beyond the so-called Roots Phenomenon, but who do not have an adequate command of the Lithuanian language."

The seminar will feature lectures by leading specialists in history, literature, language, and folklore. Dr. Jonas Balys, director of the Ethnic Heritage Program at Kent State University will speak on historical development of the American-Lithuanian community. Prof. Alfred Senn, prominent historian and scholar at the University of Wisconsin will highlight important events in 20th century Lithuanian history. Prof. William Schmalstieg, renowned linguist from Pennsylvania State University will lecture on aspects of the Lithuanian language. Rev. Casimir Pugevičius, Director of Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid, Lithuanian Information Service, and Director of Lithuanian Affairs for the Knights of Lithuania will discuss current dissent in occupied Lithuania. Elena Bradūnas, a noted ethnographer working with the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress will cover Lithuanian folklore, mythology, and the documentation of ethnic history. There are also plans for a series of lectures on Lithuanian literature with special emphasis on literature in translation.

"While the framework of the seminar is decidedly academic," notes Paul Binkis, a member of the Seminar Steering Committee, "it will not be all classroom work.





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CULTURE

Two archeologists of Lithuanian descent believe they have uncovered a link between the ancient Mediterranean world and Lithuania, according to Margis Matulionis in an article in *Lietuvių Dienos* (*Lithuanian Days*). Their evidence centers around a 16 cm. clay disc discovered in 1908 amid the ruins of the Palace of Phaistos (c. 1700 B.C.) on the island of

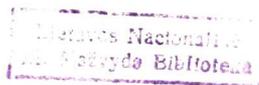
Crete. Inscriptions on the disc have yet to be deciphered and uncertainties still exist about the disc's period of origin. The mystery of the disc, which is covered on both sides with symbols arranged in a spiral pattern from the center to the edge, has proved impenetrable to any reading based on then-current paleography. The two Lithuanian scholars, however, **Algirdas Gustaitis** from Los Angeles and **Alexander Grant-Pridotkas** from Scotland, are committed to proving that the interpretation of the Disc of Pahistos corresponds to the Lithuanian language.

Alexander Grant's interest in the disc began in 1950 when he started his research. He found a key to its meaning 23 years later. Grant began to unravel the mystery when he noted similarities between the symbols on the disc and symbols used in one of the basic groups of languages of ancient Greece, called Linear B. By substituting each symbol on the disc, starting on the outside edge and working inward, with the syllabic equivalent of its Linear B value, a document was produced which bore a striking resemblance to Lithuanian.

In 1975, Grant invited Mr. Gustaitis to a presentation being given on the Disc of Phaitos. Since then, Gustaitis has spent time researching Grant's work and conducting investigations to validate his findings. He has concluded that "Grant is correct when he states that scholars have not been able to read the Disc because they have been ignorant of Lithuanian, one of the oldest living languages in Europe, and this opens up the really revolutionary aspect of Grant's hypothesis..."

Gustaitis invites those who are interested in pursuing the matter to write Alexander Grant directly. Mr. Grant's address is 28 North Fens, Upper Largo, Fife KY8 6ER, Scotland.

* * *



We plan to make the Seminar a time for real dialogue, for shared ethnic experience." There will be ample time for conversation and for browsing in the library or the bookstore, where many popular and scholarly titles can be purchased. Films, sing-alongs, even private tutoring in the Lithuanian language will be available.

The Seminar on Lithuanian Culture and Civilization will take place July 27 — August 1 at Loyola of the Lakes Jesuit Retreat House, Clinton, Ohio. The cost of the English-language seminar is \$80.00 per individual and includes room and board, most educational materials, and a \$15.00 registration fee. Registration is limited to 35 persons and is open on a first-come, first-served basis, although because of space limitations preferential treatment will be given to younger and middle-aged applicants. All applicants must be high-school graduates.

To register or to obtain more information on this seminar — or on the traditional Lithuanian seminar which will be held August 3 — 17 at a cost of \$150 per individual — write to **LWYA Communication Center, Attn.: M.Pleškys, 5620 S. Claremont Ave., Chicago, IL 60636**. Openings are limited so write as soon as possible.

Emilija Sakadolskis
Vice-President, LWYA

COMMUNITY WITH CAPITAL "C"

On April 11, President Carter's Special Assistant for Ethnic Affairs Stephen Aiello hosted a conference of ethnic fraternal leaders. The conference drew over 200 members of diverse ethnic organizations. Lithuanians were represented by Lithuanian Foundation President Dr. A. Razma, Knights of Lithuania President P. Skabeikiw, Political Affairs Chairman of the Lithuanian-American Community S. A. Gečys and Political Affairs Committee member F. Andriūnas, American Lithuanian Roman Catholic Alliance President T. Mack, Association of Young Lithuanian Americans' Exec. Vice-President R. Stirbys, Balzekas Museum Pres. S. Balzekas, ethnographic specialist E. Bradūnaitė, and Mary Washington College prof. Dr. R. Krickus.

During the half-day conference, talks were given by Alfred Kahn (Chairman of the President's council on Wage and Price Stability), Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski (National Security Advisor), J. Jeznowski (Commerce Dept. Undersecretary), and Msgr. Geno Baroni (Asst. Secretary in HUD). President Carter gave a fifteen-minute address in which he singled out the many virtues and strengths that ethnic groups have shared with the United States. He also underscored the importance of the strong family and community ties that ethnic groups traditionally have had and how this unity has contributed to the country's strength. There followed a picture-taking session during which each of the conference participants had their photograph taken shaking the President's hand.

Msgr. Baroni later introduced to the conference a group representing an Italian Catholic community from Cleveland, Ohio. In conjunction with their neighborhood parish, the ethnic community had worked

out a concrete proposal by which they were able to secure a substantial community block grant with which to revitalize their neighborhood. The message that came through from their presentation was that such funds are also available to other ethnic groups, including Lithuanian-Americans, which can get together a workable plan to maintain or rejuvenate their own neighborhoods. The representatives from HUD stressed their willingness to work with such groups to make the money available.



Members of Philadelphia's Bendruomenė at a special reception for U.S. Congressman Charles Dougherty. From the left: Roma Česonienė, Jūratė Krokytė-Stirblienė, Republican National Party Chairman Bill Brock, Danutė Muraškaitė Cong. Dougherty, Teresė Gečienė, and Dalia Jakienė. Congressman Dougherty (R-Pa.) introduced legislation that would provide funding and diplomatic continuity for the Lithuanian legation in Washington, D.C. Although the State Department advised against the bill, it prompted them to come up with an alternate means of providing for the legation's continued financial viability. The question of diplomatic continuity has yet to be resolved. Bridges photo

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During the session with the President, the Lithuanian representatives urged Mr. Carter to speak out against the violation of human rights in Lithuania, praised him for the firm stand he is taking against the Soviets, and reminded him that the course of events taking place in Afghanistan mirrors events that took place in the Baltic States 40 years ago. Bendruomenė's Political Affairs Chairman S. A. Gečys also took the opportunity to discuss the situation concerning the funding of the Lithuanian legation with a member of Dr. Brzezinski's staff. The conference ended with a light reception.

THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM

Lithuanian Information Service of New York has disclosed that Lithuanian prisoner of conscience **Balys Gajauskas** was transferred from Sosnovka prison to an as yet undisclosed location on March 1st of this year. There has been no word from Gajauskas since November 26, 1979.

Gajauskas' present incarceration began with his second arrest at Soviet hands in April, 1977. It was the day he was to be married. In April of 1978, Gajauskas was sentenced to 10 years in a strict regime labor camp and 5 years of internal exile for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda." He had been caught collecting historical material about the Lithuanian post-war resistance to Soviet occupation, an activity for which he had already spent 25 years in a Soviet prison. Gajauskas had also been involved, up until that second arrest, in distributing money from the Solzhenitsyn Fund, a source of subsistence money for political prisoners and their families. In 1978, while in prison, Gajauskas joined the Lithuanian Helsinki Group as a member. At last report, Gajauskas was said to be in failing health.

For more information about Balys Gajauskas, or about Viktoras Petkus, a founding member of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group who is currently serving a fifteen-year sentence (also for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" . . . Petkus was tried at the same time as Shcharansky and Ginzburg), write to the Coalition to Free Petkus and Gajauskas, 708 Custis Rd., Glenside, PA 19038.

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Grandinėlė, the Lithuanian folk dance group of Cleveland, Ohio, has received a grant of \$2,800 from the Ohio Arts Council/Ohio Program of the Humanities Joint Program in Folk Art and Culture. These funds are to be used for a project tracing the evolution of the Lithuanian folk dance.

Liudas Sagys, Grandinėlė's artistic director, is under commitment to find the original sources of the Lithuanian folk dances and, as a result of this work, will create new material for his group. The first phase of the project, research and writing, will be completed during the 1980-1981 season. In 1981-82, the created material will be staged. The newly created program will differ from previous performances by following the development of the dance from simple village entertainment to elaborate stage presentation.

Sagys is a research staff member at the Case Western Reserve University. His artistic activities include a long-time vicepresidency with the Cleveland Folk



Members of Rūta, the Lithuanian folk dance group from Denver, Colorado. Seated in the center of the first row is the group's director, Antanina Bulotienė. Also, standing fifth from the right is Vytautas Beliajus, editor-publisher of *Viltis*, the magazine of folklore and folkdance. Rūta will be performing at the Vth Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival in Chicago during the July 4th weekend. Photo: Saulius Pliuškonis

Arts Association. He has been stage manager and coordinator of the Folk Festivals co-sponsored by the Association and Cleveland's newspaper, *The Press*. Sagys acquired his Lithuanian folk dancing experience as a member of the National State Folk Ensemble in Vilnius and has used his knowledge with Grandinėle since 1953. Under his direction, the group has performed in major cities of America and Canada and has made concert tours in South America, Europe and Australia.

PERSONALITIES

Dr. Aldona Šlepetytė-Janačienė has been hailed as one of the best professors teaching at **Pace University** in New York. Her accolade was made in the weekly student newspaper of this very large New York City institution (Pace boasts 24,000 students and 3,000 professors). Among her many other attributes, Dr. Janačienė stands out for her teaching methods, her inroads with students, and her ability to widen their horizons. A full-page interview in the paper highlighted her educational achievements and emphasized her Lithuanian descent.

★ ★ ★

Nan Duskin Lincoln, the epitome of haute couture, whose high fashion stores became synonymous with clothes geared exclusively to upper-stratum women with upper-bracket incomes, died on April 5 at the age of 86. According to an article about her in the *Philadelphia*

Bulletin, **Nan Duskin was the daughter of Lithuanian immigrants** who came to the United States when she was 3 years old. The future Mrs. August Lincoln went to work as a stock girl shortly after completing grade school. By the time she was 21, her energy and perseverance had moved her up to the job of buyer in Bonwit Teller's country coat and suit department. She parlayed her first store in Philadelphia into an exclusive environment to which well-heeled customers would fly in with their private planes. Described as a perfectionist with unerring good taste and strong convictions, health reasons obliged her to sell out in 1958 and to retire from the business. She died in a Massachusetts nursing home, but her principles and her dedication live on in the store that still bears her name.

★ ★ ★

Lithuanian Independence Day was celebrated a little differently in Waterbury, Connecticut this year. In honor of the February 16th event, Waterbury mayor Edward D. Bergin appointed an "honorary mayor for the day" on February 17th. The new "mayor", who took office with the platform of "nobody pays taxes during my administration," was **Juozas Samoška**, a man that *The Sunday Republican* described as a prominent businessman and sportsman. The article in that day's issue of the *Republican* highlighted the ceremonial appointment and noted that "the whole purpose of the day is to remind everyone of the

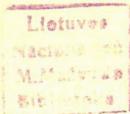
human rights violations in Lithuania." The article carried a photograph of Mayor Bergin and Waterbury's Bendruomenė chapter president Viktoras Vaitkus congratulating the honorable mayor, Samoška. According to the article, Samoška felt the honor of serving as mayor for a day really belonged to the Lithuanian community and not to him.

THE LITHUANIANS

Emilija Plateraitė, a Lithuanian St. Joan of Arc? A patriot from an early age, Plateraitė (Emily Platter) was born in Vilnius on November 13, 1806. Throughout her life, she directed her thoughts and her energies toward expelling the Russians who had annexed Lithuania in 1795. Her natural talents were fueled by studies in military strategy and training in the use of weapons. After the insurrection in Poland broke out in 1830, Plateraitė contacted a group of cadets at the military school of Daugapilis (now in Latvia) and plotted to seize the strategically important fortress there. With her cousin, Caeser, Emilija organized an insurgent unit by recruiting inhabitants of the Dusetos area, a city in northeastern Lithuania. She then commanded the unit in several victorious skirmishes with Russian troops while en march to the fortress. Unknown to her, the cadets who had intended to help her in the take-over had been discovered by the Russians and transferred out of the area. Subsequently, on reaching the castle, her civilian troops were met and routed by Russian forces. Undaunted, Emilija staged an attack on Vilnius in an attempt to retake that city. Again, she was defeated.



Emilija Plateraitė
**Emilija Plateraitė (1806-1831),
 a Lithuanian insurgent.**
 Illustration from *Encyclopedia
 Lituanica*



Soon thereafter, Polish forces arrived in Lithuania and prompted the organization of the Lithuanian insurgents into regular military units. Emilija was appointed company commander with the rank of captain. After an unsuccessful attempt to free Kaunas from the Russians, a battle from which Emilija just managed to escape capture, her unit was forced to retreat to Šiauliai in the northwest. An ambush by Russian troops forced the army to retreat into Prussia where it eventually laid down arms.

Plateraitė, however, refused to surrender. Disguised as a peasant woman, she attempted to enter Poland where fighting was still going on. Her ambitions were foiled when she became ill along the way. She died, at the age of 25, on December 31, 1831.

Emily Platter later acquired world fame as a military heroine. Many poems have been composed about her in several languages. Her biography, written in French by J. Straszewicz and translated into English by J. K. Salmonowicz, was published in New York in 1842. In Lithuania, Antanas Vienuolis wrote a play about her, *1831 metai (The Year of 1831)*, which received its premier at the National Theater of Kaunas in 1939.

MEDIA

A major two-article series in **The Wall Street Journal** on the Soviet economy used Lithuania as its focal point. The first of the two articles by Journal staff reporter Eric Morgenthaler was structured around a description of the Lelia Clothing Factory in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. While the basic theme of the article was a critique of the monolithic, state-controlled economy of the U.S.S.R. — with its notorious inefficiencies — Lelia stood out as a profit-maker boasting a 3-4 % annual productivity gain and the manufacture of award-winning and popular garments.

The second article began with a description of a back-to-school "fair" conducted by the Vilnius Central Department Store. In the U.S., the fair would be called a sales promotion with its gaily colored tents, puppet theaters, soft drink concessions, and sales clerks selling school bags, soap, paint sets, and pencils. In the Socialist world, such "unsavory vestiges of capitalism" are frowned on: it's called a fair. It's also "more characteristic of Lithuania than . . . of the entire system." Morgenthaler reports that "a Moscow resident says he doesn't recall having ever seen such a thing there." Nevertheless, the inventory of this Lithuanian version of "a J. C. Penny or Sears Roebuck outfit" has a monthly turnover, the highest in the Soviet Union. In this article, the Vilnius Central Department Store, "perched on a bank of the Neris River" is said to represent "the best in Soviet retailing" and is apparently a model other cities in the Soviet Union are hoping to emulate.

The Lithuanian success stands in marked contrast to the drab, bureaucratic monstrosities that plague Soviet economic life. The article tells a one-sided story, however. For example, no mention is made of the fact that the Soviet economic and political systems were imposed and are maintained by force of arms in Lithuania. The author ignores the fact that, although Lithuanians have proved adaptable to the rapid changes industrialization has brought to the country, such "progress" has wreaked havoc on demographic patterns and has provided the Soviets with the opportunity to import large numbers of non-Lithuanian workers into the cities. Nor does the article even hint at the political or social unrest which exists in Lithuania both in the countryside and in the major cities. The author dances around the truth by painting a tantalizing picture of how remarkably well the Lithuanian economy seems to operate, but he gives credit all too readily to the imposed Soviet system and pays all too little attention to the impact this system has on the lives of the people forced to live under it.

PUBLICATIONS

Bendruomenė's annual publication, "Violations of Human Rights in Soviet Occupied Lithuania" is reaching more and more educational and social institutions. Among the newest recipients are Oregon State University, the University of British Columbia, and Freedom House. Lithuanian educators and administrators who are associated with universities are urged to contact the libraries to suggest ordering this series of publications. For more information or to place orders, write to the Lithuanian American Community of U.S.A., Inc., Public Affairs Committee, 708 Custis Rd., Glenside, PA 19038.

* * *

The Lithuanian Folk Art Institute, centered in Ontario, Canada, has recently published its first book: *Lithuanian National Costume*. The authors, Antanas and Anastasia Tamošaitis, are the directors of the Institute as well as accomplished artists in their own right. Their book provides a history of the Lithuanian national costume "by means of words and images," according to the preface. "The work draws on information dating back to Lithuania's prehistory which includes archeological findings of ornaments as well as clothing remnants. It also relies on a number of artists from the 1st to the 14th centuries in their portrayal of the construction of clothing. In addition, historical sources include publications and engravings from the 15th to the 19th centuries. "However," the preface continues, "most of the material, both for the writing and the illustration of this book, has been derived

from discussions with old Lithuanian country women who themselves, wove, sewed, and wore such costumes and who were able to describe costumes worn by their parents and grandparents."

The 256-page, large format volume is richly illustrated — 561 monochrome photographs and 16 color plates — and includes a glossary, bibliography and index. It is the only book written in the English language which is designed for libraries, academic studies, lovers of art, and those who wear as well as those who weave the national costume of Lithuania. The book sells for \$26.00, not included postage and handling. For more information, contact Mrs. L. Milukas, 111 Grohman Lane, Plainview, NY 11803.



Cover illustration from *Lithuanian National Costume*, the authoritative book recently published by the Lithuanian Folk Art Institute.

IN LITHUANIA

Many Americans headed towards the shore this summer to relax, fell the sun and the surf, and enjoy a change of scenery (assuming, of course,

they found the gas to drive their cars with). Many Lithuanians did the same, traveling to beautiful ocean-side resorts and river health spas. The five most famous and most popular resorts even attract a substantial number of Russian vacationers. Three of the resorts are on the Baltic coast: Palanga, Juodkrantė, and Nida; the other two, Druskininkai and Birštonas, are on the Nemunas river.

Palanga, perhaps the most beautiful vacation spot, is north of Klaipėda. It was known in the 13th century for its excellent beach, clean white sand, and coastal pine-grove scent. It is a favorite with those who like to wade, since the bottom doesn't become steep for quite some distance from shore. The long chain of undulating dunes makes it ideal for sunbathing, as does the climate—the temperature is higher than the annual average in Lithuania and there are usually fewer clouds. According to *Encyclopedia Lituanica*, the two hills that surround the town are filled with many legends. In one of them, Birutė, the wife of Prince Kęstutis, was a priestess who guarded the sacred fire burning on an altar at Palanga. It is said that after the death of Kęstutis in 1382, she returned to her native place and was buried on the hill that now bears her name. The legend is very popular and gives Palanga a distinctly romantic aura. Palanga also has a boardwalk that takes advantage of the gentle slope and extends far out to sea, a favorite place for vacationers to take walks at sundown. The summer season usually attracts about 100,000 tourists here.

Juodkrantė is about 12 miles south of Klaipėda. It is a peaceful resort popular with those fleeing

busy city life. Juodkrantė is noted for the dark pine forest along the shore from which the resort gets its name (*Juod-juodas*, or black, and *krante-krantas*, or bank). It is nestled in a valley surrounded by fir-covered sand dunes which are over 150 feet high. The summer season draws up to 5,000 vacationers and tourists annually.

Nida is about 18 miles south of Juodkrantė. Archeological findings show that the ancestors of the Balts lived here from the Neolithic period. Thomas Mann, German novelist and winner of the 1929 Nobel Prize in Literature, had a house built at Nida in the Lithuanian style and vacationed there in the summers of 1930-32. There are several camps for youth and adults, and a hotel and restaurant accomodating 300 people. During the summer season, about 10,000 visit the resort. High-speed boats called *Raketa* travel between Nida and Klaipėda or Kaunas.

Druskininkai is one of the most beautiful resorts in Lithuania. It is located on the right bank of the Nemunas about 80 miles south of Kaunas and is noted as a health spa. The mineral waters (*Druskininkai-druska*, or salt) are obtained from five artesian wells and contain sodium chlorides with an admixture of calcium. The waters are used in the treatment of cardiac, blood-vessel, gastrointestinal, gynecologic, and nervous-system disorders, as well as various forms of rheumatic diseases. The left bank of the Nemunas is steep and protects the resort from northerly winds. It is also surrounded by fragrant pines, making it a natural year-round favorite visited by 40,000 people annually.

Birštonas, also on the right bank of the Nemunas, is about 25 miles south of Kaunas. Like Druski-

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ninkai, Birštonas is also noted for its curing mineral waters. About 20,000 people visit it each year, including 9,000 patients. On the outskirts of the resort is the hill where Vytautas the Great erected his castle (*Vytauto piliakalnis*). The area is also geologically famous for the Birštonas Loop, a complicated meander of the Nemunas which consists of six different bends spread over 35 miles of the river's floodplain. It is the only such meander of a major river in the world. Because of its remarkable scenic beauty, the Birštonas Loop is frequented by tourists, nature lovers, and hikers.

* * *

A nursery for breeding **snow leopards** has been set up in the **Kaunas Zoo**. These reclusive predators are difficult enough to trap, let alone to breed. According to a brief article in the "Moscow News", however, the zoo has 30 of these rare animals and offspring have been produced. The article states that the success of the Lithuanian zoologists is due to the surroundings they created to make the leopards feel at home. Special caves were constructed and tree trunks were planted for the 50 kg (110 lbs.) cats. A special diet was also provided. In its natural habitat, the snow leopard is known to follow its prey to altitudes of 13,000 feet.

GERA ŠEIM

Potato Torte
(Bulvių Tortas)

This torte has a very distinctive taste and is best served with mint tea.

Ingredients:

6 large potatoes
3/4 lbs and 2 tablespoons butter (melted)
1 1/2 cup sugar
4 eggs
1 1/3 cups flour and 1 tablespoon
1/8 teaspoon almond extract

Topping:

Plum or pear slices in heavy syrup

Boil the potatoes in their skins, then peel and grate coarsely. Separate the eggs, blend the egg yolks with sugar and set aside. Using two forks, blend flour with the potatoes, then add melted butter and the egg yolk and sugar mixture. Add almond extract and mix. Beat the egg whites till they form soft peaks and fold this into the potato mixture. Pour the batter into a greased cake form and bake in a moderate oven until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. When the cake has cooled, decorate with pear or plum slices.

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