ONE HUNDRED YEARS

1894 - 1994

ALL THIS SHALL PASS

a tribute to

all those who have gone before us

and in memory of
sister Mary Hogg
who died
August 18, 1991

May their souls rest in peace.

Dedicated by:
ANNE JORDAN
Sister of the author
Polly Elder.

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Inside front cover: Map by Don Elder

Inside back cover: Sketch by Tom Sideroff
- from memory of the farm yard in 1942

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to
my beloved brother Tom who
stayed on the original quarter of land
in the original house
to embrace the legacy of
Peter Sidoroff.

The family is grateful to Tom for his dedication to the fulfillment of the wishes of our father to continue and sustain the farm to it's ultimatum. Tom's hard work and commitment to the task in his youth, while the rest of the family left to seek other careers, is worthy of recognition. His devotion as a caregiver to our parents in their latter years is warmly appreciated and we are grateful to him and his wife Jean for all they did to make their final days comfortable.

We recognize that the many trials and tribulations of the farm life that he experienced from the time he was sixteen to the day the farm became his, were trials and tribulations we were all spared. His endurance and ambition to progress reflect in the scene that greets us when we come to visit.

We pay tribute to Tom and his wife Jean for their great success in bringing their farm and home to the great show piece it is today. The community calls the house "the Cake House" and it is a landmark of which they can surely be proud. We, the family are proud to say,
"we grew up here and Tom is our brother".

THANK YOU TOM

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I wish to acknowledge the members of my family: my husband Don, my children, Ron and Moira, Roxanne and David, Keven and Carin, Graham and Barb and my sisters and brothers for their constant support and encouragement in my research and pursuit to obtain information to bring this project to fruition. Special gratitude is extended to brother Syd for the many hours spent in launching this project with me and to sister Anne and brother Michael for the tireless assistance they have extended to me at my beck and call for the entire duration of the project. Without them and those recognized on the Credits page, this documentary would not have been possible.

My sincere and humble thanks.

Polly Elder

To My Precious Jewels
This Book Is For You - From Grandma Polly

Back: Brock Elder, Stephanie Elder, Terri-Lynn Elder, Collin Elder
Front: Britney Elder, Zachary Willson, Mark Elder - 1994

CREDITS

My sincere gratitude to the following who have dug deep into their memories and experiences to document the story of our forefathers who endured much suffering and grave deprivation in order to provide their descendants with a land of freedom: Alex Andreeff, Mike and Natalie Andruff, Nick and Zoya Andruff, Kay Cooke, Ada Courchene, Jean Dash, Jean and Pete Doumnoff, Cheryl Eidick, Merry Fowler, Norma Glimhagen, Betty Haluck, Nadia Hodgson, Mary Hogg, Anne and Glenn Jordan, Zina Kaija, Vi and Sam Kalugin, John and Margaret Kosheiff, Zina and Tom Kosheiff, Zina (Mike) Kosheiff, Jean Koyman, George and Wanda Lebedkin, Gladys Lillejord, Fi McIntyre, Nina Mihailoff, Vi and Mike Mihailoff, Cons and Elizabeth Mishukoff, Vic and Jenny Nasedkin, Joan and Vic Osokin, Julie Osokin, Luba Pierlot, John and Valentina Polushin, Mike (Mitchell) and Annie Polushin, Doreen Riedijk, Ruth Rudnisky, Fannie Schischikowsky, Rachel Shtykoff, Nick and Helen Sideroff, Tom and Jean Sideroff, Gerald Sidoroff, Lorne Sidoroff, Michael and Sylvia Sidoroff, Syd and Bert Sidoroff, Polly Thompson, Lydia Webster.
We hold close to our hearts and in our memories the following of the above who have since then become deceased: Pete Doumnoff, Mike Mihailoff, Mike Kosheiff, Mary Hogg, Cons Mishukoff, Rachel Shtykoff, Lorne Sidoroff.

It is the hope of the writer that these chronicled submissions of a people who forfeited family, friends and worldly possessions to reach this wonderful country of Canada, will give the new generations the inspiration to look at their ancestry with pride and to exert maximum effort to maintain Canada "strong and free". We who live here in Canada, are fortunate that our parents exercised the brain power God bestowed upon the human race to make possible this wonderful life for us.

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PROLOGUE

-by Polly Elder

On June 18th, 1924, the Americans were singing "California, Here I come", Calvin Coolidge was President of the United States, George Bush was 10 years old, William Lyon Mackenzie King was Prime Minister of Canada; half a gallon of milk was twenty-seven cents, a five-pound bag of flour was twenty-five cents, a dozen eggs five cents and a pound of bacon was thirty-eight cents; Chamonix, France, was boasting the successful hosting of the first Winter Olympics, three planes took off on a successful around-the-world flight, U.S. Congress passed law making all Indians citizens; kleenex tissue, atomic hydrogen welding and dynamic loudspeakers were the new inventions. This is all recorded history.

In Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, an historic event was taking place that history did not record. The Empress of Russia, landed on the south-western shores of Canada. Its cargo was a group of Russian immigrants sponsored by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. They had boarded at Yokohama, Japan, about three weeks earlier to make a new life in a strange country called Canada. The second boat would arrive in the fall of 1924, another in 1925, another in 1927 and others later. This book is their bit of history recorded.

Some background history of the Russian people, and a skeleton sketch of their beginnings, may help the reader understand and more fully appreciate the Russian customs and traditions recorded in this one hundred year history.

If one looks back far enough into history, it may even be determined that we came from the Vikings. History tells us that Russia was derived from either of two scenarios. In the ninth century, dissension and feuds among the Slav tribes became so violent that they voluntarily chose to call upon a foreign prince who could unite them into one strong state. Their choice was a Scandinavian chief, Rurik, who in 862 became ruler of Novgorod. From the Scandinavians called Rus may have come the name Russia, meaning the country of the Rus. Another theory suggests that it may have come from ruotsi, the Finnish name for the Swedes. Two other Scandinavians gained control of Kiev during this transition. This date is considered to mark the beginning of the Russian Empire. Scandinavian names were modified into Slavonic, resulting, for example, in Olga for Helga, Oleg for Helgi, and Igor for Ingvar. The establishment of Rurik and the dynasty he founded initiated the expansion of the Slavic people toward the northeast and northwest, where the native Finnic strains were largely absorbed or replaced by Slavs.

The Andreeff-Sidoroff strain is predominantly blond and fair-skinned; however, inter-marriage over the centuries following the establishment of Rurik's Dynasty has added other strains, possibly Mongolian after Genghis Khan's Tatars captured and destroyed some of the cities on their march northward in the thirteenth Century. During Catherine The Great's reign in the 18th century French was spoken fluently by the aristocracy and they married their children to French and English nobles. When Napoleon and his French troops entered Moscow on September 14th, 1812, they found that the Russians had set their city ablaze rather than let it be taken over by the French. The campaign was a disaster for Napoleon and they were forced to fall back in a retreat. The Alexander Column in St Petersburg still stands as a monument to Russia's triumph.

The Bolshevik Revolution referred to in this book was in 1917; however, it had it's start back in the mid-eighteen hundreds resulting from the Napoleonic wars. More communication developed between western Europe and Russia and the liberal political views became paramount in the

thinking of the so-called Russian intelligentsia, particularly students and the upper middle class. Viewing the present reign of Alexander the First as a corrupt bureaucracy, with little concern for the millions of oppressed peasants and serfs, the intelligentsia began to form secret political societies. Taking advantage of the uncertainty of the succession to the throne after Alexander's death in 1825, a group of young officers organized the Decembrist revolt (so named because it happened in December). Nicholas, who had succeeded to the throne, promptly suppressed the revolt. He formed a new secret police and ordered strict surveillance of all publications and removed all material regarded as politically dangerous, from school texts and curricula. He began a rigorous campaign against education and Russian intellectuals. Many writers were arrested, including the famous Fyodor Dostoevsky who was exiled in 1849. Some were executed and others exiled. Nicholas I died in 1855 and was succeeded by his son Alexander II.

It is believed that the ancestors of the Sidoroffs and Andreeffs were serfs. Sidor and Andrei, circa 1800, would have been serfs. Serfdom is the institution under which a class of peasants known as "serfs" worked on and were legally bound to the land owned by lords. Dues were rendered to the lord by the serf in the form of a portion of the crops and various forms of service including military aid. In return the lord was obliged to protect the serf against depredation of outlaws or other lords. Serfs were required to get the lord's permission before offering their daughters in marriage. It differs from slavery in that the slave was the chattel property of his master. The serf might own certain personal property, including draft animals and agricultural implements, which could be bequeathed to his heirs. Over time the lords demanded a larger share of the crops, creating a steadily mounting indebtedness on the part of the serfs. By the end of the seventeenth century the serfs of Russia had become so impoverished and had given up so many of their former rights that their status scarcely differed from that of chattel slaves. The system persisted until the middle of the nineteenth century. It was abolished by the Russian emperor Alexander II in 1861.

Alexander II was assassinated in 1881 by a bomb thrown by a revolutionist. His son Alexander III was his successor. Revolutionary propaganda continued and was eagerly accepted by Russian factory workers. During this time the German political philosopher Karl Marx found many supporters. Industrialized cities such as St. Petersburg and Moscow became notorious for the miserable working and living conditions for factory labourers. An underground revolutionary movement developed, taking the form of unionization and strikes.

Nicholas II, or Nikolai Alexandrovich (1868-1918), ascended the throne in 1894 and attempted to continue his peaceful foreign policy. Although well-intentioned, he was a weak ruler easily dominated by others, and a firm believer in the autocratic principles taught him by his father. Police control increased and was met by an increase in terrorism with many high government officials assassinated. Meanwhile Vladimir Ilich Lenin (Lenin's original surname was Ulyanov) directed the Socialist movement (Bolshevism) and the outspoken demand for reform was taken over by Socialist groups. Eventually a demonstration was called by labour leaders. On January 22, 1905, thousands of persons led by Father Georgi Capon, a priest who was a revolutionary leader, marched to the Winter Palace to present their demands. They were fired on by czarist troops and hundreds were killed and wounded, giving the day the name of Bloody Sunday. The massacre was the signal for a revolution. Strikes and riots began throughout the industrialized sections of Russia. Assassinations increased and the rush of events influenced the government to make concessions. The emperor promised the people a representative assembly. He issued decrees granting liberty of worship to Old Believers (the Old Greek Orthodox). However, the tide of revolution could not be halted and a general strike was accompanied by uprisings of nationalist groups, peasant riots and turmoil throughout the empire.

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 put a temporary halt to the revolutionary activities of the radicals. Lack of supplies and transport, and the inefficiency of military leaders disheartened the troops. The war became unpopular throughout Russia. Despite the spread of dissatisfaction with the war and with the government, dissension and corruption in the government continued. Revolutionary agitation increased, and in February 1917, riots began in the Russian capital. When ordered to fire upon the rioters, the troops refused and instead joined them. General dissatisfaction with both the foreign and domestic policies of Nicholas culminated in the Russian Revolution (1917). Nicholas was forced to abdicate on March 15, 1917, in favour of his brother Michael. Michael refused the throne, leaving the administration to a provisional government. These abdications ended the House of Romanov and the czarist Russian empire. Nicholas and his family were imprisoned in Siberia and then executed by the Bolsheviks in July 1918. An interesting point arises here. One of the Russian men in this book, Gregory Mysevich Kosheiff, was a guard to Czar Nicholas. When the Czar was forced to abdicate, Gregory Kosheiff was forced to flee.

Other background information that would benefit the reader is the origin of the Russian surname. Surnames for the Russian people are relatively recent. Up to the middle of the last century the surnames of working people in Russia were almost unknown. After the liberation of the serfs, there was a gradual effort to modernize Russia. The peasants were more exposed to education through urban influence, thus requiring surnames. When the Sidoroffs and Andreeffs were to migrate to Siberia, they needed surnames for purposes of identification. Siberians gained surnames earlier than those in other parts of Russia; thus, Siberian born wives of Ilarion (Lorne) Sidoroff, Philipe (Philip), Vasili (Bill), and Ivan (John) Andreeff all had surnames long standing prior to marriage.

My two grandfathers, Andrei and Sidor, died in the early nineteen hundreds and may never have known the legacy of their given names. The surnames given these two families were Andreiv derived from Andrei and Sidorov from Sidor. The suffix "v" means 'belonging to'. It is understood that prior to this group of Russians' arrival in Canada, a sect from Georgia called the Doukhabors came to Canada and their names were all registered with the ending "ff". With this new group of Russians the registrar did not inquire of their preference and automatically registered them with "ff" endings instead of the "v". Records indicate that Sidor's name was officially "Eeseedor", which would no doubt have translated into Isador; however, the common usage of that name was Sidor.

Surnames were mainly given based on the father's name, such as Mihailov from Mahail, Larionov from Larion, Feodorov from Feodor; and the musician Prokofiev means "the son of Prokofi". Had the surnames been assigned two generations later, Peter's progeny would have carried the name Prokofiev. If they had been assigned one generation later, my maiden name would have been Lukin from my grandfather Luke as some of the names had the suffix "kin", meaning likeness thereof or type. Names were also given for things, animals, places and trades. The surname Morozoff would be from "moroz" or frost, Kotov stems from "kot" or tomcat, Mogilny after the city of Mogilnev and Pushkin from "pushka", meaning cannon, Nasedkin from "naseet", to carry or a porter. All classes of Russian surnames carry patronymic names, which is the use of the father's name, as well; e.g., Peter being the son of Luke is addressed as Prokofi Lukich Sidorov and Philip being the son of Gregory is Philipe Gregorich Andreiv. Matrona's father was Feodor, so she was known only as Matrona Feodorovna as surnames were not in effect at that time. The feminine suffix of "v" is "va or vna". It is considered respectful to address one by using his or her patronymic name.

The Russian customs and the origin of the Old Greek Orthodox Church would also benifit the reader and are outlined in a chapter in this book. However, the Orthodox Church was not the only

religion in Russia. At the time of Nickon's religious purges and Czar Alexei's reign, many old believers escaped to Rumania (old believers being the people of the Old Greek Orthodox Church). The Rumanian government accepted them. Rumintsi is a term referring to old believers who escaped to Rumania during Nickon's persecutions. When Czar Nicholas II gave freedom, some Rumintsi returned to Siberia. The Czar granted them free land and transportation.

In the old days, the religious system was dictatorial under a Czar and Patriarch. Since the Greek Orthodox religion commenced during the regime of Czar Alexei and Patriarch Nickon, a new reform religion was formed and called Nickonianskoye. During Nickon's period, almost all of the bishops, priests and many laymen were killed who did not submit to his reforms. Then there is another faction called "Bezpopovtsi"; i.e., a religion with no priests. Russian historians tell us that Patriarch Nickon was an Abbot at Novospaskoye monastery and a very good friend of Czar Alexei. In 1646 he was appointed as Patriarch. Nickon was a very possessive and tyrannical person in nature. He also had great influence on political matters of the state. In fact, in absence of the monarch, he was the Czar dictator. Due to disagreements with the Czar in 1658, he resigned his position. In 1666 he was brought to trial by synod and declared guilty. He spent his remaining years in a monastery and passed away in 1681.

In modern times, the Greek Orthodox Church as a whole is referred to as "The Eastern Orthodox Church". In Russia, it is "the Russian Orthodox Church". After the liturgical and ritual reforms of 1666, dissention was forbidden by edict of the Czar. Nevertheless, dissenters continue to exist to this day. They are called Starabratsi (Old Ritualists - the 'bratsi' refers to their clothing). Staraveri are Old Believers and in Canada they call themselves "Old Greek Orthodox".

The Russians about which this book is written came from many walks of life. Not all were farmers, nor serfs, and some were in fact of the intelligentsia class. They were, however, all strong believers in their faith. With the Bolshevik regime moving in on them in the early 1900s, they feared persecution, annihilation and most certainly loss of their freedom to worship.

In the meantime, the Canadian government was in the throes of making the Railways Agreement with the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Canadian National Railway to attract more central and eastern Europeans to settle Canada. If Britons, Americans and northern Europeans could not be procured in sufficient numbers, then other immigrants would be persuaded to settle the West. Under the agreement the railways went out scouting for any and all that would be interested in coming to Canada to develop this vast virgin land yet untouched. This historical happening in Canada would have a major effect on this particular group of Russians.

Their ability to cope and to withstand the endless challenges in their lives is largely due to their infinite faith in their Creator . . . and . . . possibly to their favourite expression: "etto vsyo pro'dyot"
- or -

"ALL THIS SHALL PASS"

THE VISITOR

- by Sidney Boris Sidoroff

Even the snapping of the housing timbers from the intense -30 degree weather did not discompose Peter Sidoroff because he had this feeling of contentment. His family and the farm animals were warmly housed and there were plenty of logs for the pot-bellied heater in the house for the entire night. Only Marseek, the watchdog, was left to seek shelter for himself in the straw stack. It was only November but outside the cold formed truculent ice crystals which coated the trees and bushes, making them look as if they were made of glass.

"Thank God we have reached a stage where all our animals are sheltered indoors", he said to himself as he reflected on the past few years. "Thanks unto the Highest for rescuing me from the wars of hell and for providing me and my family this haven known as Canada".

He sat down and began to compose yet another letter to China. Getting satisfaction from the Chinese emigration authorities was next to impossible. Whatever the obstacles, he must continue to strive to meet his ultimate goal. Bringing over a minister for the Old Greek Orthodox Church was the number one priority. But then Marseek began to bark! There was heavy squeaking and crunching of snow outside. Clearing the frost off the window pane revealed two heavily loaded sleighs pulled by steaming horses covered by hoar frost. Three inch icicles hung from their nostrils. A woman with a child was sitting in the last sleigh barely visible through the frost on her shawl. An anxious knock was heard before Peter could put on his "butinki". A man with icicles on his 'handlebar' mustache entered.

"You are known to all as the Good Samaritan. Because it is so bitterly cold outside, may I bed my family down in your barn?" he pleaded.

The accent threw Peter back to the 1914 Battle of Galicia. Then, while lying on his back from a head blow, a bayonet was being pressed against the pit of his stomach while a helmeted Prussian soldier screamed "GIWER SCHMIS RUNTER" meaning "drop your rifle". After coming back to reality, Peter said, "Bring your wife and child inside. My sons will take care of your horses".

The latter was an order to his sons. This perturbed them greatly. It meant turning their own horses out into the bitter cold. "How can we turn out Queenie, the home grown yearling, who nuzzles us for oats (and we can't refuse); and do we turn out Duke, our pinto pony, our best pal, who will come to us in the pasture so we can ride him home bare back and without a halter? Why do strangers arrive at such inopportune times?" they agonized. The stranger's horses were soaking wet under the hoar frost that covered their bodies. If they were not rubbed down and warmly housed they would catch pneumonia. There was no alternative but to move their own horses out of the barn.

To lead their own pals out of the warm stable into the frigid cold was very painful for the boys. They unharnessed the stranger's horses and cleared the ice off their backs. Instead of eating the hay fed to them, the horses pawed the barn floor. This indicated they were too thirsty to eat. After allowing them to cool down, the boys led the horses to the watering hole. It was a moonlit night with ice crystals slowly floating down from the cloudless sky. All was still and quiet except for the squeaking of the snow under the horses' hooves. The water hole was frozen over solidly and had to be chopped out with an axe. The steeds drank copious amounts. When they were returned to the stalls, they began to eat.

Coming out of the barn, the boys noticed their own horses standing in the cold with their heads drooping. The frost was already forming on their bodies. "What means can we use to protect them?" the boys pondered. The straw stack, with its overhang, would shield them to some extent. Also the deep layers of straw would give them added protection once they lay down. With oat bundles they lured the horses to the leeward side of the straw pile. There they found Marseek lying on the straw, shivering. The boys covered him before returning to the house.

Sitting beside the wood stove the strangers had already warmed up and were beginning to peel off some of their outer clothing. The man was explaining that they were moving to the Fort St. John area because where they first settled the soil was very poor. They chose the winter months to avoid getting bogged down in sloughs, creeks and low-lying lands which usually became inundated after heavy rains. The route they were to follow was the Old Fort St. John Trail.

"Is it true that this trail cut across your land?" the stranger asked.

"Yes, that is correct. It cut across this quarter section diagonally a few hundred yards east of where we sit now. It generally hugged the higher ground but in the lower soggy sections there were three, four and sometimes six trails side by side. As one became too rutted, a new one would come into existence. In the summer of 1928 this trail was followed by us on foot from Whitelaw as the extention of the railway was not complete till November of 1928. We found this land of very rich black soil, which was still unclaimed. Some relatives and friends filed ten miles to the south of us, while my

brother Fred settled three miles north of here. Brother Lorne and I, as well as my father Luke, claimed adjacent quarter sections which are well supplied with fresh water by a clear stream meandering through each quarter. Fish abounded in this stream and tall grasses, very suitable for hay, grew on its banks. There were no neighbours except for Mr. Williams about one mile through the bush. Thank God for that because he was of immense help to us. The closest post office, school and store were four miles away.

"When we consider settlement of the prairies, we were akin to the homesteaders that moved in covered wagons to settle the West. We came from the eastern city of Harbin in China to the western city of Vancouver, British Columbia, and then to central Alberta. In central Alberta, the adjacent quarter sections provided a communal type of living. Not only was there the close association of family members but there also was the opportunity to utilize each other's scarce tools, scarce equipment and limited horsepower. That was in 1924, but the land we were allotted there was very poor so we searched elsewhere until we found this fertile land four years later. The first year on the homestead was particularly difficult because we had no home, no barn, no fences and no field in which to grow vegetables. My two horses, together with my brother's two, ploughed virgin land for the gardens. Logs for the houses had to be cut down and skidded in, some from long distances. Moss, to act as insulation between the logs, had to be gathered and dried. Some of the heavy logs had to be raised to a considerable height in order to build the walls, ceiling and roof. Construction came to a halt when the haying season arrived. The hay had to be scythed by hand, raked by hand, elevated at least twice by hand and stacked by hand. In addition to the homes we were building, shelters had to be built for the few animals and chickens that we managed to bring with us. We anguished whether all this could be done before winter set in.

"Resettling is not new to me. By the age of twenty-seven I had traversed some twenty-five thousand miles; equivalent to the circumference of the earth. This is a fair distance, considering there was no air travel in those days. In 1907 my forebears migrated, with some encouragement from the government, almost en masse, from Western Russia to Eastern Siberia. From Eastern Siberia, during World War 1, I was dispatched to the western front which was deep inside present Poland. Even though the Russians outnumbered the Germans, they were able to inflict such a severe battle, we were forced to give up our offensive attack. I was taken prisoner. After serving three years, three months and three weeks as a prisoner of war I had to find my own way from Germany back to Eastern Siberia through the battle lines of the Russian Revolution. My journey was some six thousand miles of freezing hell in rail box cars with frequent stoppages by either the Reds or the Whites to plead allegiance. After many scrapes with the fighting patrols, I found myself back home only to realize the worst was yet to come.

"The Russian Revolution, which broke out in St. Petersburg in 1917, continued for

three years. It was not until 1920 that the Bolshevik Reds defeated the White Armies of Siberia. Once in control, they took the same course as the French Revolution had followed, annihilating or jailing everyone from the royalty to the petite bourgeoisie. Being small land and property owners, we and our family members fell into the latter category. One family member was executed and another first whipped and then left to freeze in minus forty degree weather. The majority of male adults, and probably some of the females, were fingered for the gulags. There were months of terror as the Bolsheviks ferreted out those opposed to them. Our properties were confiscated. Freedom to worship was banned. We were debased to the lowest of human beings.

"The time had come to flee the country. Escape from the Bolsheviks in Russia and resettlement were both very difficult but now we are in Canada and we are free - free to speak, free to move, free to worship. Rather than being debased, we are respected as humans. Even government officials call me 'Mister'! The freedoms we found in Canada gave us the inspiration to overcome the physical hardships. We now have freedom from wars, freedom from fears of persecution, freedom of speech and freedom of worship. We have land, we have homes, we have barns and we have plenty to eat.

"One vital part in our lives, however, is still missing. We are presently without an ordained minister for our religious needs. The congregation has tried for some time now to bring over an Old Greek Orthodox minister who is anxious to emigrate from China. The Chinese authorities, however, refuse to grant him an exit visa. My ultimate goal in life is to fill this void in the life of our church and its congregation."

After listening intently, the stranger said, "That was all very interesting, but I wish to hear more about your wartime years, your flight to freedom and your life in China. Why were you considered petite bourgeoisie? What about the minister that came with you in 1924? What happened to your relations and friends that escaped with you and where are they now?

The late night was upon them and the story was not told.

The story of Peter Sidoroff, his friends and his relations, could not be told in one evening of visiting. This intense story is loaded with drama, emotion, diversity and trauma. It is, however, a success story. It involves a great many people and experiences - family members which were loved and lost, friends and relations left behind, new friends made in their new country and a kaleidoscope of experiences. Economic hardships, which they as a family and as a people endured and overcame, wars and prisoner of war experiences, threat of persecution, traumatic escape from their homeland and from the Bolsheviks, life in Harbin, China, emigrating to Canada, adjusting to a new life in a new country, uprooting again for yet another move, all play a part in this story. It is a story of many close encounters and many challenges. It is a legend in itself.

All this they did for their families and their religious convictions, that their families may have a peaceful and unprovoked way of life and have the freedom to worship. If their descendants are blessed with life in a free and peaceful country, the sacrifices, hardships and traumatic experiences endured will not have been in vain.

Peter did pass on to his next life without having told this story. With the help of many of his relatives and friends that shared his experiences, I have attempted to preserve this historical legend by compiling the recollections of all those to whom I give thanks on the Credits page. Many of the "relations and friends" of which the visitor made inquiries tell their own stories and some have extended themselves to record their lives to the present day, realizing that this too would some day be history. May our efforts serve the future generations in the preservation of this history of our ancestors.

Polly Elder

LIFE IN WESTERN RUSSIA

In 1894, one hundred years ago, a little boy, with the affectionate childhood name of Pasha, was celebrating his second birthday in a small village called Perehod. Approximately two hundred miles north in the city of St. Petersburg, Nikolai Alexandrovich was being crowned the Czar of Russia, Nicholas II. This historic event would one day have a significant effect on the life of this tiny tot who was oblivious to all and knew little else outside the love and affection of his parents, Luka and Matrona, an older brother Feodor, an older sister Anna and his grandfather Sidor. His grandmother Evdokia had died a few months prior to his second birthday. Pasha was the diminutive name for Prokofi. Thirty years later, in Canada, he would be Peter Sidoroff.

Friends and contemporaries of Sidor and Evdokia were the family of Andrei and Anna. They lived in a village called Ushkeva, adjoining the village of Perehod. These two families were close friends and would eventually become related through Sidor's grandson Prokofi marrying Andrei's granddaughter Lucaria. Peter and Lucaria would one day be my beloved parents. The two villages were eventually absorbed into a larger city presently on the map as Staraya Russa in the northwest corner of Russia, located at the southern tip of Lake Ilmen. Their nearest city was the ancient and historic city of Novgorod across the lake to the north.

Sidor and Evdokia had four sons, Luka, Vasili, Nikifor and Afanasi. Luka married Matrona and they had three sons, Feodor, Prokofi, and Ilarion and a daughter Anna. He and his sons would come to Canada and become Luke, Fred, Peter and Lorne with the surname Sidoroff.

Luke's brother Afanasi married Anastasia Kononov and one son, Ivan, was born in this part of Russia. In time they would all come to Canada and Afanasi would become Afric, Ivan would become John, Anastasia would remain the same and all would have the surname Sidoroff. Anastasia's father was Efrem Kononov who came to Canada with them and did not change his name. Luka's and Afansi's brothers, Vasili and Nikifor, would die voilent deaths in Russia.

The only children of Andrei's and Anna's family on record are Nikifor and Gregori. Nothing is known of Nikifor; however, Gregori married Irena and they had four sons, Philipe, Vasili, Ivan, Larivon, and one daughter Lucaria. These four brothers, their sister and their father Gregori eventually came to Canada and became Philip, William, John, Lawrence and Gregory, bearing the surname Andreeff. Lucaria remained Lucaria.

Life for these families in their small villages was simple and uncomplicated. They knew nothing about the outside world. No one read newspapers. They learned about their history, their country and their religion from their heritage. Winters were cold in this area near the Gulf of Finland, just south of the sixtieth parallel. The snowfalls were not heavy but the winds were strong. There was no bush for protection from the wind so the snowdrifts were huge. Their life centered around their families and their beloved Old Greek Orthodox Church.

The crops and produce they planted would last for about six months. After that they had to go out and find work elsewhere. Luke was one of many that used to go to work in a factory in St. Petersburg, where he earned five rubles a month. Besides that he carried water for the factory manager's house for which he received two rubles a month. There were soup kitchens where portions of two to three soup ladles were allotted per person. Lorne Sidoroff recalled an incident when he and his brother Peter, then children, were carrying home rationed soup provided by this public kitchen. It was carried in a bucket on a stick, each end held by the boys. One of them stumbled and fell, resulting in a soup spillage. Quite a predicament! If they were to return home without it, a punishment was due. If they were to go back to the kitchen, the chance was slim that they would get more. They decided to go back to the kitchen. To their surprise, they got a refill!

Although Luke and his brothers were well educated by their standards, most of the Russian population was uneducated under the Imperialistic system of class distinction. At that time there were the high class and the low class - the high born and the low born. If one met an official, a school teacher or a lawyer, the common low born was obliged to entreat him with a salutation of "vasha visoka blagorodia" meaning "I respect your high born status". Otherwise he would never have been spoken to, nor would he have had a hearing.

Luke often spoke of his experiences that took place before the revolution, when Russia was under the Imperialistic Czarist rule. This is a story he once told his grandson Michael.

It was January, cold, middle of the winter, forty degrees below zero F. He was requested to appear before the magistrate in the city of Novgorod about forty miles from Staraya Russa, a trip that took more than eight hours by horse and sleigh. In Russia

they usually used the troika which means, three horses to a team with the middle horse having an over-the-neck yoke called the "duga", being the lead horse guiding the outside two horses in the right direction.

He was requested to appear before the magistrate at four o'clock on Friday afternoon. He made sure he was there in good time, a few minutes before four. He made his presence known to the attendant at the desk that he was there because of the request from the Magistrate's office. He was told to wait. He waited, knowing that the office closed at five o'clock and did not open again till Monday. He was anxious to have the necessary business completed before the office closed to avoid the necessity to stay in the city two extra days, paying for food and lodging, not only for himself, but also for the three horses.

It was very frustrating, to say the least. The young magistrate was not able to see him, being preoccupied with his young secretary or mistress and said "come another day".

Luke pleaded, "I know, you high born noble sir will understand that I have travelled all day to see you at the time you designated and I wish to have an audience with you please."

"Go home and come back on Monday, you peasant," retorted the magistrate, "and don't bother me any more if you don't want to be arrested and sent to jail".

Luke was left with no alternative but to go home and return again on Monday.

THE BIG CHALLENGE

During the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905, all the young men were conscripted into the army to fight a battle in which two hundred thousands young men were lost and several thousands imprisoned. The war resulted because Russian expansion in eastern Asia ran counter to the plans of Japan to gain a foothold on the Asiatic mainland. Russia had leased Port Arthur from China in 1898. In 1904 when Russia refused to withdraw from Manchuria, Japan attacked Port Arthur. Fierce battles were fought on the banks of the Yalu River, the Liaotung peninsula, Mukden and in the straits of Tsushima between Korea and Japan. In August 1905, after the most tremendous encounter in the annals of warfare which broke the Russian resistance, peace was secured by the Treaty of Portsmouth.

Luke Sidoroff's brothers were amongst those sent east to fight this battle. After a few months of training under strict disciplinary Cossack commanders, they were sent east across all of Russia, most of Siberia and into Manchuria via a troop train which was mainly made up of cattle cars and plain box cars with straw to sleep on and a ration of dried food for each day. The Sidoroff brothers survived the slaughter and they would once again travel across a good portion of Siberia and all of Russia, in plain box cars with their rations of food, back to their Western Russia homes. While in the Amur Province in Siberia, they were very much impressed by the quality of soil in that area and upon their return home, anxiously relayed their great findings to their families.

The pros and cons were discussed in great detail before an advance party was sent back to investigate. Gregory Andreeff, Luke Sidoroff and Afanasi Sidoroff were among them. At that time Czar Nicholas' government was giving each male member of the family a grant of two hundred rubles, free transport and fifteen 'dessiatin' of land (1 dessiatin = 2.7 acres). Upon their return, they reported that the province of Amur would be favourable for relocation, primarily for its rich farm land. To pick up roots after generation upon generation of living in one small corner of the world, the Sidoroff and Andreeff families were faced with the challenge of their lifetime, the generation that would face many other challenges yet unknown to them. This would be a major adjustment. After much persuasion by these ambitious scouts who had seen this land

of opportunity', the families made the decision to move. All apprehension was eliminated and the wheels were put in motion to make the courageous move. Beautiful farming land on the forty-ninth parallel north of the Amur River would be their destination; back onto the same train, same conditions and no improvement to the economic situation.

Before them was a trek of approximately four thousand miles east. This time there were many more mouths to feed and the responsibility of each of those ex-soldiers and scouts was ten-fold. Three of my great-grandparents, Evdokia and Sidor (Sidoroff) and Andrei (Andreeff) had died prior to this move. When my grandmother Irena Andreeff had died in 1903, great-grandmother Anna took on the task of helping her son Gregory bring up his five children, Lawrence, John, William, Lucaria (my mother) and Philip, ranging in age from three to fifteen, making them ages seven to nineteen on this trans-Siberian trek. My grandparents, Luke and Matrona Sidoroff, were making their way to Siberia with their teen-age children Peter, Lorne and Anna. Their oldest son Fred was married and he and his wife Palegea were expecting their first child. Luke's brothers and their families came later.

A risky but daring adventure for this hardy and sagacious group was underway. The hardship was upon them but the future looked promising and they rode that train for many days and many nights, propelled by a glimmer of hope for better days ahead.

Siberia between Omsk and Novosibirsk taken from moving Trans-Siberian train - a trip by Luba Pierlot and Polly Elder in May 1992

GO EAST, YOUNG MEN, GO EAST!

Meanwhile, about one thousand miles south of Staraya Russa, the family of Stephen and Feukla Lebedkin were making a major change in their lives. Some twenty years later the Lebedkin family would unite with the Sidoroffs, Andreeffs and others for a final trek together.

Stephen and Feukla Lebedkin

- by George Lebedkin

My father, Stephen Timofayich Lebedkin, was born August 15, 1880, in a village called Yermolayevo, located approximately fifty miles northeast of the city of Orenburg. Mother, Feukla Vasilovna, was born September 10, 1882, in the city of Kharkov. When she was four years old, her parents moved to Yermolayevo and both parents grew up in the same village. The village and its surrounding area was a farming community with fertile soil and a very good climate.

Those who toiled long hours from sunrise to sunset made a fairly decent living. Those who had no ambition, fell by the wayside. The existing conditions and circumstances simply abolished wealth from people's minds. However, grandfather Lebedkin prospered over near neighbours, having eleven sons, healthy, big and strong as oxen. With such tremendous helping hands, he had an advantage over others for farming a greater area with ease. For grandfather it was a kind act to reap the benefits with happy smiles. But grandfather knew very well the old way of life was coming to an end. Sooner or later he had to part with his sons.

All Lebedkins, father and sons, belonged to the Orenburg Cossacks. This is how they acquired their name as Orenboorshkyi Kazakyi. From the day of birth, the young Cossack is registered with the Cossack Military Tribune. The headquarters were in the city of Orenburg for all surrounding villages. All young Cossacks at the age of eighteen were subjected to compulsory military training by law, provided they were physically fit. By order of the Czar, all trainees were granted free transportation from Orenburg to

Petersburg and they were obligated to serve three years for their country. At the end of three years' training, if the graduate was successful, he was rewarded with a horse, saddle and a sword by the Czar with his signature on the hilt. In addition, the Cossack's name was recorded in the military reserves.

Cossacks would be a fair comparison both in life style, equestrian skill, and fencing masters to the great yeomen in England in the mid-seventeenth century. Cossacks were considered privileged subjects of the Czar, but let us not forget that in case of war they were the first in line to defend their country.

During military training, father, associated with men and officers, definitely broadened the scope of his knowledge, both politically and economically, not to mention the rise of confidence in himself. He showed discernment in selecting sincere officers as his friends but bluntly condemned that there is a close correlation between high ranking officers and pompousness.

In 1904 the Russian government had completed construction of the eastern railroad in China, about the same time as father completed his training. The Chinese government, in exchange, granted a long term concession in the city of Harbin to the Russian government.

This is an opportunity that comes once in a lifetime and my father felt it would be deplorable to have it slip through his fingers. Evidently his final decision and inspired enthusiasm was in control of destiny. He had already seen much of the outside world and the village was not the place for progression.

In about 1904, father left all his possessions with his family, even most of his clothing, in order to travel as light as possible to an unknown country, eager to build his fortune. Parting was a tragic and emotional disturbance, leaving his family, childhood friends, the young Cossacks with whom he served and most difficult of all, leaving his wife and son.

Nine miserable days he travelled through Russian and Chinese plains, farmland, wilderness and mountains and sitting on hard wooden benches was torture, as in those days railroad cars were built to last but not for comfort. In many places the train moved at a crawling speed with an additional one-hour stop at every water tank for a fresh refill of water, both for the locomotive and boiling water for passengers to make tea. Apparently as far as one can judge, the time and inconvenience was of the least concern for the crew and certainly contrary to father's views and experience. He was unable to obliterate the memory of his trip for several years.

Early in the morning of the tenth day, the train finally arrived at the station. The conductor's informative voice was most welcome when he announced the word "Harbin". This was the place that offered golden opportunities! Loud cheers sounded throughout the car but not for long. They suddenly realized and were astonished at the unexpected

sight of the lower part of the city all flooded from heavy rains and overflow from the river Sungari. Chinese were barefoot, wading in water knee deep between the railroad and station.

Father stepped down from the car steps unto the crushed rock at the base of the railroad. There he stood appearing calm, but his mind was bewildered with the possibility of attempting to cross and prevent an overflow of water into his fancy high-top cavalry boots. Suddenly a splendid idea occurred to him. For fifty cents he hired a young Chinese standing nearby to cross the flooded area between the railroad and the station three times at different places along the river. Attentive observation enabled him to select the most shallow place to cross. Two men stood in the doorway of the station, one was well dressed and the other was in working clothes, barefoot and shaking the water out of his shoes. Both men observed and admired father's clever conductible tactics, a drama which evolved into a comedy. As he slowly approached the station, both men knew by his clothing and his boots that he was a Cossack and greeted him in Russian, "Kozak". The well dressed man introduced himself as a manager of a distillery and politely asked father if he was looking for work. With a sense of humor, father answered that at the moment he was looking for a dry spot to stand on, a hot cup of tea and a good meal.

The courteous manager invited and escorted them to a luxurious restaurant, the premises operated by railroad officials appointed by the Russian government. With one glance it was obvious this establishment served privileged society, aristocracy, business men and of course a cliquish group with imaginative minds, that they too were part of the aristocracy. The surroundings were exquisite, the food delicious and the service prompt and courteous.

After a meal, Mr. Samoiloff and father expressed their gratitude for his hospitality. He in return indicated with an appreciative gesture and said jokingly that it was not his but the courtesy of the distillery. He helped father to locate in one of the best boarding houses, where the place was kept clean and served good meals at a reasonable price. He won their confidence by face-to-face talk and willingly dispensed his knowledge to dispel some of their complex problems. He took his time during his departure from the premises and suggested that they report to work in two days. Two days' time was very little time for a good rest.

Day one was more a preparatory session than work. It was an insight into the daily routine they would be following. Day two was a strenuous day, but they managed very well. The crates were large and heavy, containing twelve cans of whisky. Their size could not be altered for two reasons. First, they were manufactured to the distillery's specifications to eliminate any wasted space when the railroad car was fully loaded. Second, specific requirements were for loading six tiers high throughout the car and this

resulted in a borderline allowable weight by regulatory authorities to transport on the railroad track.

Both Mr. Samoiloff and father were overwhelmingly encouraged by the results of the first six months. Inevitably the future was more promising and brighter than the past. Another year flashed by, adding vigor to their spirit and happiness to their hearts. By now, the two men were like two peas in a pod and it is difficult to imagine that fortuitous acquaintance would develop into a strong friendship and fortify their partnership as well.

The city of Harbin was divided into two parts by a ravine and the city acquired the name as old Harbin on the east side of the ravine and new Harbin on the west side, which was included as part of the concession granted to the Russian government by the Chinese government. Deeganalini Prospect in the city was one of the main thoroughfares and the bridges across the ravine were excessive in width to prevent heavy traffic congestion and served adequately for many years.

In a period of two years, father purchased six lots of land on the outskirts of the city adjacent to a flat stretch of land that was subjected to restriction for subdivision by the Russian government. This was in the area called Deeganalinia Plosheed which remained as raw land minus street and pavement. Six lots were by far more than he needed but possessing speculative venture in real estate, he would have purchased half of Harbin, provided he had sufficient monetary resources. As it turned out over the years, progressively all the land was utilized for his own extended business. An unforeseen advantage to owning the six lots was that it barred all other competitors to build alongside his property. Three years of his own savings and partially borrowed money, enabled father to commence construction. An architect prepared blueprints for a building accommodating dual purpose, that of living quarters in the back and for commercial businesses in the front portion facing the street.

All through the summer the weather was extremely favorable for construction, giving a great boost and lift to the men's spirit and created a pleasant willing attitude. For further encouragement, father provided extra food for the men, which was not in the agreement. It was apparent that kindness and the provision of food did wonders for public relations. Nevertheless, there is no denial that the crafty old timers relied more on their resourcefulness than on finance and this kept them out of debt. Their dedication and ambition were their greatest assets. Five months in the summer father toiled fourteen hours a day, ten hours in the distillery and four hours on his own building, assisting the contractor.

By mid fall the building was completed on the exterior and the interior, with the exception of the heating system. Soon a massive stove was constructed from glazed bricks. It served as a cooking stove, furnace, a hot water tank and humidifier.

Father defined this feat with a few words - a spell of laborious task that admitted him to ownership. Seemingly the tide of hard work became a reality and would some day lead on to a small fortune. To walk into a six room building of which he was able to claim possession within three years of his arrival in Harbin, gave him a feeling of gratification and a sense of pride for his achievement.

His name now was registered and declared by the municipal office as a 'Domovladelits', the closest interpretation would be 'home owner and business proprietor'. He did make the comment that pride is a poor man's luxury. Father was a man of great ambition and desire to elevate himself from the status-quo.

By sheer chance or luck, father was approached by three young men who introduced themselves as a civil engineer, a surveyor and a draftsman. They had recently arrived from Russia as employees of the government to carry out the necessary requirements to complete a project that entailed surveying and paving streets, draining of both zoning areas and flatland and upgrading the railroad to meet anticipated transportation demand of heavy freights. They showed great interest in his business area as it was adequate in dimension, sufficient of natural light and situated in the proper location.

As a result, the engineer submitted an attractive rental for fourteen months. To father's ears they were playing a most beautiful and favourable tune. He quickly calculated mentally and realized that the rental income exceeded the small debt. In a pleasant feeling inside he made the amusing remark, "this is even better than manna, the food miraculously supplied to the Israelites". The term of time was perfect as he was obligated to work another year to honour the contract with the distillery.

He wasn't a man to procrastinate until an opportunity was lost. He instructed the engineer to draw up a lease immediately by an advocate according to their verbal agreement to prevent any misunderstanding in the future.

The cool autumn morning breeze indicated that winter was following close on the heels suggesting one must be prepared or face the consequence of the cold weather. The winter arrived early in the fall and continued late in spring, averaging fifty to sixty degrees below zero, practically with no breaks in between. Ice on the Sungari River had frozen six feet deep. The men had a difficult time sawing the ice into the form of a cross for *Erdani (explanation on page 21), but the church insisted.

Working people encountered many hardships and it was much worse for those who worked outside, such as the engineer with his crew, Mr. Samoiloff and father, and a good many more who were in the same situation.

To batch was not one of father's desires. It was time for mother to be with him. He prepared a good home but it was in great need of the feminine touch that would add comfort to living and good home cooking to satisfy the appetite. Father was much concerned for his child's and wife's safety and arranged for them to travel on an express

train trouble free. He sent mother two express tickets and money for the trip. The express travelled a high speed and stopped only at designated stations for a short time only to refill the locomotive's reservoir with water. The cars contained soft and comfortable seats, meals were provided in the dining car and for an extra ruble, sleeping accommodation was available. For safety, security patrolled all the cars throughout the night. Passengers were assured of a delightful trip.

Mother and John arrived a day earlier than expected and she enjoyed the trip. She was cheerful, thanks to a conductor who took on the role of guardian and took her under his wing. Father compensated him for his kindness. The weather turned nasty, the temperature dropped by minutes to exceed 30 degrees below zero. A coachman was waiting and immediately that the baggage was loaded, he took off like a whirlwind. Within a matter of minutes mother was at her new house.

As she entered the living quarters, she held her hands over her mouth, stood there for a minute motionless and then turned to father and asked him if this was really their home or if they were just renting it. The home was beyond her expectations, both in quality and in finish. An unexpected surprise was an Aladdin lamp that attracted mother's attention by its spectacular display of illumination which was equivalent to two hundred and fifty candlelight that she had never seen before. Good light aroused enthusiasm in her as it would be of great help in sewing, she softly told father. This left no alternative but for father to purchase another Aladdin lamp as the one she had admired in the room did not belong to him. She was an excellent seamstress and a good light was of great importance. The new establishment would require loads of sewing to be completed during the short winter days.

Mother was not only religious but meticulous as well. For religious purposes she decorated one of the corners in the living room with rose colored velvet two feet down from the ceiling. An additional shelf was constructed and decorated to match the wall resulting in a splendid appearance in decor. She was now happy as an authoritarian lark and placed her precious icon on the shelf, then suspended a Lampatka from the ceiling in front of the icon. She filled a glass container with oil, put in a new wick to float in readiness for lighting on the eve of important holidays.

The word Lampatka was translated from the Greek word lampas (lampein to shine). The Greek Orthodox Church is closely related and adopted many Greek religious ordinances.

The terrible storm was at its peak and unfortunately the working men were at the mercy of its elements and struggled hard through the day. Compassionately mother began to prepare hot meals for five men, the engineer and his two men, Mr. Samoiloff and father. They did not take advantage of her and in return the men showed their appreciation by compensating her generously.

One good turn deserves another. Father was getting first hand information on the development of the project and also including the area Deeganalinia Prosheed, which was of great interest to him. Because of this information, it gave father an opportunity to arrange his own affairs accordingly.

Four months to a day the severity of storms and cold weather finally subsided but left many people exhausted and ill. The existing conditions intimidated the feeble and old and kept them from speedy recovery. Many suffered severe frostbitten injuries, causing a powerful burning sensation. There was no medication available for treatment except the old traditional remedy of applying warm goose fat to the affected area to relieve the pain.

Of the many years that father lived in Harbin, 1906 was the coldest and most destructive winter recorded by Chinese weather bureau.

Advent of spring was most welcome to enjoy the mild temperature and the sun's rays brought warmth and life to the earth and the gloomy mood of the people changed to smiles and laughter after the cold winter's confinement.

Another year flew by and Samoiloff's and father's contract was near completion. They were not obligated to find replacement but rather to show their appreciation and a good relationship to the highly respected manager who assisted them in difficult times.

For ten days they scouted the city before they spotted the two Kirghizes brothers. One glance indicated the structure of their massive frames and muscles as a suitable replacement and most unusual, they were able to speak fluent Russian. They, too, had heard that in Manchuria there was a fortune to be made in Harbin. Lucky for them, they came at the right time when the two men ventured on their own and their physique secured them a well paying job. The manager was pleased with the replacement and expressed his delight with the few words "you are both complete gentlemen and I salute your principles."

Shortly after resignation, father received a cordial invitation from the manager and his wife to all three, Mr. Samoiloff, mother and father to attend a party at a luxurious restaurant. This was an outstanding acknowledgment for both men for their loyalty and performance of duty.

By late fall the project was completed with the exception of the street. But the future was encouraging for hundreds of drayage people hauling sand and rock for pavement and it was only a matter of time before the street was paved.

Preliminary preparations in the store were completed by the end of October. Father's main concern was whether to open for business in November or in the spring. After a short deliberation, he chose November. The first two months of business exceeded his expectations and during the next three coldest months, business reverted to normal. Generally speaking, he was well satisfied with overall results not to mention

that he had now established credibility with the bank. The substantial increase in cash flow resulted in greater purchasing power for cash discount.

The winter was much milder, less stormy and considerably shorter than the winter of 1906. By the end of April, the flat land and railway were bustling with activity. One after another, rail cars arrived with lumber, all stationed on the siding. Several days later, construction crews arrived from Russia and local Chinese hired as extra hands. Father, too, had hired extra help in order to keep up with roaring business. At the end of August, barracks and stables appeared like weeds in the field. Outside construction continued to mid November and abruptly was stopped by cold weather. The carpenters shifted their winter work to complete the interior of the barracks.

The following year in May, one thousand cavalry trainees arrived in Harbin and were stationed at the new barracks. That increased the business potential to four hundred extra customers a day. The store now employed two men and two girls in order to keep up with the demand and supply. The volume of business at the store warranted purchasing goods in quantity. This created stiff competition among wholesale suppliers and as a result they offered attractive prices in order to gain the store's business.

Another rumor spread that another thousand trainees would arrive soon. Father disregarded the rumours until a commander confirmed his expectation of another thousand men by next spring or by the middle of the summer at the latest. A new extension was added to the existing business premises in anticipation of increased business in the future.

His assessment of future planning was quite accurate and the volume of business at the store now required a permanent bookkeeper and accountant to examine the records every three months to provide an accurate profit and loss figure. Through practical experience, he realized that a big ship requires deep waters and big business requires big expenditures of money. However, expenditure did not discourage him from expansion.

A year later, another thousand military personnel arrived and their patronage indeed boosted the store sales to a fabulous amount. But it also created a tremendous work load and long hours for the staff to serve customers efficiently.

As the business increased, more regulations were attached and soon father received notification from the city hall that his permit to operate the store under the name Lavachka would be cancelled. Lavachka applied to a small confectionery store. The present structure and volume of sales exceeded this by far according to the municipal bylaw act and the proprietors were required to submit a new name for the title deed.

Father chose the name Deeganalim Oospek, registering the business under the category of a large store. The word Oospek means success in Russian.

His business grew and flourished. It outsold most of the competition on the main

street and also became the largest purchaser of whiskey from the distillery in the city. The military personnel were young and energetic, consuming a great deal of food and quenching their thirst with whiskey. The high ranking officers gratified their noble service with rum and brandy.

An ill-fated hour occurred when cotton caught fire in the store from the heat of the lamp's glass chimney. By the time the fire was extinguished, father's hands suffered superficial burns and as a result he was restrained from working for a considerable length of time. Utterly disgusted with the pain and the unsafe situation, he immediately wired a telegram to Mukden to a German industrial distributing center which handled metal products, machine tools and all electrical products. Mukden was the most heavily populated and the biggest industrial center in Manchuria and many Chinese railroads met in Mukden. The availability of transportation to most locations throughout China, and its proximity to the port of Dairen, made Mukden almost indispensable.

The telegram was well received and the company acted promptly with great interest by sending an electrical engineer and his assistant draftsman to provide advice, guidance and proper electrical installation.

For ten days they surveyed the city to find the most suitable location to establish power lines and to draw up the plans to present to the municipal authorities for permission. Fortunately, the electrical proposal was given unanimous approval from the officials, authorizing the permit and to proceed with the work. The next step was to obtain an accurate count of big and small businesses in order to roughly estimate the consumption of electrical energy.

Due to new electrical development throughout the city, father personally approached the executive of the large firms to determine how many firms would be willing to discard their troublesome dynamos. This produced overwhelming results with one hundred percent in favour.

The engineer suggested employing four vertical high output generators, network of accumulators, with booster transformers on each line to ease the pressure on generators and a fifth generator on standby for an emergency that could be switched to any line independently. Each generator would be powered through its own transmission by a twin cylinder steam engine. The transmission mechanism was designed to perform a selective operation to engage to full capacity four lines at one time, or each line individually if required. An abundance of wood cuttings and unlimited amount of sawdust provided fuel for the boilers at no cost.

The building for the electrical equipment was constructed from light steel panels of the following dimensions, ten feet long and three feet wide. Steel panels had the advantage over other materials. They were quick to assemble, were fireproof and long lasting. The engineer stressed emphasis on providing electrical power to big and small

business first. Big business was here to stay and they paid their bills on time. Most proprietors of smaller stores conducted their business reputably to establish reputation and hoped some day to become big business too. He advised that father's business would not be strapped for cash and would prevent any difficulty in making payments on time. He suggested omitting the residential area for the present time and to bear in mind that installation of the residential area would be costly with returns per household rather small and advised avoiding any involvement until residents would deliver a petition of signatures with sixty-five percent requesting electrical service of that particular area. Father was very fortunate to employ a very knowledgeable engineer who took every conceivable precaution to protect father's interest from an oversight.

A large crew of Chinese labourers was hired to rough in the outside work before the cold weather set in. The work was hard but they were paid much better than the going wage and with the donation of food, it paid off twofold.

Electricians in Harbin were as scarce as hen's teeth and this caused delay and temporary inconvenience to find four qualified electricians and two linesmen from abroad who were well versed in commercial installation and would be able to perform all necessary requirements on their own, without constant observation and instructions from an engineer. As a result, it was time and money saved and also alleviated the risk of being sued by customers and unjust settlement by insurance companies in case of fire.

Surprisingly, such unexpected occurrences had no ill effect on father. He accepted this as part of business. Within a year all businesses were hooked up. Hard work and administrative skill overcame the obstacles. What an exciting and breathtaking day, to see all the electrical equipment in motion and to hear the whisper of the steam engine and the hum of the generators. It indicated that the merits of father's plans outweighed the defects. Newspapers were first to broadcast the news and a front page editorial gave an interesting account of father, covering the first day of his arrival in Harbin, the yearly progression and that day when the electrical plant became a reality. The editorial acclaimed father for his endeavour, courage, and venturesome commercial enterprise.

My oldest brother John, who was born in Russia, was big for his age and was a brilliant scholar. At a very young age, he mastered two foreign languages, German and English, and his marks were always five plus. According to mother, no higher marks were awarded. At the age of thirteen he went to school and never returned. Was he kidnapped? No ransom was demanded. No one reported a young, strange boy, and no trace of him has been found to the present day. For years, whenever we travelled through cities or towns, it became an obsession to look into telephone directories hopefully to run across the Lebedkin name. So far all our efforts have been in vain."

Stephen and Feukla Lebedkin had four sons, John, William, Gregory and Eugene George, and two daughters Katherine and Valentina. All but the oldest son John were

born in China. Katherine, Valentina and Gregory, died from scarlet fever before the age of two. William died of diptheria when he was eighteen months old.

*Erdani - so called for the River Jordan in which Jesus was baptized by John The Baptist. Irdan is the Russian word for Jordan. (Transliteration in Russian - upgahb).

Ice froze six feet deep on the Sungari River. This is not an exaggeration that may lead to incredulity on the part of the reader, but the true fact is that the Greek Orthodox Church established a holiday after Christmas called Erdani. This particular obscure baffled me and a good many others as well, and for some it created difficult hard work.

For example, a group of young men was selected as though they were obligated, equipped with saws and sent to the river to cut out the ice approximately thirty feet long and four feet wide into the shape of a Greek Orthodox cross. The large and heavy blocks of ice were removed with ice tongs and heavy dray horses. This left open walls of ice down to the water and permitted accessibility to measure the depth of the ice with great accuracy.

In spite of cold weather, attendance for Erdani exceeded well over a thousand people. They came to listen to the exclusive service and to observe the theological impressive performance with all the paraphernalia. Apparently the church drew its encouragement from the great magnitude of attendance and therefore in return excelled both in service and attendance each year.

It was a long lasting service and people were dead tired and half frozen, yet, with unshaken perseverance waited for that precious moment when the Bishop blessed the water by submerging the cross three times. According to theological teachings, the water became pure and holy.

Those with strong religious convictions and belief, filled their containers with holy water to take home, to cure various ailments, but no statistical records were ever available of the results.

But . . . the best is yet to come. There were always two or three volunteers standing by, waiting for the Bishop's command to disrobe and, with the aid of two men, they submerged three times in the ice cold water. After a final submersion the men were immediately retrieved from the water, wrapped in warm blankets which had been preheated with hot rocks, covered with a sheepskin coat (shooba) and loaded into a cutter standing by. The teamster with his fast horses would take them home as quickly as possible for revival. In my opinion, this was a revival of religious activity or man's ego of unchallengable rewarding experience.

Perhaps the dedication and the celebrating service of Erdani was adopted by the Greek Orthodox from Jordanians during Christ's era. It is astonishing, however, that church leaders failed to recognize a vast difference and the importance of climatic

conditions of the uniform temperature in Jordan compared with the rest of the geographical area of the world. Numerous countries have unpredictable severe winters. However, the church regarded the cold weather with great optimism that no ill effects would be suffered by the participants. The amazing mysterious fact still exists to the present day, and has been witnessed and acknowledged by senior Russians, that no one heard or knew of anyone becoming seriously ill or contracting a severe cold from the ice cold baptism. No other explanation is available except to accept the fact that God works in mysterious ways!

The Gritishkins (George Lebedkin's Mother's Family) - *by George Lebedkin*

Grandfather Gritishkin, my mother's father, was a carpenter and cabinet builder by trade. Long trips from Kharkov (Ukraine border) to Orenburg (near the Ural Mountains) caused great inconvenience and were time consuming. It left him no choice but to move to the village of Yermolayevo, which was within reasonable distance of Orenburg.

Development and construction in Orenburg was at its peak. Men with his skill were in great demand, well paid, and were sure of employment. Additionally, the land in Yermolayevo was cheap and compensated with low taxes, a blissful encouragement for the working man. Such an attractive offer made it possible for him to purchase sufficient land to build a reasonably attractive home, as well as a workshop which was essential to his work.

His specialized skill provided a much higher standard of living than ordinary labour, comparable to a Kuala in Russian, a well-to-do peasant, farmer or trader. A more dignified name would be called Kristianin.

The village of Yermolayevo had its drawbacks like any other community. The most serious dilemma was created by nature itself as it provided no forest or trees for community use. Construction material and firewood were imported from abroad, but the price was unreasonable. Even the wealthier citizens were compelled to limitations, while the poorer class had to resort to another source of heating that was available. They made Teesiak, the name given by Tatars or Mongols of Central Asia to a manufactured heating product. Teesiak was made of an equal proportion of straw and manure, well mixed, put into forms, and when half dry, extracted from the forms to cure and to dry throughout the summer months before it could be used for heating purposes.

This was a lifelong repeated grueling effort and labour, similar to a chronic disease. Grudgingly and with indignation the work was performed faithfully every year. Fortunately grandfather's occupation spared him from the gruesome labour as the construction work provided an ample supply of firewood.

To describe his personality with a few words, he was very quiet, honest, religious and had a cheerful disposition. He had a high standing credibility and was well respected by the community and his own family as well.

Mother mentioned very little of her family except of her brother Jack, Yakov (as in Jacob) in Russian, stating that he was exceptional from the rest of the family with great talent, aptitude and temperament. At the age of nineteen he completed nine grades of Gymnasia, equivalent to University, receiving a diploma and a degree in Russian called Atistat Zrelostyi (attestation). For a better comparison, a student completing seven grades of gymnasia was granted a teaching certificate but no degree. Strange as it may seem for a brilliant academic, he had no desire to teach. Music was his life and without any hesitation or query he dedicated his life to music. His prudence was well paid off.

A bandmaster who was a long standing family friend was able to evaluate his potential in music and tactfully influenced him in that direction. Three years under his instruction and guidance with the band earned him acceptance to the conservatory in Orenburg. Another four years of diligent studies in the conservatory placed him on the pedestal as an accomplished musician. At last all barriers were removed, and all avenues opened and he magnificently paraded to metropolitan areas. Due to the bandmaster's kindness, generosity and understanding and his own diligence, he was exalted by success. With his profession, he was able to come home only on special occasions. Family and friends greeted him as a distinguished guest although he kept a low profile, but with philosophic temperament.

Mother's youngest brother Paul completed the equivalent of high school and was employed by the government, working in the municipal office. In Russian it was called Zimelinia Kontora. Paul was devoted to his work in the office, and in three years he received a Certificate of Proficiency. He was promoted and transferred to a larger region as a supervisor. He too became a white collar employee. A pleasant and enjoyable life style rewarded his endeavors.

Mother mentioned very little about her two oldest sisters for some unknown reason, and I too was very little concerned at the time with the family's background. Sad indeed that I did not realize the significance that such information would have years later. Now there is not the faintest hope of compiling two sisters' life histories with facts as I would like. It is most regrettable to omit any members of the family from this history.

Paul Gritishkin

The photos of Grandmother Gritishkin and Paul Gritishkin were received by my mother just before restrictions were imposed by the Communist government on all mail coming in and going out. No further correspondence with relatives was allowed.

Grandmother Gritishkin

The Sidoroff and Andreeff Families

The Sidoroff and Andreeff Families were meeting their challenge aboard the Trans-Siberian Railway in the spring of 1907. Begun in 1891, this railway spanned a continent and a half by 1904, except for a short section at Lake Baikal. There trains crossed by ferries in the summer; in winter tracks laid on the ice provided the roadway. Completed in 1915, it extends for 5,776 miles from Moscow to Vladivostok.

In preparation for their life in their new settlement they even bought livestock along the way. At last they arrived. Land was already registered in their names. Word was sent back to others they had left behind encouraging them to pick up the challenge and join the settlers in their new lives. Many did, and soon a little community was in the making for a new life in Siberia.

They established their own village and called it Novgorodka, which meant little Novgorod. The settlement of Novgorodka was situated just south of present Svobodny on the shore of the navigable river Zeya, north of the city of Blagoveshchensk. Blagoveshchensk is on the Amur River bordering China. Their first abodes were earth dug-outs. In a year's time they were all living in log houses. The families that came later lived with the settled families until they built their own homes. Here they would stay until the Bolshevik Revolution would disrupt their lives for yet another uprooting.

The soil in Siberia was exceptional. Fields were absolutely stone free, everything grew. One could not find any worse soil than they had had in Staraya Russa, and for that reason alone it was a profitable move. The Staraya Russa area was grossly over-populated. This was the primary reason the government encouraged and financed

resettlement of its people, giving them land and transportation free of charge. There was much resistance by many people who were firmly rooted in a way of life and reluctant to change. To them no amount of persuasion of a promised land was worth the loss of friends and relatives they would be leaving behind. Those that made the move experienced extreme emotional trauma and grief. They found comfort in their relations and friends, and their religious beliefs and convictions gave them that extra strength they so desperately needed. In time, the significant improvement in their new lives was a comforting solace to their sacrifice.

The Sidoroff and Andreeff children ranged from age seven to twenty years when they arrived in Siberia, one of which was already married. Once they settled in, most of the children were able to go to school, which started in October and ended at Easter, at which time exams were written. The most any one individual could attend school was four years. There were no schools, so classes were held in the homes. Soon after the older age group finished school, a two-storey school was built.

Little John Sidoroff, the son of Afric and Anastasia, was age five when they arrived. Three more children were born after they settled in Novgorodka, Avraam (Abraham), Anna (Anne) and Nikolai (Nick).

Luke's youngest son Lorne was twelve years old when they arrived in Siberia. When he was eighteen he married Sophia Gregorivna Chibunin, the daughter of Gregori Chibunin from the village of Bardagon (now Svobodny). Children born in Siberia were Lizavetta (Elizabeth), Agripina (Agnes), Feodosia (Francis) and Anfisa (Faye).

The eldest of Luke's three sons Fred, had married Palegea Petrovna before he arrived in Siberia. Their daughter Zina recalled the story of their 'courtship':

It was a custom in Russia to take the lady of your life for a sleigh ride when courting. Fred took advantage of a situation that would prevent him from having to marry someone picked for him. He took Palegea for a troika ride and drove off with her. Because Palegea was taken against her will, the relationship between her and Fred was a tumultuous one but Palegea was a gentle long-suffering soul and the marriage survived!

Their son Peter was born soon after. Fred must have been a very proud father with his first born son, but alas! Little Peter fell ill. They took him to the banya (steam bath) and gave him "kvas" to drink, but pneumonia developed and he succumbed. It is believed he is buried in a cemetery near Moscow. A second son Simeon (Sam) was born after they arrived in Novgorodka, followed by four daughters, Raisa (Rachel), Tanya, Kapitalina (Kay), Natalia (Natalie) and Zinaida (Zina). Tanya died within a year of her birth. The rest of the family would eventually come to Canada.

Palegea was born in Ufa, near the Ural Mountains. She came from a well-to-do family and her father had some social standing. They called him Gospodin (Sir). It is not clear what his position was but he was not a "Starosta" (Elder). Some say he was a mayor. He was of the Bespopovtsi religion.

Peter Sidoroff was fifteen when they came to live on the Zeya River. In 1909, when he was seventeen, he married his lifelong friend Lucaria Andreeff. They were the same age, had grown up together and had fallen in love in their early teens. They were married by the Old Greek Orthodox priest in the village church. Constantine was born in 1910, then the twin boys Petre and Pavel (Peter and Paul) who died at birth and Tanya who died at six months. Constantine lived till he was nine when he drowned in the river. The oldest of Fred's daughters, Rachel, was about the same age and was there to witness her cousin's drowning. Her memories are vivid of the incident. While they were swimming in the Zeya on a hot summer day, Kosta, as they affectionately called him, was sucked in by an eddy and his body was found later at Blagoveshchensk on the shores of the Amur River.

For a few months Peter and Lucaria were childless. Then in November of 1919 Mikhail (Michael) was born and a daughter Anna (Anne) two years later. Peter would eventually sire fourteen children

Philip Andreeff was the eldest son of Gregory and Irena and was nineteen years old when they came to live in Siberia with his father, brothers and grandmother Anna. He soon married Elena Mahailovna Evdokimovna. Their children born in Siberia were Akim (Ike), Nikifor (Mike) and Valentina (Viola).

Seated: Gregory Andreeff, his mother Anna Andreeff. Center: Lawrence Andreeff. Child: Peter and Lucaria's son Constantine. Back Row: Gregory's sons John & William, Lucaria's husband Peter Sidoroff, daughter Lucaria, son Philip, Philip's wife Elena.

William (Vasili) and Elena (Helen) Andreeff - *by their daughter Merry Fowler*

William Andreeff was thirteen years old when they arrived in Siberia. At thirteen boys were expected to do a man's work. His early youth was spent in hard work on their land in their new village of Novgorodka. In 1914 he was conscripted into the army, trained as a blacksmith and sent to serve behind the front lines.

After the war, he spent a few months at home and then he dutifully sought a wife of the same religion. Because of the Old Greek Orthodox rules regarding consanguinity, there was no eligible girl in his village. He had met a lively, pretty sixteen year old girl at a recent wedding of mutual relatives. Her village stood two days' journey away but he was not deterred. Off he went, requisite match-maker in tow, with the highly respectable objective of seeking a wife. The girl's name was Elena Erofayevna Salnikova.

Elena, born in 1901, was the eldest child of Erofay and Anesia Salnikov. The families of both Erofay and Anesia originated far to the west in the region of Tomsk but they had been Siberians for several generations. The Salnikov family was of some consequence in their village but Elena, at sixteen and a half, was still not married. Due to inter-marriages, she had a consanguinity problem in her village also. So the match was made and they were married within the month in March 1918. They had known each other for two weeks. They had never so much as talked together without a chaperone.

The Siberian family of Erofay and Anesia were used to more freedom than the people from Russia proper. Elena's village had not experienced the hunger and oppression that Vasili's family had accepted as the norm. Their houses were simple but commodious with a bedroom for the parents. Elena's mother was a noted housekeeper; her father was jovial, good-tempered and easy-going. The paternal grandparents lived with the other Salnikov son and the maternal Babushka (grandmother) with them, so theirs was not a crowded household.

The young bride found things very different in her new home in her husband's village, Novgorodka. The Andreeffs had prospered in Siberia but had retained the living habits of their impoverished over-crowded little village back in Russia. There were four generations living in a one-room house. The only privacy available was a curtained alcove for the oldest son, his wife and little boy.

From their first meeting, there was antipathy between her and Gregory, her stern father-in-law. It was his prerogative, even duty, to 'discipline' the young daughters-in-law. In fact any man of the family could 'chastise' any woman of the household. Most men didn't physically abuse women other than their own wives. The Andreeff men expected submissive women in their house and Elena, with her lively spirit, saucy tongue and ready laughter was soon in frequent trouble. Elena had a strong will. It took two years and the loss of her first-born baby, to cow her into apparent submission. In

these months she and her sister-in-law, Philip's wife (also named Elena), through their shared distress, formed a life-long bond.

Elena never forgot nor really forgave the abuse she was given by the Andreeff men, and the experience marked her for life. For this and other lesser reasons she always chose to distance herself from her new kin by saying, "I am not Russian; I am Siberian."

As her feelings softened in her old age, she could be more objective. She would say, "That's how life was in the old country. We lived in such darkness. No wonder we were called 'the dark narod' (narod - people). Oi! Oi! Why did nobody show us some light? We had no light in our lives until we came to Canada. In this blessed Canada we got light and hope."

Elena disliked the communal household in Novgorod and yearned for some relief. So she was glad to leave it behind her when they fled in 1923. Regardless of the danger of their secret departure and their uncertain destination she welcomed the hope of a different life in a new land.

John and Anna Andreeff - *by daughters Elizabeth, Ada and Ruth*

John Andreeff was twelve when they arrived in Siberia. In his early twenties he met Anna Mihailovna Doumnoff, who would be his wife some day. Anna was born in Varhneudinsk, Siberia, in February 1900. Her place of birth is no longer on the map.

She never went to school, as only boys were allowed to go to school, so she never did learn to read or write in Russian, nor in English. She did some baby-sitting and the money she made would go for material for her mother to make her a dress and if any material was left over, it would go for an apron for her mother. She often had no shoes to wear. Even in the winter she would go bare foot to wherever she was sent or to baby-sit.

A flashback that Anna had when recalling life while she was living with her parents, is the gunfire in the distance while she was going to the well for water.

John married Anna in a beautiful Old Greek Orthodox Church in 1921. They believed deeply in their religion and were devastated when they learned upon their arrival in Canada that the church had been taken over by the Communists and used as a stable for horses. Only one of their children, Lizavetta (Elizabeth), was born in Siberia.

Lawrence Andreeff was three years old when his mother died and seven when they arrived in Siberia. His grandmother Anna looked after the family after their mother Irena died. His daughter Gladys tells us he talked about his mother but vaguely remembered her. He was very fond of his sister Lucaria. She was only eight years older than he but he says "she raised him". Later, in his early teens, he lived with his brother John. He was a bit afraid of his older brother so was quite formal with him, always treating him with respect.

1972 tape of Lorne Sidoroff - *Recorded by Merry Fowler*

They were settling in comfortably into their new way of life in Novgorodka. They formed their own local government. A Village Elder (Starosta) was the head. Luke was chosen every year until they left. They had different secretaries. John Andreeff was the last one before they left their mother country. They had their meetings once a year and if a secretary was inefficient, they just chose another one. Starosta managed seven villages and was paid very little; however, taxes were low. A family paid about fifty rubles a year. They governed themselves. When a child was born, a priest baptized the baby and recorded it. In the case of a marriage, the same was done. Deaths were no doubt recorded by the priest in the church records.

In Siberia there was a better chance of education than in Western Russia. Although no publications were received from the outside world, they did receive a church journal which was published in Moscow. Some people did subscribe to various publications and they were delivered by way of horse and buggy or sleigh. This took a long time. General correspondence was not prohibited, however many people were illiterate. With so few schools in Siberia, many children were taught at home.

The Greek Orthodox people were very faithful to their religion. In 1905 Czar Nicholas II permitted services in the churches. He unlatched all of the altars and gave freedom to all to act as they pleased. From the period of Czar Alexei to Czar Nicholas, they were oppressed in religious services. In Novgorodka they did not have a church to start with and held services in private homes. Eventually they built a church which was still there when they left for Canada. From letters received from there in the ensuing years, they learned that it was dismantled by the Communists and moved to a collective farm. Previous to that, it had been used as a stable.

Even though their village was near the forty-ninth parallel, winters in Siberia were very cold, reaching temperatures of forty to fifty below zero Fahrenheit. There were no spruce trees, but there were willow, birch, pine and beech trees, as well as hazelnut

bushes. What timber there was belonged to and was controlled by the government.

Land in Siberia was apportioned according to the number of males in a family. Each male was allowed fifteen dessiatin (1 dessiatin = 2.7 acres). The Sidoroffs had four males in their family, so received sixty dessiatin. Andreeffs had one more male so they got one more parcel. The land was surveyed into twenty-five dessiatin numbered parcels. Then numbers were drawn. Whatever number an individual drew out, was his land. It was free. At that time, no land was bought or sold.

Saveliy and Tatiana Osokin

The Osokin Family lived in the same district as the Sidoroffs and Andreeffs in Siberia. Their daughter *Jean (Osokin) Dash* remembers her life in Siberia:

"We were living in a village on the Zeya River north of Blagoveshchensk, a city on the Amur River. I remember standing on a chair by the kitchen window, watching a man unloading hay. In those days one could keep a cow in the city. A man, wearing a suit and carrying a black bag, was welcomed and was taken to another part of the house. I did not pay any attention to him, being more interested in what was going on by the barn. After some time went by, a lady - maybe one of my aunts - told me that the doctor found a black bag in the hay that was being unloaded. It was my little brother and would I like to see him. Yes I wanted to see him and I was even allowed to hold him. He seemed quite heavy and I was so afraid of dropping him. They named him Victor.

Then I remember a little visit I paid my grandmother who had a little cottage in the same courtyard. Father owned several houses in those days, which were all eventually confiscated. Grandma said, 'We'll have a cup of tea.' I was so excited! Just the two of us having tea in a very bright little kitchen. Her tea was hot water with milk or sugar or both. With a plateful of goodies on the table between us, it just made my day.

The day came when we had to leave the city. Father's houses were gone now and the officialdom was getting rather unfriendly. Father would argue with anyone that would take him on regarding the merits of the 'Red paradise' they had in mind. And he persisted on wearing a white band on the sleeve of his coat to show them where he stood. They, of course, were displaying the red bands. So, after warnings and threats, it was decided that the time to leave that vicinity had come.

I do not remember the moving part, but I remember living in some village at the time the Japanese army came through that part of the country. They were there to help the 'whites', so they were our good friends. There were a number billeted in our house, sleeping on the floor. A few set up tents in the yard. Victor was a toddler by then and

had an embarrassing moment with a young officer. He was sitting on a potty in a kitchen corner when the officer spotted him and picked him up. He held him above his head and said, "Eyes narrow, nose flat. All the same, Japanese." In Japanese, 'narrow' and 'flat' rhyme, so loses somewhat in translation. He probably had a little one at home.

We left this place and went to live in my great-grandfather's home. Everyone called him grandpa, or 'dedushka' and he must have been the original Santa Claus, with his white beard, plenty of white hair and ruddy complexion. I remember he had a wee table by a window where he could have a cup of tea whenever he felt like it. The tea was hot water with a wee dry red pepper floating in it. He used to like being invited to sing with the choir in the choir loft at the church and was always encouraged to 'sing louder, grandpa!' He, of course, was happy to oblige. With secret smiles, the choir would raise their voices in encouragement.

A pleasant memory comes to mind from that otherwise turbulent time. Father and the boys went to the meadow outside the village to do some haying and I was taken along. I don't remember how I occupied myself while they swung the heavy scythes, but on the way home a big load of green cut grass was piled up on the hay rack and we all rode on top of it. I can still see the meadows that I saw from this high perch, dotted with orange blossoms, and I can still smell the lily-of-the-valley that mingled with the load of newly mown hay. I picked a bouquet of them out of the hay as we bounced along on the way home.

Another memorable moment! I was visiting my cousin just next door. It was the month of March and the snow was going quickly, leaving puddles in the yard. Moving carefully to miss them, I was stopped in my tracks by beautiful sounds above me. I looked up. Right over my head, fluttering but not moving, was a very happy skylark, singing most joyously. There was no one else in the yard so naturally I concluded that the songster was doing it all for me. I don't remember which one moved first - I, to navigate the puddles, or the serenader to look for another fortunate listener.

Yet another scrap of memory intrudes. It is not very dramatic, and perhaps hardly worth recording. But it has taken root in my mind as one of the pleasant memories amongst all the 'gruesome happenings'.

From a certain location in the village we could see a distant mountain, not very high but of a good length. In spring time, it showed as a misty mauve painting. For some reason, the men folk went in that direction. Was it business or just sight-seeing? I have no idea. They did not tell me and did not take me along. But they came home with a large bouquet of tree branches laden with pinky mauve blossoms. It wasn't heather and it seems odd to me now that such flowering trees would prosper in Siberia. Mother put the branches in a large vase and set it on the window sill. We enjoyed the blossoms inside the house, and the passers-by no doubt received a bit of pleasure when they glanced into our low window.

Just one more pleasant happening that, needless to say, only I remember. My father was one of those men we call 'jack-of-all-trades'. He built houses, but he could also make the furniture to put in them. Give him a sheet of metal and he'd make a water pail or a stove pipe. And he cobbled our shoes. Well, I was in line for a new pair. My foot was measured and he went to work. I can't say how long it took him but finally they were ready to try on. They fit fine, they looked good being strap slippers with a silver buckle. Was I satisfied? No, the heels were not high enough! 'We'll fix that', father said. While he was so occupied, my Uncle Fred dropped in and asked what he was doing. Father told him that the daughter wanted higher heels so he was putting another layer on. Was Uncle Fred believing what he was hearing? The addition was only the thickness of leather but to me they were just what I wanted. I remember strutting around the room in my 'high heels'. I wonder what kind of glances the two men exchanged!"

John and Martha Pohaboff - *by Zina (Pohaboff) Kosheiff*

"Ion Kapitonich Pohaboff (John) was born in a village in the Tomsk county. He was the only son in the family and had two sisters. As a child, John had lost his two front teeth and one eye, so he was marked for life. His story was that as children they used to play a game on ice similar to hockey with curved sticks and a flat stone for a puck. He got the stone in his face and lost the two teeth. Smallpox was prevalent then as vaccination was not available. He got very ill with Smallpox and went unconscious. His parents thought he had died and even had him laid out in a coffin. His married sister lived in another village and did not arrive until the third day. While she wept over him she noticed that he opened his eyes. He recovered. He often spoke of this and said if it wasn't for his sister living seventy-five versts (miles) away, he would have been buried alive!

In his youth, John floated logs to Omsk for many years. He would log during the winter, make rafts in the spring from some of the logs and float the rest on the Irtish River. Evidently it was a three-month process, during which time his diet consisted mostly of water and 'suhary', which is dried toasted bread or melba toast.

He married and had five children, then moved to Harbin, China, with the intention of bringing his family over later. But before he could establish a home there, his wife died. He went back to Russia and brought back his oldest two children, Sergei and Anesia, leaving the three younger ones with relatives, with the intention of getting them later. Due to the political upheaval he was not able to return for them."

Marfa (Martha) Gregorivna Chibunin - *by Zina (Pohaboff) Kosheiff*

"My mother, Martha, came from the village of Bardagon, which is now Svobodny, on the Zeya River north of Blagoveshchensk. It was a neighbouring village of Novgorodka where the Sidoroffs and the Andreeffs were living. Mother is the sister of Sophia Chibunin who married Lorne Sidoroff.

I was born in Blagoveshchensk on October 24, 1920, to Martha and Lazar. Out of four children I was the only survivor. The other three died in infancy. My father was a conductor on the railroad. He disappeard on one of his runs between Blagoveshchensk and Vladivostok and presumed killed by the Bolsheviks as many men were during the Revolution in Russia. I was born after he died."

The Gardeovs - *by Nina (Doumnoff) Mihailoff*

"My mother Pearl Gardeov was born in 1881 and had six children before she died. Her sisters were: Ogophia Marikova who had three children - Grounya, Zahara, Vasili; Quisteena Kuznetsov who had two children - Tanya & Loinya; and Zoita Gardeov. The sisters' husbands' first names are not known. Her brother Menia and wife Anna had two children - Nera & Vasya. After my mother died in 1923, dad married Anna".

World War I

World War I broke out August 1, 1914. Peter Sidoroff and Philip Andreeff were conscripted and combat-ready before August, 1914, having had compulsory training earlier. Mobilization in Russia began the latter part of July 1914 in anticipation of a German attack. The account of Philip Andreeff's experiences during the war are relayed, simply but impressively, by his daughters Vi Kalugin and Doreen Riedijk.

During a fierce battle on the front, Philip found himself surrounded by fellow soldiers either dead or wounded. He noticed an officer that was badly wounded. Philip picked him up and put him on his back. As he was carrying him, another bullet struck. This one hit the wounded man in the back, went through the man and through Philip's back. Philip, realizing the officer was dead, dropped him. He was anxious to get help for himself. Bleeding profusely, he kept moving forward, one step at a time. Finally he reached one of the out-posts where they treated soldiers. They treated him as best they could, with their primitive equipment and facilities. It was three months before he was released to go home.

The movie Dr. Zhivago, where the soldiers were trekking back with their feet barely covered, is the perfect scene to describe Philip's return from his wartime service. The George Cross was awarded him for attempting to save a wounded officer. Many evenings during the children's upbringing, Philip would tell them war stories. Philip's daughter Vi recalls his story describing the fierce hunger. Russia did not have the supplies for their soldiers. Philip found beans which had been thrown away as garbage. He was so hungry, he ate untill he found himself violently ill. Up until the day he died he never again ate beans.

From the stories that Syd Sidoroff heard his father Peter tell, it appeared Philip Andreeff and Peter Sidoroff, life-long buddies and now brothers-in-law, were on the same front. By all accounts they were in the Battle of Galicia.

Philip Andreeff's George Cross

Peter Sidoroff & Philip Andreeff

The battalion was dispatched to central Poland to form the attack. The march to Krakow took place in August through September 1914 by an army under Brussilov after he occupied Stryj. Peter's son Michael remembers a marching song that Peter used to sing:

Trudna, trudna, nam ribyati,	Hardship, hardship for us brothers,
Gorod Krakow boodit vsat	Krakow city for to take
A eesho boodeet trudnaya,	But it will be even harder
Nam pad pushki pad beezjat.	If a cannon we must face.

Syd remembers his dad's story of the forced marches at the outset in order to keep up with retreating Germans. "Their only respites were the enemy's delaying action by the use of machine guns, rifle fire and artillery bombardment. Suddenly they were ordered to dig in. After some days in the trenches under almost constant artillery bomardment, his unit was ordered to the rear for R&R - casualty Replacement and Reorganization.

While in the rear as reserve troops, they were sent up a hill during the night to dig potatoes. In the early morning the Germans spotted them and a devastating bombardment ensued. With numerous explosions heaving the earth into the air, dad said he spent more time in the air than on the ground! The bombardment followed them into the trenches and continued intermitently until the following morning when it became

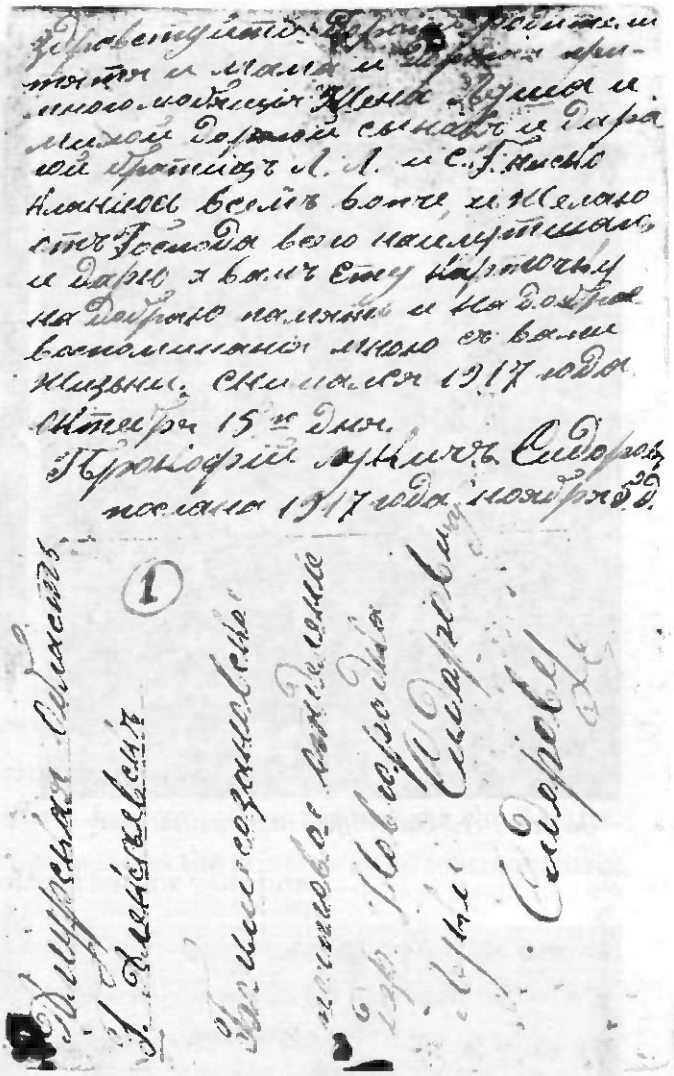
extremely heavy. It crept forward and behind this creeping barrage, German troops were advancing through the first line of defense with rifle fire, grenades and bayonets, onwards toward their reserve unit. As the barrage lifted off the reserves a deafening sound of "Urah"s, close-up rifle shots, grenades exploding and cries of the wounded emanated from the rear. Now they were faced with boyonets in the front and boyonets in the rear. Suddenly he was lying on the ground with a bayonet at his chest."

Peter was taken prisoner and experienced much hunger and abuse. In time he was billeted to a German farmer where he worked with another prisoner by the name of Kvashenko. They were allowed just so much food, not enough to live on. Peter explained how they kept physically strong. They would poke a hole in the end of an egg, suck the contents out, then replace the egg shell back as it should be. At one point in their incarceration they made an attempt to escape but were captured and brought back to the farmer for assessment of this misdemeanor. By this time Peter had proven himself to be an excellent worker and had become valuable to the farmer as a harness repairman. He was spared and remained on the farm till the war ended. He was well treated and always spoke well of the farmer and his family.

Periodically during his captivity he was allowed to send a post card to his family back home. Photos were sent home with messages on the back which did nothing more than indicate to his family that he was alive. Love and affection was expressed on the card but no suggestion of his whereabouts nor his state of health. Since there was no sign of a postal stamp nor a return address on the post card, it is assumed the delivery was made by authorities in order to conceal the whereabouts of the prisoner. It is interesting to note that they dressed in their uniforms for the post card and a photo of the family is placed in a prominent visible position. All this, no doubt, to portray a "comforts of home" atmosphere.

When the war ended Peter was released but left totally on his own in a strange land with no food, water or extra clothing. He fell ill. To save his life, he had no alternative but to knock on the door of the first farm house. He did not know whether he was on German or on Russian soil. Good fortune was on his side. He was on Russian soil.

Peter Sidoroff & Kvashenko - 1917
(Post Card)



Message on Back of Post Card

Peter Sidoroff - 1916 - Post Card

Afric (Afanasi) Sideroff - 1915

Center: Fred Sidoroff, 2 names unknown

Lucaria & Peter Sidoroff,
Elena & Philip Andreeff

. . . and they waited for their soldiers to return.

Rachel, Palegea, Sam Sidoroff

Lucaria with son Constantine
Sidoroff, brother Lawrence Andreeff,
Elena with son Ike Andreeff - 1915

The family took him in, nursed him back to health and in a few weeks he was on his way again. His trip back home would have surely put him in mind of the trans-Siberian trip in 1907 when he was travelling in the comforts of his family and friends at the age of fifeen, but this time there was no stove, no warm clothing, no food; nothing but the cold winter wind howling through the slats of the cattle car. His will to endure this hardship was continually fueled by the joy of seeing his wife Lucaria and son Constantine again.

The train finally got to Bardagon (now Svobodny) where he was overcome with emotion. Once again he was able to step onto soil he had not seen for nearly four years. He left the train and set out on foot for the forty mile walk to Novgorodka. The story he told of his arrival in his home village is vivid in the minds of his children.

It was January 1919. The community of Novgorodka was about to experience what they considered a miracle. After waiting four years for news on their missing soldier, a happening took place that sent a wave of ecstatic emotion throughout the village.

In the small Old Greek Orthodox Church, yet another service was taking place where they would pray for the return of their friend, husband and father. The holiday observance was January 19, 1919. It was the commemoration of the christening of Jesus; therefore called Christenia. The ceremony is referred to as Erdani, Erdan being the Russian word for Jordan, the river in which Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. In a procession to the water, the congregation is led by the minister, who ceremoniously carries a cross to be submerged to purify the water for baptism.

Before the ceremony, Father Starasadchev prayed one more time for his beloved friend's return. He and Peter were the best of friends and would both be turning twenty-seven years old that year. As the minister walked out the church door to begin his approach to the water, a figure appeared on the horizon. Father Starasadchev laid down his cross and walked towards this figure, as though in a trance. Happiness, tears of joy and prayers of sincere and thanksgiving prevailed. On the horizon was the long-lost soldier Peter Sidoroff. Elated and ecstatic, the whole congregation raced out to meet him.

Emotions rose even higher when Lucaria was reunited with her beloved "Pasha" and for five-year-old Constantine, it would be a whole new world. This was the papa he had heard about for so long. Once again Peter was able to hold his son, a reunion he had longed for and prayed for since he left him at the age of was five. Within a few months tragedy struck and he would never hold his son again. Constantine drowned that summer.

THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION

When Peter came back from the war he encountered a very revolutionary society. Bolshevik bands were not an organized army at the beginning. They were just a bunch of bandits, roaming the countryside. They would loot and plunder, and rape and murder, or whatever took their fancy, killing for any goods or chattels. No laws to go by, no police force to rely on and very few one could trust.

A story Luke once told his grandson Michael: During the revolution he had a friend, six foot two and a very handsome man in his early twenties. He had many rivals with those who would be rid of him at any cost. With no law or police, no one to suspect him . a jealous rival thought. 'I will get rid of him. He is supposed to be an expert gun smith. I'll send my Red Commander to him to have his guns all lined up to shoot accurately. If he fails, the commander will kill him.'

So the next day the commander arrived at Luke's friend's gun shop on a spirited, actively bounding white horse and handed him two revolvers.

He held back the third and said, "You say you are an expert gun smith. Are you?"

Luke's friend answered, "I do my best."

"Now you will have to prove it to me. These two revolvers cause me to miss my target. Fix them to shoot straight," demanded the commander. "I will be back this time tomorrow to pick them up and if they don't shoot the way I want them to, I'll make sure they work on you one way or another. He rode off gallantly saying, "I will be back tomorrow." One can imagine the anxiety for the gun smith, knowing he could be shot if he didn't come up to expectations.

Frantically, without sleep since the Commander left, he checked out the guns, cleaned, polished and used much ammunition for practice to be sure they would satisfy the Red Commander. Both guns seemed to be working perfectly.

The next day the commander returned. "Are my revolvers ready?"

"Yes, yes, tavarish, if you please." he answered as he handed the guns to him. He was sure they would work after so much practice and detailed work on them.

Before the commander left he said, "If these guns work to my satisfaction, all well and good. Otherwise I will be back!"

Two days later, the commander came back, smartly riding up to the shop on his white horse. This time he was alone. Briskly he jumped off his horse, sternly and without a smile approached his rival.

"So you think you are an expert gun smith?" "I do my best," was the reply.

The commander put his hand on the gun smith's shoulder and said, " I have never had a gun that worked so well."

Having anticipated the worst upon the commander's approach, he heaved a sigh of relief and said to himself, 'He could have shot me and there is no one to defend the innocent!'

Luke and Matrona Sidoroff (seated) with their two sons Lorne (Left) and Peter (army hat), Peter's wife Lucaria and son Constantine. Back: Gregory Andreeff (Lucaria's father), Nikifor Sidoroff (Luke's brother) - taken shortly before Constantine drowned - Summer1919

Fred Sidoroff's daughter Rachel recalls an incident during the Revolution. A Japanese gun boat had come up the river firing shots to ward off the Reds. Her mother Palegea and Constantine's mother Lucaria and their children had to flee to the village

of Bardagon at night by horse and wagon. She remembers the bullets flying over their heads. The men stayed behind to guard the homes and to fight if a battle should break out.

Fred had been conscripted in the Czar's White Army when the Revolution first started. It was to no avail. The Communists were taking over. Fred made the decision, along with many others, to flee the country and take refuge in Harbin, China. Fred and Palegea had four children by this time and as they were about to escape, their fifth child Zina (Zinaida) was born. The baby was three days old when they came down the Zeya River to the city of Blagoveschensk. Fred's cousin, Palagaya (Sidoroff) Ushmalkin, was living there, and because it was feared that Zina would not survive, they stopped to baptize her. Zina did survive and a month later they managed to make their escape to Harbin. The family of Palagaya Ushmalkin, who was the daughter of Luke's brother Nikifor, still live in Blagoveshchensk. Her daughter Nina Govrielov, her son Mihail and Nina's son Uri have visited Canada in recent years.

Afanasi and Anastasia Sidoroff & Efrem Kononov - *by Gerald Sidoroff*

The family pondered the fateful takeover of the Bolsheviks. It was a terrifying time with civil unrest, horrifying reports of killings and loved ones disappearing without a trace. The civil war and anarchy were devastating the country. They were informed that they were on the black list and sooner or later, they would be executed. The decision was finalized. They too would escape.

Afanasi and Efrem began to make plans to remove their family which would consist of Afansi's wife Anastasia, their sons John, Abraham, Nicholas and daughter Anna. The Bolshevik influence was felt everywhere and no one could be trusted. It was rumored that if only they could get to Harbin, China, they would be safe. The Chinese frontier was heavily patrolled. The great Amur River formed a long natural boundary and patrols were everywhere, on foot and in boats.

The Sidoroff and Andreeff families were Kulaks, meaning a capitalist on a smaller scale, or a rich peasant whose property could be confiscated and the owner shot if the Communists saw fit to do so. Peter owned an American-built McCormick reaper which in itself would make him into the 'petite bourgeoisie'. Anyone that owned an extra cow, horse, harrow or reaper, was a petite bourgeoisie and considered a capitalist. There was continued fear as to who would be taken next. Many were killed for no reason. There was no justice. Anarchy ruled.

To defend their belief and refuse submission to the Bolsheviks would manifest many other tragic incidences. A story is told of a friend who was one of twelve termed to be Whites against the Red Bolsheviks and its new system. They were lined up against the

wall to be executed. While they were lining them up against a wall, a contingent of the White Army intervened and a conflict began between the two armies, giving an opportunity for those lined up to escape. No execution took place. The friend's life was spared and he eventually came to Canada.

Philip, John and Lawrence Andreeff - *by their daughters*

The Bolsheviks would raid the farms at gun point. Usually only women and children were at home as the men were at war. The Bolsheviks would take anything they wanted - cattle, chickens, etc., and if any men folk were around and did not hide fast enough, they would take them too. At daybreak mothers and wives would go looking for them in the village and all they would find on their way would be pieces of clothing along the road or on tree branches, but the men were never found nor did they return.

John had acquired a horse and harrow. When it came time to dispose of everything in order to take leave of their country, he was not able to sell his horse and harrow. There was no such thing as selling property or possessions. It was a workers' state and everything was owned by the workers. They were not able to do much with a horse or a harrow in China, nor did they have any way of getting this property there, so there was no choice but to leave it all behind. They had some valuables, such as gold and jewelry, which would be a valuable commodity for them in their attempt to escape. They needed to carry something of value with them in order to pay off the man that would take them to Lohasus on the Sungari River. The paper money that they had became worthless under the new regime.

Elena, the wife of Philip Andreeff, revealed some ugly happenings to her family. She saw her own brother shot because he would not become a Bolshevik. He chose to fight them rather than join them. The men would hear the Bolsheviks coming on horses. They would hide in the haystack until they heard them leave again. The Bolsheviks would come into the house asking if any men were around. If they found them, they would either shoot them or take them away. They didn't touch the women, but some of the men never returned to their families.

The Philip Andreeff family had a friend helping them escape. No one remembers his name and Elena always wondered why he helped them escape but did not go with them. He advised them to take only the very necessary possessions, mainly what was on their backs.

Lawrence Andreeff was still a single man with no family. He was making plans to escape along with his father Gregory and his brothers Philip, Bill and John with their families. Their caretaker and grandmother, Anna, stayed behind with family members of her deceased son Nikifor. She would have been close to one hundred years old by that time and was blind.

Theodor (Feodor) and Stepaneeda Polushin - *by John Polushin*

The Polushins were also living west of the Ural Mountains and were experiencing the upheaval caused by the Revolution. Their story is told by their son John Polushin:

"I was born in the village of Porshur, Province of Vyatka, in Central Russia, in the year 1908. My father, Feodor (Theodor) Polushin, was a civil servant, serving as Justice of the Peace and Clerk of the Court. His father and uncles were builders of churches. Father's family had moved to Porshur from Urzhum when he was seven years old.

Father favoured a new land scheme, "huter", a form introduced by Prime Minister Stolypin after the 1905 revolution. He decreed that every peasant should own land, and several village families, including ours, took advantage. We moved to a farm on the Oomyak River. The farm consisted of about thirty acres of land forty kilometers from the City of Yelabuga. We improved the farm by draining a swamp, which became a meadow. We lived in a well built house heated with a "petchka", a Russian stove. We had twenty head of Brown Swiss cattle, bought with government help. We learned to make butter, which father sold in Yelabuga. He received an agricultural certificate of merit from the Czar. Life was about to take a drastic turn.

Lenin was very much opposed to the "huter" scheme, fearing that it would take away the people's appetite for revolution. Stolypin was assassinated.

Early in October 1918 a squad of Red soldiers came to the farm. At first they pretended to be admiring the farm machinery. Then they told father that he was under arrest for "betraying Bolshevism". They gave no reasons. Father asked to be allowed to say farewell to his family, and they granted him permission. Once in the house, he jumped out of the window, with Walter following, and went through the orchard into the timber. Here they separated, and father went into a small lake and hid himself in the cold water among the bulrushes. He planned to use a hollow stem to breathe through if he had to go under. He moved on at dark, and went to the home of Tatar friends where he stayed until the White army came.

Back at the house, the officer, a dark man, asked mother where he was. He put a revolver to mother's temple and demanded that she tell or be shot. Other soldiers outside found footprints where they had jumped. The officer said, "If he is not back by evening the family will be executed." The soldiers left and didn't come back. Soon after, another group of soldiers came and confiscated all the livestock but one horse and one cow. They searched the house every night looking for father.

Walter returned sick with influenza. He recovered with a tea made from dried raspberry cakes, and steam baths in the banya (steam bath). All spring we lived under the shadow of searching. The teachers at school kept asking if father was home yet. Walter was inducted into the Red Army. Shortly after, he escaped and hid at home.

dressed as a woman. They sent me, then nine years old, as a "watch" to look toward the village for someone coming, and warn Walter. It was still spring. The Whites were advancing and the Reds retreating. The Reds stayed overnight at our place singing, dancing and playing balalaikas. They gave us children shells which we threw onto a bonfire.

I was coming home from the village where I had been playing with my cousins, when I heard a noise like a stick being pulled along a picket fence which was no doubt gunfire. Then I saw Katie calling me to hurry home. A battle was in progress. We went into the cellar. Near night we went upstairs to watch the flash of bullets flying in the dark. The White cavalry entered the village with a white flag. That night White officers stayed at our place. Next day they left to go twenty or thirty kilometers to the river of Vyatka. We heard cannons roar for about two weeks. At this time father was returning.

As he walked home, he spotted a White Army officer riding "Mashka", the horse the Reds had taken. He stopped the officer and asked where he had got the horse. A peasant had the right to have his property returned. The officer told him that the rider had been shot in battle, and he had acquired the horse. Father claimed the horse and they bargained. The officer offered him a half dozen horses for it, but he wanted his own. The officer agreed, but asked permission to use the horse to move artillery to its new position, then father could come to the front, find the unit and bring back the horse. This he did. While getting the horse, he found that the White Army would have to retreat. The Reds were winning. He rode his horse home and ordered the wagon to be loaded. We left, leading our cow. As we left home my friends herding cattle on the meadow were astonished. One more wagon joined us. In it were a man, his wife and their twelve year old daughter. One evening we came to a certain village where we wanted to stop and rest. During the evening someone set fire to the village houses. We moved on immediately, not knowing if it was under attack. The man in the other wagon saw no other alternative and suggested we kill ourselves.

The Cossacks counter-attacked and drove the Reds off. We drove on to the city of Sarapul on the River Kama, where river boats docked. We stayed a short time. We had to cross the Kama, so we looked for a ferry, but everything was being used by the military. Mother, father and the family were on their knees, crying and praying. From nowhere a young officer came up and asked us if we wanted to cross. He had lost half of his company in battle and he had room on the ferry. We crossed and travelled over level land. In the distance I saw my first train. Father arranged for the family to ride on the train and told mother that he would meet us on the other side of the Urals at the city of Tumen. He rode the horse, Mashka, across the Urals. It is possible he knew the road because, in the army as a young conscript officer, he had taken prisoners to Siberia that way.

We arrived in the city and camped by the station, sleeping with crowds of other refugees in the station house. We waited a week or two, or maybe more. The girls said they saw a Chinaman with a long pig-tail, so I ran off looking for him, but he was nowhere to be found. I walked the streets of the strange city until I came to the River Tura, where people were swimming, so I joined them. Somehow I found my way back. When I told of the river, the family was happy to have the opportunity to get some clothes washed.

As my father rode through the great dark forest, he would call "Feodor Evanovitch!" and listen to the echoes. He came to the station. We thought the Whites would never retreat from Omsk, but in Tumen we found that they were losing, so we decided to move farther east into Siberia, but there was no way to get out. The trains were all filled with soldiers, and we had no money. The horse would not be allowed on the train, so father sold it to a race track for harness racing.

Father decided to claim that he was an immigrant rather than a refugee, and he found a way of going on the train. Like the passengers in Dr. Zhivago we boarded. The trains were being attacked and the tracks sabotaged by guerrillas. An armoured train ahead and a small one behind gave ours protection. There was someone or something on this train that was to be protected. As we rolled along I saw bodies of people hanging from poles - people who had been caught in sabotage. I remember stopping at one station. Mother took me into the village to beg for bread "in the Name of Christ", she had said. We heard nothing but curses because they were sympathetic to the Reds. Out of frustration my mother attacked them verbally, "Wait, you will starve too". We were very hungry.

We travelled slowly and peacefully, picking berries when the train stopped. At last we reached Lake Baikal. It was very beautiful, with deep, clear water and mountains around it. The train stopped and the family went swimming in the cold water of the mountain river, Angara, which flows into Lake Baikal. While they were swimming someone stole their clothes. Other passengers gave them some clothes to wear. At this point, Pasha (grandmother) became very ill.

When we came to the city of Irkutsk we asked for a doctor. He came and ordered a horse-drawn ambulance and took her to the hospital. We were told that she would have to stay for several weeks. The train would be moving soon. When she found this out, she was so frightened she ran away from the hospital to the train. Hospital authorities came looking for her. Tatar (Tatari) friends and the family hid her under piles of clothes and convinced the authorities that she was not there. The train pulled out. The fear or the excitement must have cured her - she did recover.

We went without event to the city of Khabarovsk, which was occupied by Japanese forces. We were fed and taken to saunas. Our clothes were fumigated and returned. Father took us on a steamboat down the Amur to a village about eighty kilometers from

Khabarovsk in the mountain area. It was an overnight trip. We could see across the beautiful wide river of Amur into China. We found a place to stay all fall and winter. I was enrolled in school. Father was still on the alert, and hiding.

The timber behind the village was full of game and tigers, bears and wild pigs. The fishing was good. Father, Walter and the girls fished for Keta salmon, and Pasha cleaned and salted or smoked the fish, then packed them into barrels. The Japanese bought them. Pasha learned to mend nets. Father had about one hundred acres of land registered in his name. The land yielded ship building timber. We all went into the woods and picked sacks of pine nuts, "cader", some of which we ate, and the rest we traded to the Chinese for flour. We stayed in the village all winter. When the ice broke on the river, Japanese gun boats began patrolling to clear Red guerillas away. One of the gunboats stopped at the village. Father went to see the captain and asked how we could get out. The captain promised to send a barge in a few hours. They came and we left for the city of Khabarovsk. We stayed there in a house until fall, when the Japanese occupation ended. Then father went again to Japanese headquarters and asked if we and several other families could leave Khabarovsk. They issued a freight car with a heater and that was the beginning of our move to Harbin, China."

The full revolt of the Bolsheviks began in 1917. In 1918 in Siberia, a force of forty-five thousand Czechoslovak former prisoners of war, who had been armed by the czarist government and enlisted in the war against Germany, launched a campaign against the Bolshevik authorities. Japan became their allies to fight the Bolsheviks and Japanese forces occupied the eastern port of Vladivostok. An American expeditionary force was sent in in an attempt to ward off the Bolsheviks. This was not to be. The Bolshevik forces formed their own Red Army and within three years were in full control. With the expulsion of the Japanese occupation forces from Eastern Siberia in 1922, the period of civil war and foreign intervention came to an end. Communism had taken over.

A major force in the decision of many Russian families to leave their mother Russia was religious persecution. No amount of hardship or the threat of being caught and executed would hamper their plans to escape and have the freedom to worship. They simply would not live in a country that did not allow them to worship God.

In all these households plans were hurriedly being made to leave everything behind and make their escape to Harbin. Their future was uncertain but they were willing to take any risk for freedom. They would go via steamship down the Zeya and Amur Rivers to Lohasus at the mouth of the Sungari River, then along the Sungari to Harbin in northern Manchuria.

THE ESCAPE - RUSSIA TO CHINA

The Osokin Family - *by Jean (Osokin) Dash*

One night while father was away from home, mother woke us up, bundled us in warm clothes in case we had to leave the house to hide elsewhere. Shots were heard all over the village. The church bells were ringing to warn of possible danger. Adults were coming and going, wondering what to do. Before making the final decision to leave, it was decided to find out what was going on. Mother piled us on top of a large brick oven, where grandfather used to like to take his naps. The chimney was wide and we were to stay behind it in case shots came through the windows.

After some time, someone came with the good news. No one was attacking the village, we were told. A group of soldiers across the river were target shooting - for practice or fun. They must have been part owl to see the board they were shooting at as it was the middle of the night. I don't know how that information was obtained but it was welcome news and we were able to settle in for what was left of the night.

The next episode is much more tragic. I was standing at the window taking in the street activities. People were coming and going, stopping to chat. Three sleighs came into view and slowly passed our house. I noticed bumps covered with blankets on the low open sleighs. The elders knew what those bumps were and I overheard their conversation. In those days it was common for men to disappear in the night. These were the three latest ones for whom the villagers, friends and relatives had been searching. One of the victims managed to hang a cloth belt on a bush without being seen by his captors. That led the searchers to an abandoned dwelling - and their gruesome find in the cellar. No one could resolve why these three harmless men met such a fate.

My father was away from home much of the time working on plans to leave the country, hiding and eluding the powers that had taken over the country. Many times he had to cover his tracks . . . even spending one night in a snow bank. The day finally came when we got permission to take a boat to a certain destination. Father had scouted

that place beforehand, so he could answer the questioning regarding it. Good-byes were said and tears were shed as our friends and relatives came to see us off on this adventure. Everyone was loaded with parcels, bundles and baggage. Only what we could carry was what we took to start a new life somewhere, we didn't know where. A final whistle and we were on our way down the Zeya River to the Chinese border. Little by little the women folk stopped crying. Not I! I wept and wept, mostly because I did not want to part with a two-year old cousin on whom I doted. Finally I cried myself to sleep.

When my tears had dried up I went on deck to join my cousins. We enjoyed exploring the boat, watching the paddle-wheel pushing it along, and ran from side to side to catch the moving scenery. The captain was a Chinese gentleman and had his young son on board. The little guy, about the same age as we were, joined us in our activities. He did not speak Russian and we did not speak Chinese, but we communicated. The following day he came out with a beautiful candy box or perhaps it was a cigar box. Very solemnly he offered it to me. Lucky girl. The box was empty, of course, but so beautifully decorated with flowers and I thought it quite a treasure. I don't remember what finally happened to it nor how long I kept it. But I have this pleasant picture tucked away in my mind of a good looking Chinese boy and my first gift from a male admirer, my first romance.

Arrangements were made. A few families went ahead of our group to cross into China. Upon our arrival in Blagoveshchensk we boarded a much larger river boat to go down the Amur River. It looked beautiful to me. I recall one scene on this boat. There was a bit of excitement and we were called to hurry up on deck. Everyone crowded around the railing. It was the meeting of two rivers, the Amur on which we began our journey from Blagoveshchensk, and the Sungari, the Chinese river. The Amur was clear and blue, the other yellowish. The division was so clear it was a mystery in our eyes.

A boat was to arrive at to a certain place to pick us up. This place was quite an experience. It was in the middle of nowhere with cords of wood stacked about. Boats stopped here to replenish their supplies. The captain would blow a whistle and a villager would ride over to sell the wood. Our boat did not need wood but this is where we were to disembark. The captain was informed why we were leaving his boat. The story was that another steamer was coming with the rest of the group and we would join them to go to that destination for which previous arrangements were made. The boat whistle brought up a problem. No one else was to know that we were here or why. Anyone would be suspicious seeing a group of people with bags and bundles landing by a woodpile. And at that time, we didn't trust anyone. Yet father did not dare to ask the captain not to blow the whistle or he would get suspicious. What to do?

The whistle was blown and we gathered up the bundles and came ashore. Then the mosquitoes struck. Swarms and swarms of mosquitoes! We tried to cover up but it was a muggy late afternoon and we'd soon be sweating and suffocating. We broke branches

and waved them around. The young ones were soon crying and the mothers were helpless in trying to comfort them. My mother settled us younger ones on the ground under a blanket. In a few seconds we'd be suffocating under it! We'd stick our heads out and a zillion mosquitoes would land on us with their voracious appetites, furiously elbowing each other for a bare spot.

There was anxiety for the grown-ups more serious than the mosquitoe problem. A boat was coming from the Chinese side. They looked up the hill towards the village and there was a man on horseback heading toward the woodpile. Disaster! The two must not meet. Father instructed the boys to get down to the water and tell the Chinese boatmen to go back for a while. When the villager arrived, father explained to him the complicated story. The boatmen evidently did not understand the instructions called over the water. They sailed past and drifted towards the shore farther down. The boys raced with instructions to them again. When they came back the man asked what the Chinese were doing on this side. The answer was "They said they are fishing." The man obviously took it with a grain of salt. "Fishing on our side?" With a mumble he started back towards the village.

When we disembarked by the woodpile, four or five fellows came ashore too. They were in uniforms but were not soldiers. They located further up the hill, made a bonfire either to cook supper or drive the mosquitoes away. We could see them wrestling around. Their presence added to the fear and anxiety. They could get curious and come down to investigate just when the Chinese junk arrived. There were only two adult men in our party. The other two or three husbands were involved in selling their horses and would get across on their own some other time. So it was just my father and a cousin, a very timid young man. This timid young man had had a traumatic experience earlier in his life. His father was a fairly prosperous farmer with full granaries on his property. This would make him a Kulak! A group of Bolsheviks descended upon their home, pulled the father outside and told him to run. He did, but try as he may to dodge the bullets, he was shot and killed. They left him lying in the yard, set fire to the barn, the granaries and the house. His family had hidden in the cellar of the house and before long they smelled smoke. They crawled out, broke a window, and escaped a fiery death. The young man was left with a young wife and his mother to look after.

Our party consisted of our family, two or three women with young children, and someone's grandmother who had to be carried on and off the boat.

Father was concerned about the information the villagers or even someone in authority would get from the man that visited us. The boatmen were now on their own side in an inlet with just the sails visible. Father instructed the boys to call the Chinese back while he tried to find out what was going on in the village. He raced up the hill but had to slow down to exchange a few words with the young fellows. It seemed they were

not interested in the group by the woodpile. They were telegraphers and perhaps the reason for the boat whistle. They might have been waiting to be picked up by someone from the village.

Father did not go into the village but found a convenient tree and climbed up for a good view. The man on horseback was in the middle of a good sized crowd, waving his arms and informing the folks of the strange business by the woodpile station. There was no time to lose. Father slid down the tree and raced back, hoping there was time before something happened. Meanwhile, the boys were trying to hurry the boatmen to come back. They did not understand and lowered the sails instead. It was getting darker. Finally the boat headed towards us. When I heard the paddles from under the blanket I was sure the "Reds" were going to throw us all into the water in the dark. Mother shed copious tears that unforgettable evening. Would father come back or would he be arrested? Things happened fast once father got back and the boat arrived.

We finally arrived on the other side onto a nice sandy beach, surrounded by weeping willows. A big bonfire was built and tea was on the go. Our Chinese friends looked on all this with big grins on their faces.

There were a number of days of boat travel, with stops every few hours when everyone unloaded. The women took off in one direction and the men in the opposite direction.

One place comes to mind. Beautiful high grass above our heads. Nice place to play hide-and-seek. We were told it was broom grass. There was a canopy over the boat and I remember one peaceful day we were all urged to get under it. The children were admonished not to peek out and show their white faces. A large steamer, someone said a mail boat, was coming from the other direction. If we were seen, someone might want to investigate. The two boatmen stood tall and straight at each end of the boat with their coolie hats and innocent grins. We were safe.

Some of the families that were with us on our boat were Luke Sidoroff and his brother Afanasi with his family. Afanasi's daughter Anne became my best friend. This would be the first boat to arrive in Harbin. Luke's sons were coming on separate boats and would arrive in Harbin a few days later".

The Sidoroff and Andreeff Families

Several families from the small villages of Novgorodka and Bardagon (Svabodny) boarded steam boats down the River Zeya to Blagoveshchensk, leaving many loved ones behind. The Sidoroff cousins, the Ushmalkins, who lived in Blagoveshchensk, provided

shelter for them untill they were able to make strategic plans to get to China. It would be the most challenging escapade of their lives. They separated into three different groups. The journey would be along the Amur River, which was the border between China and Russia, to Lohasus (now Leninskoye) in China at the mouth of the Sungari (now Songhua) River, then down the Sungari to Harbin, China. This would not be a pleasure cruise - this was an escape!

Lorne Sidoroff's family, the family of Father Ivan Starasadchev and some others, bribed a cossack to help them cross the Amur River. After consulting with his wife, the cossack decided to help them. The cossack and his wife crossed the river on a stormy night to make arrangements. The custom officials on shore were drunk and didn't notice them. They found a Korean that owned a large sail boat and made an agreement that on the next stormy night the Korean would come and take them across. Then they returned to their home to wait. The wait at Blagoveshchensk for a stormy night was two or three days.

When a stormy night came, the cossack appeared and said: "Hurry up and get ready!" They loaded their belongings on wagons as quickly as they could and went to the shore where the Korean was already waiting with his sail boat. They paid him one hundred twenty-five rubles with a five ruble tip for vodka upon demand. They were taken down the Amur River to Lohasus at the confluence of the Amur and Sungari Rivers. A Russian boat, "Alexei" by name, was there. The Alexei had at one time plied river Zeya and its captain was of the old ideological training. When his boat docked, he saw the refugees and their children on the sail boat, but custom officials would not allow them to disembark. At that time, custom officials were Russians working for the Chinese government.

One custom official came aboard their sail boat and asked them how they could prove that they were immigrants. One of the boxes belonging to Father Ivan Starasadchev was opened showing church crosses, vestments and books. He said: "That's enough, close it!" Then the Chinese customs official allowed them to go ashore.

The Captain of the Russian ship "Alexei" noticed them again from the bridge. He yelled at them, "Who are you?" They answered, "Russian immigrants!" He said "You are brave heroes! What is your destination?" "We are going to Harbin!" was the reply. "Then welcome aboard!" said the captain. Delighted, they boarded. The captain told them that there was a restaurant and a bar on his boat, only the prices are a bit higher than on shore. That didn't seem to make any difference. It was a time for celebration.

In the evening, they left for Harbin. After a while their captain ordered them to the lower hold, saying that sometimes river pirates attacked boats and it is much safer below. The main and upper decks were protected with sand bags so that bullets would not penetrate the ship's structure.

Three months before the big exodus, Peter Sidoroff was aware that the Chinese would be closing their borders to immigrants or refugees from Russia before long. Having made the decision to take the family to China, he bought Chinese citizenship papers for a piece of gold worth three rubles. When time came to leave, his foresight paid off. He had his citizenship papers. He disposed of most of his possessions for gold or silver in preparation for a major move.

When the time came to cross the border Peter felt it was too dangerous to board a big boat on the Russian side. He decided to row across, and hope for the best on the other side. With three on board - Lucaria, son Michael, age three, and daughter Anne, age one, Peter stealthily rowed across. The one thing Michael remembers is asking his father "Kak gliboka vada?" meaning "How deep is the water?" Peter obligingly let the paddle slip down into the water out of sight. "Boodoo seedyet", meaning "I shall sit", replied Michael as he crouched down even further into the bottom of the boat. No way was he going to take any chances!

When they reached the Chinese shore the guards would not let them come near the shore. Peter stood up in the row boat and waved the immigration papers at them, but they repeatedly would signal them back with guns pointed at them. Finally, after a few miles down stream, they consented to look at the papers. Suspecting they were fraudulent, they arrested the whole family and put them in jail. The next day their papers were accepted by the man in charge only after accepting a bribe of two hundred rubles in gold.

Peter met up with the Andeeff families and others on the Chinese side and boarded a steam boat along with other Russians to go down the Amur River to Lohasus. Going down the Amur River meant stopping at alternate ports along the way, first on the Russian side and then on the Chinese side. This resulted in a real test for the refugees. An inspection and search for refugees was made at each Russian port. Before stopping at one Amur port the refugees bribed the captain of the ship for fifty rubles to hide them in the hull of the ship where the wood was stored. This wood was used to fire the steam boilers on the paddle wheeler that carried freight and passengers up and down the Amur River. One of the ladies was a little on the heavy side and they thought she might have problems in the hold so she posed as the captain's wife.

At Lohasus a Russian customs armed motor boat was anchored. They checked every vessel, especially the ones that went to Harbin. While the ship was in port with some eighty refugees crammed in the hull, the Red Army soldiers made an inspection of the ship, searching for any refugees escaping from Russia. This was a two hour ordeal. First they unloaded some cargo, then they loaded some on, then they began to search the ship for refugees. Stomp! Stomp! Stomp! they could hear the footsteps on the floor above them. While this was going on, Philip's and Elena Andreeff's infant daughter,

Valentina, started to cry. All were holding their breaths for fear they would be discovered. The frantic mother stuffed the baby's mouth with her breast to silence it. She heard someone say "choke the baby - better for one baby to die than for us to be discovered. We will be taken back to that revolution-torn country to be shot." Fortunately the baby was silenced with the mother's breast. This 'baby' lives today to tell this story. She is Viola (Andreeff) Kalugin. Vi tells us:

"The armed officials decided nobody was there and they left. The captain of the boat opened the hatch above the hull floor and said 'Come on out.' Some thought it was the Red Army ordering them out. All being weak from heat and exhaustion and lack of water, several of the women fainted. Much of this was attributed to fright. Some had to be carried up to the hatch from the hull of the boat. How relieved they were to find out that the Red Army soldiers had left and it was the captain that said 'Come on out'. What embraces and tears of joy! 'Slava Boghu, spaseel nas ot nashuh vpagov', meaning 'Thank God for saving us from our enemy.'

The arrival at the mouth of the Sungari River was a great relief. They disembarked, boarding a different boat to make their way to the city of Harbin along the Sungari River. They had their personal belongings and some even had a fair amount of gold and silver that was quite valuable in China."

Fred and Palegea Sidoroff's oldest daughter, Rachel, has vivid memories of their trip down the Amur and the Sungari Rivers. Her father gave a Chinese man all the money he had to get them to safety. Because it was cold, damp and dark below deck, she was very ill.

The second of the three boats arrived in Harbin about noon with Lorne Sidoroff and others on board. They were met by those who had gone ahead: Luke, his brother Afanasi with his family, Bishop Joseph, Father Artemy Solovieff and the Osokin family.

The boat transporting others, including the Andreeff brothers and Fred and Peter Sidoroff with their families, arrived two days later. Accommodation had been found for all of them by Luke and those who had arrived earlier, located near the Old Greek Orthodox Church. Soon they found separate apartments for their families.

Other foreigners had settled in Harbin before the Russian Revolution, so it was possible to "disappear" into the vast numbers of people in the teeming Chinese city of Harbin. The Lebedkin family, for one, had lived in Harbin since the early 1900s.

Terenty and Anna Doumnoff - *by Nina (Doumnoff) Mihailoff*

Nina's recollection of their escape from Russia to China: "We were living in the village of Bardagon. In the middle of a winter night my brothers Pete and Tom, my sister

Oleana and I were awakened, bundled up and loaded into a cutter. We had no idea what was happening, nor why. With some clothing, blankets and a cow tied behind the cutter, we left our village and crossed the frozen Amur River into China. Grandfather Mihiel was travelling with us. We arrived in Karoganka, China, where my grandfather left us and returned to Bardagon. After living in Karoganka for about three months, we decided to go to Harbin, leaving behind my sister Oleana. She died in Karoganka."

LIFE IN CHINA

Nina's brother Peter remembers that there were many Russian Cossacks in the area. There was a Russian village Kumara from where nightly raids were made by Communist soldiers. They captured many people, tortured and executed them. Peter's recollections:

"We drove to Tsitsihar in the province of Manchuria where we met many Russian immigrants. They advised us not to go to Harbin because of large unemployment there, so we drove towards Hakishy village in an area known as Treh Rechie (Three Rivers) where many Russians lived, but made it only to Barim village. There we found employment of hewing and hauling railroad ties. This type of work was heavy and uninteresting, so my father decided that he would go to Harbin after all.

He found work as a dray man. A dray man is a person hauling and delivering heavy articles. He had two drays. I found work in a canning factory. "

In order that the reader may appreciate the distance covered by horses, it was well over one thousand miles. The scaling was done in a straight line 'as the crow flies', so the actual would be much greater.

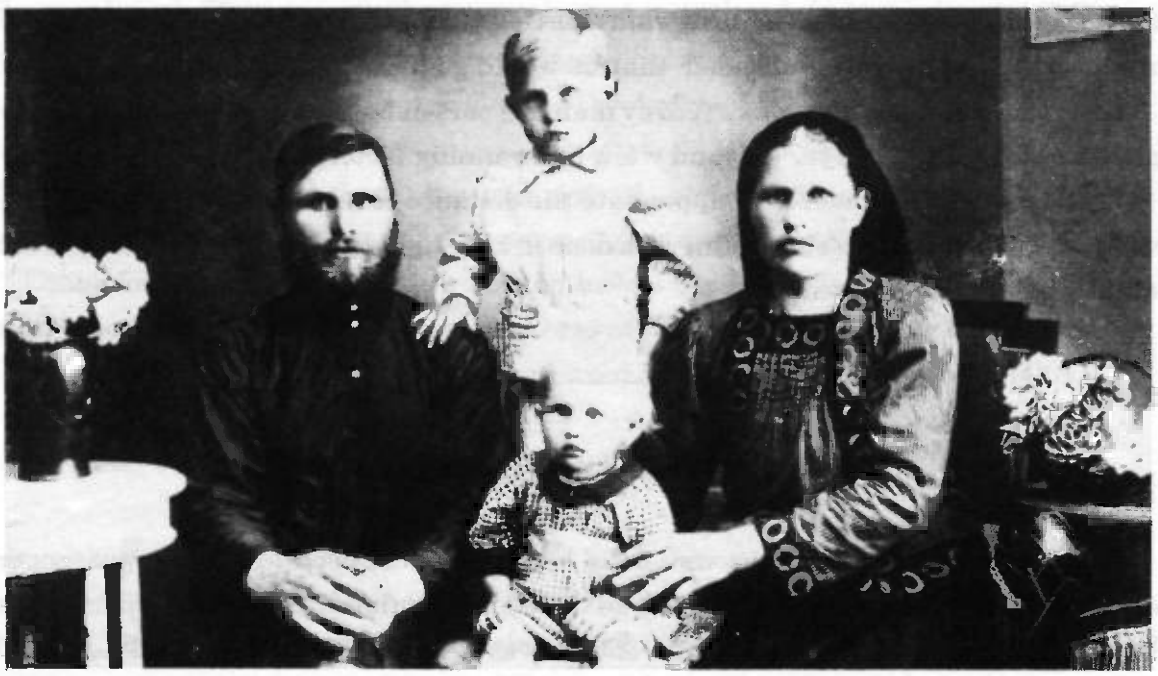
Sidoroffs' Life in China

Peter Sidoroff purchased a commercial bus which was used to provide passenger service throughout the city of five hundred thousand population and became part of the Harbin transportation system. This venture was a very profitable one and he would

have liked to stay as long as a good living could be made. However, there was always the fear that communism would spread into China, and so negotiations were on the way to emigrate to Australia. The Australian government, however, was falsely informed that the Russian group were communists, so entry was denied.

In the meantime, each family was living in a good home with some land and small acreage with a few animals. Life was reasonably comfortable. Michael recalls playing in the yard one day and the billy goat got out somehow and began to chase him. He ran hard for the back porch but the goat caught up to him before he got too far and butted him in the back side, knocking him down. Then the goat stood and looked at him. After he got up to run again, the goat let him take a few steps then butted him again. This happened about four or five times until he was rescued by his mother, who took chase after the goat with a stick. A fun adventure for the goat - not so for Michael.

He recalls playing with a neighbour girl, Luba, the minister's daughter, also about three years old. She had beautiful blond hair done up in ringlets. They were playing with some tar that was in a tar barrel at the back of the house. After about an hour or so the mess was incredible! They had tar on their clothes, on their hands and faces and you can imagine how the girl's mother reacted when she saw her pretty girl's blond ringlets all stuck together with black tar. The two mothers took them to the banya and gave them a good scrubbing. Poor Luba had to have some of her pretty ringlets cut off. Michael had been disciplined for different things before so he was afraid this would be a big one when father came home. To his surprise he only said there should have been a lid on it, but made it clear that they should not be playing with those sort of things and to remember . . . next time it would be the belt!



Peter and Lucaria Sidoroff, son Michael and daughter Anne - Harbin 1922

They had a private bus driver to drive the bus. The buses were different in Harbin in those days. The bus driver was caged off away from the passengers with his own entrance. The passengers entered from the back and a "billeter" (ticket collector) was at the back to collect the fare. The driver lived in the Sidoroff home. Michael has fond memories of him. His recollection: "He was so good to me. He would pick me up and play with me. One day he lifted me up to the ceiling when I had a glass of milk in my hand. My head hit the ceiling and I dropped the glass on the floor. There was glass and milk all over the floor. Another time he let me sit on his lap when he was driving the bus and I saw some horses on the road in front of the bus. 'Uncle Sergei, Stop!' I said. He just slowed down and told me to push the button, so I did. A horn went beeeep! The horses scooted out of the way. 'I did it, I did it!' I shouted with glee. 'Good boy', said Sergei."

When the Fred Sidoroff family arrived in Harbin, Rachel was almost eleven years old. She needed to go to work. Her grandpa Luke sold butter and found a job for her as a maid for a rich lady for a short time. She then found another job for a very nice family looking after their daughter.

When time came for Fred to go to Canada, he had to borrow money from Rachel's employer. Rachel worked to pay off this debt. She was earning fifteen dollars a month.

During his stay in Harbin, Afanasi Sidoroff's son John met a young beauty from another Russian refugee family from the area of Tomsk, and John and Efrosinia Chuchalin fell in love. John could not take her with him but vowed to return one day for his beloved Efrosinia.

The Andreeffs' Life in China

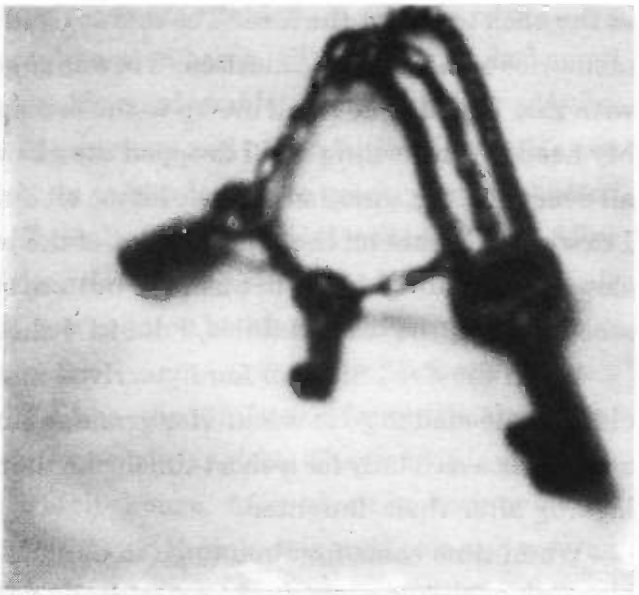
While living in China, Philip Andreeff was in the transportation field as well, either a bus driver or a "billiter". One notable experience Philip shared with his family was what he considered a great find. He found an icon in a Chinese junk pile or second hand store. He was so happy. He said, "Nashol Bozhenku!" (I found God). To him this was a sign of good fortune and that it was the Lord that helped him out of Russia, to come into China. Many years later the family recognizes the Christian heritage that their parents handed down to them. That is where they found their faith and have that hunger for the Lord, to live a Christian life.

In Harbin William Andreeff worked as a logger and then as part owner of a horse-cab. William and his wife Elena and their two-year-old daughter Olga rented a room in the home of another Russian refugee family. Elena was very happy to have even a little space of her very own at last. Here, her next child, Vasili or Vasya (Bill) was born in February in 1924.

John Andreeff got a job as a bus driver while waiting for immigration papers to come

through. He took the set of three keys for a souvenir when they left China. His daughter Elizabeth Haluck has them in her possession in her home in Canada. Elizabeth doesn't remember but her mom Anna told her that she had a few rides in a rickshaw.

Peter Sidoroff (cap) Assisting a Rickshaw Rider - Harbin



John Andreeff's Keys - Garage, Bus Ignition and Cash Box

The Osokin Family's Life in China - *by Jean (Osokin) Dash*

When we arrived in Harbin, my first memory is that of being transported bag and baggage with children and older folk piled up on top of it all, bounding along over the stone-cobbled streets in two-wheeled carts. We were unloaded at what I thought a very beautiful place. A large park with many lovely trees, green lawn and in the midst, a big red brick building with many windows. Being preoccupied with all this, I did not notice the bars. Then it happened. The authorities had us. The women and children were taken inside. One cell was opened to accommodate some of us, others were in the hallways here and there. One particular cell had an occupant but she was allowed to sit among us and chat. She told us she was there for hitting her husband with a brick!

The door was open to the outside so I took advantage of it and wandered out. I saw our men folk around a big table under the trees. With no one stopping me, I walked over to investigate. They were being questioned by a tall, classy Chinese gentleman. He was dressed in the traditional robe slit at the sides, cloth slippers and a pillbox hat. He spoke better Russian than some of us. Naturally, I was at sea as to what was going on, but since no one chased me away I stood there fascinated with the proceedings. My poor timid

cousin was shaking like a leaf. Father saw me standing there and whispered, 'Just tell the truth.'

It seemed the authorities here received information that spies were on the way. However, they seemed satisfied that we were harmless so they did not lock us up. Once again we were bounced and jarred over the cobbled streets to another part of the city and deposited at the Red Cross headquarters. From here the folks fanned out to find lodgings. After being located in a place for a month or two, our family moved to a better house and a better location. My father, in partnership with a friend who had been living in Harbin for some time, bought a city bus. My brother, Paul, took lessons on how to navigate it in city traffic and how to fix it if necessary. That is how we made our living for a year or so before leaving.

Back: Saveliy & Tatiana Osokin, son Paul & Grandmothers. Front: Jack, Jean, Victor - 1924

The Polushins' Life in China - *by John Polushin*

"The freight car with the heater they had issued us at Khabarovsk was our home in Harbin, China, until we found a house. While on the side track the Chinese official tried to make us leave, but the Japanese allowed us to stay. Shortly we found a house and moved.

The family soon found work cutting wood for steam locomotives, then better jobs on a dairy farm at En-dah, a station about eighty kilometers from Harbin. Here Walter learned the cheese making trade. I stayed with Tatar friends in Harbin to finish school, and joined the family when school was out in the spring. Father found work in the experimental farm in Harbin where he became supervisor of the dairy section. Katie, Annie and Pasha milked, and Walter worked at other jobs. Mother and I stayed in En-dah until school was over and then joined the family in Harbin. Next term I attended

school in Harbin. I made the trip from our home at the experimental farm by train, about twenty minutes. Once the train did not stop to let me out, and I was taken about thirty-five kilometers farther to a point where I knew no one. Two young people, brother and sister, about my age, invited me home to stay over night. I was fed and in the morning a lunch was provided. At the station in Harbin my father was waiting with my lunch in a bag. He threw it straight at the open train window and hit a Chinaman right in the head. The lunch fell back onto the ground.

Our school was in a YMCA building, and was run and taught by Russians. The American Red Cross gave us clothing and provided hot lunches at the school. Occasionally, we had a movie; I remember Charlie Chaplin in particular. I was very nearly expelled from the school. A friend had given me a wooden gun, so well carved that it looked real. During religious instruction conducted by the priest, while all heads were bowed, the principal walked by the open classroom door and saw me aiming my gun at one of the girls. He thought I was 'drawing a bead' on the priest. He asked me to send my father to see him, but Father was away from home, so Walter came and talked to him. On another occasion I got into trouble for giving the teacher a 'gift'. A friend and I had found a large wooden box which was completely sealed in. We pried it open and found human bones —several skeletons — and some coins. We left the money alone, but I selected one of the skulls, sneaked it home and 'gift wrapped' it. When the teacher found it on her desk, she was not amused.

In Harbin the Chinese contracted a disease called Shuma, which was fatal to them but did not affect us. People dropped dead in the street, and the bodies were picked up in an 'Arba', a two-wheeled wagon drawn by one horse, and piled up in a field and burned. One day one of the Russian men who had a drinking problem had passed out on the street, and sobered up just in time to find himself on top of a pile of bodies in the arba on his way to the funeral pyre. The shock had a lasting effect. He stopped drinking!"

Alexander and Anna Mishukoff - *by their granddaughter Luba Pierlot*

Alexander Fyodorovich Mishukoff was born in March 1891 in Vladimir, Russia, about one hundred miles east of Moscow. Anna Alexandrovna Zlobin was born in October 1890 in Chita, Siberia, east of Lake Baikal. When Alexander was fifteen years old, on the advice and help from an uncle, he went to work on the Trans-Siberian Railway. He never returned to his family in Vladimir and eventually made his way to Harbin, China.

Alexander met Anna through Anna's brother, who was also an employee of the

Railway in Harbin. They were married in 1911. Aexander went back to school and when he was twenty-seven years old he was a full-fledged bookkeeper. By then he and Anna had a son Constantine, who was born on June 8th, 1912.

Those who knew Alexander later in his life would be quite surprised to know that he was not very religious at that young age. His wife used to despair that he spent his weekends off hunting with his buddies. He even brought his two hunting dogs with him to Canada. They must have been fairly good dogs. They were stolen shortly after they arrived in Canada!

John Pohaboff in Harbin - *by Zina Kosheiff*

"John Pohaboff, a widower, settled into life in Harbin with his children Sergei and Anesia. Eventually he married again and by this time owned some dairy cattle. He sold milk and cream which provided a living for his family. Then his second wife died.

In the meantime, when I was about eight months old, many of the Russian families were making their escape from Siberia across the Amur River to Harbin, China. Mother and I went with them. My mother was able to find a job as a waitress in a restaurant. She met John Pohaboff, they got married, and at the age of four I had a new father, an older sister and an older brother.

We lived in part of a house which was a soldiers' barracks. The other part was a Chinese grocery store and bakery. Dad would often have a bottle of beer with his meal. I would take the bottle back to the store and get a treat of candy or pretzel in return. One day when I came in with my bottle, the baker was making the pretzels, rolling out the dough into a rope then slapping it over his shoulder on his sweaty bare back. Well, I refused the pretzels after that and to this day, when I see pretzels, that scene pops into my mind."

The Nasedkin Family - *by Victor Nasedkin*

"Our mom's life in Russia is virtually unknown by her family. We know she was from Siberia and her husband Ivan Kabakoff worked for the Russian Railway. He was transferred to Harbin, China, which was one of the cities that the railway served. They moved there in 1909 when their oldest daughter, Zina, was five months old. In 1911 they had a son Nick, followed by Jean in 1913, Vi in 1915 and Jim in 1917. In 1920, Mom's husband died very suddenly from a heart attack. At thirty-one she was left a widow with five children.

They lived in quarters which the railway company provided for their employees and, when her husband died, she feared that she would have to give up these living quarters. She inquired of a very good friend if he could get her a job, any kind of a job, so she and her family could stay in the same accommodation. This friend was able to help her get on as a janitor in the railway station. The pay was low but she was able to provide a home for her children. She struggled along as best she could with the janitorial work and selling milk from the two cows she had purchased with money her husband had left her.

Meanwhile, a gentleman by the name of Peter Nasedkin, who would one day be my father, was experiencing major changes to his life. He was born in Ufa, Russia, in 1875 to a middle class family. He was able to go to school and get a good education, unlike so many Russian children. When he was finished his education, he became a civil servant, or government worker, in charge of liquor sales, a good job at the time. His father had died when he was a young man and he lived with his mother until he married, and then she lived with them. His position was good and things were rolling right along. They had five children, two girls and two boys, and then another girl.

Then came the revolution in 1917. Everyone who had anything to do with the Czar or his government was a marked man. The "Commies" shot first and asked questions later. Dad knew if he didn't get out of the country he would be killed. He was living in Omsk, not far from the Manchurian border, so he decided to escape alone and bring the family over later. He left his family of five children, a pregnant wife and his mother. He made his escape at night and rode in box cars and on the rods under railway cars to Harbin. The Russian ruble was inflated so bad that it cost five thousand rubles for a loaf of bread, so he did not eat much until he got to Harbin.

Wedding of Evdokia Kabakoff and Peter Nasedkin

Arriving in Harbin did save his life, but his family was still in Russia. His first priority was to get a job and make a little money so he could get his family out. Harbin was pretty much control-

led by the Russians at the time, so much so that even the Chinese laborers spoke Russian and inter-marriage between Russians and Chinese was common. Under those circumstances, dad was able to get a job in an office of a Russo-Chinese importing company.

It was over a year before he was able to contact his family back in Russia, only to find his wife had died in childbirth, as well as the child. His mother was looking after the five children. He knew then he had to get them out of there as soon as possible, so he started working overtime to make that extra money. That meant he had to work evenings. His office happened to be in the building where mom was doing her janitorial work in the evenings. That is how they met. They soon fell in love and were married in 1922. Their first joint effort was to get his children out of Russia. By that time his two oldest daughters had married in Russia and stayed there. He managed to get the three younger ones and his mother out. So, here they were - mom and dad, eight children and his mother, all living in a two-room flat.

Well it didn't last a year. Dad's mom couldn't get along with her new daughter-in-law so she went back to Siberia where she still had family.

Mom and dad settled in quite well with their brood of eight. They were both working, mom in order to have living quarters and dad to make money. The cost of living in Harbin at that time was reasonably low. The Chinese grew big gardens and sold their produce at very low prices. The weather was favourable, so all in all, things were going well.

Life in China was good and they had enough to eat and wear. Then in that same year the Chinese started to take control of the city and to take the railway back from the Russians. Russia had a new government and the Chinese were able to break any contract with Russia. They began to take over all the jobs from the Russian people and soon it became obvious that the family would have to leave Harbin. Then came the biggest blow - the Chinese government told everyone who was not a naturalized Chinese citizen, to get out or they would be sent back to Russia. Dad would not have lived long enough to get to the first stop across the border. He was now an enemy of the Communist State."

Victor's older sisters remember some of their life in China.

Jean was ten years old when they left and her memory of life in China is primarily of the Chinese gardeners selling vegetables from large baskets which they carried on a pole over their shoulders with a basket on each end of the pole. Some of the children would try to steal from the basket. "Though I only went to grade three in the Russian school, I now speak, read and write Russian. As children, we did not feel any hardship in China," says Jean.

Vi was eight years old when they left China but remembers going to school there. "The winters were cold and I remember wearing a heavy quilted coat. Life in China was good and we had enough to eat and wear."

Zina was five years old when her father, Ivan Kabakoff, was transferred from Russia to China with his railroad job. "We lived in quarters supplied by the railroad company. When I was ten years old, our father died. It was very tragic for me as I was the one who found him on the verandah where he had been sleeping. He had died of a heart attack.

Mother had to work hard after that. She found a job with the railroad as a janitor for their offices and we lived in an apartment in the barracks. We acquired two cows. Mother would milk the cows and then deliver the milk by seven in the morning so she could go to work and we to school. As I was the oldest of five children, I had to see that everyone got to school on time.

About three years later mother met Peter Nasedkin. She married him and we had a good step-father who later adopted us all."

THE EXODUS - CHINA TO VANCOUVER

In the spring of 1924, it was rumoured that a land known as Canada beckoned where political and religious freedom existed and where virgin farmlands were plentiful. Under the Western Canada Colonization plan the Canadian Pacific Railway Company agreed to sponsor any Russian families that were willing to come to Canada and work the land. What wonderful news for these hardworking and ambitious people. They would once again have the opportunity to put their hands to the soil and embark on a new challenge to a successful life.

A retired Russian military man known as Colonel Dournovo was assigned to organize families into groups willing to emigrate to Canada. Some had plans to go to Australia or the United States, but the uncertainties connected with the plans in both cases were disturbing.

While the Polushins were considering emigrating to Australia, they heard that the Canadian Pacific Railway Company was offering land in Canada. This appealed to them as a better idea and they decided on Canada instead.

The Osokins also had plans to emigrate to Australia. But with the arm of the Red regime having reached Australia, their plans had to be investigated and the waiting period continued to grow. Finally, the Australian government gave clearance for them to go there. By then they had heard about the Canadian Pacific Railway Company's offer. Upon their persistence and determination, they were accepted into the Canadian

plan instead of Australia.

All these families that had so recently experienced a major adjustment in their lives were once again planning to uproot and make their move to ultimate freedom. This created mixed emotions of excitement and apprehension. The future looked good. Wheels were put in motion to sell all businesses they had so ambitiously acquired and to salvage what little they had for yet another boat trip.

The first group, including the Andreeffs, Lebedkins, Polushins, Mihailoffs and most of the Sidoroffs, left Harbin by train for the southern tip of China in June 1924. They left at noon and travelled through that night. In the morning they came to the port city of Dairen (Dalian) on the Yellow Sea where they boarded the Harbin Maru to Yokohama.

The stay in Yokohama was brief. Luke Sidoroff had time to take his grandaughters for a walk and met a Japanese man who gave them fifty yen each. When the children rejoined the others they proudly and gleefully showed off their silver coins to the other children.

George Lebedkin had turned nine in March and had made friends with Afansi Sidoroff's ten-year-old son Nikolai (Nick). He well remembers the journey and tells the story:

"We arrived at the port of Yokohama soon after devastation by an earthquake, where block after block of buildings had been reduced to a pile of rubble. Hundreds of soldiers were at work clearing the debris. Others were laying planks in zig-zag patterns to provide a walkway for people, over deep and wide crevasses with smoldering fires.

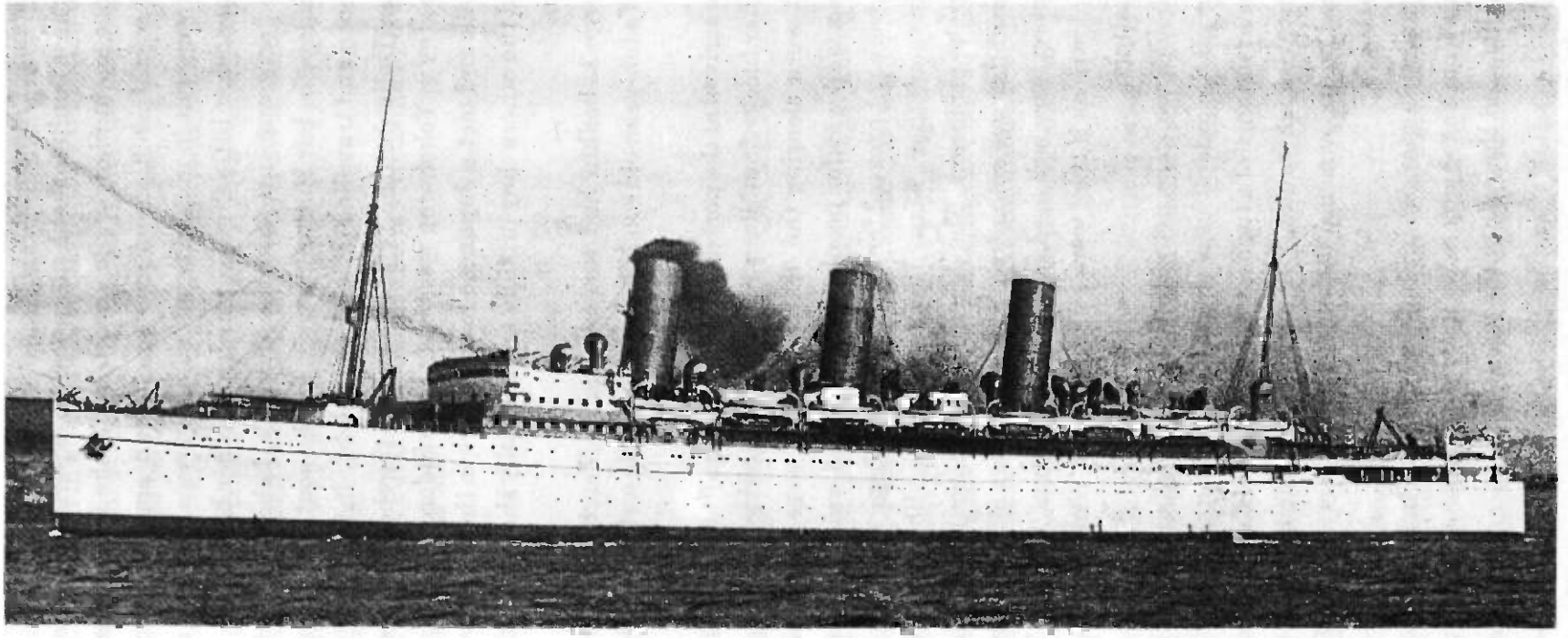
We were not pressed for time, due to the baggage being transferred and loaded from one ship to another. Many Russians took the liberty to view the crater caused by the earthquake explosion. The devastated sight would remain a lifetime memory for most.

At mid-day, we embarked on the Empress of Russia, a Canadian steamship. Men and women were assigned to separate accommodations. With ease of mind, everyone settled down, as if they were at home. Most remarkable about the Russians entity is their instinct.

Although we were not able to speak English, in no time at all they were able to discover all the amenities of the ship, including the liquor bar. Early in the afternoon, with the assistance of a tugboat, the Empress of Russia was slowly pulled away from her berth into deeper waters, free from obstructing the busy wharf. From then on it was propelled on its own into the open Pacific, carrying the Russian immigrants to their destination.

For many days and many miles across the Pacific Ocean, the voyage on the Empress of Russia from Yokohama to Vancouver offered nothing more than loneliness, screaming of the gulls, and the roar of the waves.

Canadian Pacific Royal Mail Steamships "Empress of Russia" and "Empress of Asia."
Gross register 16850 tons; displacement loaded 30625 gross tons. Length 593 feet; width 68 feet; quadruple screw; turbine engines.



- *Courtesy of Provincial Archives of Alberta A.5253*

At last, from a distance, we were able to catch glimpses of trees, and in what seemed only a matter of minutes, there appeared a clear view of land and its inhabitants. The day was perfect and the warm beaming sunshine with a slight ocean breeze, offered comfort and encouragement for everyone to be on the deck. Even those who suffered for days with motion sickness and nausea, appeared in good spirits. Big, small, young and old, all stood in silence, their eyes capturing the sight of their destination, their faces indicating a faint smile of triumph, as if to say, we have succeeded, only an arm's length away from the promised land of Canada.

The Pohaboffs, Evanoffs, Doumnoffs, Kosheiffs, Fred Sidoroff's family, Nasedkins, and Osokins would make their exodus to Canada in stages.

George Kosheiff - *by Tom Kosheiff*

"My father George had been a guard to the Royal Family of Czar Nicholas II. When the Royal Family was exiled, he had to leave the country. The family moved to Australia. In 1917, I was born in Port Darwin, Australia.

While in Australia, my father worked in the cane fields. After a couple of years in Australia, he moved his family to Harbin, China. He set up a shoemaking shop and built shoes, including the Russian "sapogy", knee-high boots. In about two-years time he decided to go back to Australia taking only his oldest son Mike with him. They both worked in a mine that produced silver, lead and tin ore. When the Russians were leaving Harbin, China, in 1924, the rest of the Kosheiff family moved to Australia, landing in Cairns. I was six years old by then so started school. It was difficult at first, not knowing the language, but I soon caught on. We didn't have paper scribblers then. We did our work on individual slate boards."

By this time George and Alexandra's daughter Palagaya had married Lawrence Andreeff in the Greek Orthodox Church in Harbin. They travelled to Australia with the Kosheiff family and settled in Chilico, Queensland, which is approximately a one-hour flight from Cairns, New South Wales, at the present time.
In 1925 they emigrated to Canada, arriving in Vancouver in September 1925 on board the steamship Orangie.

The Nasedkins - *by Zina (Nasedkin) Kosheiff*

In 1924 the Communists were coming into China. In September dad and mom decided to get out of the country. They heard that a Mr. Dournovo was organizing groups to go to Canada where the Canadian Pacific Railway helped immigrants to settle on land.

They applied for visas to Canada, Brazil, and Australia. They would go to whichever country issued them a visa. Fortunately Canada came through first and in the summer of 1924 we began making plans to move to Canada. In September we were ready to go.

To avoid being evicted from her living quarters, mom had never told the railway company that she remarried. Passes on the railway were granted to all employees and their children. Under her previous name of Kabakoff she, her five children and dad's

three children were able to travel on free passes to the port of Dairen. Dad was the only one that had to buy a ticket. He even had enough money for the boat tickets and he even loaned enough money to one of the other families to buy their tickets.

We took the train to Dairen (Dalian) the southern port of the province of Manchuria, where we boarded a very dirty and uncomfortable Chinese ship to go to Yokohama, Japan.

Our voyage on the Chinese boat was traumatic to say the least. When we changed boats in Yokohama from the Chinese horror to the 'Empress of Canada' we were elated! It was beautiful and so different!

On route my mother was very ill all the way and she almost died. We finally arrived in Vancouver, Canada. How lucky we were!"

The Osokin Family - *by Jean (Osokin) Dash*

"We were in Dairen (Dalian) for a couple of days before boarding a Japanese liner bound for Yokohama. After some travel we were tossed about by the rough sea. Typhoon approaching! The boat turned back and the crew found shelter between two mountains where we stayed until the storm blew itself out and we were able to continue our journey. Once in Yokohama, some were allowed to go ashore for a little while. There were still signs of the earthquake which took place in the spring of 1924. From the boat we watched divers bringing up things from the bottom of the harbour. We left this boat to board the same ship as the Nasedkins, the Empress of Canada, for Vancouver. What a boat! Gleaming white . . . and all those windows! Beautiful! We travelled steerage and I was very seasick even though the Pacific was calm. It took ten days or so to reach Vancouver."

John and Martha Pohaboff - *by Zina (Pohaboff) Kosheiff*

"My parents John and Martha made their move in July 1925. I was only five years old at the time, but Anesia was married. The marriage was rather rocky so Anesia made the decision to come to Canada with the family. On our way, we had a short stay in Yokohama, Japan, then boarded the Empress of Asia to cross the Pacific Ocean. We arrived in Vancouver, Canada, July 17, 1925. Sergei moved to Seattle, Washington. Later he came to Canada for a short time, but returned to Harbin to marry the sweetheart he had left behind. His father tried to persuade him to stay in Canada but

Sergei said he promised to come back for his lady, so off he went. They got married but immediately after the wedding he got sick with typhoid fever. He recovered and was ready to leave for Canada when he had a relapse and passed away. Later his wife came to live in Canada."

Terenty and Anna Doumnoff - *by Nina (Doumnoff) Mihailoff*

"After working for two years in Harbin, my father and brother Tom left for Canada. The rest of us stayed and continued working for another year to save money so that we could join them. In the summer of 1927 we travelled by train to the port of Dairen (Dalian), then by boat to Yokohama, Japan, where we boarded the 'Empress of Russia' for Vancouver. Seven days later, on July 10, 1927, we arrived in Vancouver. We stayed in Vancouver with a Russian family that first night. The next day we travelled by train to Ponoka, Alberta, where we were met by my father and Uncle John Andreeff."

Fred and Palegea Sidoroff - *by his daughters Zina Kaija and Rachel Shtykoff*

Fred came to Canada with his brothers in June 1924. The rest of the family did not leave Harbin, China, till 1927. Fred worked out harvesting and selling badger skins to earn money to get his family to Canada. He finally sent money for Palegea to buy passages to Canada for herself and her family of five children. They boarded the Empress of Asia for a long lonely trip across the Pacific. Rachel's memories of this trip are not pleasant ones. It was a very hard trip for all. She and many others were sick below deck. They arrived in Vancouver December 5, 1927, and were delighted to see Fred's cousin, John Sidoroff, there to meet them. The most memorable thing about their landing was to have John there to meet them with a bunch of bananas in his hands. What a treat! John had come to Canada in June 1924 with the first group and was working in Vancouver when Palegea and her family arrived.

FREEDOM - CANADA

Vancouver: Arrival of the Empress of Russia

The Empress of Russia arrived in Vancouver on June 18, 1924. On board were families of the Sidoroffs, Andreeffs, Mihailoffs, Polushins, Lebedkins and others.

- by George Lebedkin:

The ship slowed down to a crawling pace, the pilot carefully and skillfully maneuvered the ship from colliding with thousands of logs floating in the water. The boom boats, too, were pre-occupied, decking and pushing the logs out of the ship's way. This was a very slow procedure before we entered a narrow strip of clear water. By this time the Vancouver dock was in clear view. Ahead of the ship two men stood motionless on the dock waiting for the ship to approach. The movement of the ship was unnoticeable to any bystanders, perhaps moving only a few feet at a time. As the ship came to its proper location and to a standstill, it appeared there was a considerable gap between the ship and the dock. At this moment two sailors appeared on the dock, tying a thin rope to the two-inch cable. This was of great curiosity to my friend Nick and myself, not knowing what purpose the thin rope would serve.

We carefully observed both sailors. One was laying out heavy rope cable on the deck and the other sailor held a thin rope and formed a loop in the rope, like in a lariat. He expertly whirled the rope above his head and with amazing accuracy, landed the loop over a large tie bung on the dock. One of the two men on the dock fastened the thin rope to the winch, and the rotating drum of the winch pulled the heavy cable across the gap of water with great ease. In a matter of minutes, the bow and the stern of the ship were well secured. It is often mentioned that a picture is worth a thousand words, so was the action of the two sailors who had helped two youngsters to understand the use of the thin rope.

This was a glorious morning for all the Russian passengers aboard the ship. They were courageous and high spirited, and their anxiety gave way to a feeling of success. Undoubtedly this was a highlight as well for many Canadian papers, reporting that the

Empress of Russia, carrying the first group of Russian immigrants from China, arrived at the port of Vancouver on the 18th day of June, 1924, at eleven-thirty in the morning.

Everyone seemed to have changed from a serious to a carefree attitude, promenading on the deck, as if it were a religious holiday. The bell sounded loud and clear, a signal for dinner, but no one paid much attention, and a few minutes later the bell rang a second time. The families began to assemble, and slowly went to the dining area in a lofty manner, as if to indicate that regimentation did not apply to this group. There was plenty of excitement, which caused a lack of appetite in the dining room. As a result, in no time everyone was back on deck, promenading and exchanging long tales of their lives. Women now were more relaxed and sat on benches, discussing and wondering what their future would be.

Early in the afternoon, Canadian officials from the Immigration Department appeared on the deck and informed all the passengers that the ship would be quarantined for three days for legal and physical inspection. They cautioned all passengers to have all documents on hand at the moment of request, to avoid unnecessary delays.

Immediately all passengers were ordered to stand in a long line to take a count. The count was repeated three times, before the immigration officials were satisfied and left the ship. On June 19th, the same procedures were repeated, only with extra officials plus several medical doctors. On June 20th doctors were much more thorough in their examination than the day before. My friend, Nick Sidoroff, was hospitalized for a further physical examination. It was a sad and heart breaking day for his family, especially for his mother who burst into tears when the train pulled out. Nick's sister Anne tried to comfort her mother, but the tears were rolling down her cheeks as well. It would be the end of the summer before Nick would be discharged from hospital and would arrive in Homeglen.

The immigration officials were just as thorough as the doctors, checking every document and scrap of paper they could lay their hands on. Immigration officials were strict, but not unfair, although their strict inquiry filled a few families with apprehension. By noon the inspection was completed and documents were in order and approved. Both doctors and immigration officials were satisfied with the passenger presentation. They expressed their sincere wishes for us to do well in our new country and to enjoy the new life. As they left the ship, apparently no one expressed any regret to see them leave.

June 21st will remain a memorable day. Early in the morning activities indicated there would be a considerable change from the regular routine. The ship was repositioned to accommodate unloading conveniences. The trap doors were opened to the baggage compartments and the crane was growling at a low pitch, hoisting heavy baggage and placing it neatly on heavy duty carts for transportation.

Passengers were well informed in advance to have their belongings packed and have them ready the moment they left their living quarters. The dinner was half an hour ahead of the schedule in order to coincide with the other timetable. As soon as we all appeared on deck, the gate at the entrance way, leading into a central hall, was immediately closed. There would be no return.

The gang plank was already in place, with three sailors standing on each side for security. An officer stood at the head of the gates of the gangplank, and his orders created much confusion among the Russian immigrants. Not realizing he was dealing with a group of people that could not speak or understand English, he caused unwitting disruption.

At this moment the captain commanded two sailors to assist the Russians to form a line two abreast, and at a given signal to follow the officer. Relieved of confusion, the group carefully walked down the gangplank, through a narrow walkway, and finally into a large administration building.

The long line of immigrants, following the officer, exhibited a picturesque scene, strongly suggesting small goslings following the gander to a pond. In the immigration office, the Russians met the Canadian Pacific Railway representative, Mr. Sewell, who had diligently negotiated with the immigration officers on behalf of the Russian immigrants, while they were still in China, to obtain visas and permission to enter Canada.

According to the adults' discussion, Mr. Sewell had a great deal of experience on immigration procedures. He also was an expert with considerable experience in dealing with bureaucratic routine. His participation alleviated many legal problems and uncertainties. As a result, the Russians received their visas much sooner than they anticipated.

The afternoon was hot and stressful to both Russians and officials as well, to process the registration for so many landing cards, and to cope with various names, their spelling and pronunciation. Amusingly, their voices sounded like a choral speech.

By late afternoon all legal paper work was completed and everyone was relieved of the strenuous tension and welcomed the rest of the day for a breather. There were overwhelming tears of joy, as they received the approved landing cards, officially indicating that the Russian immigrants landed on June 18th, 1924, and were granted permission to disembark from the Empress of Russia on June 21st, 1924, onto Canadian soil.

Fulfillment of their expectations seemed to erase a gloomy outlook on life and the monotony of the day, and it became an unabashedly heartwarming occasion. The second floor of the immigration building, with its large windows and furnishings, served as a reception room and offered a great view and comfort to the new arrivals. From a short

distance we were able to see clearly a small station and a lengthy train with two locomotives standing by. A crew of working men were busy loading the rail cars with freight from the ship that had been off-loaded earlier in the morning. During our observation we were informed that the CPR company had allocated two passenger coaches and one freight car for the Russian immigrants in order to provide sufficient transportation to their assigned destination.

The early evening sunset lit the horizon with a crimson and orange luster and signaled relief for the group of working men, but not for long. The noisy activity resumed at the arrival of the train crew. Every employee was bustling with his or her own assigned responsibility. In a short time a visible cloud of grey smoke poured from the stacks of the locomotives. Slowly, one by one, the crew began to congregate at the caboose, an indication that their work was completed and our train was ready for the trip. A conductor appeared on the platform by the rail cars, and security officers opened the compound gates and we were escorted to the station.

There we were divided into two equal groups and each group was assigned to a passenger coach. Our group slowly settled into comfortable seats, gazing toward the moored ship that we were going to leave behind. A man with a soft spoken voice expressed his thoughts in an audible pleasant tone, "I wonder how many more immigrants the Empress of Russia will bring to Canada."

His speech was interrupted by a loud piercing sound that came from the locomotive whistle. With black smoke pouring out of the stacks, the train began to move slowly, every second gaining momentum. In no time it had reached its maximum speed. The train was travelling along a winding river, and the high banks of the river and its heavy growth of trees restricted the vision ahead. The rapid variation of the natural landscape and its surroundings caused some concern, but not enough to cause alarm.

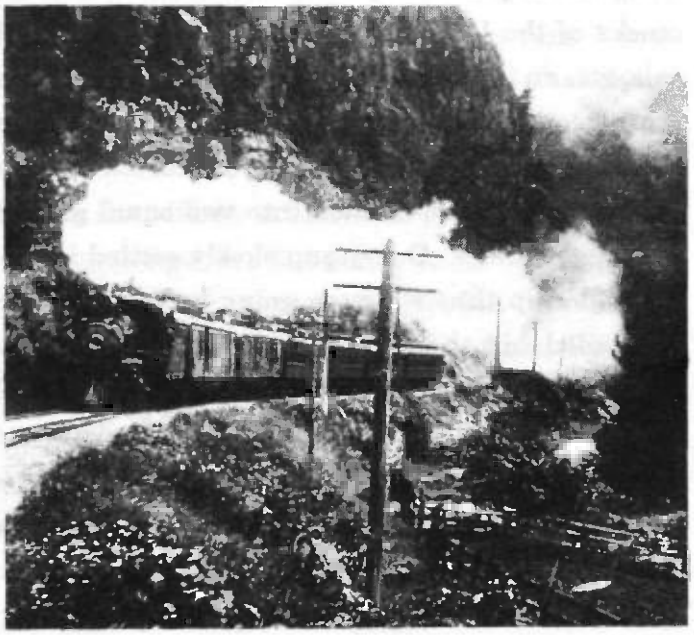
As we travelled further, the condition of the land began to improve and it was noticeable that the train was climbing up a low and steady rise of elevation until it reached ground level. All of us were amazed to see the wonders of the land, a valley of level rich fertile soil as far as the eye could see, with impressive large farm buildings, accompanied with various farm machinery in yards and corrals full of livestock. We were eye witnesses to the unexpected reality that was so dear in the hearts of Russian farmers. Their inspired spirits and hopes were high above the clouds, perhaps with the true visualization to help them form a mental picture that Canadian land was both bad and good. The land discussed above was no doubt between Hope and Clearbrook and along the Fraser River.

Taking into account that seventy years have gone by since the first group of Russian immigrants travelled that way, it is only reasonable to expect progress with vast changes. The breathtaking view of the past may not arouse interest to the same degree

due to considerable changes in our lifestyle, in which we are firmly accustomed to modern ideas and taste. We were very fortunate to travel across the country in the month of June, as even at the late hour of the day, there was sufficient daylight for observation.

The train travelled at a good pace, with miles of scenery flying by. In an hour or so we were able to see the end of the beautiful valley with mountains and tall trees ahead. The locomotives sounded their whistles alternately as the train approached the town. I believe it was Hope. It did not stop, only reduced its speed considerably and shortly after, speedily descended into the depth of the mountains.

This was a life time experience, travelling through great mountain ranges and at daybreak, we encountered the unique spiral tunnel that produced an optical illusion as if two trains were travelling simultaneously. During our journey through the mountains, the conductor confined us to our seats. Since we were unable to speak English, he patiently illustrated with motions to keep the coach proportionately balanced this was necessary.



Steam Locomotive in Fraser Canyon
- Courtesy B.C. Archives and Records Services A.03594

The Russians were astounded by the construction of the railroad through rugged mountains. They were all of the same opinion that it required rugged men to perform work under such conditions and to withstand the hardship of such undertakings. They did not know that Chinese labour was mostly employed for the construction of this terrible task and many men had sacrificed their lives before the railroad was completed. It was the coming generation that would enjoy the fruits of their labour.

The scarlet rays of the sunrise brought life and a touch of morning delight to the drowsy heads of travellers. When they fully awakened and their sleepy eyes cleared, they saw the green prairie-like expanse of farmland stretching to the horizon as it suddenly appeared as a farming paradise.

An unexpected surprise was an uplift for the Russians as well. It may sound amusing but it is true that the spirit and emotion of the Russians fluctuated equally with the quality of land, natural surroundings, and its environmental image.

The last three hours of our journey were most delightful, not only as sight-seeing, but as sightworthy as well. It provided visible evidence of the land value and, the Canadian farmer's way of life, from the poorest to the best; a fair indication to all Russian farmers or to those who intended to farm, of what to expect in the future. A rapid decrease in speed and the frequent sound of the train whistles strongly suggested that we were nearing our destination.

From the distance we first caught sight of the town of Wetaskiwin (now a city) and later there appeared a view of the station with a huge crowd on its platform and around the building. One would have thought that they had gathered to meet well-known celebrities. As soon as the train came to a stop, the ladies of the Wetaskiwin community entered the passenger coach and cordially welcomed the immigrants with hot coffee and lunch.

After lunch the group posed by the passenger coach for a photographer, to hold the occasion in grateful remembrance. The photograph was presented to each Russian family as a courtesy of the Wetaskiwin community.

It was a cold and drizzly afternoon, with occasional light rain that added much discomfort to all. Nevertheless, we were fortunate that the CPR company had undertaken responsibility to arrange and provide transportation. Cars were available for all passengers and light trucks for baggage, with tents and most essential utilities provided for outdoor living.

ARRIVAL IN ALBERTA

- courtesy of Canadian Pacific Archives Category 41.026 Photograph 15780

After the lunch the group posed by the passenger coach for a photographer, to hold the occasion in grateful remembrance. The photograph was presented to each Russian family as a courtesy of the Wetaskiwin community.

Late in the afternoon we were on our way to the new location in a string of cars, each with at least four passengers, appearing as if it were a funeral procession. We arrived in the dusk of the evening at the foot of Moon Hill, on the south side of the Battle River bridge. This was a perfect site, a clear spot of approximately two acres with high elevation, surrounded by trees and near the water, a most suitable location for camping.

The night was cold, the darkness approaching fast, and there was no time for lunch or even a cup of hot tea. The men set up tents as fast as they could and the women prepared beds for the night's rest. Our feet were damp and we were chilled to the bones. Getting into a cold damp bed offered as much comfort as taking an ice cold shower in the morning. Was this the first trial of pioneer life? Time would tell.

The tranquil air of morning with a clear sky and the bright sunlight with its rays of warmth stirred the campsite to life. The burning fire displayed high colorful flames, and evidently attracted the children's attention while their mothers tried their best to prepare breakfast and tea.

The men were also preoccupied, stringing rope from one tree to another that could enable them to hang damp bedding and clothes to air. The least expected shock to all the Russians was to discover a pail half full of water with a visible paper thin crust of ice in it at this time of the year. In frustration, Grandma Polushin raised her arms and expressed herself with indignation "Kooda nas chertei zaneslee?", meaning "where the devil have they brought us".

Unbelievable was the drastic change in the weather and its temperature, from cold to hot within twenty-four hours. May I say, it was helpful to relieve the camping stress and made a pleasant stay in camp for the duration.

On the fourth day, teams and wagons appeared. Who made the arrangements, I haven't the faintest idea. All our belongings were loaded and we were on the move again, to our new location called Homeglen. Obviously no one knew the direction to Homeglen, except that it was somewhere south of the present camp site. Travelling south without explicit directions resulted in a long vacation trip. There was disarray and concern among the group at the beginning of the trip mostly caused by uncertainty, lack of guidelines and the language barrier, which hindered obtaining information along the way. This left us to no other recourse but to travel south and hope for the best.

The narrow and rough road was reasonably straight with rolling hills, many potholes, and in places going through a swamp built up with sand and gravel. It could be characterized as a well beaten buffalo trail.

When we reached a junction of two roads, it caused some confusion as the men debated as to which road to take. During the long discussion, one of the senior men volunteered to investigate the side road. His suggestion was completely dismissed from consideration. Everyone felt it would result in nothing more than a waste of time. But

he was a man of strong will with control over his thoughts and actions and was not easily swayed. He disregarded everyone's opinion and slowly trotted off on his mission.

The group was disgusted with the man's behaviour and a few even suggested leaving the old senile behind for insubordination. His wife was infuriated as she glanced towards him and said "holera poslednia rostreplish", meaning "cholera will scatter the last of his belongs". (cholera must have been a serious threat to them as it was often used in a demeaning context).

Lo and behold, our "senile senior" returned sooner than the group expected, proud as a peacock. He waved a paper before our eyes describing a detailed diagram of a road with three intersections and an arrow indicating which road to follow to the intended camp site for the Russian immigrants. Apparently he obtained the diagram from a German farmer who was in Russia for three years as a prisoner of war in World War I. He appeared to be of good nature, conversable and, most importantly, able to speak Russian. He was familiar with the location and went out of his way to draw the diagram. This was a surprise that dumbfounded most of the knowledgeable Russians. All they could say was 'how lucky can a man be'. Nevertheless it brought harmony among the group for the rest of the trip.

The temperature was near ninety degrees Fahrenheit, and restricted travel to a slow pace to prevent horses from sweating to a lather through strenuous exertion. For four days the Russians were exposed to exhaustive testing, but they cheerfully came through with flying colours and no sign of fatigue.

We finally arrived at the tee roads and travelled the road going south. Within a short distance we approached an area densely forested with tall pine trees that shaded the area from the sun, causing it to appear much later in the time of day than it actually was. Nearby was a newly built school called Lonesome Pine. Its colourful and most appropriate name perhaps derived from the tall pines surrounding it. This was the last stretch of the trip.

We soon entered the Homeglen road and followed it eastward. From a distance we were able to see two men approaching our wagon train. As they appeared in closer proximity, we recognized Mr. Sewell and again his appearance gave us inspiring confidence that relieved us of all anxiety. He directed us to the camp site, now presently owned by Victor Osokin.

The camp was established along the creek, not too far off from his present residential area. It was a suitable location for both easy approach and availability of good water and a fair wind break. Observed from a distance, a cluster of tents along the creek created an illusional appearance of a military camp.

During the day the heat was almost unbearable. Men poured cold water on the tents, to lower the temperature inside. Otherwise a person would severely dehydrate before morning and lose a night's rest as well.

On the third day of our arrival, the CPR company delivered to the camp an enormous tent, stoves, tables, benches, and urgently required large utensils. Mr. Sewell was a man of few words and did not express any emphasis on behalf of the company's generosity. He merely mentioned that this was the compliments of the company to the Russian community to ease their burden. No one was more thankful and appreciative than the Russian women for the company's thoughtfulness.

He was kind and compassionate towards children and expressed his delight by throwing wrapped-in-paper candies and peanuts in a widespread area. The children took the area by storm and picked up the goodies as fast as they could. His regular weekly visit to the camp continued throughout the summer months and he always brought with him a good supply of treats for the children. His compelling voice became so familiar and whenever he called, children rushed from all directions towards him. He was a discrete person and gained the children's and adults' affection and respect by his deeds and actions.

Within a few days an enormous log structure was under construction as men and women laboured long hours under difficult conditions. No doubt it was far from their minds that it would result in a futile task.

The senior Russians were busy too, cutting willows and stripping the bark into half-inch widths and weaving sandals out of the strips for their footwear. The appearance of the finished sandals appeared perfect but the life span unpredictable. By no means was this an innovative project as the quality of workmanship clearly indicated the hands of experience and showed that they had been previously engaged at this type of work. Obviously the material was simple but the art of work was astonishing. Believe me, it was an eye opener and a novelty to Canadians. It is regrettable that no photos were ever taken of such events as they would have been priceless today."

The following article and letter to the paper appeared in the June 16, 1924, issue of the Wetaskiwin Times following the arrival of the Russian immigrants:

118 Russian Immigrants Settle in West Country

The first party of Russian colonists to be settled near Wetaskiwin arrived on Friday morning last and were taken out to the district southwest of Pigeon Lake where a community camp had been erected by the colonization department of the Canadian Pacific Railway. They are a fine, intelligent class of settler, and will no doubt do well in the west country.

The party was met by Deputy Mayor Moan, E. E. Sparks, M.P.P., representatives of the Kiwanis Club and others. They were immediately served with breakfast by the ladies of the different organizations in the city, and were generally welcomed. The party contained one hundred eighteen men, women and children, who all seemed pleased at their arrival at Wetaskiwin and the reception given them.

The Kiwanis Club had charge of the transportation of the party to the camp, and by ten thirty in the morning had some twenty-six automobiles on the way to the settlement with the party.

The camp is situated on the Battle River southwest of Westerose, and presents a pretty scene, the tents being set up in military fashion in four rows with a large dining tent on one side and the headquarters tent set on a small knoll above the camp, all under the Canadian flag.

On the arrival of the whole of the party, a thanksgiving service was held in the large tent by the priest and prayers were offered up for their safe arrival. The priest, in a speech to his people in the Russian language, told how the Israelites in leaving Egypt to go to the promised land were beset by armies and had to fight their way to their new country, but this party, after having undergone great trials in their native land, had been fed, welcomed and generally treated in an enthusiastic manner by the people of their new country. Prayers were said during the service asking for God's blessing on King George, their new ruler, and on Canada, their new country. Colonel Domohovsky, who brought the party over from Harbin, China, was then presented with a token in remembrance of their safe arrival. (According to information obtained from those present at the time, Colonel Dournovo was the leader of the party, not Colonel Domohovsky).

The party seemed generally pleased with the camp and the country, and are this week being located on farms by Messrs. S. D. Sewell and J. Anderson of the C.P.R. colonization department.

If this settlement proves successful, and there is every indication that it will, the party will be followed in the near future by some five to six hundred others who are at present in China and Manchuria. (Exact numbers are not available, however, this estimate of Russians that went to the Wetaskiwin-Homeglen area was much higher than the actual).

Plans were made for a school for the immigrants' children to be held at Pigeon Lake beginning in October 1924. Besides classes for the children, provision would be made for a class of thirty adults. The teacher was J. Hawreliak.

The Wetaskiwin Times has received the following letter from the Russian settlers thanking the people of Wetaskiwin:

June 22, 1924
Dear Sir:

We beg to request you to publish in your honored newspaper as follows: The Russian immigrants arriving from Harbin, China, to Vancouver on the 20th instance think it their infallible duty to express their feelings of the most sincere gratefulness for the very hospitable and very cordial reception shown by the representatives of the Canadian government, the C.P.R. administration, local ladies committee, the Wetaskiwin Municipality, and especially the members of the Kiwanis Club. We hope to justify your welcome by our following actively the trust you expressed in our party on reception.

Believe us, sir, to be yours,
O. Dournovo & Domohovsky, Heads of the Party

In June 1994, on the seventieth anniversary, Polly Elder sent the following letter to the Wetaskiwin Times in gratitude for all that was done for that group of people upon their arrival in Wetaskiwin in June 1924. The Wetaskiwin Times Advertiser devoted a full page to this article, including a photo of Peter Sidoroff's family of four taken in 1924 and another one in 1989 of Peter's descendants up to that date. The heading at the top of the page was Lifestyle:

Seventy Years Later

Seventy years ago a family of four, Peter & Lucaria Sidoroff and their two children Michael and Anne, were part of the group that arrived in Wetaskiwin from Harbin, China, under the sponsorship of the Canadian Pacific Railway to establish homesteads and to pioneer the virgin land in this part of Alberta. The Sidoroffs, along with several other Russian families, originated from the Novgorod area in western Russia, later moving east to take up residence on the Amur River which is the border between Russia and China. After Wold War I, anticipating religious persecution by the Bolsheviks, they escaped under gunfire and with few possessions across the Amur River to China where they lived for close to two years.

It is at this point in their lives that Canada beckoned, and they in their wisdom accepted the challenge and made the gutsy move, leaving behind family and friends and a way of life they were never to be a part of again.

Seventy years hence, we descendants of Peter Sidoroff would like to express our sincere gratitude to all those in the Wetaskiwin area that helped in establishing these families in their new way of life that we might enjoy this wonderful life that each of us presently has. Our special thanks to the Wetaskiwin Municipality and the members of the Kiwanis Club, and should there be any of the "local ladies committee" of 1924 still residing in Wetaskiwin, a warm thank you to you.

From the camp situated on the Battle River southwest of Westerose, Peter Sidoroff settled in Homeglen. In 1929 he moved to Hines Creek, Alberta, where he began his homesteading on a quarter section. He had eight more children. The quarter section has increased to more than a section and a half and is now being farmed very successfully by his sixth son Tom and wife Jean.

The letter of gratitude published in this paper June 26, 1924, by the Heads of the Party Mr. Dournovo and V. Domohovsky, quotes "we hope to justify your welcome by our following actively the trust you expressed in our party on reception". I would like to assure any and all concerned that we have in fact done so. Peter Sidoroff now has seventy-five descendants who are all excellent citizens of Canada, contributing by choosing careers such as the RCMP, Canadian Airlines, Canadian Pacific Railway, Transportation, medical field, the teaching profession and many other professions that make our Canada what it is today. We are all so proud and grateful to be part of it.

Homeglen Memories

In the book "Homeglen Memories" the article on Roy and Winnifred Burns tells us " . . . the Russian Colony moved in across the road and Roy did their banking (in a jar, on the clock shelf, where the papers were kept), tried to translate and also named many of their children when taking their census for the government. He couldn't spell their Russian names so substituted a little."

Roy's brother Bob was the closest neighbour to the Russian immigrants when they settled into their colony up the hill. The colony was located on the north half of section twenty-one, township forty-four, range one, fifth meridian. A creek ran diagonally through the north half of section twenty-one, then down through the west half of section twenty-two where Bob Burns lived. There was a bridge across the creek where the two sections met.

Jack and Jim Burns were the sons of Bob Burns and Jack recalls some of the happenings while the immigrants lived in the tent:

Peter Sidoroff worked for Bob Burns. In the words of Jack Burns: "It may surprise some folk that Peter walked five miles to start work at eight in the morning, worked hard all day, often tormented by Jim and I in our early teens, then walked home to his wife and family.

When the land was surveyed, there was a survey mound made by digging four square holes approximately two feet square and eight inches deep, then piling the earth in the centre in which was driven a metal stake. Printed on the stake near the top in Roman Numerals was the land number. The survey stake was at the northeast corner of each section. Note: A section is one mile square, a township six miles square; therefore, six times forty-four equals two hundred sixty-four miles north of the United States border. Many of the survey stakes were carried off by folk who just thought they found something handy!

Some recollections of befriending the Sidoroffs: A meal at the Sidoroffs - a large pot and ladle on the table, each had a bowl and spoon and helped oneself to good stew; the hard work that changed trees into houses, doors, window sashes and frames; the big hall - the east end was for entertainment or a big dance, the west end had a well stocked store; the underground ice storage with heavy hand-made doors where fresh meat was kept. These are just a few memories. The best memory was a host of friends who have lasted a lifetime."

A recollection that Jack Burns relayed to Anne Jordan (Peter Sidoroff's daughter) at the Homeglen Reunion in 1984: Peter and the boys, Jack & Jim, were hauling manure. "Peter was on the stoneboat where the manure was piled while the boys were at the front, one of them being the driver. They decided to have a bit of fun so the driver caused the horses to jerk, causing Peter to fall backwards into the manure. Laughter ensued, Peter enjoying the humour of the incident with the boys.

After leaving the colony to take up residences on their respective quarter sections, Peter Sidoroff and Philip Andreeff at times helped Jack's father, Bob Burns. Section twenty-one was purchased by the Osokins and they have continued to live there till this day."

In the book "Homeglen Memories" published in 1980, an article describes these Russian immigrants landing in Homeglen. It was submitted by Joan (Burns) Osokin and Frank Lind.

The Russian Colony

"In 1924, something unusual happened in the district. We were very fortunate indeed when we received the greater part of some of the Russian immigrants. They came to settle in Homeglen.

We should pay a tribute to these fine people for their resourcefulness, kindness and their good neighbourliness. Many have left the district, but fond memories remain of them.

In 1924 about fifteen families set sail from Harbin, China. They were bound for Canada. This first group to arrive in Homeglen consisted of three families of Sidoroffs, three of Andreeffs, Vodatyka, Ivanenko, Polushin, Lebed, Lebedkin, Kuzakoff, Dournovo, Shiskin, and Mihailoff. To arrive later were Osokin, Nasedkin, Troitsky, Zlatowsky, Matrosoff, Mishukoff, Kosheiff, Pohaboff, Shtykoff, Evanoff and Spiridonoff. The journey was long and hard. With sacks of dried or toasted bread they prepared before leaving, they managed to survive the rough journey.

Some of the families spent the first winter in Battle River north of Homeglen. There was a snowfall that first winter of about forty inches. They were quite at home with these weather conditions as similar conditions existed in their native Russia. Later they moved down to Homeglen on the farm cornering Roy Burns to the southwest. This farm is now Victor Osokin's home. Here they put up little sod roof houses and shacks. They were built of logs, and split boards were used for shingles. Some dwellings had just one large room as their living quarters, others had one or more rooms. These houses were built about three hundred yards apart.

We must not forget the community steam bath that was built near the spring adjacent to the Russian settlement. Everyone took part in the erection of this building and then also the maintenance of it. Saturday was bath day at the steam house, and it was not uncommon to see the smoke rising from this building all day long. This was a sure way of keeping the skin pores open and the skin clean.

All the families that came were not from farms. There were jewellers, opera singers and business men from the cities, consequently some found it quite hard to start farming.

These Russians brought their religion with them. After William Andreeff moved to his farm north of the base line, they used his old home for the church. The church was of the original Old Greek Orthodox faith. Some of their books were hand printed in Slovanic, which is the Evangelie or New Testament. These books were very heavy and

it took a good strong person to carry them. They had brought these books with them all the way from Russia.

They also decided to erect a very large building of logs, to serve as a hotel and store. It was one hundred fifty feet long with one end being used for the store and the other end as living quarters for one family. They left the centre unfinished so as to be able to put on a few social evenings. They held dances, concerts and masquerades, all of which were immensely successful.

As time went on, they found they were not too satisfied with the colony system, so most of the men went to work for themselves, and soon were able to buy a cow or two, a team of horses, etc. They also had to send their children to school, some to Lonesome Pine (Messick House) and some to Homeglen. These were the older children and when the new Lonesome Pine school was built the younger children began their schooling. None of these fifty Russian children could speak English. The teacher, Miss McQuarrie, thought it best that everybody should try the English language first but much to her dismay, she found that the few Canadian children caught on to the Russian language too fast. But Miss McQuarrie, then a young girl just out from Nova Scotia, who was blessed with a good set of lungs and a strong speaking voice, soon had her class under control.

The Russian women used to line up at Roy Burns' place every morning for milk for their children until they were able to get their own cows.

In the late twenties, quite a number of the children moved away from the district as soon as they mastered the language and received some education. Gregory Andreeff and his four sons, Luke Sidoroff and his three sons, Nasedkins, Mihailoffs, Kosheiff and Pohaboffs moved to the Hines Creek/Fairview area; Luke's brother Afanasi and family to the Peace River/McLennan area. Lebed moved to British Columbia where he worked as a jeweller. His son married Mildred Irwin of Rimbey. The Osokins were the only ones to remain on the section that they first came to and farmed throughout their lives."

The Polushin family *was also on the Empress of Russia in June 1924 when John Polushin was a young man. Their family consisted of nine members, Theodor & Stepaneeda Polushin, their two daughters, Katie and Annie, two sons, Vladimir (Walter) and John (Ivan). Walter's wife Paraskeva (Pearl) and two grandsons, Mitchell or Mike (Mihail) born November 22, 1918, in Vyatka, Russia, and Vena born October 1922 in Harbin, China. They reached Wetaskiwin with their belongings and ten cents.*

The Polushin Family - *by John Polushin*

"When we left the train in Wetaskiwin, local people welcomed us and took us by teams and cars to the campsite near the Battle River. Here tents were pitched and we

were settled in. A man, a widower from near Pigeon Lake, came looking for a housekeeper and sister Annie was hired. She was reluctant to go alone, so I accompanied her.

When the the camp moved to a more permanent location on what is now Victor Osokin's farm in Homeglen, we made a house of double walls of poplar poles filled with a mixture of mud and straw tramped into it.

Until they could locate on suitable farmsteads, the Russian immigrants lived in the camp. Old timers in the district told of standing on their porches in the summer evenings to listen to the beautiful singing as the newcomers expressed their love and longing for their homeland.

After two years at the camp the Polushins left their hut of poplar poles and mud, took their baby, Alexander, and settled on the N.W. 15-44-28-4W (legal description), the former home of the Dick Stewart family.

How they worked! Walter found employment in the harvest fields, sawmills and on the Calgary Power dam construction near Calgary. I hired out to local farmers. Katie and Annie went to Edmonton where the Great Western Garments Company engaged them as seamstresses. All the wages went back to the farm where the parents and Pearl were holding the fort. Gradually they became equipped for farming. Their first purchase was a milk cow, appropriately named Alpha.

Hard work, good management and self denial paid off and eventually the family prospered. They suffered great hardships, but so high was the value they placed upon freedom that hail, frost and poverty never dampened their enthusiasm or dulled their appreciation of their new land. And, after World War II the names of three members of the family appeared on the scroll honoring those from the district who had volunteered for active service.

The Senior Polushins died during World War II, Grandmother Polushin in 1941 and Grandfather Polushin in the spring of 1944. They were buried in the churchyard at St. Mary's Convent, Springdale, which is built on land they had originally donated to the Orthodox Church. Vena, who lost his life following a car accident in October of 1946 lies beside them.

Pearl and Walter Polushin celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in 1978. Katy passed away in the Rimbey General Hospital in October, 1979, and is buried at St. Mary's.

After my discharge from the armed services, I trained as a welder and found employment in the shipyards on Vancouver Island. I married Valentina Rossoff-Mihiloff in 1946 and we have one daughter, Marina Taylor, and four grandchildren.

Mitchell returned from overseas in the summer of 1945 and the following July married Annie Diggle who had taught in the Homeglen School from 1941 to 1943. They

have six grown children and five grandchildren. They still live four miles northeast of Rimbey.

Alexander married Ailene Collis, July 10, 1958, who was teaching in the Bluffton elementary school. They have six children. Alex is with the Department of Transport in whose employ he has risen steadily to the position of Regional Radar Specialist for the western region of the Ministry of Transport."

The Lebedkins Settle In - *by George Lebedkin*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LANDING CARD

Name S. Lebedkin Age 38

S.S. Empress of Russia

Class 3rd

Commissioner of Immigration
JUN 18 1924
Date Stamp
VANCOUVER, B.C.

Landing Card of Stepan Lebedkin - June 18, 1924

"Father found work in Calgary and by the middle of September we left Homeglen to spend the winter in comfort in Calgary. By the middle of March we returned to the Homeglen district and Bluffton became our post office. We proceeded to our homestead which had previously been registered in father's name. The snow was two feet deep and father cleared the snow away to the ground approximately fourteen feet in diameter. He cut branches off evergreen trees and placed them neatly in the cleared space a foot deep to isolate our bedding from the cold, damp ground and then placed a heavy tarpaulin over the branches. We had brought a half inch thick felt with us from China which was ten feet long and eight feet wide. Father laid this out on top of the tarpaulin and topped that with two number five Hudson Bay blankets, well known for their warmth. The erection of the tent over the bedding took only a few minutes and our 'mansion' was ready for occupancy. Then father cleared another area for a stove, took it off the sleigh and placed it in the cleared spot. As young as I was, I realized for the first time the strength my father had.

There were plenty of dry pine trees in the area, penetrated with pine pitch, that burned hot as coal. Mother prepared good meals but I cannot recall whether she baked bread or substituted it with something else. For further convenience father strung two wires across the stove a foot apart to dry clothes and socks.

In two weeks' time we were like the restless and intrepid pioneers of the west, who tried to open up the country with axe and shovel. There was no room for whining. We had to make the best of the situation and accept this as a way of life. Before all the snow disappeared father had enough logs prepared for building and Afanasi Sidoroff was hired to build a log house. At the end of May 1925 we abandoned our 'mansion' and moved into our new log house.

It was a grim start on the homestead and the future for a while looked dark, but within six years we were farming three hundred acres in crop. We appreciate our progress when we think about the past."

The Peter Sidoroff Family- *by Michael Sidoroff*

What a relief to be settled in one place in a tent after several hectic weeks of travel from Harbin, China, a grueling ten days on a steamship from Japan to Vancouver, then by train through the rockies to the plains of Alberta to Homeglen. I was four and my sister Anne was two years old. When I got up in the morning after the first night in the tent, I saw cousin Agnes outside another tent down the row of many tents. I was so excited to see her, I attempted to run to her when I tripped on a tent cord and fell. I hit my nose on a tent peg. It took hours for my mother to stop the bleeding. The next day I had a fat nose and two black eyes.

There were several rows of tents where many families lived while building a row of log homes on the other side of the creek, the Sidoroffs and the Andreeffs close together. Never to be forgotten are the family of Roy Burns and their two girls ages four and two who lived across the road from us. The girls' names were Jean and Joan. I remember my mother giving me a bath in a portable galvanized tub and Jean also wanted a bath, so mother stuck the two of us in the same tub. No problem for two four-year-olds!

On another occasion, we were helping ourselves to the peas in the Burns' garden without permission. For some reason, the RCMP stopped at the Burns' house that evening. I was told that they were after whoever was in the pea patch that day. Whoever it was would be put in jail. I ran away and hid by the creek until it got dark. Then I snuck home, first checking to see if the police car was still at Burns' place. When I got home the entire village was looking for me, a four-year-old gone missing. When I approached the house, mother grabbed me with a big hug and kiss, so happy to have me home. Needless to say, so was I!

"Where were you?" she sobbed, "We were afraid you were kidnapped. We looked all over for you. I'm so glad you are found." A nice welcome home after all that!

Russian was the language at home, but it was time to go to school to learn the three R's in English. Cousin Elizabeth and Agnes lived only a quarter of a mile from us. They were older and had been to school so they gave me a clue as to what to expect. They gave me a few preliminary lessons before I started. At school during classes everything had to be in English, but during lunch hour and at recess the language was Russian because most of the children were Russian. What a time our poor teacher, Miss McQuarrie, had with the Russian children.

I well remember getting a strapping the first day in school. The other kids told me that the teacher straps anyone who uses swear words. Little self-rightious me, I said, "Oh, I never swear. We are not allowed at home. I only say nice words like Jesus Christ and things like that." One of the Evanoff boys, Amille, ran into the school and told the teacher that I said a swear word and then told her what I said. He came back and told me the teacher wanted to see me. When I went in, she asked me if I had said that and I said I had. Without any further questions, I got a strapping. When I came out I went after the unfair squealer. A fight at that time would have meant a strap for both of us, so I waited until after school was out. I don't know who was the winner of the scrap, but I know I went home with a sore lip.

There are many good memories too. We made friends with school mates like Frank Lind and Cecil Cross, and new Russian friends as well, too numerous to name.

Baby Boris was born in August of that year while we were still living in the tent, then Jessie in 1926 and Polly in 1928 after the log house was built.

I recall on one occasion when sister Anne, brother Boris, and I were left at Uncle Lorne's place a quarter of a mile away just across the creek that ran between our place and theirs. We were there with Frances who was eight years old at the time. I was seven and a half years old. In the house also were Frances' younger sister Faye, her brothers Nick and Alex. Alex was just under two years of age. Both our and their parents were away at the time. While little Alex was sleeping in the attic of their house, a fire broke out next to the stove pipe going through the ceiling of the house close to where Alex was sleeping. All of us ran down the hill with buckets to fetch water. We finally put the fire out, saving the house and baby Alex. My little brother Boris, only three years old, was a very helpful little fire fighter, but also was very heart broken. He had a little bucket to help bring water up to put out the fire and made three attempts, but each time he ran up the hill he tripped and spilled his bucket full of water. Finally he managed to reach the house with some water in the bucket but how disappointed he was! This gallant, courageous little firefighter, after reaching the scene of the fire, found it had been put out!

Life on the Homeglen homestead was difficult. A family of five living in a small two-room log shack, and Grandpa Luke was also living with us. In the summer time our

father worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway building the railroad west of Calgary. In the winter time he would go ice fishing to Pigeon Lake or shooting rabbits to get ten cents for the pelts. Grandpa had a trap line to catch "oodeel" - his way of saying weasel - for twenty-five cents a pelt. Father only worked for the CPR for a short time. Long hours were spent trying to make a living on the homestead on this poor hilly sandy soil in between muskeg swamps.

There is the story of the team of horses pulling a wagon through the swamp. The horses sank to their bellies and could not move the wagon, so dad had to unhitch them so they could get out of the swamp. Oh, what a struggle to get out, even without pulling the wagon. A rope was tied to the reach, the horses were rehitched and out came the wagon. It is easy to imagine how an incident like that would stick in the mind of a seven year old.

Our quarter section was five miles away from the original village where the Old Believers built a church. Their official name was the Old Greek Orthodox. I remember walking with my dad the five miles before breakfast. Throughout the service we had to stand. One morning I woke up in my Aunt Elena's (the wife of Philip Andreeff) arms. I had fainted. I also remember receiving Holy Communion, wine and bread, from the priest, at that young age. This 'privilege' was denied the Burns girls and they were most upset.

We stayed in this village over the winter of 1924-1925. The next spring and summer each family moved onto a quarter-section of land, one hundred acres, to work it and to make a living off it. The land was poor and unproductive. In the summer of 1928 the decision was made to look for land in the Peace River District.

The Peter Sidoroff Family- *by Anne Jordan*

I was two years old when we arrived in Canada in June 1924. My first recollection is the rows of tents and the tall grass we had to walk through to go from tent to tent. When little Boris (now Syd) was born I was two and a half years old. My only memory while we lived in the tent was my mother showing me a sweet little boy. She asked me if I liked him. I said, "Yes, I like him but why does he have to be so small?" That same day mother asked Michael, who was two years older than I, to borrow something from a lady who was in a tent down the hill. I wanted to come along. The answer was yes under the condition that my brother hold my hand all the way. He was my caretaker and I trusted him to do so, but first we had to put on our shoes. Barefoot was the norm.

Memories of the walk are pleasant and nostalgic. As we walked up the hill toward our tent holding hands, I composed a little song. To the rythm of our swinging hands I sang, "oen palatki, oen palatki". Translation: "there are the tents, there are the tents". During our visit, I noticed something very unusual about the lady - she had no children!

Before long, we moved into a house. It was Sunday. Mother had told me the night before that she may go to church. I might still be sleeping when she left and so would the baby "Borya". Now, if he were to wake up crying, all I would have to do is put the nipple (soother) in his mouth and that's all. He would go to sleep again. That didn't sit right with me. I protested. I wanted to go to church too. Finally, mother convinced me that it would be O.K. even if he did cry. They would be home very shortly after. I must have been reaching the terrible age of three or four by then because I remember thinking 'when he does cry, I will not get up and give him the nipple because if I do, they'll try this again'! When Boris did cry, I started crying too. We were both crying when they arrived home. I know mother was disappointed in me.

In Homeglen Uncle Lorne's family built a short distance from us. Faye and I used to exchange visits every Sunday. One Sunday afternoon it was my turn to visit Faye. I was near age five or six. It was winter. I had my hands in my pockets because it was cold and I had no mitts, though I think I did have mitts at home. There was a bit of a creek between the two houses. It was frozen over. As I walked across I could see a piece of ice which I thought was loose so I kicked at it. I slipped and fell on my face and knocked a couple of teeth out. With blood running down my face, I came running home. I remember the shocked sympathetic look on my mother's face. She quickly washed me down and consoled me by saying "Do not worry, your teeth will grow in again." How fortunate for me this happened before my permanent teeth came in.

I started school when I was seven years old. I had been plagued with fainting spells so mother held me back a year. We ate poorly but we ate wisely. There was kasha (porridge) which was often buckwheat, other times rolled oats, for breakfast. Beans were a large part of our diet; many different types of beans, and good nourishing soups every day. There was often fish, even for breakfast. My anemia was dealt with by a special dish that mother used to make. It was a liver dish and delicious! Liver was boiled, then ground up in a meat grinder, then made into patties with onions and bacon, rolled in flour or bread crumbs. During the Lenten periods we did not have this dish, possibly the reason for my anemia.

One day all the cousins got together, plus Joan and Jean Burns, to visit the big house (Bolshoi Dome). When the group stopped by to take me along, mother was reluctant to let me go as my anemia was acting up that day. My cousin Elizabeth Andreeff said, "It's O.K., Auntie Lusha, I'll take care of her." Note, I was six months older than she was - and she was to look after me?! However, Elizabeth did look after me. Bolshoi Dome was still in its infant stages and rather precarious. Before leaving for home, we played games which required holding hands. Someone held my hand too tight and squeezed my sore finger. I screamed, almost fainting. I quietly said to Elizabeth, "Please don't tell mother about this." As soon as we got home, Elizabeth said, "You know what, Auntie Lusha...?" There went our secret!

My dear Aunt Elena came walking to our place one day carrying a chicken. Yes, she carried this chicken for nearly two miles on a very hot day. They didn't have a rooster and we did. Mother and Aunt Elena sat on the porch steps while Aunt Elena poured her heart out in tears to mother about something. It seems the Russians cried a lot and openly. No doubt lonesome for their homeland and uncertain about their future. Mother and Aunt Elena were very close. Her husband, Uncle Philip, was my mother's brother and Uncle Philip and my dad were best friends from childhood days.

One Sunday all of us staunch Greek Orthodox children went to church. Joan Burns came with us. It must have been a special Sunday because all children under eight years old received the sacrament. Joan was refused. She was devastated!

As the Homeglen names come to mind, I recall certain special people such as Joan Burns, Jean Burns, Jim Burns, Jack Burns, and Roy Burns, the Crosses and the Dyes. I want to thank these wonderful people, and those I don't remember, for the kindness and the tolerance they showed us when we first arrived in 1924. The Homeglen Reunion in 1984 was a very special occasion to celebrate the 60th anniversary. It is the most precious memory. Sincere thanks to all and especially to the Burns, Osokins and Polushins. Special thanks to my grade one teacher, Miss McQuarrie, for being there.

One of the finer and more emotional moments of that reunion was my in-depth conversation with Naidine (Evanoff) Lee. She relayed to me their very tragic and emotional story. Not only did they lose both their parents while Naidine was growing up but they had to sell their home to pay the hospital bill. I remember her as Nadia Evanoff when we were both in grade one in Lonesome Pine School. I was then Annie Sidoroff and seven years old. I felt her pain when I heard both her parents had died when we were both in our teens and regret now that I had not made my feelings known at the time - perhaps too shy or perhaps too wrapped up in my sorrow over the loss of my own mother. It is unfortunate we do not have a story from Naidine herself about her family. I hope this will serve as a tribute to the Evanoffs." Naidine and her husband Elmer live in Barrier, B.C., and Alex Evanoff lives in Sangudo, Alberta. All the older Evanoff brothers have passed on, as have the her parents.

Afanasi Sidoroff - *by his grandson Gerald Sidoroff*

"When my grandfather Afanasi and his family arrived in Homeglen, his oldest son John (my father) was twenty-two years old, Abraham was fifteen, and their sister Anne was twelve. Nick was ten but was detained in Vancouver for a few weeks for medical reasons. The younger children started school in English at the nearest country school-

house called Pigeon Lake School. Attending were twenty children and thirty adults. The teacher was Mr. J. Hawreliuk. Later they attended Lonesome Pine School where Miss McQuarrie was the teacher. They struggled to accept and understand their new environment. It was not easy but a stubborn will to succeed was evident and the teacher was most willing to help with home tutoring if and when necessary.

The students got to school any way they could; walking, on horseback, perhaps skiing in winter, and for some of the more fortunate a horse drawn cutter or light sleigh. John's brother Abraham took some schooling in English. Before long he discovered that it was not necessary to homestead on Canadian Pacific Railway land and that settlers were able to go anywhere to file for homesteads. When Grandfather Efrem learned of this and the information was confirmed by some others, it was decided that "scouts" should be sent north to look for better land. The land in the Homeglen area was too rocky and rolling for grain farms.

Meanwhile, Afanasi's son John, a young man in his twenties, went back to Vancouver to find work to help support the family. John found work at Britannia Beach on a water monitor, washing gravel and sand to be loaded onto barges for shipment to Vancouver. He was still dreaming of his Efrosinia and looked forward to the day when he could go back to get her."

Philip Andreeff and Elena Andreeff

- by Doreen Riedijk and Vi Kalugin (daughters)

"In the summer father went to work in the threshing fields to make money. In the winter he worked around Wetaskiwin. The first year they worked out to make some money, so they could buy some equipment and work their own land. Mother washed clothes for a large family by the name of Lind. She made a little extra money. Clothes had to be washed by hand on the washboard and this family had grown men. Mother had to wash their heavy big underwear. Water was hauled in a barrel from these people's place on the stoneboat - maybe a couple of miles. Two things stand out in my memory - the lady giving us peanut butter and jam sandwiches, which she had never eaten before, and the two Burns girls who used to come over to the Russian community to play. Instead of our learning English, they learned Russian, including our prayers.

Zinaida (Zina) was born in 1924, Constantine (Nick) in 1925 and Philipe in 1926 while still in Homeglen. Philipe died shortly after birth. We lived very poorly, cooking in jam cans. Two years after our arrival a family by the name of Kalugin arrived, looking for a Russian settlement. I was about two years old when my mother commented 'Vot nash zyat!', or, 'this is our future son-in-law'. The marriage was pre-arranged.

Soon the government said everyone had to get their own land. Kalugins moved to the Peace River country and father and his brother Lawrence joined them. The rest of the families followed. We left the land near Homeglen because no one bought it from us. The men went on ahead and we stayed behind at Uncle Bill's (William Andreeff). They had a farm a little further over and we stayed at their place for a while. All the cattle and everything went ahead by train. We were taken to the train by car, a Model T Ford belonging to Roy Burns. This was my first experience riding in a car. We were like Ma and Pa Kettle. They piled us in - but then we noticed we were not quite all there. Nick was afraid of the car and would not get in. He took off towards the creek, but someone chased him and finally got him into the car."

Vasili and Elena Andreeff - *submitted by daughter Merry Fowler*

When Vasili and Elena Andreeff came to Canada in June 1924, Vasili's name got changed at Customs to William (or Billl) and Elena became Helen. They settled in Homeglen and some of their children were born there. They, too, moved to the Peace River country in 1929.

John and Anna Andreeff - *by their daughters Elizabeth, Ada and Ruth*

Elizabeth Haluck remembers some of her early years in Homeglen, in particular their wonderful neighbours - the Burns family. The two sisters, Jean and Joan, became very good friends. They learned to speak Russian very well. Elizabeth says her mother was a good teacher. "I remember making trips to Osokin's with a lard pail to get milk. Then my mother got a job milking cows for the Burns to keep us in milk, but how we bought other supplies escapes me. I'm sure we had no money. My English consisted of a very few words."

Ada was born about two months after they settled in Homeglen. She was born in August 1924 in one of the tents the C.P.R. supplied to every family. She arrived with the help of her Aunt Helen as midwife. Ada's limited memories of life in Homeglen: "Water was from a creek nearby. With fall approaching, they built log houses. It was after moving into the house that my memory kicks in. I remember the priest, Father Solovieff, taking me for walks down the road behind our house. Mrs. Burns took a trip to England and she brought my mother a beautiful heavy silk crocheted over-the-shirt sweater trimmed in Angora. Mother passed it on to me and I still have it! I also have and treasure my little baby blanket (sheet) all trimmed in lace. It was hand sewn from a sugar sack, the holes still showing where the word "Sugar" had been sewn in.

Ruth was not born at that time; however, has one recollection from her parents' stories. "Ada was born in Homeglen. She was born very sickly and was not expected

to live. The priest baptized her quickly and they were digging her grave within a few hours of her birth. However, she survived and is still alive and well today to tell her own stories."

Their sisters Helen and Polly were born in Homeglen before the family moved to the Peace River country where Paul and Ruth were born.

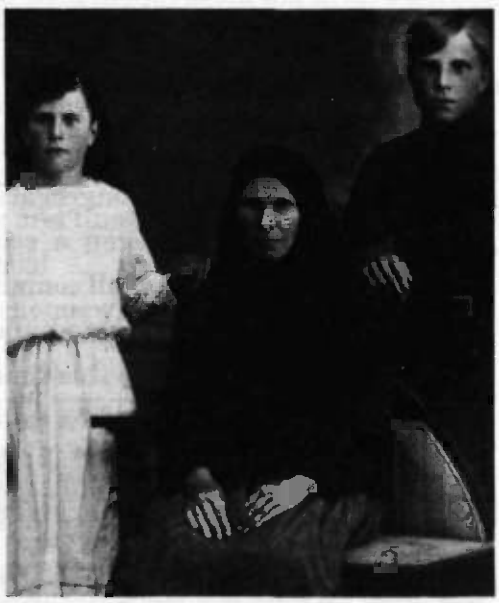
Lawrence and Polly Andreeff - *by their daughter Gladys (Andreeff) Lillejord*

Lawrence was the fourth Andreeff brother and would also make his way to Homeglen. Lawrence, his wife Polly and his in-laws the Kosheiffs lived in Australia for a year or two. The men were employed in a smelting mine. They made reasonably good money. The men also worked in sugar fields while there. It was very hot and humid at times. Lawrence was corresponding with his brother John who had settled in Alberta, Canada. After hearing about the availability of homesteads and the wonderful country Canada was, Lawrence and Polly Kosheiff booked a passage to go to Canada. They sailed from Sydney after travelling there by train, and sailed for Canada, arriving in Vancouver on the ship Tango Maru. They travelled first class. The good money they had made in Australia was soon eaten up by the cost of travel and resettling in Homeglen.

Father Artemy Solovieff

Father Artemy Solovieff was the minister that came on the Empress of Russia in 1924. He was born in Russia in 1877 and died in Canada in 1961 at the age of 84.

He was married and had one son and one daughter. He escaped to Harbin, China, leaving his family behind with the hope of reuniting with them sometime in the future. Soon after he arrrived in Homeglen, he heard that his wife had died of a stroke and his children were also dead. This was a great blow to him. In his distress and sorrow he began to resent some of the leaders of the congregation for not having made more effort to trace and rescue his family. However, he continued to minister to the congregation.



Family of Father Artemy Solovieff

Family of Father Artemy Solovieff

Elizabeth Mishukoff recalls her association with Father Artemy in Homeglen. That is where he taught her and others how to read "Slavonic" and she subsequently became

a psalmodist. He moved to Hines Creek, Alberta, and lived with the families of her father Lorne and her uncle Peter Sidoroff in Charlie Williams' house. She remembers a bed on one side of his room and the chapel on the other side where he held services on Sundays and holidays. In time a cabin was built for him on the original church site donated by the Sidoroff brothers and located between their two quarter sections.

Merry Fowler recollects some of Father Artemy's better qualities. "He recited the liturgy from memory and was meticulous in observing the seasonal Lents and Feast Days, having Sunday worship services at home even if he were alone. He always remembered the 'name-days' of every child he had baptized in that little group of Russian immigrants. He would visit the appropriate family on that day to say some special prayers."

As time went on, Father Artemy began to show signs of stress and, through resentment towards the congregation regarding his family's plight, was prone to misdemeanors that were not in keeping with his roll as an ordained minister. Following a fire around his cabin a controversy arose on the safety of icons and church books. The congregation removed these valuable icons and church books from his care and stored them in Peter Sidoroff's attic. Father Artemy took exception to this and began court proceedings against the congregation. Since the icons and books were the property of the congregation and not his personal property, he lost the court case. That in itself was sufficient cause for the Orthodox hierarchy to suspend his powers of priesthood; however, the final decision was made by the Metropolitan (Orthodox hierarchy) to remove his rights as an ordained minister when he refused to come to perform the last rites for a member of his congregation as she lay dying.

The congregation began a search for another minister in 1939; however, the outbreak of the war cut off all communication with the Metropolitan. Nine years later Father Artemy was exonerated and once again was able to officiate as an ordained minister. He was aging by this time and showed signs of illness; however he served when called upon and occasionally conducted a church service such as Christmas and Easter. After World War II ended, communication was once again restored with the Chinese authorities and the congregation continued their pursuit for another minister.

Sunday School Orthodox Style
Father Solovieff & John Andreeff

Father Solovieff in Full Ragalia
Inside Hines Creek Church

LIFE IN CENTRAL ALBERTA

The Mihailoff Family were on the Empress of Russia with the first group in June 1924. No details are available of their settling in Homeglen; however Mike Mihailoff once told the following story to his wife Vi of life in Homeglen:

"While living in Homeglen, one year Mike's dad and his brother Bill went harvesting around Calgary. They forgot to take the home address so could not send home money they earned. That left Mike to earn the living for the family of three sisters and baby brother Nick. Mike had a rifle and one box of twenty-two shells. He would hunt rabbits, partridges and prairie chickens for their meat and with money from his mom's garden and milk from the one cow, they made out fine.

However, at one point he found himself with only two shells left, so he went to a neighbour, Mr. Stewart, to see if he could borrow some shells. Mr. Stewart said,

'I have a pesky squirrel in my barn. If you can shoot that squirrel, I will give you a box of shells.' Mike followed that squirrel all day and finally got it - with one shell. It was a happy day. He now had a whole box of shells!

What a relief when his dad and brother came home with money!"

Saveliy and Tatiana Osokin - *by Jean (Osokin) Dash*

In September 1924, the Emress of Canada arrived in Vancouver with the Nasedkins, Osokins, Evanoffs and Shtykoffs on board.

We left our boat and boarded a train for a trip across the mountains to Alberta. Awesome were those mountains. We were unloaded in Ponoka. A house was rented just outside the town and three or four families crowded into it. We had one of the upstairs bedrooms. The women shared the kitchen. The men went to Homeglen where Canadian Pacific Railway land was set aside for a settlement. Folks that had come to Canada

ahead of us were already in Homeglen and had their log houses built. There was no time to log, so father and the boys made a shelter which was partly a dug-out and the top built of poplar trees that grew right there. A window on each side of the door, dirt floor and presto! . . . a shelter for his family. He gathered some spruce boughs, spread them on a bunk and lying on his back, with arms outstretched, he sighed, "Ah, Heaven!"

The children that came ahead of us took my brother Jack and me on the long walk to the school. They already spoke some English and had read their grade one readers. Poor teacher had to start all over again with another group of wide-eyed, tongue-tied kids. I remember when she fixed her big blue eyes and asked me, "What is your name?" I stared back at her with my blue, unblinking eyes. She might as well have asked me in Dutch or Greek. She tried again and again. Finally, a girlfriend came to my rescue. Across the aisle from her was a girl named Jean. For some reason she told the teacher my name was Jean. We took it that my name, Nina, was Jean in English. It took me a while to learn it. "What is my name?" I'd be asking her. The older generation kept calling me Nina but the younger accepted Jean.

One morning when we were all outdoors waiting for the teacher to arrive, the English speaking kids were in one group and the Russians were jabbering away in another. Finally, Miss McQuarrie arrived. She looked at us sternly and as she was passing by, said in a no-nonsense voice, "Speak English!" We heard that several times a day, of course. Speak English? All I knew was either "hello" or "thank you" and "Yes, we have no bananas today." The boys had picked it up in Harbin and used to sing it. I seemed to know what it meant but it didn't get me very far in speaking English.

Then there was a day when Miss McQuarrie had a group around her, one of which was my brother Jack. She was teaching them the days of the week. Jack had a hard time with "Thursday". Like the Swedish language, Russian has no "th' sound. She'd say it over and over for him but when he tried it would come out "Tursday". She gave up.

I knew the Russian alphabet, so when copying something off the blackboard, not knowing what I was printing of course, I would compare letters in my mind. A capital "H" is the Russian "N", a "B" is a "V", and so on. Most did not look like any Russian letters, so when I came to the letter "S", I just thought "crooked letter". One time we were allowed to take a reader home. One of the girls taught me to "read" one page. I simply memorized it and rattled it off the next morning, pretending to read. I don't think the teacher was fooled!

Miss McQuarrie used to invite guests occasionally. One day her future sister-in-law came with her six-year old son. He was walking up and down the aisles. Suddenly he stopped by my desk and, before I knew what was up, he kissed me on the cheek and ran off to his mom. I was a shy eleven-year old. I don't think I even smiled back. Several years later I met him at a community function. I mentioned this incident to him and this time he was the shy one and barely dragged out a smile.

In a year or so new pupils joined us. Some were in the same situation as we were when we began - little or no English. So Miss McQuarrie had to start all over again with the newcomers. One day a little boy was reading out loud "Tom Teenket had a dog. It said bow-wow". He wasn't looking at the page. He had picked it up from hearing the others. We "old-timers" felt quite superior and grinned at each other. This "little boy" in time married a school teacher, raised six children and is now a district councillor.

Vic and Joan (Burns) Osokin - *by Joan Osokin*

"Victor Osokin arrived in Homeglen with his family in September 1924, when he was seven years old. We grew up together in the Russian community. My only vivid memory of the Russian community is my talking Russian instead of English. My mother would get very angry with me that I would not speak English. I would go to school and my older sister Jean would be crying because I did not sit in my desk but would wander around talking Russian.

I also recall when my Aunt Jessie came to visit my parents one day. I was telling her a great long story about some happening and she did not understand a thing I was saying. I was telling the story in Russian. She started to laugh. I realized what I was doing and we had a good laugh together. We were really lost when our little Russian friends moved north. The school was down to fourteen children and we really missed them. We almost lived at their houses. Sixty years later at the Homeglen Reunion I didn't recognize anyone.

In 1941 Victor and I were married. We moved into our present home in 1948 with our three children Bob, Maggie and Dick. My ambition then was to have a nice flower bed, so we hauled in soil and worked it into a nice flower bed. For about three years the flowers flourished. My landscaping came to a sudden end when one Sunday, upon our return from the lake, we were greeted by a back yard full of feeder pigs cultivating the flower bed! Later, the fishermen in our family discovered the flower bed to have the largest worms in the vicinity . . . I gave up on my flowers!

In 1954 the electricity was hooked up in "the Glen" and we brought our new baby Joanne home from the hospital. In 1956 we lost our garage, two tractors, a welder and many tools in a fire. The neighbours and friends in the district got together and presented us with money enough to purchase a second hand tractor.

One by one our family left home and got married. We are now proud grandparents and great-grandparents."

Jack and Julie Osokin - *submitted by Julie Osokin*

Jack Osokin was eleven years old when the family arrived in Canada. He moved to Lake Cowichan, British Columbia, in 1948 where he worked in the woods for a time.

Then he transferred to the Honeymoon Bay Mill (Western Forest Products) on the tug-boat section of the mill. Jack married Julia L. Erickson on May 10, 1941. Julie had been born in Alderson, Alberta, and lived her early life in Creston, B.C. After her marriage to Jack, she worked in the Lake Cowichan Overwaitea Store and in 1978 she moved to Victoria where she worked at the Royal Jubilee Hospital till her retirement in 1986. Jack retired in 1977 and for six years before he died he was a resident of Tillicum Lodge in Victoria. He passed away December 11, 1994. Jack and Julie have twin children John and Judy. Judy married Thomas Nicholson on June 17, 1964, they have three children and one grandson. John has no children.

The Nasedkin Family - *by Zina (Nasedkin) Kosheiff*

"We took the train to Ponoka and were transported to Homeglen by way of a Model T Ford. A hall had been built by the previous group which some called the 'Immigration Hall' and it served as temporary accommodation for us. It had a large kitchen and a hall for our activities. We did not stay here long as dad bought a farm with a house on it and we started farming. Although dad had never farmed, mother was a farmer's daughter and with the help of friends like the Osokins, they became farmers. Imagine little dad who was five-foot-two and had worked in a liquor store most of his young life, having to drive four horses - he did it and did it well!

On January 22, 1928, I married Mike Kosheiff, the first big wedding! After our son Mitchell was born we heard of a couple looking for help. Needing work, we applied and got the job. It happened to be a Russian prince whose name was Alexander Galitzen. He lived on a farm near Edson, Alberta, and was married to an Italian wife. I worked as her maid and even mended her silk stockings!"

Jean (Nasedkin) Doumnoff: "I marvel at our parents! How brave they were to come to a strange country with little money, eight children and a strange language. There were no handouts like the immigrants get today.

In Homeglen the one room school house was filled with Russian children who did not know a word of English - poor teacher! However, we learned English quickly and the English children learned Russian from us. After living on a farm in Homeglen for about four years, we moved to Spirit River, Alberta."

Viola (Nasedkin) Mihailoff: "After we abandoned the farm in Homeglen, we packed up all our belongings on a big hay rack and headed for the Peace River country. There were eight children and our parents. Dad was just getting over pneumonia and was still sick. Zoya was a baby. Brothers Joe and Van drove the horses and we took off

towards Ponoka where we were to catch the freight train to go to Spirit River, Alberta.

When we were about half way there, it started to pour. We stopped at a school house and went to see the farmer across the road who happened to be the janitor of the school. He opened the school up for us and lit the fire. We got dry and warm. He also fed our horses. What a nice man he was! We left about six o'clock the following morning long before classes got underway in the school."

Victor Nasedkin on the Homeglen days: "In September 1925 I was born at home with my dad Peter as 'midwife'. My older sister Zina and brother Nick were gone to work outside the home. The rest of the children started school in Homeglen. Nick went to Ponoka to work for a butcher by the name of Fritz Bachor. He was only twelve years old but he went as a helper and then trained as a butcher. Mr. and Mrs. Bachor had no children and wanted to adopt him but mom wouldn't hear of it. They treated him like their own son and even clothed him. He was also paid a little, all of which went to mom and dad. In those days anyone who worked out brought all the money home. Everyone worked together.

In November 1927, Zoya was born. That made a total of ten children, three of 'his', five of 'hers' and two of 'theirs'. In 1928 when Zina got married and Nick was working in Ponoka, the family was reduced to eight children.

Some cattle and machinery had been acquired; however, farming was not productive on account of poor soil and another uprooting was in the making. The Kosheiff family had moved north to the Peace River country and had sent back reports of good, inexpensive land. Family and chattels were packed up, loaded on a hay rack and transported to Spirit River, Alberta".

The Mishukoff Family - *by their granddaughter Luba Pierlot*

"Alexander Fyodorovich and Anna Alexandrovna Mishukoff and their son Constantine went to Homeglen after their arrival in Vancouver in June 1925. They stayed in the "Bolshoi Dome" for a short time. Even though Alexander Fyodorovich was not a farmer, he recognized that the soil in the area where they were expected to settle was poor. They moved to the Rimbey area, which was only a few miles away, but had much better soil. They rented land for many years. At the age of twenty-four Constantine married Elizabeth, daughter of Lorne and Sophia Sidoroff from Hines Creek on November 1, 1936.

In 1944 the Mishukoffs bought a farm two miles north of the town of Rimbey. Constantine and his father farmed the land until 1959 when Cons and his family moved

to Edmonton. Alexander and his wife Anna moved to St. Mary's Monastery. Anna died on October 7, 1961. Alexander was ordained as a minister in the Russian Orthodox church in 1966 and served in the church until his death on April 15, 1972.

Cons and Elizabeth had their first daughter Luba September 13, 1937, a second daughter Irene April 7, 1945, and a son Leonard August 18, 1950. Luba married Lorne Pierlot, Irene married Pat Anderson and Leonard married Sherrie Shottland."

The Russian Hall in Homeglen - *by George Lebedkin*

"I have never been more bewildered than by the construction of the Russian Hall (Bolshoi Dome), which was located on the property presently owned by Victor Osokin in the Homeglen area, approximately fifteen miles northeast of the town of Rimbey.

Over the years very little has been mentioned by anyone to arouse interest to the point of discussion which would contribute some facts to unravel this mystery. In fact, it appears to me that we Russians dismissed the hall from our minds, as if it had never been in existence.

An assumption by the majority of the Russians was that Mr. Dournovo was the chief organizer of the project. However, he denied categorically that he was an influential participant. But he did agree that it would be beneficial to the Russian group, and strongly supported the idea. Then who was instrumental in organizing a group of Russians, so quickly and effectively, to perform the work willingly and diligently all through the summer on this enormous log structure? The enormity of the task was staggering and yet caused no alarm to the men. One must not disregard the important fact that all the Russians were still living in tents themselves, leaving the preparations of their own shelter to the last moments and running the risk of being at the mercy of the elements of the weather.

Can this be attributed to the organizer's diplomacy and articulation that won him overwhelming support? It is most unlikely that any hardworking Russian could be baited with diplomacy. Was it tactful maneuvering that led Russians to believe it was absolutely necessary for their future establishment and for their own good? Who orchestrated this so carefully as to gain the will and confidence of men to devote their prime time to this cause? He may have had a clear perception that the Russians were hindered by a language barrier and this presented an opportunity to succeed in his objective.

Undoubtedly at the beginning, the proposed idea must have been appealing, otherwise it would have never gotten off the ground. This structure was approximately

forty by one hundred and fifty feet long, and the floor, walls and elaborate steps were completed during July and August of 1924. The construction of this hall progressed with amazing speed, and equally amazing was the fact that this intended idea collapsed and the hall was abandoned and the labour of many hands was sacrificed. The ill-fated structure was left unattended, lacking care and protection from weather, and therefore was doomed to its destruction. Perhaps the hall was never completed because the men were no longer able to devote time to complete the hall and instead had to provide food and shelter for their own families.

Perhaps the hall was of no great value monetarily but symbolically it served as a memorial to display the ability and craftsmanship of the Russians and their skill with an axe. The preservation of this land mark would have served as an invaluable memento to mark the arrival of the first group of Russians in June 1924 to the Homeglen district and their first establishment in Canada. I hope this short history will stand as a lasting final tribute to all men and women of the first Russian immigrants who contributed so much for the good of mankind."

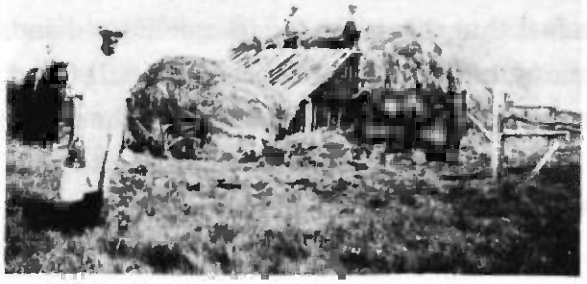
HOMEGLEN, ALBERTA, CANADA

Peter and Lucaria Sidoroff
Michael, Anne, Baby Boris (Syd) - 1925

Jessie and Boris Sidoroff - 1928

Homeglen School
Front: Elizabeth Andreeff

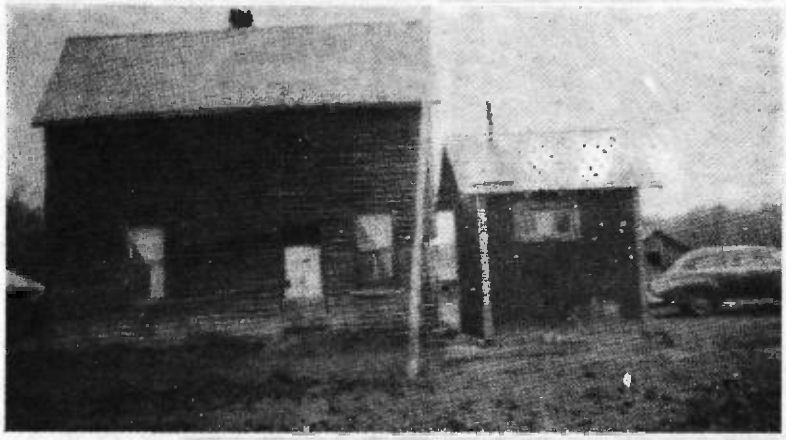
Russian Teen Party - Homeglen



Philip Andreeff - Haying 1927

Peter Nasedkin's Farm - 1927

John Andreeff's Farm
1927



Theodor Polushin's Home
Homeglen, Alberta

Afric Sidoroff's Home - Homeglen, Alberta

The Homeglen Church - *by George Lebedkin*

"The Greek Orthodox Church had a small but active congregation and performed their church services in senior Shtykoff's residence for a considerable time. I have no knowledge of the transaction that took place. Was the property donated or did the church purchase the land? I do know that the Polushin family donated one quarter of land to the church. The land lay idle for years and then the Mishukoff family was instrumental in organizing and building the Greek Orthodox Church. The church was dimensionally small, neatly built, and attractively furnished.

In my entire life I have never seen anyone so dedicated to the church, faithfully religious, such strong supporters of the church ordinance and with an unshattered belief in God, as the two seniors, Mr. and Mrs. Mishukoff. They were both an example of true Christianity. During his retirement, Mr. Mishukoff officiated services in the church.

Homeglen Greek Orthodox Church

Their deaths were an emotional loss to the church and to the congregation.

At the beginning of the church establishment, monks were in charge, but this was gradually taken over by nuns and later was strictly under their management. The premises and cemetery were well kept, and children were delighted to visit their parents' resting places and attend church services. It is sad indeed that the years have taken their toll and the congregation slowly dwindled and the younger members scattered Canada wide to prosper in their own futures. The elderly nuns in the fall of 1991, by order of the Abbess, were moved to San Francisco, California.

In conclusion of this memoir, parents deserve the credit for their outstanding courage to venture to a strange country and face the risk of the unknown and the hardship of a new life in a new land for the sake of freedom. Courageous parents were not daunted by the perils of hopeless conditions at first. From sunrise to sunset they toiled with bare hands for a living. They paved the way and promised hope for the future, that their children would enjoy the fruits of their labour.

Shouldice, Alberta

From the memory bank of Fred and Palegea's daughters Natalie, Zina, Kay and Rachel

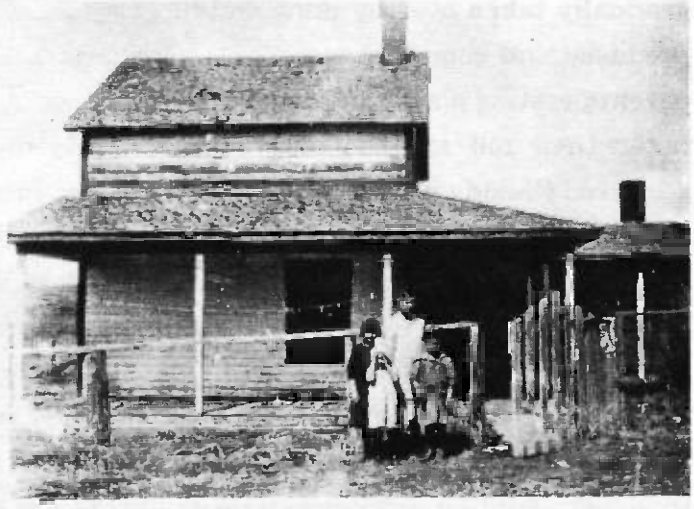
Fred Sidoroff was not able to take his family with him when he left Harbin to go to Canada in June 1924. He went to Canada to earn the necessary funds to bring his family over later. Palegea, Sam and the four girls were left behind to uncertainty and the elements of fear, hunger and cold. They lived in a one-room shack for three years. With a lot of prayer and God's help they arrived in Canada in 1927 and settled in Shouldice, Alberta.

Sam was too old to go to school so he learned his English on his own but Kay and Natalie started their schooling in Shouldice. Rachel went to a school for six months in nearby Bassano to learn to speak English. Zina would not start school until they moved to Hines Creek.

To support a family on the prairies was not an easy task. Fuel was hard to get so the family gathered dried manure from the fields to help keep the big prairie house warm. Fred hunted for badgers and the children caught gophers. Sam skinned them, bringing in twenty-five cents a pelt. There was a little lake in the vicinity where Sam hunted for ducks and partridge and which served as an ice playground in the winter. He made friends with some Doukhobors who had settled nearby and there were periodic visits made to their home for bowls of borscht.

Having emigrated from an Asian country, lice was a problem among the young and Zina was the most victimized.

Fred's attempts to hunt them down with Zina's head snug in his lap were futile, so drastic action was taken. One day Zina's dark and luxuriant hair was cut off down to her clean little scalp. That evening when Zina was in bed the family sat down to order a doll from the catalogue as a consolation, and a pretty bonnet in which to be photographed. The doll was the only one in Fred's household. Such trifles were not affordable unless it was for a good cause.



Shouldice House - Rachel, Kay, Natalie, Zina

Zina recalls that at Christmas, Rachel brought caramel corn to put in the stockings of the younger girls. At Easter Sam brought them chocolate eggs in China pitchers.

While living in the Calgary area Rachel worked for a Jewish family. One day Rachel's father's cousin, Abe Sidoroff, came to visit her and brought his friend Nick Shtykoff with him. Nick had come to Canada on the Empress of Canada on September 19, 1924, at the age of seventeen. His family had originally come from Tsaritsan (Stalingrad) in Russia where Nick was born on January 29, 1907. While living in the Calgary area, Rachel and Nick became well acquainted and before long he proposed to her. As she was only fifteen years of age, her father Fred did not allow the marriage to take place and Rachel moved to Hines Creek with her family. Nick lived in the Calgary area until his father died, at which time he moved to Vancouver, then to Washington State. Many years later, they met and married.

Fred's daughter Kay remembers how she learned that there was no Santa. "Nina and Tom Doumnoff were living with us. They informed me that whatever I asked Santa for he would bring me, so I asked. On Christmas morning there was nothing there and Nina and Tom delighted in my disappointment with a hearty laugh. I had my lesson about Santa".

Terenty and Anna Doumnoff - *by Nina (Doumnoff) Mihailoff*

"We arrived in Homeglen on July 11, 1927, where we rented a place to live. It was there that I went to school for the first time in my life. Our next move took us south of Calgary to Shouldice were we lived with the Fred Sidoroffs. From there I went to Calgary where I worked for a family for twelve dollars a month. My father, stepmother, and brothers Peter and Tom left to settle in the Peace River country. I worked for several families while in Calgary, then finally in 1933 I moved north to join my family in Hines Creek, Alberta. I lived with my family for a couple of months, then went to Fairview where I found work.

During one of my visits back to Hines Creek, I met Bill Mihailoff. In 1935 Bill and I were married. We stayed and homesteaded in Hines Creek for the next thirty years and had five children. In 1964 Bill died of stomach cancer. I remained in Hines Creek for three more years, then moved back to Fairview where I worked in a nursing home for ten years. I retired in 1977. Now at the age of eighty-two I am still living in my house in Fairview. I now have ten grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren."

THE DIRTY THIRTIES

by George Lebedkin

"The first four years the Russians enjoyed economic stability and the wages paid were in proportion with economic consumption and demand, and valued according to man's performance at work.

Mr. Dournovo and his family lived in a house nearby the camp which served as the Russian headquarters and he was closely associated with the Canadian Pacific Railway Company in some confidential capacity. To assist him in travelling, he purchased a model T Ford car and Mr. Kulukoff was employed as his chauffeur.

For the others, hardship prevailed. What was the CPR company's motive in showing such great interest and providing extensive material support to the first Russian immigrants? Could it have been a land sale promotion, or was it an error in judgment on behalf of the CPR company in bringing them to the wrong location? Homeglen and its surrounding area was more of a pitfall than attractive farming district and farfetched from what the Russian farmers had in their minds. The more suitable land for farming had already been taken up by earlier settlers and the land that was available was not worth the loss of time to consider. The conditions and quality of land offered nothing more than hardship, slave labour, and very little in return and not a ray of hope for an early comfortable retirement.

Towards fall the camp dispersed. Every man for himself. As it is well known, a man's first obligation is to his wife and children. Every man had to provide shelter for his family. Cold realization forced the men to expect a harsh winter would soon be greeting them. They were desperate and had no other alternative but to purchase cheap land and be able to construct some sort of a shelter to survive the cold winter. Every family was preoccupied with its own problematic situation and each used his own tactics to combat them.

With limited time and resources, men accomplished remarkably well. A few didn't have time to hang doors so they hung heavy blankets instead over open spaces to keep the cold air from entering. Those that were caught with open ceilings, laid rails over the beams and plastered both inside and outside of the rails. This entailed extra work but spared their cash. The second group of Russians who arrived in the fall built their shelters in dugouts into the side of the hill with windows facing south. This provided plenty of sunlight and uniform temperatures during the cold winter month, a proven fact that the earth is still the best insulation.

The past involvement subjected the Russians to hardships but their minds were not disturbed with perplexities. Their strong character and self-sufficiency endured much pain without any evidence of suffering. This was an era when unemployment insurance

was substituted with resourcefulness and welfare was unheard of. The economy was brought down to a standstill very abruptly by the Wall Street crash of 1929. This was followed by a depression in 1930, putting a tight lid on the economy. Thousands of men lost jobs and some in a fit of depression committed suicide.

Disparity in wages was another affliction and forced men to labour for fifteen or twenty dollars a month, which only kept a person alive one step from starvation. The provincial government subsidized farmers to employ as much hired help as they could. The men rode on the roof of the rail cars from one town to another seeking work. The west was hit most severely, facing the task of absorbing its proletariat. The provincial government sympathized with the working class. Circumstances forced the government to create a Debt Adjustment Board and imposed a moratorium on mortgage debt to stay foreclosures, and saved thousands of farmers and small businesses from bankruptcies. But government was powerless to control exploitation of labour. As regularly as clockwork, the municipality put up notices yearly on the illuminated bulletin boards listing hundreds of parcels of farmland for tax sale. Farmers were well aware of the fact that no one was financially in a position to buy, when price of wheat, barley and oats were sold at seventeen, twelve, and seven cents per bushel respectively. Grain prices tumbled so low that the Prime Minister of Canada, R. B. Bennett, issued a temporary proclamation that compelled grain companies to compensate farmers with an extra five cents per bushel to defray threshing expenses. Companies issued yellow certificates as proof of payments - farmers called them 'Bennett's charity'.

The unfortunate Russians, barely established, were trapped again, by a dismal economy that caused a precarious situation. The families suffered great deprivation during the long depression. A good harvest in southern Alberta was one of the first financial boosts to the Russians, who took advantage of the situation. It enabled them to earn a premium wage nowhere else to be found. During this two and a half month period, when the harvest was completed, minimum payable earnings to a man were five hundred fifty dollars and the maximum was seven hundred fifty dollars, depending on the man's ambition and physical stamina. For some reason, however, some Russians failed to exploit this opportunity to better themselves financially. The wheat farmers were generous with wages and prompt with payments. But they also were selective as to whom they hired and they were well qualified to form an accurate opinion of a man. They emphasized they did not want any trick stooking, and were very informative to newcomers, carefully explaining the proper method of building stooks to withstand the ravages of wind. Their choice curbed many men, not so much due to inexperience, but rather the individuals who had no desire to learn and who were very little concerned with how well the job was done. The Russians established an excellent reputation through the prairies, for reliability, fortitude and performance of good work. For their

earnest fulfillment of work, they too had the pleasure of collecting financial reward. The Russian women were so inspired with the financial results, they called the prairie harvest 'zolatoia dnoh' (golden bottom). The men's version was 'zemlenoi raei' (earthly paradise!).

People could not understand how the prairie farmers had the financial ability to pay such fantastic wages while the price of grain was reduced to a pulp. The public was unaware that supply and demand controls the price. Because of its characteristic quality and lengthy maturity, the northern hard wheat never reached the climax of overproduction and was therefore in great demand by flour mills to mix with the softer wheat and cereals. As a result, the farmers were in the driver's seat and commanded a reasonable price.

A rabbit epidemic, not due to disease, but rather by a tremendous increase of rabbits, bewildered everyone in the community as to where they had come from. This turned out for the best as it provided an unexpected little fortune for the poor. Rabbit pelts were in great demand and rivalry among buyers caused prices to skyrocket from nine to sixteen cents a pelt. Without any exaggeration in two days' hunting of approximately nine hours, it was possible to earn as much as one month's wages if working locally or for a lumber mill. After two days of hunting, men realized there was more to it than meets the eye.

To rabbit hunt, one had to cope with sub-zero temperatures, hours of constant walking through two feet of deep snow, eating a frozen lunch, and then carrying the dead rabbits out of the willows to where sleigh and horses were stationed, sometimes as far as three hundred yards away. The days in winter were short but the hunting continued until the sight of the gun was no longer visible on account of darkness. It was time to pack up and travel home. Care of the horses was the first priority, chores were next and after supper the rabbits had to be skinned and stretched. The dry pelts from the previous day's hunting had to be removed from stretchers, separated into sizes, large and medium, and tied into bundles of ten. These were the buyer's requirements. The guns had to be cleaned and oiled and the boxes of shells placed about a foot from the chimney to dry overnight. One must weigh the attractive income against the hardship of obtaining it. If conditions of hunting were normal, it would have attracted a greater number of participants but many were discouraged to meet the challenging conditions and abandoned the idea of hunting completely.

While working for the railroad company, my father had discovered several areas north of Hoadley with a heavy growth of good quality tamarack. He realized he could convert the tamarack into cash and during the harvest season in southern Alberta, he signed a contract with farmers to deliver a carload of three thousand tamarack posts at fifty cents per post. The farmers were obligated to pay the rail transportation.

Every year in March, father and Steve Shtein faithfully shipped carloads of posts to farmers and, considering the wages during the depression, made an incredible profit which they divided equally. Although depression spared no one, evidently the aggressive men always found a way to better themselves.

Generally speaking, Russians were very hospitable and lived in harmony, faithfully observing their religious holidays and social customs. They kept a keg of braga in the cellar to soothe their nerves and to entertain occasional company. Even though they suffered severe deprivation and had no electricity or running water in their homes, they always had time for socializing. They travelled to each other's homes by sleigh and the cold temperatures had very little effect on their celebrations, and the colder it got, the louder they sang and the sound of their voices could be heard a great distance in the sharp cold winter air.

In the early thirties, the majority of the Russian group decided to move from Homeglen to Peace River to the unknown conditions of northern Alberta. They had the will to do and the soul to dare to better their livelihood. They were willing to face the consequences and were of the opinion that the wealth and other objectives are often forfeited by over-cautiousness or failure to risk danger. Only a handful of Russians decided to stay and kept on farming without any interruption. Over the years, their farming accomplishments were quite impressive.

The Search for Good Earth

In the summer of 1928 many of the menfolk made another major decision in their aspirations to improve their livelihood. Peter and Lorne Sidoroff, their father Luke and his brother Afanasi Sidoroff, John Pohaboff, Lawrence Andreeff, George Kosheiff and others made their way to the Peace River country to look for more productive farmland. Afanasi and John Pohaboff stopped off at Falher while the rest went on to the end of the railway at Whitelaw. It may be hard to believe, but these men walked from Whitelaw to the Waterhole and Hines Creek areas, in their determination to find that perfect piece of land on which they would spend the rest of their lives. Each filed for quarter-sections for themselves as well as for others that could not accompany them on this trip. John Pohaboff was not happy with his find in the Falher area so he too took the train to Whitelaw, then walked to Waterhole. Good fortune was on their side. They found what they were looking for. After filing their claims, they returned to their families in Homeglen and began planning for their final trek.

"When many of the Russian families moved to the Peace River country, I found myself alone in grade six and I stayed alone until I went to Wetaskiwin for Grade eleven.

For my teacher training I went to Camrose Normal School. The spring we graduated there were two thousand unemployed teachers in Alberta. We were in the Depression. The school board looked for experienced teachers and I suppose my foreign name did not help either, but as Johnny Wayne and Frank Shuster said, "whoever heard of a hockey player named Smith or Jones?" I was almost three years without a job. Then from my first teacher, Mrs. Dye (nee McQuarrie), I heard of a school being built in her part of the country. I applied and was accepted. Mrs. Dye lived in Mackay, about ninety miles west of Edmonton and she was still teaching.

My school was in the bush where new settlers were coming in to beat the Depression. The people of the district built the school themselves. They cut the timber, limbed the trees, cut them into logs of the desired length, hauled and hewed them and put up the four log walls. The government supplied the windows and roofing. What do you suppose they called this school? "Log Cabin", of course.

When I arrived, the men were still doing some inside work. The wall board still had to be painted for the blackboard, pegs by the door for outdoor wear, nails to hang drinking cups on and a bench to hold the water pail. In the middle of the room stood an old drum converted into a wood burning heater. Outdoor restrooms, of course.

School opened after Easter Holidays. I found myself in a similar situation as Miss McQuarrie did several years earlier. A few students had some English. There were two English-speaking families, but the majority were like myself when I started. I had three sets of twins in that school, two boys, two girls and one of each. At the place where I boarded, the man was a twin and I myself had a twin brother. One set of twins was Peter and Paul. I could not tell them apart. Their mother had embroidered an "A" on Peter's overall strap and a "B" on Paul's. It was always Peter and Paul, never the reverse. I would gesture with my hands for them to come to the blackboard. No go! They just sat there and stared. Familiar behavior.

A school picnic was planned at the end of the school term with home-made ice cream - real cream - and all the other goodies. During the festivities one of the twins came to my yet-to-be husband Rob, looked him over and said "You got green eyes". How's that after just two months? No special English Second Language lessons and no extra cost. I don't know how most of the children made out in the end. However, I do know one girl became a teacher, two became business women, one of them a world traveller and one of the boys became a big contractor. Such small beginnings, depression years and then the War years!

After three years at the Log Cabin School, I married Rob Dash, the guy with the green eyes, but continued to teach off and on for many years. Our children are Diane and Dennis. Diane became a school teacher. Dennis won a scholarship to McGill University and graduated with a Bachelor of Science.

There were some dark times in our life but some of them resulted in good. From a hymn we sing in church "I'll bless the Hand that guided, I'll bless the Heart that planned" and from Psalm 103: "Bless the Lord, O my soul".

PROGENIES & PHOTOS .....

Progeny of Theodor (Feodor) Ivanovitch and Stepaneeda Polushin

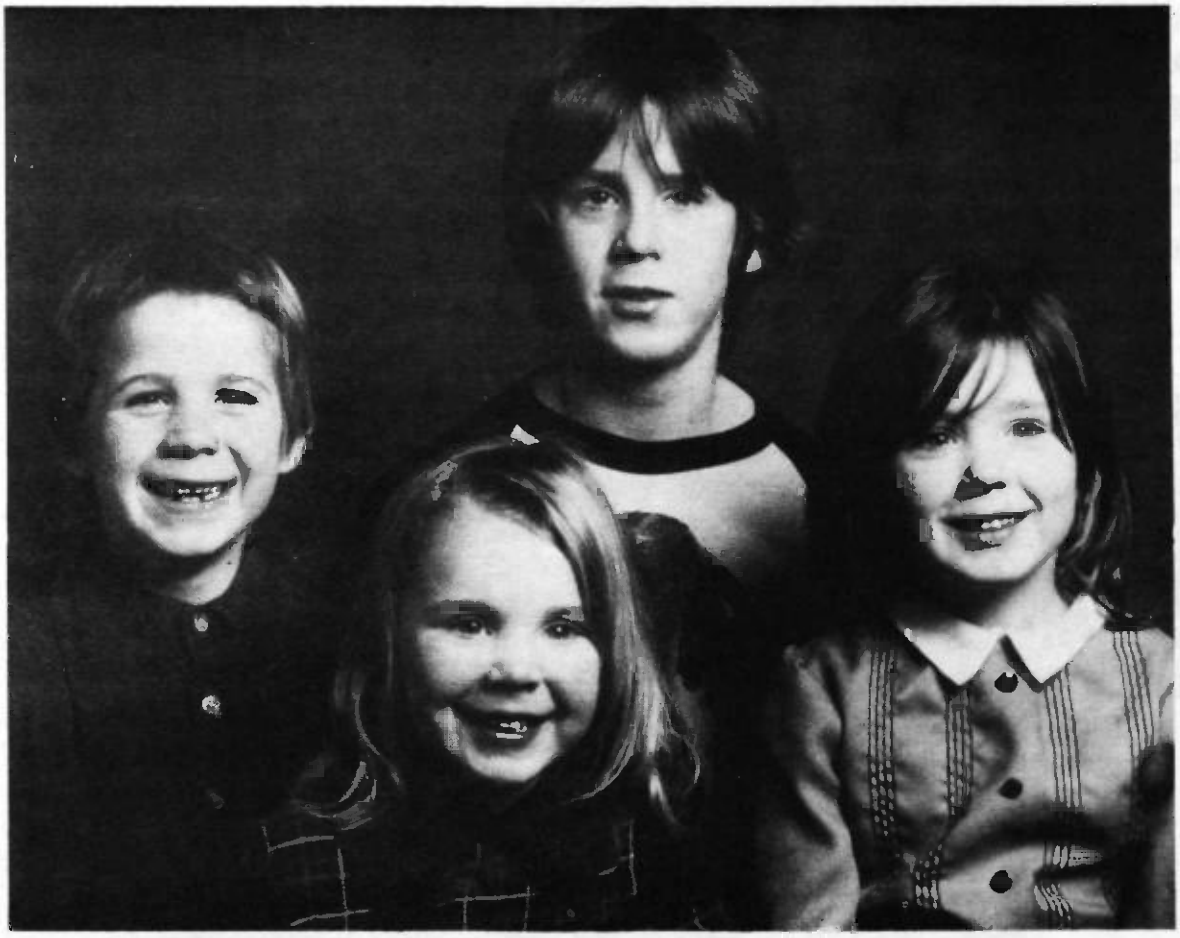
Both born in Russia and died in Canada, Theodore died in 1944 and his wife died in 1941. Children: Walter (Vladimir), born 1906, married Pearl (Paraskeva), 3 children - Michael or Mitchell (Mihail) born in Russia November 22, 1918, Vena born in Harbin, China, October 1922, died in Canada; Alexander, born in Harbin, China, 1924, 11 grandchildren. Anna born in Russia. Ekaterina born in Russia, died October 1979 in Canada. John (Ivan) born in Viatka, Russia, in 1908, married Valentine Rossoff-Mihiloff - 1 daughter Marina, 4 grandchildren - Vanya, Jason, Tatiana & Larissa Taylor, 1 great-grandchild Christina.

Theodor & Stepaneeda Polushin - 1924

John & Valentina Polushin

Katie & Annie Polushin - 1924

Marina (Polushin) Taylor



Jason, Tatiana, Vanya, Larissa Taylor

Pearl & Walter Polushin - 1924

Progeny of Saveliy Osokin, born Russia, died 1968 in Canada; and Tatiana, born in Russia, died 1962 in Canada. 5 children born in Russia:
Paul - born 1910, died 1990. **Jack** - born 1913, married Julia Erickson, twin children, 3 grandchildren. Jack died December 11, 1994. **Jean** - born 1915, married Rob Dash, 2 children, 3 grandchildren . **Victor** - born 1917, married Joan Burns, 4 children, 8 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. **Fatya** - died in Canada 1925.

Back: Paul & Jack Osokin. Seated: Saveliy & Tatiana Osokin. Front: Jean, Victor & Fatya Osokin

Jack & Julie Osokin, daughter Judy Nicholson & Son John

Judy's Children: Nick (Nick's fiance Alison), Tracy, Donna Nichlson - 1992

Paul & Vic Osokin

Victor & Joan Osokin with Children & Grandchildren - 50th Wedding Anniversary

Front: Rob Dash, his mother, Jean Dash - Grandchildren Dana & Jennifer
Back: Dianne & David Pepper, Dennis & Anne Dash

Progeny of Stephen (Stepan) Timofayich Lebedkin - born Aug. 15, 1880, in Russia - died Aug. 12, 1945, in Canada and Feukla Vasilovna Lebedkin - born Sept. 15, 1882, in Russia - died Sept. 28, 1967, in Canada.

Children: **John** - born in Russia, disappeared age 13 in China. **Katherine** - Born in China, died from scarlet fever before the age of two. **Valentina** - Born in China, died from scarlet fever before the age of two. **William** - born in China, died of diphtheria at 18 months. **Gregory** - born in China, died of scarlet fever before the age of two. **Eugene George** - born in China March 5, 1917, married Wanda Patek, 4 children, 6 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren.

Stephen Lebedkin in Cossack uniform, Feukla center holding baby John, flanked by two sisters with their children. Top left is a son-in-law - Yermolayevo, Russia about 1904.

Stephen Lebedkin - in his early 30s

Center: George & Wanda Lebedkin, Baby Tanner
Grandchildren: Liza, Tracey, Mikel, Brittany, Jared
Great-grandchildren: Nicole, Kevin, Candice, Chelsea

...la Lebedkin with son George
taken in the early 1920s

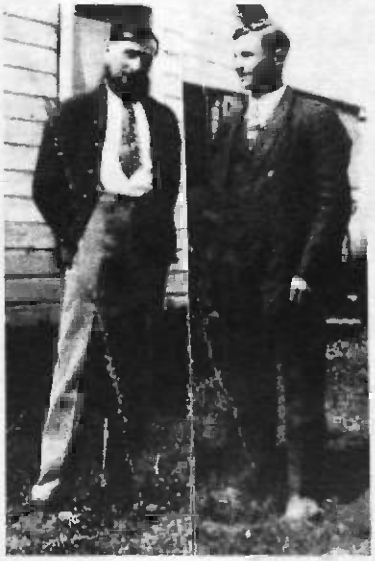
George & Wanda Lebedkin with children
Diana, Leon, Gloria and Deana - 1994

Pogeny of Sidor (origin of name Sidoroff or Sideroff) - born May 14, 1834, died April 22, 1900. Wife: Evdokia born March 12, 1843, died March 19, 1894 Sidor and Evdokia were born and died in Western Russia:
Vasili - born May 15, 1865. Wife Natalia. Vasili died November 19, 1908, 4 children- Stepan, Palagaya, Matrona, Anna. All remained in Siberia. Nikifor- born February 9, 1872. Wife Marya. **Nikifor** died April 19, 1922, in Siberia. 5 children - Aksenya, Simeon, Ivan, Constanine, Palagaya. All remained in Siberia. **Luke (Luka)** and **Afric (Afanasi)** - both born in Russia and died in Canada.

Progeny of **Luke (Luka)** - born October 31, 1860. Wife Matrona - born in Russia, died February 20, 1921, in Siberia. Luke died December 30, 1948, in Canada. 4 children - Feodor (Fred), Anna, Prokofi (Peter), Ilarion (Lorne), 28 grandchildren, 49 great-grandchildren, 85 great-great-grandchildren, 12 great-great-great-grandchildren.

Luke Sidoroff

Fred Sidoroff



Lorne & Peter Sidoroff - 1932

Progeny of Palagaya Sidoroff (daughter of Nikifor and Marya) - Palagaya is the cousin of Fred, Peter and Lorne Sidoroff and is their only contact in Russia. She married Ivan Ushmalkin. Children born and stayed in Russia:
Constantine - born 1926, no records available (photo below). **Nina** - 2 children, Uri and Valya (surname - Govrielov as in Gabriel). **Mikhail** - name of wife not known, 2 children Andreï and Era. **Sergei** - no records available. **Taisia** - name of husband not available. Available records show 1 son, Vova.

Palagaya Ushmalkin with grandsons Uri and Vova - 1975
Palagaya is the cousin of Fred, Peter & Lorne Sidoroff

Constantine Ushmalkin - 1927

Nina & Uri Govrielov with Santa - 1975

All the above remained in Russia - Contact was re-established in the early 1970s
Uri Govrielov is now a medical doctor in Moscow specializing in respiratory medicine.

Progeny of Afric (Afanasi) Sidoroff - born June 18, 1876, died August 31, 1959. Wife **Anastasia Kononov** - born December 22, 1882, died December 31, 1942. Children: **John** (Ivan) - born 1902, married Efrosinia (Florence) Chuchalin in China, 3 children. John died 1985, Forence died 1979. **Abraham** (Avraam) born 1909, married Aliftina (Ella) Nasedkin, 5 children, 13 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren. Abraham died June 4, 1974. **Anne** (Anna) - born 1912, married Bill Todor, 5 children, 5 grandchildren Bill died December 16, 1993. **Nick** (Nikolai) - born 1914, married Helen Savard, 10 children, 16 grandchildren. 2nd wife: Mary Kotyk. Nick died March 11, 1984. Helen died December 1989.

Back: John, Abraham, Efrem Kononov
Front: Afric, Nick, Anne, Anastasia - 1924

John Sidoroff & family, Anne Todor & family, Ella with Baby, Nick Sidoroff

John and Florence Sidoroff
Harbin, China - 1931

Gwen's daughters (Nick's)
Carrie, Nicole, Roberta

Gloria (Nick's daughter)
with daughter April

Nick & Helen Sidoroff's (Peace River) Grandchildren - *Pictures 1 to 9*

Bernie's Stefan

Brian, mom Nellie, Bradley

Tony's Lee & Krisa

Tim's Clayton

Nonna's Jason

Alex's Dustin & Jill With Mom & Dad

Tim's Lisa

Nonna's Sam

Tim's Julie

Len & Millie With Grandchildren - *pictures 10 - 12*

Abe's son Len Sidoroff

Bryan

Stacy, Robyn, Millie, Mandy

Progeny of Fred (Feodor) Sidoroff, born February 21, 1887, died October 5, 1961 married Palegea Petrovna, born October 21, 1886, died July 19, 1965. **Peter** (Peotr) - born 1908, died 1908. **Sam** (Simeon) - born Oct. 1, 1910, married Alaftina (Ella) Kuznetsoff, 2 children, 3 grandchildren - Sam died May 21, 1993. **Rachel** (Raisa) - born Sept. 18, 1913, married Lawrence Kosheiff, 2 children, 10 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren - Lawrence died April 3, 1967. Rachel married Nick Shtykoff on Apr. 25, 1971 - Nick died in 1977, Rachel died February 1995. **Tanya** - born 1915, died 1915. **Kay** (Kapitalina) - born Nov. 9, 1918, married Hugh Cooke, 2 children, 4 grandchildren. **Natalie** (Natalia) - born Sept. 8, 1921, married Mike Andruff, 3 children, 7 grandchildren. **Zina** (Zinaida) - born July 5, 1923, married Andrew Kaija, 4 children, 3 grandchildren.

Fred Sidoroff - Russia

Back: Sam, Kay, Mom Palegea, Rachel
Front: Zina, Natalie - Harbin 1926

Fred & Palegea's children with their families - Sam & Ella Sidoroff, Rachel & Larry Kosheiff, Kay & Hugh Cooke, Natalie & Mike Andruff, Zina & Andy Kaija - 1953

Larry Kosheiff
& Rachel Sidoroff

4 Generations: 1st Rachel, 2nd Mike
3rd Ivy, 4th Brandon Kosheiff

Nick & Rachel Shtykoff
at their summer home

Zina & Andy Kaija's family - Angela's Wedding - 1989

Hugh & Kay Cooke and family at Scott & Liz's wedding - Hugh, Kay, Jennifer, Scott, Gail, John, Tina, Michael, Kelly (missing from photo - bride Liz)

Progeny of Peter (Prokofi) Sidoroff - born July 21, 1892, died August 26, 1962, married Lucaria Andreeff - born March 26, 1892, died May11, 1931.
Constantine - born 1910, died 1919. **Tanya** - born 1915, died 1915. **Peter & Paul** (twins - Petre, Pavel)) - born 1913, died 1913. **Michael** (Mihail) - born 1919, married Sylvia Chance, 2 children, 7 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. **Anne** (Anna) - born 1922, married Glenn Jordan, 3 children, 8 grandchildren. **Syd** (Borise) - born 1924, married Alberta Dickie, 3 children, 8 grandchildren. **Jessie** (Taisia) born in 1926, married Leslie Mennie, 3 children, 3 grandchildren. **Polly** (Palagaya) - born 1928, married Don Elder, 4 children, 7 grandchildren
2nd wife: Pearl (Paraskavaya) Reznick - born August 8, 1903, died Dec. 8, 1966
Thomas (Timofei) - born 1933, married Jean Kibblewhite, 2 children, 4 grandchildren. **Mary** (Marya) - born 1935, married Ross Hogg, 2 children, 2 grandchildren. Mary died August 18, 1991. **Nadia** (Nadezhda) - born 1936, married John Hodgson, 2 children, 1 grandchild. **Vic** (Vicari)- born 1938, married Dorothy Hughes, 1 child. **Rhena** (Irena)- born 1940, married Harold Canning, 3 children, 3 grandchildren.

Peter

Lucaria

Pearl

THE PETER SIDOROFF CLAN

Daughters - Nadia, Polly, Jessie, Rhena, Anne, Mary

Sons - Michael, Vic, Syd, Tom

Reunion on farm - 1978

Peter Sidoroff Family Reunion - Parksville, British Columbia - August 1989

. . . and there are more

Kevin, Trista &DylanHughes

Zachary Wilson

Larissa Hogg & P.J. Johnson

Ben Kelsey & Mom

Kathy Sidoroff

Julie & Tawnya Ritco

Darcy, Twins Carissa & Courtenay Sideroff

Rob Sidoroff

Alynn Borger

Brittany Borger

Rick Mennie

Melissa Eidick

Rylan Sideroff

Tiffany, Samantha, Michael Sideroff

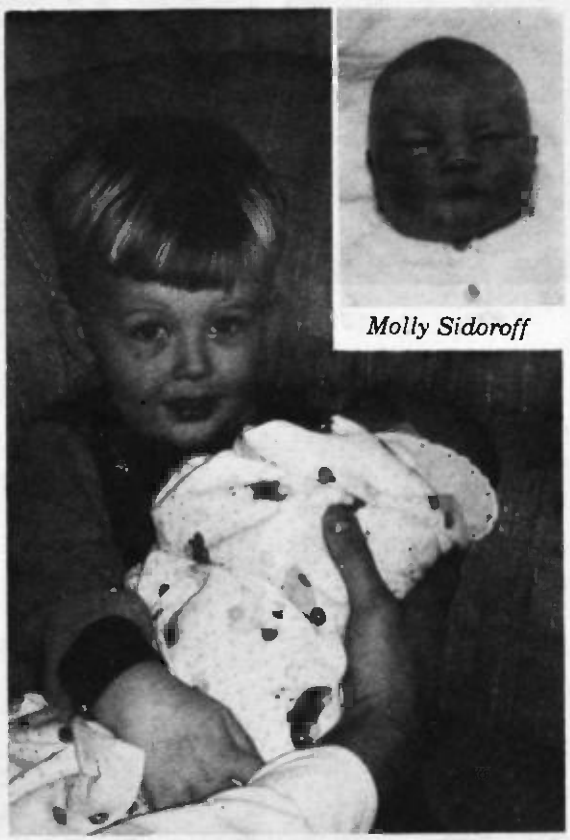
6 Generations of Sidoroffs

1st: Luke Sidoroff - 1930

2nd: Peter Sidoroff - 1932

Michael & Sylvia Sidoroff
Baby Louise - 1943

3rd: Michael Sidoroff (center).
4th: son Leonard (back right)
& Rick son of Syd & Bert Sidoroff
(front right). 5th: Darren (back left)
& Rod (front left), sons of Len &
Carol Sidoroff - 1988



Molly Sidoroff

6th: Mason & Baby Molly Sidoroff,
children of Rod & Monica - 1994

Progeny of Lorne (Ilarion) Sidoroff - born June 19, 1895, died February 12, 1983 Married Sophia Chibunin, born September 30, 1894, died August 2, 1989. Elizabeth (Lizavetta) - born Nov. 4, 1915, married Constantine Mishukoff, 3 children, 4 grandchildren, 1 great-grandchild. **Agnes** (Agripina) - born July 6, 1917, married Harry Clarke, died November 14, 1980. **Frances** (Feodosia) - born June 11, 1919, died May 9, 1946. **Faye** (Anfesa)- born Sept. 4, 1921. **Nick** (Nikifor)- born Feb. 22, 1924, married Helen Burke, 3 children, 7 grandchildren, 1 great-grandchild. **Alexander** - born August 17, 1926, married Margaret Slobnyk, 3 children, 4 grandchildren - Alex died October 30, 1962. **Anne** (Anna) - born August 10, 1932, married Bruce McIntosh, 2 children. Anne died June 1990.

Lorne - Age 25

Sophia - Age 18

Elizabeth

Agnes

Frances

Faye

Alex

Anne

Nick

Barry, Don, Jeffrey
- Nick & Helen's sons

4 Generations - 1st Nick,
2nd Barry, 3rd Chris, 4th Kira

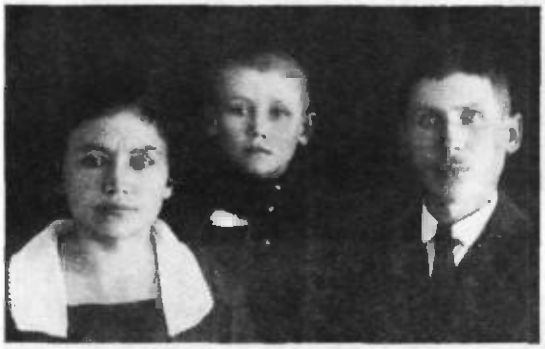
Leonard, Luba, Irene
Mishukoff - 1967

Bradley & Douglas McIntosh

Alex's Children & Grandchildren
- Natascha, Cindy, Brooke, Rod, Kyle, Sandy, Alexander

Progeny of Alexander Fyodorovich Mishukoff - born March 1891, died April 15, 1972, in Canada. Married Anna Alexandrovna Zlobin - born October 1890 in Siberia - died October 7, 1961, in Canada.

Constantine - born June 8, 1912, in Harbin, China - married Elizabeth Sidoroff, 3 children - Luba, Irene, Leonard; 4 grandchildren, 1 great-grandchild. Constantine died March 30, 1995.



Anna, Constantine, Alexander Mishukoff - Harbin, China

Back: John & Anna Andreeff, Mr. & Mrs. Mishukoff, Sr. Seated: Father Solovieff Children: Ada & Betty Andreeff

Anna with grandchildren Luba Irene & Leonard - 1953

Constantine & Elizabeth Mishukoff with son Len and wife Sherri

Pat & Irene Anderson, daughters Jennifer and Karen - 1991

Luba Pierlot with granddaughter Maxine Pierlot (Mark's)

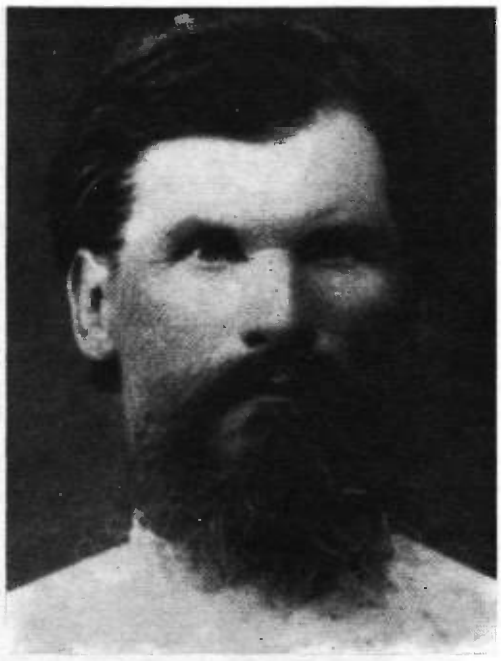
Paul & Mahtab Pierlot - 1994

Mark & Jemima Pierlot with Mark's grandparents Constantine & Elizabeth

Paul & Mark are Luba & Lorne Pierlot's sons

Progeny of Andrei (origin of the surname Andreeff or Andruff) - born between 1820 and 1825, died before 1908 in Western Russia. Wife Anna, born between 1824 and 1828, died at the age of 110 in Siberia in the 1930s. Children: Although it is known that there were more than two children, available records show only Nikifor and Gregori:

Nikifor - born in the 1850s, died prior to 1915. Wife Vasselesa, 2 children: Stepan and Feodosia, 4 grandchildren: Mihail, Katerina, Elexei. No further records available. **Gregory** (Gregori) - born 1856, died 1940 in Canada. Wife Irena, born in the 1860s, died 1903, 5 children: Philipe (Philip), Lucaria, Vasili (William), John (Ivan), Larivon (Lawrence), 46 grandchildren, 112 great-great-grandchildren, 192 great-great-grandchildren, 12 great-great-great-grandchildren as of 1994.



Gregory Andreeff

John

Lawrence

Bill

Lucaria

Philip

Progeny of Philip (Philipe) Andreeff, born in Western Russia, died in Canada - born November 27, 1888, died October 2, 1953. Married Elena - born June 3, 1894, in Siberia, died October 21, 1975, in Canada.

Ike (Akim) - born 1914 in Siberia, died 1933 in Canada. **Mike** (Nikifor) - born 1921, married Natalie (Natalia) Sideroff, 3 children, 7 grandchildren. **Viola** (Valentina) - born 1923, married Sam Kalugin, 3 children, 6 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren. **Zina** (Zinayeda) - born 1924, married Ross Clark, 2 children, 4 grandchildren. 2nd marriage: James Waterman. **Nick** (Constantine) - born 1925, married Zoya Nasedkin, 3 children, 7 grandchildren. Philipe - born 1926, died 1926. **Jean** (Anesya) - born 1929, married Laurens Koyman, 5 children, 13 grandchildren. **Fannie** (Feodosia) - born 1932, married Louis Schischikowsky, 4 children, 11 grandchildren, 1 great-grandchild. **Fi** (Fiena) - born 1934, married Kenneth McIntyre, 4 children, 4 grandchildren. Kenneth died 1987. **Doreen** (Darya) - born 1937, married Lawrence Calvert, 3 children, 5 grandchildren. Lawrence died 1970. 2nd marriage Pieter Riedijk 1980.

Philip and Elena Andreeff - Russia During WW I - 1915

Ike Andreeff - 1932

Back: Fannie, Zina, Jean, Nick, Vi, Fi,
Front: Doreen, Philip, Elena, Mike - 1953

1989 - Mike, Vi, Zina, Nick
Jean, Fannie, Fi, Doreen

Zina & Jim Waterman & Family

Mike & Natalie Andruff's Family

Doreen (Calvert) & Pieter Riedijk's Family

Fannie & Louis Schischikowsky & Family

Jean & Lo Koyman & Family

Vi & Sam Kalugin & Family

Fi McIntyre & Family

Nick & Zoya Andruff & Family - 1989

Progeny of Bill (Vasili) Andreeff - born in Western Russia, died in Canada - born February 1894, died July 28, 1957. Married Helen (Elena) - born July 14, 1901, in Siberia, died October 11, 1994, in Canada.

Ivan - born and died in Siberia 1920. **Olive** (Olga). Married Charlie Skrlac in Canada, 7 children, 13 grandchildren. Olive died in 1974. **Bill** (Vasili)- Born in Harbin, China, 1924 - married Ruth Woolsey, 3 children, 7 grandchildren. Bill died in 1982. **John** (Ivan) - born in Canada 1926, married Theresa Grabski - 2 children, 4 grandchildren. John died in 1959. **Merry** (Marya) - born in Canada 1928, married Ken Fowler, 2 children. Enafa - born in Canada 1929, died in 1931, age 2 1/2. **Carl** (Kornelei) - born in Canada 1931, married Betty Richardson, 2 children, 2 grandchildren. **Jacob** (Yakov) - born in Canada died in 1933, age 1 1/2. **Julie** (Eulianesia) - married Bob Crawford, 2 children. **Walter** (Vladimir) - married Georgina Goulet, 4 children, 1 grandchild. Walter died in 1975. **Vera** (Vera) - married Jack Hill, 3 children, 3 grandchildren.

Helen and William Andreeff, Sr., with Olive - Harbin, China - 1923

Helen (Andreeff) Clark on her 80th birthday - July 1981
Children: Merry, Carl, Bill, Jr., Julie, Vera

Children & grandchildren of Helen and William Andreeff - gathered for Helen (Andreeff) Clark's Funeral - October 18, 1994

Progeny of John (Ivan) Andreeff - born 1895, died October 1959, married Anna Doumnoff, born February 16, 1900, died October 22, 1988.

Childen: **Elizabeth** (Lizavetta) - born 1922 in Siberia, married John Ladyka, 3 children, 9 grandchildren, 1 great-grandchild. John died 1975. Elizabeth married Albert Haluck. **Ada** (Evdokia) - born 1924, married Lewis Courchene. **Helen** (Elena)- born 1926, married Leon Weir, 3 children, 2 grandchildren. Helen died April 23, 1980. **Polly** (Palagaya)- born 1927, married Lyle Thompson, 2 children. **Paul** (Pavel) - born 1929, married Lillian Wineberger. **Limpiada** - born 1932, died 1932. **Ruth** (Fevrusya) - born 1936, married Joe Rudnisky, 4 children, 8 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren.

Gregory Andreeff, Anna, baby Elizabeth, John Andreeff

Anna and John Andreeff with daughter Ada

Anna Andreeff's 80th birthday Children: Ada, Paul, Ruth, Polly, Betty

Jeff & Robert - sons of Polly & the late Lyle Thompson

Ruth's great-grandchild Cody, daughter Pat, grandchildren Jason (Brandy), Chad, Christy

Michael, Stephanie, Danielle Rudnisky
Grandchildren of Ruth and Joe Rudnisky

Joe & John Esler

Thomas Rudnisky, Helen's daughter
Bev Weir, Thomas' wife Colleen

4 Generations: 1st Anna, 2nd Betty
3rd Charlotte, 4th Spencer, Dean
Nathan and Amber Pasowisty

Progeny of Lawrence (Larivon) Andreeff - born 1900, married Polly (Palagaya) Kosheiff, born in 1903. Both born in Russia, died in Canada.

Mary (Marusa) - born 1925 in Australia, married Alec Harasimo, 2 children, 2 grandchildren. Mary died May 1984. **Gladys** (Klavdia) - born 1927 in Homeglen, Alberta, married Melvin Lillejord, 2 children, 5 grandchildren. **Eugenea** (Evgenia) - now called Jean - born 1928 in Gage, Alberta, married Norman Poirier, 6 children, 5 grandchildren. **Peter** (Peotre) - born 1930 in Gage, Alberta, married Anabell Leppinton, 7 children, 17 grandchildren. **Alex** (Alexei) - born 1931 in Gage, Alberta, married Anne Marie Giesbrecht, 2 children, 4 grandchildren. 2nd wife: Helen Jane Carlson, 2 children, 2 grandchildren. **Victor** - born 1936 in Gage, Alberta, died 1960. **Louise** (Uleana) - died at birth. **Nick** (Nikolai) - born 1939 in Gage, Alberta, married Frances McCleod, 4 children. 2nd marriage: Rebbeca, 2 children. Nick has 9 grandchildren. **Ernest** (Nestor) - born 1942 in Gage, Alberta, married Joanne, 3 children, 5 grandchildren. **Lydia** (Leda) - born 1945 in Fairview, Alberta, married Jim Webster, 3 children, 5 grandchildren.

Polly (Kosheiff) Andreeff

Lawrence Andreeff

Polly & Lawrence Andreeff
& Family - Gage House

Alex visiting Ranger School - 1966

Ernie, Lydia, Alex, Nick, Gladys,
Jean, Peter, Mary - 1969

Lawrence Andreeff with all his sons
July 1960

Lawrence Andreeff Reunion 1990 - Some of the Grandchildren.

Progeny of George (Georgi) Kosheiff - born in Nalinsk, Russia, in 1877, died in Canada in 1952, married Alexandra (Sonya) Kosneova - born in Russia, died in Canada:

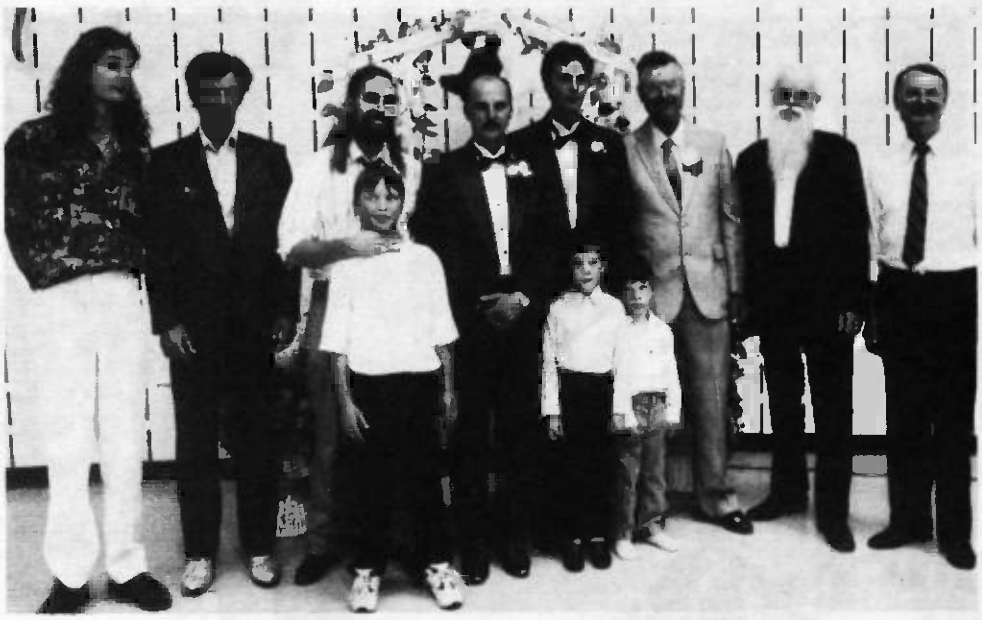
Polly (Palagaya) - born in Russia 1903, married Lawrence Andreeff, 10 children, 47 grandchildren. 54 great-grandchildren, 3 great-great-grandchildren. Polly died in Canada. **Mike** (Mercuri) - born in Russia, married to Zina Nasedkin, 3 children, 6 grandchildren. Mike died August 8, 1986. **Lawrence** (Larick) - born in Russia, married Rachel Sidoroff, 2 children, 10 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren. Lawrence died April 3, 1967, Rachel died February 13, 1995. **Tom** (Timofei) - born in Australia, married Zina Pohaboff, 3 children, 2 grandchildren. **John** (Ivan) - born in China, married Margaret Kalugin, in Canada, 6 children, 18 grandchildren, 1 great-grandchild.

George & Alexandra Kosheiff
Larry, Tom, John - 1923

Lawrence Andreeff & Polly Kosheiff

Front: George & Alexandra Kosheiff & granddaughter Lueba.
Back: Tom & Zina, Lawrence Andreeff, Zina & Mike

John & Margaret Kosheiff



All the male Kosheiffs at Ron's wedding in Grande Prairie, Alberta - 1994

Tom & Zina Kosheiff with son Wayne and grandsons Richard & Jeffrey (Danny's)

Progeny of Ion (John) Kapitonich Pohaboff - born 1880 in the Tomsk are in Siberia, died 1959 in Canada:

5 children with first wife: **Younger** 3 were left in Russia - no record available. **Sergei** - born in Russia, moved to USA, then to Harbin, no children. **Anesia** - born in Russia, married Harry Rabachenko in Canada, 2 children, 3 grandchildren. Harry died 1938, Anesia married Alec Nazaroff. **John's 2nd wife** died shortly after marriage - no children. **John's 3rd wife:** Martha (Marfa) Chibunin - born 1890, died 1990 in Canada. Martha and her first husband Lazar had 4 children, **3 girls and 1 boy**. 2 girls and the boy died in infancy. One surviving daughter: **Zina** (Zinaida) - born in Siberia, married Tom Kosheiff in Canada, 3 children, 2 grandchildren.

John and Martha Pohaboff with daughter Zina - 1924

Zina (Pohaboff) Kosheiff

Tom with sons Danny, Wayne & Carl

Danny & Lynda Kosheiff sons Richard & Jeffrey

Progeny of John Mihailoff - born in 1892 Russia, died 1943 in Canada. Married Agafia - born 1894 in Russia, died February 1962 in Canada.

Born in Russia: **Bill** - born 1904, married Nina Doumnoff, 5 children, 11 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren. Bill died 1964 in Canada. **Mike** - born 1910, married Vi Nasedkin, 3 children, 3 grandchildren. Mike died May 11, 1972, in Canada. **Fannie** - born 1916, married Nick Woronuk, 3 children, 5 grandchildren. Fannie died 1987 in Canada. **Jim** - born 1918, married Dorothy Trenholm, 3 children, 1 grandchild. Jim died October 1963 in Canada. Gwen - 1 son, 2 granchildren. **Dianne**- born 1923, married Mac Wrathell, 4 children, 7 grandchildren. **Nick** - born 1924, died 1940.

Agafia Mihailoff with daughters Gwen & Dianne & son Jim

Gwen, Jim, Dianne Mihailoff

Vi (Nasedkin) & Mike Mihailoff

Triple Wedding held at the home of Philip & Elena Andreeff: Aliftina Nasedkin & Abe Sidoroff, Viola Nasedkin & Mike Mihailoff, Jean Nasedkin & Peter Doumnoff - 1934

Progeny of Peter Nasedkin - born 1875 in Ufa in the Ural Mountains died February 19, 1966, in Canada.

Born to Peter and Katerina: **2 daughters** - stayed in Russia, **Joe** - born 1908, died 1960. **Van** - born 1915, died 1957. **Aliftina** (Ella) - born 1916, married Abe Sidoroff, 5 children, 13 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren, Abe died June 4, 1974. **1 child (name unknown)** - mother and child died in childbirth.

Born in Siberia to Evdokia and Ivan Kabakoff: Zina - born 1909, married Mike Kosheiff, 3 children, 7 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren. Mike died August 8, 1986. **Nick** - born 1911, married Elda, 1 child, 2 grandchildren, 1 great-grandchild, Elda died in 1938. Nick married Eleanor in 1947, 4 children, 4 grandchildren. Nick died November 18, 1991. **Jean** - born 1913, married Peter Doumnoff, 3 children, 4 grandchildren. Peter died June 10, 1986. **Viola** - born 1915, married Mike Mihailoff, 3 children, 3 grandchildren. Mike died May 11, 1972. **Jim** - born 1917, married Irene, 1 child, 2 grandchildren. **Peter Nasedkin married Evdokia in 1922. Evdokia** - born 1889 in Siberia, died April 21, 1946, in Canada .Children born in Canada: **Victor** - born September 1925, married Jenny Polukoshko, 5 children, 11 grandchildren, 1 great -grandchild. **Zoya** - born November 1927, married Nick Andruff, 3 children, 8 grandchildren.

"His" and "Hers" of Evdokia and Peter Nasedkin - Harbin, China - 1924
Back: Joe, Jean, Zina, Aliftina, Nick. Front: Van, Evdokia, Jim, Peter, Viola

Back: Aliftina, Van, Jim, Viola. Seated: Peter & Evdokia. Children: Victor & Zoya

Jim & Van Nasedkin

Victor & Jenny Nasedkin & Family - 1975

A Nasedkin Family Gathering

Progeny of Mihiel Doumnoff- born 1845, died 1925.

Children: **Ogaphone**, wife Phedosia - 2 children; **Anna**, husband John Andreeff - 7 children (see Progeny of John Andreeff); **Terenty** (progeny below); and **Oleana** - died at age 3.

Progeny of Terence (Terenty) Doumnoff - born 1880, died 1967. Wife **Pearl Gardeov**, born 1881, died 1923. Children: **Peter** born 1908, married Jean Nasedkin, 3 children, 4 grandchildren. Peter died June 1986. **Vasili** died age 7. **Nina** (Aniusia) born 1913, married William Mihailoff, 5 children, 11 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren. William died in 1964. **Patap** died as baby. **Tom** born 1920, married Bertha McCaull, 3 children, 5 grandchildren. Bertha died. Tom's 2nd wife: Francis Bak. **Terenty's second wife: Anna.**

Pearl, Tom & Nina Doumnoff - Russia - 1915

Back: Nina and Peter Doumnoff. Front: Terence, Tom, Anna Doumnoff - 1926

25th Anniversary of Bill & Nina Mihailoff
Bill, Leda, Nick, Nayda, Terry, Laura, Nina

Tim, Gaile, Carol Doumnoff
Tom & Bea's Children - 1955

Gathering of relations at Doumnoff's - Families of Bill Mihailoff, Pete Doumnoff, Mike Mihailoff, John Andreeff, Peter Nasedkin

Baby Carol, Bea, Tom Doumnoff; John, Anna & Ruth Andreeff; Jean and Pete Doumnoff; Bill Mihailoff; Anna and Terenty Doumnoff. Children: Tim & Jim Doumnoff, Terry Mihailoff

Anna Andreeff (1st Gen.)

Her son Gregory (2nd)

Gregory's son Philip (3rd)

4th Vi Kalugin (Philip's daughter), 5th Anne, 6th Mark, 7th Brenden

4th Fanny Schischikowsky (Philip's daughter), 5th Chris, 6th Marcy, 7th Megan

NORTHWARD BOUND

In early 1928 plans were being made to extend the E.D. & B.C. Railway line from Whitelaw to a point four miles north of Waterhole. Construction on the track was begun in early 1928. Contracts were given out to settlers in that area for building the grade and with good weather on their side, the grade was made ready by fall. The steel laying crews were not far behind and on November 2, 1928, the first train came through to that point north of Waterhole which is now Fairview. Some of the business men to get established in the newly formed Fairview were those with whom these Russian men would deal for the duration of their lives in the north country; names such as Loggie, Hemstock, McAuley, Smart and Madden. After filing for their homesteads that summer, the Russian men did not stick around for the celebration of this gala event; however, the news was music to their ears since they would be moving their families to that area at the end of the winter. To be able to unload in Fairview, only ten miles from their homestead for some and twenty miles for others, was great news!

Mike Mihailoff was the first of this group to head for the Peace River country. Since there is nothing on record that would indicate how the Homeglen residents heard about the Peace River country, it would be logical to assume that Mike's venturing into the unknown and bringing back news of the good soil and available land, was their incentive to pick up roots and make yet another move. Mike's story follows:

"In 1928 I left my home in Homeglen and boarded the train in Wetaskiwin bound for Edmonton with a small pack sack. When I got to Strathcona I got off the train. Because of all the lights, I thought I was in the city. The conductor told me Edmonton was four miles away and to hurry or I would miss the last bus. I ran after the bus but I was too late and had to walk the four miles.

The police stopped me, asking what I was doing and where I was going. They directed me to the station. I looked across the street and saw a big box. This turned out to be my sleeping place for the night. Next morning I got my ticket to the Peace River region, Falher being the actual destination. From there I went to Spirit River looking the

country over as I travelled. From Spirit River I went to Grande Prairie and then walked to Sturgeon Lake and back with two other young men I had met. We walked there and back in two days and then thumbed a ride to Rolla, B.C.

After returning to Grande Prairie I hitched a ride to Waterhole where I stayed in a hayloft over night. I got there late and left the next day for Hay Lake where I filed on a homestead for myself and my father, John Mihailoff. I worked as a fire ranger for two months and then got a job building the railroad which was moving from Whitelaw to Fairview. I built the present elevator road in Fairview with four mules.

In August 1928 I returned to Homeglen and in 1929 we brought our machinery, cattle, furniture and personal belongings to our new homestead."

Mike Mihailoff looking for homestead

Lawrence Andreeff - *by Gladys (Andreeff) Lillejord*

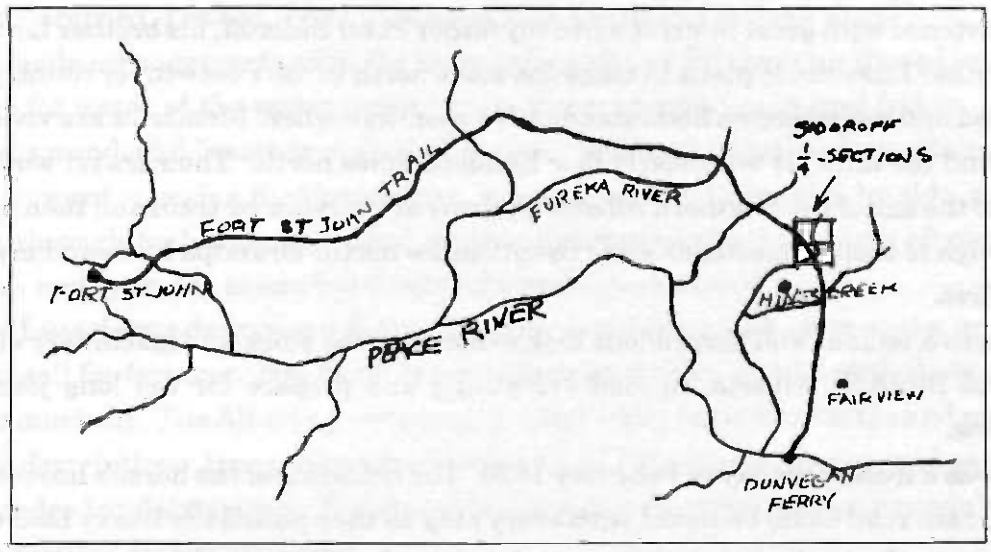
"My dad and Mike Mihailoff were good friends and when Mike returned with his news of good soil in northern Alberta, word got around and one of the first to go was my dad with other scouts in search of land on which to settle. They checked out the soil by digging deep into the ground to see if it was fertile and the proper type suitable for farming. They found the soil to be excellent and decided to file for land. Lawrence also filed for his brothers and his father Gregory Andreeff on adjoining quarter-sections. The men stayed with a family by the name of Frank while they were scouting around. Having completed their mission, they went back to Homeglen to get their families.

When we left Homeglen we were able to bring with us some of our possessions, including cows and horses. The homesteads were located next to the Indian Reserve at Hay Lake. At that time Gage did not exist, although the railroad had just gone through from Waterhole to Fairview. There were no roads as such, only the Fort St. John Trail which everyone followed to get to their homesteads. When we first arrived at Gage, we lived at the Kemps and dad started clearing land with one horse and an axe. When dad's

brother Bill arrived with his family, dad had our house built, so they lived at Kemp's until they put up their own log house. Ours was a one-room log cabin with board floors."

As the brothers and brother-in-law arrived one by one, Lawrence Andreeff was there to help them get to their homesteads as he had already settled in with a house and a barn."

Fort St. John Trail



The system of roads and highways in the Peace River area of Alberta was once a network of ill-defined Indian and fur trade trails. By 1870, long use had produced well marked trails from the Peace River to Fort St. John by way of Fort Dunvegan. Motivated by the Klondyke gold rush of 1897-98, the Canadian government sent two North West Mounted Police trail expeditions to the Yukon via the Fort St. John Trail. The first expedition examined the trail, encountering numerous gold seekers bound for the Yukon. The second expedition followed and upgraded it in May 1905.

At first the trail ran north of the Peace River, from the junction of the Peace and Smoky Rivers to Dunvegan and from Dunvegan to Fort St. John, nearly one hundred twenty miles. In 1898, at the height of the Klondike gold rush, a second and slightly less circuitous route from Peace River Crossing to Fort St. John was also utilized, which by-passed Dunvegan. It ran from Peace River Crossing to present day Bluesky and then veered northwesterly beyond Island Lake (now called George's Lake). It was estimated that sixty miles could be eliminated by taking the shorter route. The settlement of the upper Peace district began in earnest in 1910 and for the next twenty years many homesteaders followed the Fort St. John Trail to their new homes.

From 1914 to 1933, when the Peace River country was being opened to settlement, the shortened Fort St. John Trail once again assumed an important role. The Northern Alberta Railway, completed from Peace River to Fairview in 1928 and from Fairview to Hines Creek in 1930, followed fairly closely the shortened Fort St. John Trail.

The Peter Sidoroff Risky Trek - *by Michael Sidoroff*

"I listened with great interest when my father Peter Sidoroff, his brother Lorne, and their father Luke made plans to make the move north to the Peace River country. They had filed and registered on homesteads a few months earlier. Memories are vivid of the move and the difficult trek nearly four hundred miles north. Their travel would take them to the end of the Northern Alberta Railway at Fairview by train and then by horse and sleigh to their homesteads some twenty miles north. Grandpa Luke and my father went first.

It was a tedious and horrendous task to move all the stock and machinery eighteen miles to Bluffton, Alberta, to load everything and prepare for the long journey to Fairview.

It was a frosty cold day in February 1929. The crackling of the horse's hooves on the hard frozen road could be heard with every step as they pulled the heavy load of farm implements, horse-drawn machinery and various farm tools to a box car sitting on the railroad siding in Bluffton. This was seven miles away from the quarter where Peter and Lucaria, grandpa Luke and we five children lived. At the time I was nine years old, Anne was seven, Boris four, Jessie two and baby Polly five months.

The journey with the equipment to Bluffton took nearly three hours. Unloading and placing all this equipment into the box car was no easy task. This had to be done off a ramp, since the box car stood about four feet above ground on railroad tracks. Using ropes, pulleys and horses, about four hours later the machinery and the rest of the equipment was stacked at each end of the box car. Then we had to make the journey back home to our small two-room log house to put the two horses in the barn, feed them and feed the two cows. When the three of us, my father Peter, grandpa Luke and I arrived home, mother had already milked the cows and had a nice hot supper ready for us.

They were all so happy to see us and we were ready with excitement to tell them how pleased we were that all went so well.

"Well, what are the plans for tomorrow?" mother wanted to know.

"Tomorrow we take the two cows and enough feed for the two horses and the two cows for the three day journey north. Our destination is Fairview in the Peace River country and we are fortunate that the railroad now goes to Fairview," said father.

"Who is going to feed them and how will they get water for three days?" mother asked.

"I will be going with them," grandpa answered. "Tomorrow we will load the hay and the oat sheaves in and make stalls for the animals in the box car. I will make my bed on the hay and the body heat from the animals will keep us all warm," grandpa assured all of us. We listened with great interest and concern for grandpa and the animals.

"How about water?" I asked. "What will the horses and the cows have to drink?"

"We plan on filling up those big cream cans. We have four of them. They are eight gallons each and grandpa can water them out of the smaller buckets that are only two gallons each," father answered.

Still concerned, I asked, "Will that be enough for them for three days?"

"We made arrangements with the train crew to let us fill them up if need be when they stop for water at the water tanks for the steam engine," answered father.

"That's wonderful," mother replied with glee. "You have thought of everything. I'm looking forward to seeing that homestead, you and brother Lorne side by side, a creek running through both properties and another quarter section just north of yours for grandpa - and each one is one hundred and sixty acres you say?"

"Yes, Lucaria my dear, you will love it - a few small trees with clear areas, no rocks and good soil for farming. Not like it is here in the Homeglen district with these sandy hills and muskegs. The Alberta government required only ten dollars to file and register the legal descriptions for each quarter section when I filed last summer, and each one is one hundred and sixty acres. We were able to register a quarter-section per adult male for each family," father explained.

Mother had her concern and asked, "How about our furniture, the little bit we do have? When will that be loaded?" Mother wanted to know. "We have my cook stove and we will need the pot-bellied heater, all our bedding, my sewing machine, the butter churn. I have filled the two wash tubs and the boiler with most of our dishes and things. I saved some flour sacks. We can put our blankets and sheets in them to keep them clean in the box car."

Father reassured her, "We will get up early tomorrow and load all that is on the sleigh onto the hay rack before we put the feed on. We will tie the cows behind and they will follow. It's only seven miles. We will take our time".

The next day early in the morning everyone pitched in to help pack things in boxes and bags, first loading the household goods, then the feed for the animals. The last thing would be to tie the cows to follow behind, then away to the town of Bluffton. The big wagon, the plow, the harrows, the sickle hay mower, the big hay rake and other farm equipment was already in the box car. Next was to arrange the furniture, then the feed for the animals so everything would be handy in the box car for grandpa Luke on the three day journey to Fairview. Everything was in order, properly secured to endure the

movement, the shuttle and the shunting of the freight train for over three hundred and fifty miles north on the Northern Alberta Railway. Grandpa was ready and eager. His coal oil lanterns, food for himself and food for the animals at the ready.

Little Anne wanted to know "Will we ride in the box car with grandpa?"

"Oh no," father exclaimed, "we are going to ride in style. First we will go by automobile, then in a nice train." Mr. Dye is coming over and taking us all in his car to Wetaskiwin. It will take about two hours; it is forty miles from here."

Little Boris anxiously asked, "How about Marseek? Is he going with grandpa?"

"No, grandpa can't take him and we can't take a dog in the car," father explained.

All the children started crying, "We can't leave him!"

"I will ask Aunt Sophie to feed him after we are gone," mother comforted us all.

Marseek was left behind. A devastating blow to us children!

It was a memorable trip for the family from the shack in Homeglen to Wetaskiwin. Mr. Douy Dye was taking us in his Model T Ford with only a canvas top and it was mid-February. Sister Anne recalls how they arrived by sleigh to Dye's house near noon: "We had lunch with the Dyes, then we got into Mr. Dye's car. Mrs. Dye was crying as she bid us good-bye. I thought, 'English people cry too!' This was a rather pleasant surprise as we thought only Russians cried a lot. We were experiencing many mixed emotions," Anne recalls. She and I both remember mother wrapping us and the younger ones in a blanket to protect us from the wind. It was even flapping the canvas around.

Father had made previous arrangements with a family that had come to Canada with us, Ivan Pallatoff. He settled in Wetaskiwin because of his trade as a cabinet maker. We stayed there over night and boarded a passenger train the next day to Edmonton. We had a two-hour stopover in Edmonton so mother and father decided to look at some things in the city stores. Our being totally absorbed in what we saw in a department store turned into a most frightening experience.

Father looked at us children and asked with urgency, "Where is Boris? He was right here by these toys just a minute ago".

"He must have gone outside thinking we left," exclaimed Mother.

"All of you stay right here. I will go find him," father yelled as he ran out the door.

As he ran out with a desperate look on his face, a man asked, "Looking for a small boy? He went that way," as he pointed down the street.

Father ran, dodging people as they came and went in both directions. He caught up to Boris about a block and a half away from the store.

"Why did you leave me?" four-year-old Boris sobbed as he clutched to his father's hand and leg. "I was so afraid I wouldn't find you," he cried.

"Now you are found, my son, don't cry. I'm happy we are together again. Let's go and join mother and your brother and sisters," father comforted him.

What a happy reunion when father came back to the store with our little brother in tow. It was time to go to the train station. The train was to leave in an hour for Fairview.

Oh how we loved those nice soft seats on the train. The baby was able to lay stretched out, giving mother relief from holding her in her arms. Once the train got started I loved to hear that puff, puff, of the engine and then the whistle blowing. It was so exciting! Everybody wanted to be by the window to watch the scenery go by. Mother opened up the well used suitcase and took out some homemade bread, butter and a lot of boiled eggs and something out of a sealer jar. We all got something to eat. Then she opened up a jar of milk for us to drink. Oh that tasted so good! We were all so hungry. The baby was happy and healthy. She was thriving on mother's milk. Sleeping on the floor between the seats was a problem for all of us. The train was not equipped with sleeping coaches. I recall every time the train stopped or started, I would hit my head on the steel post holding up the seat. There would be a stop every few miles for passengers getting on and off the train.

Father, with a sigh of relief and with some anxiety, said to mother, "Tomorrow morning we will be meeting Lawrence at the train station. He is coming to meet us."

Lawrence Andreeff, mother's younger brother, had settled on a homestead about ten miles north of Fairview the year before our arrival and agreed to help us over night before we were to move on to the homestead that father now owned.

Our homestead was just northwest from the store and post office called Hines Creek, adjoining the creek by the same name.

When we arrived at Fairview, Uncle Lawrence was there to meet us. He took mother and us children to his home. Father stayed in Fairview to wait for the freight train on which grandpa was to arrive the next day. In the box car with grandpa Luke were all our belongings and the animals. That night father stayed in a room above the restaurant where he was able to have some food and a night's rest.

The freight train arrived the next morning. With great anxiety, father was desperate to find out how everything had gone on the long journey and the welfare of his father Luke. He ran along the railway track trying to find the right box car. Finally he saw grandpa Luke waving out of the box car door. Trying to catch his breath father hurried to the box car. "How did things go, father?" he asked.

"I was very anxious at first. The horses were very nervous and restless the first day and night but finally they got accustomed to it," replied grandpa Luke.

"We will not be able to unload here. They will have to place our box car by that ramp," father exclaimed, pointing to a platform on a side track.

The trainmen finally stopped the box car by the platform for unloading. The first to be removed were the horses, then the sleigh with the hay rack with the left over feed on it.

It was cold and frosty, even in the last week of February. The cows needed milking. They were heard bellowing for attention.

"I milked them last night when we were stopped in McLennan. The milk is in a cream can over there," grandpa pointed to the four eight-gallon cans.

"That's good," said father, "the children can sure use it".

"Did Lawrence come to meet you when you arrived?" grandpa inquired.

"Yes, the family went home with him yesterday afternoon. Lawrence will be coming to help us unload the box car. Should be here any time," father replied.

"How will we move the cows? We can't let them follow behind the sleigh all that way. It's ten miles and they look so exhausted already," grandpa said sympathetically.

"Oh no," father reassured him, "we will have to put them on the sleigh somehow. We will pile the hay feed and the oat sheaves at the front of the hay rack and tie the cows at the back. We will have to come back for the rest of the stuff tomorrow."

"Good idea, we will do that," grandpa agreed.

"But before we do that, I think we should milk them while they are still in the box car," father suggested, looking at them with pity.

While father was milking the cows Lawrence arrived with his heavy duty sleigh and a big high box on the sleigh. Anticipating the need, he came with his stock-hauling unit.

"Let's load the cows on my sleigh," Lawrence suggested willingly.

"What a great brother-in-law and friend you are," father said with a big smile.

"We can put a tarp over them tonight in this stock unit, give them feed and water at my place and you can take them tomorrow," Uncle Lawrence generously offered.

"That will give us room on our sleigh to load the furniture and the household goods," father said with delight.

The milk from the cows was added to what grandpa had from the night before. The cows were loaded on Uncle Lawrence's unit and tied securely with some feed for them to eat. The furniture got loaded on father's sleigh in place of the cows and off they went ten miles north . How happy we all were to see them arrive with the two units!

I ran out to pet Duke, the pinto horse I learned to ride in Homeglen. Both horses looked so tired.

Uncle Lawrence said, "It's cold tonight. We will be able to put them in the barn with ours for the night."

"We cannot thank you enough for helping us out this way; putting us all up including our animals. We have our own bedding on our sleigh that we can use tonight," father explained.

"Good man," mother gave father a hug. "I'll help you bring it in".

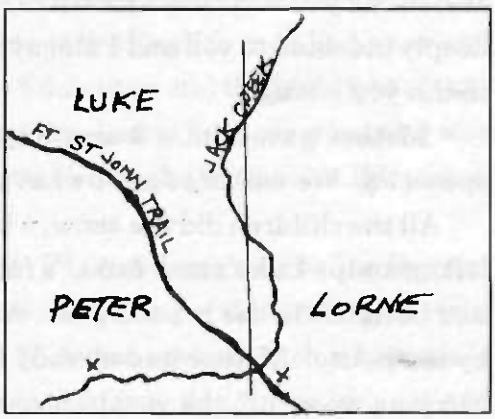
Aunt Palagaya and their three children had a nice hot evening meal ready for all of us. The atmosphere was warm and relaxing. Grandpa, with a satisfying sense of

accomplishment, was eager to tell us about his experience with the cows and horses during his three days in the box car. Many times he cursed the engineers for being so rough shunting the box cars around, at times nearly knocking the animals off their feet. Twice during the night they caused him to fall off his perch atop the hay, landing him between the horses. Good thing the horses were lying down both times!

I asked grandpa, using the Russian term "Dedushka, what did you do with the manure caused by the horses and the cows for three days in the box car?"

Grandpa, with a wide grin on his face, said, "I waited until we were going past some farmer's field and I just flung it out to fertilize his field. I'm sure one farmer was not too happy, he was standing too close to the train track. He got hit with a fork full. I saw him wiping it off and shaking his fist at me as we went streaking by, the wheels just a-clattering." That got everyone laughing. I was not sure whether they were laughing at what happened, or at me for asking the question.

The mattresses, large sacks stuffed with straw, were laid side by side on the floor. The four children slept crossways on one mattress and our parents on the other with baby Polly in the middle. Grandpa slept in the barn. The next morning we woke up to some light snow falling, with about an inch of snow on the tarp that covered the stock-hauling unit with the cows inside. About the same amount was on the big hay rack where the furniture and the feed for the animals were loaded. Then there was the task of moving all these things another ten miles north. The area was just bush, mainly poplars mixed with some spruce and birch trees. There were no government built roads, just the Fort St. John Trail to follow.



Sidoroff 1/4 Sections - Ft. St. John Trail

Everyone got bundled up for the long twisting journey to an abandoned two-room shack made out of lumber and an unfinished barn near by. Grandpa Luke anxiously asked Peter, "What if Charlie Williams is back living in this shack? It's more than six months ago that you made the arrangements to temporarily move onto his property?"

"Oh no, he will be away for another year and a half. We were given permission to use it by Constable Walker of the local Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Fairview. The place is empty," father assured us all. On we went, reaching the property by noon. We passed over a bridge which crossed the Hines creek near Griep's place, about a half a mile from the Hines Creek Post Office, then around the east side of George's Lake. The horses continued to drag the heavy load, past Olstad's place, past Coon's place, then over the frozen Jack Creek and on to Charlie Williams' homestead. This was . . . home?!

We had to unload the cows so that Uncle Lawrence could start on his return trip home with his team of horses and the stock-hauling unit. The cows were unloaded and put into the barn and then the feed was unloaded for the animals. Next the household goods were unloaded and the stove and heater set up. Because it was still cold, it was necessary to set up housekeeping while the children were still bundled up in warm clothing.

The Home of Charles Williams - Taken Seventy Years Later - 1994

Uncle Lawrence wanted to help unload the furniture. Father gave him a firm warm hand shake, put his other hand on his shoulder and said, "Bolshoi spaseeba!" that is to say, thank you very much for what you have done for us. "Your sister Lucaria and I are deeply indebted to you and Palagaya for being so hospitable and kind to us. We cannot thank you enough."

Mother gave him a warm hug, "Give our regards to Palagaya and our bolshoi spaseeba. We will not forget what you have done for us."

All the children did the same, a hug and a 'da svee danya' to Uncle Lawrence. As he left, grandpa Luke's and father's first priority was to set up the cook stove. The heater had been left in the house by Mr. Williams. There was wood in the lean-to wood shed by the house. Mother had already found the axe and was making some kindling and carrying wood into the vacant house. She lit a fire in Mr. Williams' heater.

All of us children, still with our heavy warm clothing on, were around the heater getting warm. The baby, in a box nearby wrapped up in blankets, was making a fuss and crying. Mother picked her up saying, "My little Polya is hungry. Here you are." Baby Polly just loved that warm mother's milk, while listening to the heart beat and feeling the warmth of being held in mother's bosom. The family had completed its last trek!"

THE GOOD LIFE THEREAFTER

Philip and Elena Andreeff - *by Vi Kalugin*

When it was time to move to the Peace River country from Homeglen, some of the menfolk and all the cattle and supplies went ahead by train. The women and children and some of the men stayed behind for the time being. Our trip from Homeglen to the train station was by car - my very first car ride. One of the English men had a car and he took us to the train. We had to spend the night in Edmonton and the highlight of that for me was seeing the first electric light. It was just an electric bulb where string was pulled to put the light on. What an experience it was to ride the train from Edmonton to Fairview!

We must have arrived in the month of February. There was no railroad to Gage at that time. Nick was only about two years old. He was wearing a ski hat, pulled right over his head. Everyone else was bundled up too. Nick was making such a fuss while we were travelling by sleigh from the train station to the farm, dad threw him out and he walked alongside the sleigh. Nick walking onto the farm would be remembered as a big joke for a long time after.

Dad's brother Lawrence Andreeff, had come to this country before us and built a small house. The Kalugins, who had come to Canada after us, moved north ahead of us with Uncle Lawrence. When we arrived, we settled in with Uncle Lawrence's family until dad built a shack on the adjoining piece of land. By then there were eight of us in our small shack. Soon after, father built a big log house which still stands and is still occupied by a member of the family. The Kalugins had filed their land claim and the following spring they were going to build a house on a little island on a lake. Unfortunately, a fire burned the whole island. A few years later they moved to British Columbia and father purchased their land from them.

When we first settled on our land in Gage, there were no schools in that area so I did not attend school. About a year later a school was built about two miles from where we

lived, called Ranger. That school was unique, as half the kids were Russian and half were German. What a time we had playing different games - Russians against the Germans, with softball being the favourite sport. It was all in fun and there were never any hard feelings.

The language spoken at school was either Russian or German and not too many spoke English. The teacher could not understand any of us! Then the teacher put the pressure on and no more our own languages, only English on the school grounds. That's when I stopped talking altogether, as I was very shy and would not venture out vocally. Soon, though, English took over and if it was not for my father insisting on Russian at home, I'm sure we would have forgotten it. I'm grateful to him for that.

Our school was a one-room log building with grades one to eight, thirty-five to forty-two children and one teacher. The stove in the school was a big oil drum made into a heater and we burned wood. On cold days we would sit around the stove to keep warm, as it was too cold to sit too far from the stove.

I can truly say I enjoyed my school days. I liked the lessons and we had a lot of fun with all the kids. Also we got away from doing all the work at home. We had to help clear land, pick roots, work in the fields, stook, hay and help bring hay in. During the hard times we had to saw wood by hand and dad would take a load of wood and try to sell it for about one dollar and fifty cents a load.

In the summer, most of the time we walked to school, but at times we rode on horseback, two or three on a horse. In the winter we went on a sleigh or what we called a cutter. There was a barn by the school so the bigger boys would unhitch the horses and put them in the barn. After school they would hitch them up again and we would go home. Those were adventurous times. Our road cut through Uncle Lawrence's farm and some of the adventures were at his expense.

In the winter time it would be we Andreeffs on our cutter and the Nasedkins on their toboggan. We surely did do some naughty things. Uncle Lawrence had a little lean-to chicken coop in the yard and here we would see who could get up the highest with one runner of the cutter on the chicken coop and one on the ground without tipping over and many a time we would tip over into the snow, blankets and all. The boys would also go into uncle's chicken house and take eggs out of the nests for an egg fight. We used to walk past their straw stack and try to catch chipmunks. I remember catching one and being bitten but good! We never seemed to get caught doing these nasty things.

I enjoyed my childhood days even living through what they called the hungry thirties. Even though the families were large, I can't say we were ever hungry, although we did eat a lot of pea soup and porridge. School lunches were bread and butter. In summer we went to school bare foot or in running shoes with holes in them. It was a thrill to get a new pair of runners that cost between seventy-five cents and a dollar and a quarter a pair.

We certainly had a lot of fun with all our cousins and others that lived around that area. Our place was always a gathering place for all the kids. On Sundays we would play softball in our yard as it was nice and big. It was our favourite sport. Then there would always be something to eat for the kids even if it was just some bread and fried potatoes.

In the winter time we would ice skate. We had a small lake that would freeze early in the fall and sometimes there would be no snow until almost Christmas. That clear ice was great to skate on. Those moonlit nights sometimes would be so light we would skate till almost midnight. If only we had even half the skates we have today! Ours were make-shift blades of some sort attached to shoes.

I enjoyed the Greek Orthodox Church in Hines Creek. I remember walking with Grandpa Andreeff about ten miles to church. We would go Saturday evening and stay over night at Peter Sidoroff's. Our favourite place to be was at Uncle Pete's. After church we would walk home. I remember when Grandpa Gregory's big toe turned black and they had to amputate it. I walked to Fairview to visit him and then walked back home.

I finished school in grade eight. About two years later I got married. I married the eldest of the Kalugin sons (Sam), the family that came to our place two years after we arrived in Canada. I married fairly young but I must say I have never regretted it. When I got married we moved to the West Coast of British Columbia to a small mill town called Port Alberni and have lived there ever since. That's over fifty years ago. About a year after we were married we were blessed with a beautiful daughter, Anne. Then a year and a half later we had our dear son James and three years later we had another beautiful daughter, Caroline.

We now have six wonderful grandchildren. Our eldest daughter has two boys Mark and James. Our son has a boy Kyle and a girl Brynn and our youngest daughter has a girl Leah and a boy Brent. On October 18, 1990, Sam and I celebrated our fiftieth wedding anniversary. I can truly say we have had a wonderful life and I am thankful to God for that and for the beautiful country to which he brought us."

(For clarity: Nick Andruff, along with his brother Mike, have changed the spelling of the surname from Andreeff to Andruff; therefore, their progenies carry the surname Andruff.)

Mike Andruff is the second oldest son of Philip and Elena Andreeff and Natalie is the fourth daughter of Fred and Palegea Sidoroff.

Mike and Natalie Andruff - *by Natalie Andruff*

As Mike and I had known each other from the day we were born and were always attracted to each other, in 1942 we were married. We began our life on the farm, but it was not to be. We wanted to do something different so in 1948 we opened up a welding and machine shop business in Hines Creek. Business was getting good so we decided

to build a new home in 1955. We were one of the first families to have running water and bathroom facilities in our home.

One day in August of that year we took our family out to the Waterhole Old Timers Picnic and our life was never the same again. Mike had a serious accident and it is only through prayer and faith in God and His help that we survived and managed to raise three beautiful children, all of whom are well educated, married with families of their own. Our children had no time to live a normal child's life. They learned life's responsibilities at an early age. We are grateful to them for their understanding.

Our oldest daughter Kay had four years of nurse's training and five more years to get her Masters degree in Mental Health Nursing while working full time. They have one daughter and live in Langley where Kay is a Hospice Director.

Our son Michael had eight years at the University of British Columbia. He has his Bachelor of Commerce degree and is a Certified General Accountant and presently works as a Realtor. They have a daughter and two sons and live in Vancouver.

Our youngest daughter Laurie is married to a RCMP who is now in Canadian Security Service in charge of computers. They have three sons and live in Ottawa where Laurie works as a dental assistant.

Mike and I live in the Kerrisdale area of Vancouver in a park-like setting in a high-rise. We may be poor, but we have a million dollar view. Vancouver is a jewel among the great cities of the world. It is blessed with snowcapped mountain peaks (and we see three ski resorts from our living room window), a surprising abundance of sunshine, lush stately trees, and turquois green water which rivals the Mediterranean. Canada's third largest city, with the Pacific Ocean at its feet and the coastal mountains as a back drop, Vancouver displays one of the world's most beautiful settings.

We enjoy many good times with our family and are very proud of them. Now that we are retired we want to devote more time to our faith in God, without whom we would not have made it, and to our Orthodox Church which we believe Jesus Christ established.

Nick Andruff is the third son of Philip and Elena Andreeff - *by Nick Andruff*

"Over the years I have come to realize our lives are full of choices. What we do and where we are is what we choose to do and be. I know now that my marriage was pre-arranged in heaven many years ago, even before I was born. When I became of age, I chose to spend eternity with my childhood sweetheart, Zoya Nasedkin. God had given each of us 'the gift of helps' and this is why today we are missionaries, servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have learned to live with lots and also with very little and to know from where to draw all our needs in any given situation.

I would like to take you back many years. It was on the eve of a big Old Greek Orthodox Church holiday. My parents were on their way to the evening service at the

church in Hines Creek on horse and buggy and I, as a young boy, was sitting in the back. I was visited by an angel sent by God. As I sat there, suddenly I felt a presence and a strange feeling came over me, a peace that I cannot describe. I sensed that this was of the Lord. In my mind I was talking a mile a minute about my future plans - of how I wanted to do my thing in my productive years and how I would like to serve God in my latter years. My request was granted. I know now that this experience was a call from God. He had a plan for me but I chose my own way. I had my 'forty years in the wilderness' but His seal was upon me. I quote from the Bible, "before I was formed in my mother's womb, He knew me and He ordained me a servant".

I thank God for my God-fearing parents. My dad had the faith of Abraham. A war, a revolution and a depression in the prime time of his life took its toll and he went home to be with the Lord at a young age.

In 1950 we moved to Vancouver Island where I worked for MacMillan Bloedel until my retirement in 1980. Our lives took a big turn in 1970 when there came a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit up and down the Island and we got caught up in the flow. Up to that time we were faithful attenders in the United Church and we wanted our children in Sunday School, but somehow I knew there was something lacking, a void that could only be filled by the Holy Spirit. I know now that I could sit in a church pew all my life and never become a Christian, just as I could live in a garage all my life and never become a car.

Once again I had a choice to make. Do I choose to believe what these Christians are telling me and what the Bible is saying, or do I continue to do my own thing? Praise God I chose to follow Jesus and there is no turning back."

Jean Koyman - *daughter of Philip and Elena Andreeff*

"I weighed in at five pounds of 'fighting fury' when I came into this world on December 25, 1929, at Gage, Alberta. It was eleven o'clock in the morning, just in time for turkey! Proud parents were Elena and Philip Andreeff.

I spent most of my life on the farm that was once dad's and mom's and grandpa Gregory's homesteads. Our oldest brother Ike also had a homestead for a short while before his untimely death in 1933 at the age of eighteen.

From my earliest years as a child it seemed like we were forever brushing the land and picking roots and rocks. As I got older it seemed like we were forever fencing. I always say, "the story of my life - fencing". I suppose that was good as we no longer had to tend our sheep. Almost every day after school in spring and most of the summer holidays it was Fannie's and my job to be shepherds. Dad would turn out the sheep on summer fallow or anywhere else that wasn't fenced for grazing. We soon trained Fiena to do it when she got old enough!

However, all was not work. My most enjoyable times were when we played ball and went skating on our small lake. I learned to skate when I was five years old. Later I even played some hockey with the men's team in town. Fast ball was my favourite sport. I played ball for many years with the lady's fastball team as catcher. I had no trouble getting to ball games as I had my first driver's license when I was thirteen years old in 1943. Of course, dad had to sign it!

In early 1947 I left home for the first time. I went to Port Alberni, B.C., where my sisters Viola and Zina were living. I got a job at Woodwards in the grocery department and worked there untill fall of that year when I returned home to help mom and dad with the harvest. After harvest I went back again to Port Alberni where I worked at the hospital. I left in January of 1948 to come home for Fannie's and Louie's wedding and never went back. I stayed on the farm to help mom and dad. For a time I worked in Loggie's grocery store in Fairview.

In the fall of 1952 I met a young man. His name was Laurens Koyman. He was originally from Holland. He came here from Campbell River with cousin Peter Andreeff, who had talked him into coming up north to go trapping. Of course, there was no trapping. They stayed and helped me with the harvest. Laurens went back to Langley, B.C., only to return in 1953.

It was during this time that dad got cancer. Mom and I went out to Edmonton to be with him during his operation. In the meantime, Viola came to help look after the farm. Dad lived for almost a year after his operation. He passed away in October 1953 at the age of sixty-five.

In February 1954 I married Laurens Koyman. Mom lived with us and helped raise our five children. Laurens worked outside the farm for almost thirty years just to keep the farm afloat, first as a carpenter for eighty cents an hour! Later he worked as a sheet metal worker, installing furnaces as well as working as a plumber. I worked the farm as best I could. Mom was our built-in chief cook, bottle washer, disciplinarian and all-around baby-sitter.

Our family consists of three boys and two girls. The oldest, Colleen is married to Don Reed who is a heavy duty mechanic. Colleen is a lab technician at the hospital in Red Deer, Alberta. They have two children, Alana and Ryan.

Our second is Don. He is married and has three children of his own and one adopted. He is the plumber at the Fairview College. Children with his first wife are Derek, Christina and Mikki. His second wife Susan has one daughter, Ashley.

Our third is daughter Cindy. She married a farmer from Spirit River, Alberta. They have five children, four boys and one girl. Her husband Phillip Lebraque grew up on his Dad's farm which they now own. Cindy is a secretary and works part time for the power company. Their children are Adam, Matthew, Luke, Joshua and Erin.

Our fourth is son Shane. He is married to another Cindy. He is a carpenter by trade. At present he works at Canfor sawmill in Hines Creek. They have three children, Brandy, Garret and Candice.

And then we have James, five years younger than Shane. He is the one that gave mom most of her headaches as well as most of her joy. He is not married. He is an electrician and is working in Grande Prairie, Alberta. The boys all have a share in this farm. Shane has his own house and little farmstead on what used to be mom's homestead. Don has his own home on the home farm. James owns some land.

The children are proud of their father who was in the war in Indonesia, Malaya, Java and Borneo against the Japanese, where he earned the Bronze Star.

Our mom lived with us until she left to go to the nursing home in Fairview in 1972. She was eighty-one years old when she died in October 1975.

Now there are only Laurens and I left in this big old house where memories from the distant past still linger on."

Original Home of Philip & Elena Andreeff
Now owned by daughter Jean & her husband Lo Koyman

Fannie Schischikowsky - *fourth daughter of Philip and Elena Andreeff*

"I was born in 1931 at Gage, Alberta. One of the things I recall as a youngster was that my father was a man of many talents. He was a great carpenter and working with only a few hand tools, he carved out some beautiful designs in finishing his home, some of which are still visible to this day. He also made school desks for the Ranger School which we all attended from grades one to eight. He made a lot of his own harnesses and twisted his own ropes out of twine. Mother, of course, was the teacher in basic homemaking such as bread making and sewing. We had a treadle machines that we cranked by hand, spinning wool, knitting and quilting.

I recall as a child we always seemed to have all the neighbour kids over for ball games, run-sheep-run, or hide and seek. When we were little girls we used to play house. We'd glue spools on our heels and think we were really big with high heels.
Mom always had a big noon meal for everyone and sometimes supper too. It didn't matter if there were six or twenty-six, no one ever went home hungry.

Christmas and Easter were always special holidays. Maybe because we had a very strict Lent for six weeks prior - no meat, no eggs, no dairy products. One Christmas we girls got real store-bought dolls, heads made of porcelain with ribbons on them.

That year was our first taste of puffed wheat and milk for breakfast, which I'll never forget. It tasted like the best thing I'd ever eaten. We also had to keep Lent on Wednesdays and Fridays. It was the Greek Orthodox religion.

Father used to cut wood and ice for summer's use. The ice was stored in ice houses with lots of sawdust. We didn't have electricity so ice houses and wells were used to keep food cool. Wells were dug with spades, some about thirty feet deep. Water was only for animal use and ice was for house use. They worked so hard for what they got.

Christmas concerts were a special event. The whole family would go all bundled up with lots of blankets and a few hot bricks to keep us warm. Horses would have bells on the harness and the old bob-sleigh creaking in the snow would make the neatest sound!

Sister Jean and I spent a lot of winters trapping, snaring and shooting rabbits, weasels and squirrels. We did the skinning and stretching of the pelts onto boards to dry. The furs were sold for only a few cents each but it was money and money was scarce at times. We certainly have seen a lot of changes over the years; some good, some not so good. We never went hungry and were punished if we took more food than we could eat. Our parents had a tough row to hoe but they stuck with it and I'm proud to say they raised a pretty nice family.

In 1948 I married one of the fellows I went to school with by the name of Louis Schischikowsky. We have four children, Annette, our oldest who married Gerald Langdale in 1968. They have two sons, Dean and Brett and two daughters, Tina and Kimberley. Our son Christopher married Christine Regush in 1972. They have four daughters. Their oldest Marcy married Burt Charchuk in 1988. Tracy, Tammy and Marty are still in school. Karen, our third child married Garry Wasylciw in 1976. They have two sons, Lance and Laine. Our youngest daughter Tresa is still single. Our latest addition is a great-grandchild!

We have had life a little easier than our parents and now with so many conveniences our children will most certainly have an even easier life."

Fie McIntyre - *fifth daughter of Philip and Elena Andreeff*

"My first childhood recollection was the day Doreen was born. I was three years old. There seemed to be a lot of commotion and suddenly I heard a baby cry. I can't remember seeing her but remember the announcement that I had a baby sister.

A most vivid memory of life in the home of Philip and Elena is that of a dinner scene. After the traditional washing of hands and praying before the icon, the whole family sat around a large rectangular table with grandpa Gregory Andreeff at the head. He would

sprinkle some pepper in his palm and inhale it. This was his idea of restoring his sense of smell. After a few sneezes the meal began in total silence. Apparently it was a sin to speak during a meal. If anyone broke the silence there was an immediate smack on the forehead by grandpa's spoon. It must have been a magic spoon as it managed to reach anyone, regardless of distance.

I suppose my childhood was typical. We played a lot of different games in our earlier years. Hop-scotch was a favourite game. Finding that most beautiful piece of glass almost made one feel prestigious. Playhouses - we built them in the trees behind our house using binder twine to separate the rooms. Our dishes were broken pieces of mother's dishes, various lids and discarded odds and ends. We would straddle our stick horses and set out in search of food... leaves, seeds, stems and blossoms, mud for cookies, and even dried rabbit droppings. What a menu! Our meals always started with a prayer but because we were not actually eating the food, the real prayer seemed sacrilegious. As we crossed ourselves, we'd say, "Bozhee moi" (my God).

The highlight of the summer was always the visit by the Anglican Sunday School by Post ladies. They seemed like angels, so soft spoken. Their grey van was filled with books and other neat things. They always left gifts. How I loved them!

As we grew older, we were obliged to do our part on the farm. Summer holidays meant picking berries and mushrooms, haying and helping with harvest, usually spreading the grain in the granaries. Haying was the worst. How I hated the fox-tail in my socks!

Somewhere between my birth and grade nine, metamorphosis took place. Instead of being Russian, as our parents insisted, I became a Canadian of Russian origin. I attended Fairview High and lived at Mihailoff's for twenty dollars a month. Vi Mihailoff and I are still best friends. I had the distinction of being the first Ranger student to graduate from high school.

When dad died my dreams of becoming a nurse ended. Meanwhile I met and married Ken McIntyre, a twist of fate I've never regretted. We had four children. Susan, who has a son David, married Bill Potter (who has two sons, Bradley and Brendon) and they live in Ottawa where Susan has worked for National Defence since obtaining her Masters Degree in Library Sciences.

Brian, who inherited his woodworking talent from his grandpa Andreeff, is a cabinet maker. While working in Calgary, one of the projects was a contract with MGM in Disneyworld, and his claim to fame is having restored Walt Disney's desk. He now lives in Kelowna.

Gary married Anne Berger, an Animal Health (which she now teaches) student from Norway. Gary is a natural gas plant operator for Anderson Exploration. They have two sons, Cody and Kennet.

Kelly married Emily Doll and they have a son, Scott. Kelly and Emily are now

farming the land formerly owned by his father Ken and uncle Bill Boyd. Their futuristic approach to farming resulted in their winning the farm family award for this area.

Ken passed away in 1987 at the age of fifty-eight. He left a big hole in our lives but as we all know, there is no going back except in good memories.

I now have my own business, Fimac Insurance Ltd., have a staff of three and thoroughly enjoy going to work every day. I enjoy painting and perhaps some day this hobby will make me rich and famous."

Doreen Riedijk - *youngest daughter of Philip and Elena Andreeff*

"I was born on March 29, 1937, on the farm at Gage, Alberta.

I attended school at Ranger until grade eight. Ranger is situated between Fairview and Hines Creek and is about two and one-half miles from the farm. Of those eight years, four were by correspondence whereby we had supervisors, rather than teachers. From grade eight to twelve, I attended Fairview High School, graduating in 1955. In 1956 I married Lawrence Calvert and we had three children, Bill, Douglas and Carol. All three children were born in the Fairview Hospital. Lawrence was in the sheet metal business in Fairview until August 1966 when we moved to Campbell River, B.C. He was employed at the Elk Falls Mill until his death on December 25, 1970. Realizing I had to be the bread winner, I began studies in the Health Record field and became department manager of the Health Record Department at the Campbell River and District General Hospital, where I still retain the same position. In April 1980 I married Pieter Riedijk and I became stepmother to his two daughters, Corinne and Diane. I have two grandsons, Tristan and Spenser.

So much has happened over the years. I did have a happy childhood, with very loving parents. Going to church in Hines Creek was no doubt the highlight. We would go to Uncle Peter Sidoroff's by wagon where we would spend the night. With our cousins we compared notes - who had the prettiest dress or shoes. Church was always long, so we amused ourselves by "growing warts" (dropping candle wax on our hands). Those young enough could even have a little snooze. Parties at Uncle Pete's were always fun as we could get to see our cousins again. And they had such a neat house.

I remember the ball games we had in our yard, when our neighbours and relatives would all come over. Walking fences and climbing buildings was also a great past-time. During my school days in Ranger, we always had a ball team and competed against other teams, such as David Thompson or Gage Schools. We took part in sports meets and I always had to go in the races because I was in "that age group". I certainly was not a runner.

We went to school by cutter in the winter and either rode horseback or walked during the rest of the year. When I was about eight, I decided I wanted to be the janitor of the

school, so I got the job of lighting the fire every morning and sweeping the floor at night for four dollars a month. The job lasted only one year - it was too much in the winter time. Being bused to school came when I was in grade eight. We rode in a home made box on the back of a truck.

Picking mushrooms into our lunch buckets on the way home from school or going out into the pasture to pick them was great. Picking strawberries was a bit tedious, but I have great memories of going with mother. Milking cows was a nightly chore. Another experience I had was being a "shepherd". On the farm, we raised sheep and I had to tend sheep in a field from morning to evening. I was given a gun to scare off the coyotes (maybe wolves, I was not told) and I would take my dolls along to play with.

As I grew older, I helped dad with the field work, harrowing, discing and threshing. I even tried stooking, but that was not my bag. Poor mother always had to re-stook my mess. Haying could have been fun, but the combination of the smell of hay and the heat was sometimes unbearable. Our job was to ride the "bucking pole" and make sure we scooped up each haycock. Lunch out in the field always tasted so good and we, as children, could have a cup of tea and eat with the working men.

All the while I lived on the farm we did not have electricity. The phone was installed when I was about fourteen and it was a party line of about twenty families. We could listen in to any conversation and our ring was two longs, which you cranked by hand.

To go to Hines Creek we would walk to Gage and then take the train. To go to Fairview, we took the horses and wagon. Once in a while we would see a movie, such as Wizard of Oz. In the winter time you had to bundle up and a heated rock would be placed at your feet.

I learned to drive a car when I was fourteen. At that time you could drive under your mother's driving license. She didn't know how to drive, but that didn't matter, as long as the license was in her name.

Whenever mother and dad would go on a trip, I usually went along, being the youngest. One big trip we took was to the west coast when I was about five. I remember sleeping at the train station until our train came in to take us to Edmonton and then on to Vancouver. There were several army men travelling and this was my first experience of what a war could do. There were men with either arms or legs missing, but they were survivors. From Vancouver, we took the ferry and train to Port Alberni, where we visited my sister Vi and her husband Sam Kalugin and all the rest of the Kalugins. Other trips we took were to Rimbey to visit the Mishukoffs. I haven't changed much because I still love to travel. I have been to Australia, Belgium, California, Denmark, England, Finland, Germany, (when it was East and West), Holland, Mexico, Poland, Russia, Sweden, and just recently to Ottawa and Toronto.

I enjoy many things in life, but especially family and friends. Our family has all

grown up, so now we have two dogs, Brandi and Soda. We love camping and entertaining guests. Our home is always open to everyone."

Bill and Helen Andreeff - *by their daughter Merry Fowler*

"Bill and Helen Andreeff farmed not far from the hamlet of Gage, north of Fairview, Alberta. On his farm Bill set up a blacksmith shop with a forge, and generously shared his skills with his neighbours. Given the option, Bill would have preferred to work as a blacksmith, but that was not to be. They were brought over to settle land as farmers, so farm he did. Helen loved the country and the farming life.

Both Helen and Bill learned to speak and read English almost from the beginning. Bill's first job at Gage was working with a surveying crew north of Hines Creek which was being opened up for homesteading. He was one of the first trustees of Ranger School, the small local school which the immigrants had built in 1931. Because he spoke English, he was made foreman of the work crew constructing a built-up connector road between the two gravel roads which ran from Fairview to Hines Creek.

Bill and Helen Andreeff both had two special qualities which made them very adaptable to a new culture. They were open to change and willing to leave the past behind them, and they were tolerant of people who were different from themselves. This enabled them to enter more fully into their citizenship as Canadians.

Their first summer at Gage, when their land was still covered with bush, they had rented a house and field from an Indian family named Kemp. Here they came to know Indian people as individuals, and continued to relate to them in that way. Consequently they were more tolerant than most in their attitude towards their Indian neighbours. This attitude was instilled into their children even when they themselves were drawn back into the old prejudiced habits.

In character, Bill and Helen were quite different from one another. Bill was an easy-going man with sudden flashes of hot temper but he never carried a grudge. His sense of humour was keen but quiet, shown not by a loud guffaw but by a twinkle in his vivid blue eyes. Through the years he developed good relationships with a wide range of people from Charlie Knott on the Indian Reserve to "Osky" Johnson at the garage. He was a genial man without guile.

Helen's character was more impatient, assertive and ambitious. She was physically strong with energy and stamina beyond the ordinary. This very intelligent woman was frustrated for most of her life because of her total lack of formal education. She learned to read both Russian and English and in her fifties when her children were all far away,

she taught herself to write to them in English. Having a restless and inquiring mind, she yearned for an intellectual life which her narrow kinship circle never provided.

They were a warm-hearted, generous and hospitable couple. Their farm was situated beside one of the old Indian trails to Hines Creek and many a bachelor homesteader trekking wearily home was made welcome to supper and a bed in their house. Both Helen and Bill could speak some Ukrainian, Polish and Croation and a smattering of German picked up from the German immigrants who were their nearest neighbours.

Having settled two or three years before their neighbours, Bill and Helen were able to help them in practical ways with building and with garden produce. They shared tools, equipment and even horses with their new neighbours. Helen learned new skills from them; how to make lye soap, sausages and how to plaster walls. There were social times also and they spent many winter evenings playing cards with their German neighbours, as well as with Lawrence and Palagaya Andreeff.

Helen was a self-taught mid-wife and was often called upon in that capacity by her sisters-in-law and by her other neighbours. With her own birthings, however, she relied on her husband to help her. He was gentle with the children and helpful with the housework so that she could stay in bed for two or three days after childbirth.

From necessity they were both hard-working people but as the Depression years went by, Bill got discouraged with his infertile land. He chose to confine his efforts to doing what was necessary for a decent living and to let the rest go. He could turn his hand to anything from building a house to fixing a tractor. (Although they had four sons, Bill and Helen were never so dependent upon them as some of the other immigrants of their era. Helen even learned how to drive the tractor and the truck after the children were all gone.) His relaxed approach to life created friction in their marriage because Helen's response to poor soil and poor crops was to work even harder and harder.

Helen was a wonderful story-teller and knew many folk songs. Tedious chores like carding wool would be lighter for her small children as they listened to stories about the witch "Baba Yaga" and "Snegooratchka", the snow girl. She described her happy youth in Siberia with longing and yearned to see her parents again, but that never came to pass.

Helen's hope in the new land was for some liberation from the narrow strictures of their life in Siberia. When they stepped off the train in Wetaskiwin, Alberta in 1924, the welcoming committee had arranged for cars to drive them out to the tent camp near Pigeon Lake. Helen was in a car driven by a woman — a woman in breeches who smoked a cigarette. "Aha", thought Helen, "this is the modern woman. That's what I want to be: a modern Canadian woman." She was twenty-three years old then.

Finally she made a declaration that was both symbolic and practical. It took her ten years but at last she cut her hair short. Old Believers had strict rules about hair. Men

were not allowed to cut off their beards; women were not allowed to cut off their hair. Women were to keep their hair bound in braids or in a bun and covered by a head cloth and in public by a shawl. She had to do heavy tasks in the field and garden and her hair made her so hot that it had become a burden to her. Besides, she wanted to be a modern woman and modern women wore bobbed hair in the 1930s.

Helen had beautiful hair; a fall of dark brown hair down to her waist. It had never been cut in all her life. It was so thick she had to comb it in sections. The little children watched as she combed it and impatiently twisted it up into a knot at the nape of her neck. To them it was intricate beauty; to her it was a nuisance.

Early one morning, the children awoke to a surprising scene. Papa was cutting off Mama's hair! She was sitting on a chair in the middle of the kitchen weeping as the long, heavy locks fell in ripples at her feet — weeping for the loss of this link with her youth but through her tears insisting that he must — he must cut off her hair because "This is Canada. We don't need old Russia here." Then she swept up all that beautiful hair and fed it lock by lock into the fire. She never looked back. She had courage and a strong will to sustain her.

And she had need for her strong will. One of the first things she had ascertained was that, "in Canada men were not allowed to beat women. If they did, women could call the police." She and her husband shouted and stormed in their quarrels as the Depression worsened but the farthest he would go would be to slam his fist on the table. In fact he had never threatened her with blows after they left the communal home in Siberia. Over the years other women would show Helen their bruises but she had no such bruises herself. "No more! Never, no more! This is not Russia; this is Canada!" She had learned to stand up for herself.

Education was valued and school attendance and achievement were given a high priority. Their children were encouraged to participate in the free SUNDAY SCHOOL by *POST* lessons sent out to isolated homesteaders by the Anglican Church. One of their daughters, Merry, at fifteen, placed first across Canada in the annual Sunday School exams for advanced pupils. Books were regularly borrowed from the Anglican lending library in Fairview. Bill would buy books as well when they were available at auction sales.

Their more pious kinfolk were critical of Bill and Helen because they chose not to observe the many periods of prescribed fasting days, especially the long major Lents before Christmas and Easter. Helen declared that no children of hers would be forbidden eggs or milk or meat for any Lent as long as she had it to give to them. She herself and Bill fasted during a major Lent but their children were never deprived in that way.

They were kind parents who seldom resorted to the harsh discipline of the "old country". No matter how short of money they were, Bill always got a bag of candy for

the children when he went to town: "Oh well", he would say, "we can spare a nickel for the little kids." They enjoyed playing cards and checkers and doing jigsaw puzzles with their children. Chinese Checkers were a special favourite with Bill. They subscribed to the *FREE PRESS PRAIRIE FARMER*. They both listened to radio programs, "Fibber McGee and Molly" and "Lux Radio Theatre". Bill followed the war news and the stock market (cattle and pigs) prices. Helen had her regular noon hour of soap operas.

Bill and Helen were proud to be Canadians. When Helen got her citizenship papers, she was very proud of her right to vote. At the next election, they drove with horse and wagon twelve miles over muddy dirt roads in rain and wind so that she could cast her ballot. She never missed the chance to vote, even in her old age in a nursing home.

She so valued living in "blessed Canada" that even in her distress when her oldest son was with the Air Force overseas, she took comfort in the fact that he was defending her new home land. To the end she would say, "I am not Russian. I used to be Siberian but now I am one hundred percent Canadian."

As they became Canadianized, they set aside many old rituals and prayers. They believed in God but many of the old traditions they regarded more as superstition. When he was sixty-three and continually short of breath from a failing heart, Bill expressed himself like this to one of his daughters, "I've had a good, long life and I'm ready to die. I don't want to live this way, breathless if I just cross the yard. Death doesn't scare me. I guess God can look after me when I die. He knows that I've tried to be fair and to live a decent life. And I've had 'lotsa' good times to boot."

Helen's religious views broadened in a different way. She always wanted to know "why?". She read the updated translations of the Bible for herself in English and turned away more and more from icons and old rituals and rules. "We were taught more to reverence icons than to worship God," she would say. "If God is our Father why do we need an icon or a saint between us when we pray to Him?" In her B. C. days, she went occasionally to the United Church with one of her daughters, but mostly she prayed in a simple trusting way directly to God - a God of love and compassion, not the stern deity she had been taught to worship in fear.

Bill and Helen had eleven children in all, but only eight reached maturity. William died of a heart attack in 1957 at the age of sixty-three. Helen was married again, to Jack Clark in B.C., and eighteen years later was widowed a second time. She outlived Bill by thirty-seven years and is now (1994) in a nursing home, aged ninety-three.

Elena Erofayevna Andrieva (Helen Clark) is still 'Mama' and 'Baba' to her many descendants, although she now lies speechless and motionless in a nursing home, and neither sees nor hears them when they come. Her heart is strong and her body still keeps her soul. Perhaps deep within the unconscious she is a singing, dancing child again in a Siberian meadow playing beside the little river. And perhaps all her little children are

playing with her too and perhaps it is all one 'blessed Canada' for her."

The above was written by Merry Fowler in September 1994. Helen Andreeff Clark died October 22, 1994. Her four children, many grandchildren, nieces and nephews gathered to say farewell to a great lady. Merry Fowler paid tribute to her mother with these words directed to the grandchildren, "Most of you remember a soft fat hugging Baba - but for four of us here she is also remembered in our hearts as a strong young mother. We remember her before sickness and sorrow and old age bowed her down. But even then within her, lived the same courageous, intrepid spirit. And I believe that deep within there was a dancing, singing child". Aunt Helen is buried in the Nanaimo City Cemetery.

A Cousin's Lament

A quote from a letter written by Sydney Boris Sidoroff in Quebec to his sister Anne Jordan in Courtenay, B.C., dated September 23, 1982:

"Thank you for the update on Bill Andreiv. I phoned Bill on the Sunday before he died. He most surely is worthy of credit for his stoic approach. He talked to me like a true soldier on his death bed, not asking for pity. I believe I was more broken up, as we talked, than he was. The French pronounce the name Andreiv the same as the Russians do. It indicates status and poise. Bill seemed to be reflecting this to me when I talked to him before his final day."

Bill Andreiv (he was known as Bill Andreeff) is the son of Helen and Bill Andreeff and a close buddy of his cousin Syd (Boris) when they were growing up.

John and Anna Andreeff - *by Elizabeth Haluck*

"When we left Homeglen our destination in the Peace River Country was Englewood, Alberta, in the Fairview district. Sisters Ada, Helen and Polly were born in Homeglen. We were given a lean-to shack to live in with bunks, a table and benches and a stove. There was a nice creek running by so we had lots of water, but I remember being hungry a lot. Father was working on the land either crop-sharing or paying off the team of horses, a wagon, a cow a few chickens or a stove. These were our worldly possessions, which we took with us later to our permanent homestead.

We had great neighbours across the creek from us in Englewood named Bartletts. I started school there and if it wasn't for Johnny and Hazel Bartlett picking me up every morning, I would have been a grade one drop-out. My English was poor - I was petrified.

This was the time I realized that we were poor. The English kids had good clothes

and good lunches. All I remember in my lard pail lunch box is fried bread dough.

We were in Englewood about a year when my dad left for the bush to stake out our homestead in the allotted area. Gage was our closest store approximately six miles away and we were in the Black Duck district. This was also the name of our school that all our family went to and was three miles away.

Dad built a house on the homestead and we took off with all our possessions - kids included. I remember being so excited. We had about ten to fifteen miles to travel, mostly through bush. Six of us in the wagon, some chickens and a cow tied behind and other meager necessities we owned. How I wish we could have had a picture taken, it would have been priceless to our family. The small log house had an upstairs - an attic actually. To us it was a palace. We kids slept upstairs on blankets for years.

Home of John & Anna Andreef - Gage, Alberta

Paul was born in 1929. The first and only son. Aunt Helen, wife of William Andreeff, was midwife. They lived a mile away. Dad brought her over in a stone boat with a team of horses. Sister Limpiada was born in 1932 and died at six months old. Mom and Dad took her in the wagon ten miles to Fairview to the doctor. The medication didn't help and we lost her. The 'flu epidemic that year was a bad one. My father and his three brothers, Philip, William and Lawrence settled within one to three miles radius of each other and sister Lucaria, wife of Peter Sidoroff, was about ten miles away. Trails were cut and we were able to visit each other which was exciting - Sundays and holidays only.

Somehow we children became proud owners of a pair of skates - the kind you tie on to the shoes. Our skating rink was an old slough with grass tufts sticking up all over. The good Lord surely did look after us or we'd all have had broken ankles. We skied on barrel staves tied to our shoes. I hit a tree on my first run and gave up the sport.

We cleared land, put in crops, grew a large garden with potatoes, carrots, and other vegetables. These were put in the cellar for the winter. Sauerkraut was made from cabbage and pickles from cucumbers. There was a flour mill in Fairview so our wheat was made into flour and cream of wheat. We sold cream or made butter to trade for other staples. Meat was scarce. There were pigeons and jack rabbits we could have eaten but it was against the Old Greek Orthodox religion to eat them. We got a twenty-two rifle later on and hunted wild duck and partridge and when there were no shells we set traps with a little wheat sprinkled around them to get the ducks. The odd time mother would steal a couple of eggs from the wild duck's nest to bake us some sweet buns. Dad would

fish in a creek about four miles away with a fish trap he made out of chicken wire.

One day a policemen drove into the yard. We were frightened - so sure that he came because of the fishing but he asked us why we grew so many poppies. We explained to him that the Russian people used the poppy seed for baking cakes and rolls and he was satisfied. I'm sure he thought maybe we were starting an opium farm! What the policeman didn't know is that he put a crimp on dad's illegal fishing because of his visit. We used to dry rhubarb for the winter, peeling the stalks for hours to dry in the sun. Some one told us if you didn't peel the stalk it was poisonous. Years later we found out it was the leaf that was poisonous.

And, of course, all families had a bath house, an ice house and most important the out house, but I don't recall any of the clan having the out oven that mom said they used in the old country. It was built outside from clay and stone or something fired up, and they'd put loaves of bread in to bake using a sort of shovel. In the summer time the loaves were baked on a hefty cabbage leaf. Mom said the bread then smelled delicious, like having cabbage soup and bread. They called it "black bread". It was heavy - made from rye and brown flour.

For treats we had Andreeff's spruce sugarless gum! The sap on the spruce tree would harden and we'd pick off a chunk and chew - it was hard, crumbly and bitter - so you spit till most of the bitter was gone. Chew long enough and you got pretty good gum.

We made candy when we could swipe some sugar when the parents were away. Melt sugar and butter in the frying pan, then add a little vinegar. It was hard as a rock but we made sure there was no sign of it when the parents got home. I got a terrible burn making candy one day - so that was the end of the secret. We even had soda pop - water, baking soda, vinegar and sugar. It would all fizz up and was yummy good. Then we'd all get terrible stomach aches.

We made our own bar soap. It worked well on laundry, but it sure was rough on the skin for bathing.

We were short of cutlery. Knives and forks didn't matter so much but spoons we needed to eat our soup with. Dad made a 'spoon mold' out of something and used some type of alloy or something, and made us some spoons. They were ugly and rough but served the purpose. I wish I had kept one for a souvenir.

Someone loaned us a rooster to visit our few hens we had. He did his bit, then Mom would trade eggs with the wild duck. When they were hatched we kept the chicks in the house until they were older. The duck was not unhappy for long. Her chicks couldn't swim so she took off. Later we got ducks and geese. Mom was kept busy protecting the chicks from the crows. She was a good shot. She'd pepper those crows with the twenty-two and that fed the dogs.

Uncle Terence Doumnoff arrived in Canada later. He helped build our big log house. We got a tractor and later an old truck which dad drove in second gear most of the time. He then got a couple of bee hives started. It was nice having the honey and we even sold some, but it was short-lived. One night a bear came to visit and put an end to our honey farm.

Keeping all the family clothed was no easy task for Mom. She had to sew in between all her other chores and help in the field. We all helped pick roots and stones. The Timothy Eaton catalogue is where everything came from. A bolt of twenty yards of material was cheaper so we all had the same dresses - except Paul, he got boy's stuff.

Mother brought a beautiful long gown from Russia which was black with bold red flowers. I'm sure she would have loved to have kept it, but Ada and I were to participate in a Christmas concert so Mom made us nice dresses out of her gown. All our family wore the same type of underwear - good cotton - but it took so long for the "Robin Hood Flour" printing to bleach out (now it's a fad and expensive!). The winter fleece bloomers were ordered from Eatons and always hung way below our dresses. Hand-me-downs weren't very popular, but that's what we got or did without.

Mom & Dad learned to speak enough English to get by quite nicely, but before that Mom said shopping for groceries was quite a chore. She couldn't read the labels nor did she know how to ask for it. She didn't know if it was pepper or another spice. Uncle Terence Doumnoff got along quite well - Mom said he would make a motion of shaking a can then he'd sneeze and they knew he needed pepper. He would pat his butt and say "baa, baa" and that was for a leg of lamb.

When it came time for dad to get his naturalization papers, he kept practising his Oath of Allegiance and he made it. I was a child, so was naturalized with him. Sometime after, it was Mom's turn. Dad was teaching her and she was a nervous wreck the day they went to Fairview. She came back home all smiles. There were several others there for the same reason and said it together so Mom's mispronunciation wasn't noticed.

The older folks used to have parties at their homes. We'd cook and bake for a week if it was our turn and with the help of the braga (beer) they made, the party got pretty frisky at times. They enjoyed singing the Russian songs.

The dances at the school for the whole community were something to look forward to in later years. They would last till about three in the morning. By the time we walked home three or four miles, tired and sleepy, it was time to do the morning milking! Then there were the "box lunch" dances. The girls would make a nice lunch and decorate the box pretty and the boys would bid on them. Whoever bought your lunch was your partner for the evening. I always got a boy I didn't like. Some of the "big shot" boys bid as high as two dollars!

Time went on. We finished elementary school, got jobs and started a life of our own Paul and Ruth went on to higher education.

Mother and Dad stayed on the farm alone for a few years, then dad decided they should move to Fairview and rent the farm out. The night before they moved, he died suddenly of a heart attack. Mom moved to Fairview. She rented a small house and later bought one of her own and was very happy there for over twenty-five years. She was well liked in Fairview. All the younger generation called her "Auntie Annie".

She grew a large garden, knew how and where to pay her bills. Her doctor, Dr. Chung, and Joe Hemstock, the grocery store owner, loved to tease her because she always had a smart answer for them. I was with her when she went to see Dr. Chung. He patted her hair and said "getting kind of grey, Auntie". She grinned, slapped his hand and said, "None your business". He loved it. Then we went to Hemstock's store and Joe said, "Come on Auntie Annie, let's go to my office for a smoke." Mom said, "Sorry, Joe, I quit last week". She had never smoked.

On her first complete check-up, the doctor discovered she was diabetic. They looked after her well and she lived a good long life.

The nursing home was a short distance away from her house and she was forever packing vegetables to them in the summer time and visiting all the people she knew there. We visited her a lot and it was then I found that my Mom had a great sense of humor. There was no time for it on the farm, I guess.

In 1980 at the age of fifty-four darling sister Helen died suddenly of a heart attack. She was in the army during the war and later worked as a Commissionaire at the RCMP station in Edmonton. One morning she didn't feel well at work. An officer took her to the hospital and she died that evening.

In 1981 Mother decided she wanted to move to the nursing home. She didn't want to move in with any of her children because Fairview was her home and we all lived a good distance from there. She died in 1988 at the age of eighty-eight after a short illness.

We struggled to survive, worked hard, but Canada was good to us. Life got better and better. Our own children are educated, have good jobs, are all happy and I'm so proud of them.

Darlyne Shane is a private secretary to the Chairman of Tebus Corp. Charolette Pasowisty worked in the Municipal Office and the doctor's office occasionally but is busy with their four children and furthering her education by correspondence. Our son Kelvin Ladyka chose a career in his father's footsteps and is a lineman for B. C. Hydro.

I worked in a pharmacy in Invermere, B. C., for about sixteen years. My husband Johnny died in Invermere, British Columbia, in 1975. Later I married Albert Haluck and moved to Calgary to his home. We are now lazy and contented."

Ada Courchene - *second daughter of John and Anna Andreeff*

"I was born in Homeglen in 1924. I don't remember moving from Homeglen in 1928. After a short time in Englewood, we moved to Gage where we settled in the homestead log house with the bad and the good ahead of us.

When I started school, I couldn't even tell the teacher my name. It was a school named Black Duck and the teacher's name, believe it or not, was Miss Mallard! There were no school buses. We walked the two or three miles to school but before that there were chores to be done. We four oldest girls had to milk six cows, separate the milk and take the cows back to another pasture. The cream was kept in a five-gallon cream can. When the can was full it was taken by horse and buggy to the Gage station and then shipped by train to the Peace River Creamery.

Besides the station, Gage had a Post Office and a little store where one could buy anything from nails to sugar. We must have been great Rogers Syrup eaters because once empty, the containers were our lunch buckets. A second one would be used for our cocoa which we warmed up by setting on the old drum converted into a wood stove. This stove kept our one room school house warm. I don't know what dad asked for in the store in his poor English when he requested something to put into school sandwiches, but he ended up coming home with a twenty-five pound pail of mincemeat! I presume to him it was meat of some sort and sandwiches we did make, believe it or not. They smelled good but oh so soggy. All the kids in school wanted to trade with us.

I think everyone felt the depression in the hungry thirties. Though everything was cheap, there was no money. A pound of loose tea was twenty-five cents a loaf of bread eight cents. Mother baked her own bread, made her own yeast, we had our own wheat milled into flour. We did receive some relief to buy what we didn't grow. Seems to me it was two dollars a month. This had to be paid back by working such as building roads with your own horse. It did not matter when, whether it was haying season or harvest time, when they were called, they went. Their own work was done later. About that time my teacher had a pair of skates to sell which I wanted badly. As she was batching I paid for them by packing her a dozen eggs a week at eight cents per dozen. It took a long time to pay them off, if I ever did pay her in full. I believe she asked four dollars and fifty cents for them.

None of us ever expected presents at Christmas. We did have a Christmas tree even if it was nearly bare, short of decoration. Our parents believed in their Greek Orthodox religion very strongly. Lent lasted for seven weeks before Easter and six weeks before Christmas. When it was over, we were hungry for the food we had missed out on for that period of time, so we were more interested in food than presents. With all the baking and cooking weeks before, our mouths were drooling. During Lent, we could not eat meat, eggs, nor any dairy products such as milk, butter, or anything made of these products. For many years on Christmas morning we would have a visitor. A young

batchelor homesteading up north would come during the night, stay in the barn with the cattle and appear early in the morning and spend the day with us. We got to know him well and he became our good friend even up to a few years ago when he came to visit Mother in the nursing home. He was still living on his homestead though his years were catching up to him.

Many times the whole family wasn't home all day, be it working on the land or gone picking berries. The doors were never locked. We'd come home to find someone had passed through, helped themselves to whatever they could find to eat, the dirty plate still on the table. Most of the time we had no idea who it had been - nothing else was ever taken.

When a person was finished with grade nine at the country school, the government wasn't concerned if the schooling was continued. If there was no money to room and board in town with the help from your parents, you made your own plans. Some found jobs. My first job paid fifteen dollars a month. I could get my hair done for one dollar, buy a nice dress for three dollars and fifty cents, plus give my parents a few dollars. When our new larger log house was built, there were many great parties, especially on mother's birthday, preparing for it for weeks. All put their worries behind them by eating, drinking, singing all their Russian songs, maybe a little jig from someone. The braga (beer) they made was powerful if it was aged long enough. I remember company appeared during one of those parties, intending to stay for a while. He didn't make it home until the next day. Was he sick drinking that braga! Never again did he come to any of the parties. The food was always on the table so they nibbled as they drank, enjoying themselves to the fullest.

A memory about my sister Polly. She was taking a nurse's aid course in Calgary. Dad sent her a parcel, probably a chicken, and a quart of "honey". The quart got broken and needless to say, he got a nasty letter from the Post Office. The breakage resulted in a lot of gooy mail. Another incident was when she came home for a holiday. Dad sent her to Gage in a one-horse two-wheeled buggy. She got past Uncle Bill's place and somehow the horse spooked and took off through the bush, dumping her, cart and all. The horse came home with no Polly. Dad had to look for her and found her with a broken leg. It was a long trip by horse and buggy to the Fairview hospital for a cast. Part of her assignment when she was sent to Gage was to purchase sugar with sugar ration coupons. They were never found.

I have a few memories of brother Paul as well. The parents were away. Paul and his cousin Carl harnessed up a calf and hitched it up to a stoneboat. With a big kick and a roar the calf was gone. They finally caught him in the field just before the parents got home. Did they ever find out? Paul and Carl may not wish to recollect the consequences!

Before mum and dad left for a trip to Fairview one day, they had instructed us to catch a chicken that was to be our supper. We caught the chicken but no one would chop the head off so it was still under the pail, live and well when they got home. To this day, I don't know what we had for supper - probably no meat, lots of potatoes.

As we all grew older we were more or less on our own, living away from our parents. Though they believed strongly in their religion, Mum and Dad accepted our inter-marriage outside their religion. There were never any arguments that we were disgracing them and their beliefs. Everyone got along very well.

To this day I wish I had a "banya" in my back yard, even though at times you almost steamed yourself to death. It was usually situated away from the house by a well or creek. Even at thirty below our faces would be beet red as we walked from the banya to the house and the following Saturday we would repeat the whole process.

We had no running water in our house, no power, no fridge. A gas lamp for light, a gas burning washing machine and the good old ice house. In the winter time we had a "big" wooden barrel of sauerkraut with an axe near by, chop as you needed, and today you wonder - were those the good old days? I am sure the young generation of today would not agree. Could today's generation survive the hardship? Maybe it's for the best that they don't have to endure that kind of living, yet I treasure those memories. One would probably say we didn't know any better! I salute all the parents from the bottom of my heart and a special thanks to my parents. Hard times and all, we were brought up to respect our parents and people around us."

Polly Thompson - *fourth daughter of John and Anna Andreeff*

My birthplace was Homeglen, Alberta, and my birth certificate tells me I was born October 22, 1927. My working career was in Edmonton as a L.P.N. and then as a physiotherapist till my retirement in 1984 at the age of fifty-seven. I had married Lyle Thompson and we had two boys, Jeff and Robert. Lyle died suddenly at the age of 42.

Jeff and Robert worked part time while they went to school to help with finances after Lyle died and then went on to further their education after graduation. Robert graduated from the University of Illinois with a Ph.D. in Communications and is now doing Marketing Research in Chicago which allows him to travel abroad.

Jeff is an accountant; however, is presently attending the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology in the television field.

Ruth Rudnisky - *youngest daughter of John and Anna Andreeff*

"I was born on the farm near Gage, Alberta, with the help of an aunt who acted as midwife. Although things were a little more "modern" when I was growing up, I do remember the outside biffies at thirty below and going to a one room school which one

teacher taught from grade one to grade eight. The school was two or three miles from home and I often went by horseback but the biggest thrill was when I got a bike. In the winter time we would often leave before day light and get home after dark and still have chores to do when we got home.

I remember my dad working the fields with horses from dawn until dusk, but I'll never forget when he bought his first tractor and coming home from the field one day instead of stepping on the brake to stop the tractor he started yelling "Whoa! Whoa!". Another time he was a 'little' upset over something he couldn't find. Meanwhile one of our cows was also upset because she'd been separated from her calf and was doing an awful lot of bellowing. He told her several times to "shut up" - she didn't.

Ohhh - the Russian parties. I went to several, mostly as a child with my parents. They were a lot of fun. There were always a lot of children there so there was always someone to play with. I think the best part was the food - all those cakes, cookies and Russian dishes. The older folks seemed to have a darn good time. At Christmas, Easter, or weddings those parties would last two to three days. Some folks, such as my Aunt Anna and Uncle Terence Doumnoff, would travel twenty miles by horse and cutter in the dead of winter just to get to one of these parties. I wish I had learned some of those Russian songs.

Oh, how I hated Lent - no meat, eggs, cheese or any milk products or even to chew gum for a six or seven week period. We were not allowed to go to dances or any social functions.

Christmas was sometimes a sad time for me. By the time I had "grown up" and was going to school most of my sisters had left home. All my friends at school would have Christmas on December 25th and I would have to wait until January 7th. Santa always came - and sometimes even a little earlier. A bag of candy with an apple and a Christmas orange at the Christmas concert was a treat in itself. The school Christmas concerts were something to behold. We'd start practicing our lines in about October for the big day, often to forget them in front of the big crowd. The appearance of Santa was the highlight of the evening when he passed out the gifts and bags of candy.

Russian Easter very seldom fell on the same day as the English Easter. We often went to church and I must admit that was one service I was not fond of. It was an all night service which you had to stand through and, although I could speak Russian and understand Russian, a church service I could not understand. I remember one Easter church service I had gone to the washroom - outside biffy - then I went and laid down in my father's truck and fell asleep. My mother came and found me - none too happy."

Lawrence Andreeff - *by Gladys (Andreeff) Lillejord*

"Dad got his first team of horses through the Oliver Company, a finance company. They worked on the farm for years. He still had one of the horses when he sold out in 1946 to go to British Columbia. For the first year the men used to go to work at the sawmill that belonged to the Hemstocks in the Black Duck area. That's where some of the settlers got their 'slabs' that they used for roofing and for other parts of their buildings. They were either free or very cheap because a lot of that type of material was used by all the people. Dad said he bought some grain and his first crop of oats fit into a washtub! They got moose meat and dear meat from the Indians in trade for future crops of vegetables and dad used to snare rabbits and sell skins. He worked at the sawmill also. It seems we were always poor, always trying to clear a bit more land, working with an axe. They would pile up brush piles and burn them, then break a bit of land each year, pick roots and burn again. It was very hard work. We always had only the one quarter-section until the late nineteen thirties when dad leased a bit more land, loaded with bush.

Adam Frank tells the story of how our people came into that country. He remembers when they first came out to scout for homesteads, they stayed in the granary and the Franks offered them some food. "It was during the Lent period and they would not eat anything offered them except bread and water, should anything else have something in it that is not allowed during Lent". My dad had learned to speak English while he lived in Australia. Fortunately for the rest of the family, Adam's parents spoke Russian, having come from Germany. They were well settled on their homestead when we arrived.

A Greek Orthodox Church was started on the Gage graveyard site which Grandpa Gregory Andreeff had donated. The logs, material and labour were also donated. This was to serve the Gage congregation and some of the Gage residents are buried there. My dad taught us all the prayers and insisted on it; however, he did not attend church services later in his life. As he was good friends with Father Solovieff, I am not sure why he removed himself from the church. They visited back and forth often when Father Solovieff lived in the cabin by Ranger School."

Peter Andreeff - *by his daughter Norma Glimhagen*

Peter is the oldest son of Lawrence and Polly, born in Gage, Alberta, October 10, 1930. Peter's family remembers grandpa Lawrence for his hard work and his efficient running of the farm and grandma Polly is remembered as pleasantly plump and a jolly dear one. A memory that Peter has which his mother relayed to him was the instant clothesline for their diapers. She would wrap the diaper around her waist and the diaper would dry as she walked.

Lawrence and Polly's large family of eleven lived in a two-bedroom house in Gage for fourteen years. In the warmer weather, the boys slept in the hayloft, which Peter claims to have enjoyed, and in the winter they slept in the attic. They attended a one-room school and traveled there by horse and sleigh in the winter. The annual school picnic was a highlight, with the fun pillow fights, goodies and games.

Pete claims to have been a good kid! This is hard to believe since he takes pride in getting a preacher to swear! He was hiding on a roof one day and as the preacher walked by he threw a tire over his head! He was also strapped seven times for accidentally poking a kid in the eye. Pete also admits to chasing a prize bull that was used for breeding better stock. The bull jumped over the fence and crashed into a well. The bull had to be shot and it took a day and a half and a neighbor's help to pull the bull up.

Pete had to drop out of school at the age of fourteen to help run the farm. Working hard all week was made easier by the anticipation of the weekend trip to town where he would spend his earnings of fifty cents on a show and a wiener.

One of Pete's most exciting experiences was the move from Alberta to Port Alberni by train. Upon arival they spotted a house for sale on Cherry Creek Road for just $1800 and decided to buy it. They wrote a cheque and considered it theirs, only to find out later they had bought it from the renter! The con man was caught. They did get the house but from the rightful owner. Later, Pete and his family of nine lived in that house.

At sixteen Pete cut wood at a plywood mill and shortly after moved out on his own. An outing he loved was walking around the mountain. He still does.

Pete also talked of the day he took girls out, such as 'Jonie'. He drove 'little Jonie' to a show like a big cheese in his own car. It wasn't the gal that made him feel like a big 'hero', it was the car since it was a rate item to own at that time. Pete returned to his hometown in Alberta to look for work and lost 'Jonie' to another guy, "grrrrrrrr" was his exact comment.

After a few years of 'bouncing around', he settled in Youbou and bought a garbage business for one hundred dollars. As well, he sharpened saws and chopped wood to make extra money. Then he met "pretty Anabell" on his way to work one day. Anabell was the new girl in town, staying at her aunt's in the duplex next door. It was love at first sight. All of Pete's brothers were after her but he won out since he was the oldest and he could play the accordian. Both had farming in common, as Anabell was from Manitoba. When they moved in together, Anabell's mother and aunt thought it a good idea for her to become a nun. Pete and Anabell decided to get married in a hurry. Two weeks later they had a small wedding in Lake Cowichan. Pete played the accordian at their wedding! Forty years later the children threw a surprise anniversary party for them in Gibsons, B.C. Six of the seven children were able to attend this special event along with their families numbering twenty-two in total.

Pete and Amabell raised seven children. They struggled some, but one thing can be said for them, they are both hard working, determined to make the best of any situation.

Over the years, their love at first sight has blossomed into true love, commitment and respect for one another. Most of all, they just enjoy being together.

Alex Andreeff - *2nd oldest son of Lawrence and Palagaya Andreeff*

It was a cold day, a snow storm was blowing in from the north on October 30, 1931. My Dad, Lawrence Andreeff, ran to our neighbour, the Mihailoffs. Mrs. Mihailoff came over and that blizzard night was the night that I was born. I was the fifth of nine children.

"Facing the Wolf" - We used to walk one mile to our one-room school. One very cold January morning, we were on our way to school. Gladys, Jean and Peter could walk a lot faster than I. Soon I was all alone and very cold. I started to cry. It was so cold my tears froze my eyes shut. I took off my mitten and rubbed the frozen tears out of my eyes. When I could see again, up the path in front of me, stood a big gray wolf, his yellow eyes staring at me. I screamed in terror! Running back to the road, I could see a team of horses coming. On the end of a long rope that was tied to the cutter, was a boy on snow skis. It was cousin Nick Andruff, like water skiing - back and forth over the snow drift. Jean was driving the horses. Zoya Nasedkin was sitting next to the small kids. Jean yelled at me to jump on the back of the cutter. I was so thankful for the ride and never told anyone of the wolf.

"Doing the Chores" - We all had to work on the farm. For Peter and me, it was splitting and hauling in wood every night after school. Also, we took turns in filling the water tank on the side of the stove with clean snow. The girls had to milk the cows and separate the milk. On Saturdays, they each scrubbed a room of the pine wood floor. Each spring we all stayed home planting the garden. There was a large garden to plant vegetables and a large field for potatoes. On those hot months of June and July, we all had to hoe the weeds around the potatoes. Then we used a horse drawn cultivator to hill the plants.

"Threshing Time" - I loved threshing time. For a ten year old boy, nothing could be more exciting than watching Uncle John Koshieff on the McCormick Deering tractor pulling the threshing machine on our farm. It was glee and fun for us kids, watching the men feed the bundles into the thresher, and smelling the big meal mother made for the crew. We all had fun - like a football game to the kids today. We were too excited to go to school and I "got sick" often and stayed home. I could not miss any of the action. When I was thirteen years old, I did get a chance to work on a threshing crew. Peter and I worked with a team. We were paid two dollars per day for a ten-hour day.

I was fifteen when we moved to Port Alberni, B.C. I worked in a saw mill, then in logging camps. Later I got into construction and took up the trade of carpenter.

Now, as a Property Manager and Supervisor, I look back fifty years to Peace River and "hoeing the potatoes". It was not all bad.

Lydia Webster - *youngest daughter of Lawrence and Polly Andreeff*

"I was born in Fairview, Alberta, April 5, 1944. My life was quite different from that of my sisters and most of my brothers. Mom and dad moved to Port Alberni, British Columbia, in 1946 so rain forest became my home and my background. Because I was the youngest and a girl after five boys, mother kept close tabs on me.

My childhood was carefree and wonderful. We lived at the end of Cherry Creek Road when there were only ten residences on the entire gravel road. The mountains behind the house were a playground for me and my brothers. I grew up with Nick and Ernie and barely knew my sisters. They were old enough to be my aunts - sorry, ladies, it's just perspective. I often visited their homes on holidays. They enjoyed 'dressing me up' and spoiling me.

I don't remember any hard rules set by mom and dad. I have always had a sense of responsibility because I simply knew 'what was expected' and wouldn't have dreamed of going beyond those bounds. I wanted and had the respect of my parents. We learned our lessons from old Russian fables told at evening tea time around the kitchen table.

There was no T.V. We were entertained by radio that hooked up to a huge dry cell battery. In the early years we had no electricity and no telephone, but we had plenty of running water. My dad was very proud of this and he would often show visitors how fresh and clean the mountain water was. It came from one of seven springs on his five-acre plot of timbered land. "Look at the water pressure", he would boast.

In 1960 I married Jim Webster. We are still happily married and still live in Port Alberni. I have retired from the Post Office where I had been a letter carrier for sixteen years and am now a freelance journalist and volunteer for local Shaw Cable television as a community programming interviewer. Jim and I are active in Canadian Power Squadron.

We have three children and five grandchildren. Our children, Wesley, Lorraine and Danny all married and went their separate ways. Wes works in the woods for MacMillan Bloedel, Lorraine is in Automobile Insurance in Victoria and Dan is a certified Electronics Journeyman but currently studying the Bible at a California College."

Peter and Evdokia Nasedkin - *by Victor Nasedkin*

Nasedkin's Spirit River House

"We arrived in Rycroft by freight with all the livestock and belongings and made our way to Spirit River to the house we were to rent from Mr. Davies, the butcher. When we got there we found the house had no windows nor doors and it was cold! We put blankets and cardboards over the windows. We were home!

Dad worked very hard on this farm with the help of his oldest son Joe, everyone else pitching in where and when possible. Jean, Viola, Ella, Van and Jim went to school. At home there were still two little ones, Zoya and I, ages one and three. Nick eventually moved from Ponoka and came to work for Mr. Davie in Spirit River. Mr. Davies was a great person and helped in every way possible. He would give Nick goods to bring home from the store until we got our own vegetables and chickens on the farm.

Soon things got better. The land was good and the crops were productive so dad bought more machinery on credit. The 1928 and 1929 prices were good and they went into debt quite heavily. Then in 1929 the crash came. They had lots of grain but it was worth nothing. Things got so bad, it was not worth putting in crops. In 1930 they came to Gage and filed on two homesteads. This meant another uprooting and starting all over again. This next move meant no house and no cleared land to go to.

Before leaving Spirit River, however, dad had gone to all the people that he owed money to, with one of his children as translator, and told them he was leaving for the Fairview area to homestead and as soon as he could, he would pay them off with interest. They trusted him and let him move without repossessing anything.

They built their house, and with the machinery they did have at the time, broke any spot, no matter how small, that had no bush on it, to get started, slowly expanding as time went on. It is to be remembered that we speak of a slight man, barely over five feet tall and an office worker all his life, grubbing out thirty and forty foot trees! He did it, but he used to get so tired he would come home and go right to sleep, too tired to eat."

Recollections by daughters Jean Doumnoff and Vi Mihailoff:

Vi remembers having three dresses - one for school, one for home and one for dances and parties. She says: "I remember once there was a dance that three of us teenage girls wanted to go to. The problem was, we had only two pairs of shoes with soles in them.

I was the youngest girl, so I had to stay home." Vi worked for ten dollars an hour for Mrs. Rachel Arthur. Mrs. Arthur was a teacher and made sixty dollars a month. Vi says, "If she didn't get paid, I didn't get paid. Often, her wages were brought in in produce: milk, a chicken, or a hunk of moosemeat. Every cent I earned went to the parents."

Nick stayed in Spirit River at Davies Meat Market. Jean remembers when Nick came home with a pair of felt shoes for each of the girls. As they had to walk four miles to school, the new shoes felt great! Jean was a good academic student and wanted to be a teacher. Her high school teacher advised her to go on to teacher training but the family couldn't afford it. She went to work in Peace River for the publisher of the Peace River Record and later worked for a family by the name of King in Hines Creek, closer to home.

Victor continues:

"Ella stayed home to help mom. Joe went on a homestead of his own and Van also went to work. Jim went to Ranger School. Zoya and I were still at home.
There was little income from the land and no price for grain or cattle. There was no choice but to ask the government for assistance in the form of relief (assistance similar to the present welfare). Dad applied and was given five dollars per month. That was enough to buy sugar, salt, lots of Mazola oil, tea and other small basic items. Mazola was necessary for the strict Lenten periods they kept. The assistance was given on the understanding that it would be paid back eventually or worked off.

In 1933 all the girls not yet married found themselves boyfriends out of the Russian teenagers that landed on the shores of Canada less than ten years prior. On February 9, 1934, our parents had a triple wedding. It was a lot cheaper than having three weddings. Jean married Peter Doumnoff, Aliftina (Ella) married Abe Sidoroff and Viola married Mike Mihailoff.

Two forty-five gallon barrels of 'braga' were brewed for the wedding and the party lasted for a week. The main big party was held at the home of Philip Andreeff as his house was the largest in the area. All the Russians in the area celebrated.

Mom was accustomed to making all our clothes on her little Singer sewing machine. She made their wedding dresses, white georgette and lace, and she also made their next day dresses. These marriages cut down our family by three members over night and shortly after that Jim got a job in Rycroft managing the Co-op Store. Mom and dad were left with "theirs" - Zoya and I. "His" and "hers" were all out on their own.

After Triple Wedding 1934: Vi & Mike Mihailoff, Jean & Pete Doumnoff, Ella & Abe Sidoroff

Zoya and I were both going to school by then and the parents were building up the homestead. They built a big log house in 1937/38. Peter Doumnoff and his dad contracted the log walls for thirty dollars and worked all fall and winter. When dad was ready to harvest his first crop at Gage, he had a binder but no twine and nobody in Fairview would give him any twine on credit. Mr. Harper at Spirit River told him when he left there if he needed help he could go to him. Just before harvest dad and I went to Spirit River for twine on a horse and buggy. It took all day to get there, we stayed over night at Shemenko's and the next morning we got two bags of twine from Mr. Harper and drove back to Gage. I went along as an interpreter and to keep dad company. The round trip was about eighty miles.

I finished school in June 1939 when I passed into grade nine. As the nearest High School was in Fairview and there were no school buses or assistance for board and room, I was not able to continue my education. Dad was nearly sixty-five years old, so I stayed on the farm. Together we decided we would work off his relief debt. Everyone who had taken relief was asked to work on the roads that were being built in the area. Dad and I went to work with four horses pulling a fresno hauling dirt from the ditches to the center to make a grade. It was an eight to six job and we were both little guys, but we managed to keep up to the big guys. For every day that we put in, we got credited five dollars off our debt to the government. My dad was so happy - we could repay a month of debt in one day, then once it was paid off, we would make five dollars per day to take home! No such luck. As soon as we paid off our debt in work, we were laid off and others were hired to pay off their relief debt!

In the fall of 1939, war broke out. Nick, who had been married and lost his wife the previous year, was the first to join up and was in the air force until the war ended. Van and Joe were in the army and in 1941 Jim joined. Zoya and I were at home. Suddenly there was a big demand for grain and the prices went soaring. In 1940 Philip Andreeff bought a Massey Harris 102 rubber tired tractor, so he was 'farming on air', as we used to say. They did some custom ploughing for us and their son Mike was the proud driver. In 1942 things were looking good. We bought our first McCormick Deering W4 tractor for fourteen hundred and sixty dollars, but it was on steel as the war was on and rubber was scarce. We even bought a 1929 Chev car at an auction for four hundred and ten dollars. We had good crops, cleared more land and attempted to buy some things to make life easier, but it was war time and things were very hard to get.

In 1944 mom got sick with Rheumatoid Arthritis. Her knuckles and joints swelled up so badly she was not able to wash clothes which were done on a washboard at that time. Zoya was in her teens and took over. Try as we may, we were not able to get a motor washing machine. Her son-in-law Mike Mihailoff had a friend, Hugh Thomson, in the hardware business. He explained the situation to Hugh, and even though things were

very hard to get during the war, he did have a gas powered washer coming in. Mike bought it but mom was too sick to use it.

Finances were improving but mom's health was worsening. She had a tough year in 1944/45, suffering from the arthritis and worrying about all her boys in the armed forces. At last the war ended and Nick came back from overseas in time to visit her shortly before she died. Jim was hurt in an accident and was discharged earlier and Van and Joe were never overseas, so they all survived. Before she died, she had the satisfaction of knowing the war was over and all her boys were home. After suffering in terrible pain for months, she passed away on Easter Sunday, April 21, 1946. She was fifty-seven years old. Dad was alone again with his two youngest, Victor who was twenty and Zoya eighteen.

On January 8, 1945, I had gone to a dance at Highland Park and met a cute young girl named Jenny Polukoshko and I think we fell in love that night; however, it took a whole year of driving to Worsley through snow drifts and mud to convince her that she had met the man of her life. A year later I took Jenny to our place and she got to meet mom. They took a liking to each other and mom told me she was such a lovely girl I had better hang on to her. So, I really put the pressure on, going to Worsley pretty well every weekend. She stood me up a couple of times but she soon came around and on June 4, 1946, we got engaged.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Nick Andruff, Philip's third son, who lived a half a mile north of our place, was giving my sister Zoya the rush. I would go to Worsley and he would come to our place. I could see they were getting pretty thick, 'becoming an item' in today's terms, so I was a bit worried. Dad and I had Zoya for our cook and housekeeper. If Nick took her away from us, we would be in trouble. I started to talk to Jenny more and more about our getting married because I was not a cook and it looked like Zoya was leaving. Finally, Jenny said O.K. we would get married but Zoya had to get married first. My next move was to talk Nick and Zoya into getting married. Then, we said "What the heck, let's have a double wedding". We all agreed and set the date for July 21, 1946. Jenny said she was cooking for her dad and brother so she might as well cook for a husband and father-in-law. Jenny's mom had passed away in March 1944 and she was the only daughter.

Dad stayed with us on the farm for three years and then we moved him to Fairview in 1949 into a nice little house. We bought the farm from him and he had a little money so finally he was able to enjoy his life after all the years of hard work and many hardships. He had very good health until 1964 and he had many friends in town although he never did learn to speak English. He really loved his adopted country Canada. He was a deeply religious man and read the Bible every day. He had always told us "Don't ever believe anyone who tries to tell you there is no God. God is real and He has been very good to us".

He also liked to have a little fun. Mr. Terence Doumnoff also lived in Fairview by then and the two of them would go to the bar in the hotel and have a few beers. Then they would walk home arm-in-arm singing Russian songs. Everybody in Fairview knew them and got quite a kick out of their performances.

Dad had fifteen good years of retirement but then his health started failing. He had hardening of the arteries and would lose his memory. There were times when he would actually run away, reliving the days that he ran from the communists. He came to live with us for a while and Jenny was very good to him, but at times he would get violent. We had four children by then and periodically he would rough them up. We couldn't handle him so my sister Viola Mihailoff took him and looked after him as long as she could. Finally we had to commit him to a home. He passed away on February 19, 1966, at the ripe old age of ninety.

Jenny and I are still married and are looking forward to our fiftieth anniversary in 1996. We had five children, eleven grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. We are now living in the best country in the world. We are grateful to our parents who had the intestinal fortitude to pack up eight children and go to a foreign country with no money and hardly a word of the language. Thanks to them and to God."

Zoya Andruff - *youngest daughter of Peter and Evdokia Nasedkin*

"Shortly after we were married, Nick and I paid a visit to Nick's sisters Vi and Zina on Vancouver Island. Nick applied for work at the mill and before the day was out, he was called in to work the afternoon shift. I went back to Fairview, Alberta, to sell our little house and pack up our children and a few belongings. We lived in Port Alberni for fourteen years after which Nick was transferred to the Chemainus mill. He had worked his way up from the Green Chain to Sales. After thirty years in the employ of MacMillan Bloedel, Nick's work expired when the Chemainus mill closed down.

Our life began anew and afresh. We retired from working for a wage to working for the Lord. It has been an exciting and rewarding adventure. Our marriage has never been stronger and God has given us the desires of our hearts with health and renewed strength for each new day. We both like to work and travel and in the past fifteen years we have done both. We have been given the ministry of helps and that's what we have done. We have served in Hawaii, Fiji, Tonga, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Alaska, Dominican Republic, South America and Mexico, the latter being our longest mission.

We are trusting God will give us the opportunity to go to Russia to share the love of Jesus with the people that did not have the opportunity which our parents made available to us, to raise their children in a land of freedom. What an inheritance we have. Praise God for His mercy and faithfulness, and for our parents who persevered."
Nick and Zoya have three married children, Darlene, Dan and Ron and eight grandchildren.

The Peter Doumnoffs - *by Jean (Nasedkin) Doumnoff*

"After Pete and I were married in 1934, we lived with the Senior Doumnoffs until we built on our own homestead. In 1941 we left the homestead and went to Port Alberni on Vancouver Island in British Columbia, where Pete worked for the Bloedel sawmill. Later Mike and Zina Kosheiff also moved to Port Alberni and as we had a big house, Zina and I kept boarders, helping with the finances. Mike also worked at the sawmill. When the war started and the coast had blackouts, we all decided to go back to farming in Gage.

We rented a house in town for a while until we bought a farm three miles north of Fairview. Mike and Zina had their farm to go to. After we settled on our farm, the children went to Beaver Ridge school. When they reached high school we moved to Fairview. Pete worked for the school division in maintenance and I worked for Boyts for thirteen years. We continued farming from our home in town until our son-in-law, Ivan Tilly, took over the farm, giving us time to travel. We made two trips to Australia, once by air and once by boat; and a trip to Russia. Zina and Mike Kosheiff accompanied us on all three trips.

Peter & Jean Doumnoff
Golden Anniversary - 1984

Peter and I celebrated our Golden Anniversary in 1984. On June 10, 1985, Peter died. In July 1992 I sold my home and moved into the Garrison Manor Apartment, a different life but very comfortable. I have my little car to take me around. We have three children, Olga (Jode), Nona and Jim; two granddaughters Yvonne and Janine, and two grandsons David and Gordon.

George and Alexandra Kosheiff

Submitted by Mike's wife Zina (Nasedkin) Kosheiff:

Mike Kosheiff was the eldest of four Kosheiff sons and had married Zina before moving to Fairview. After working for Alexander Galitzen and his wife, Zina and Mike moved to Fairview and began farming. Mike died August 8, 1986. They had one son Mitchell and two daughters Lueba and Kathy. Mitch and Edith have two sons. Mitch

died in 1992. Their two daughters are Lueba Boyd and Kathy Poulin and have families of their own. Zina is eighty-five years old and still lives in Fairview.

Tom Kosheiff - *third son of George and Alexandra Kosheiff*

"When the family moved from Australia to Homeglen, Alberta, we lived with the Bill Andreeffs for a short time. Before long, father purchased a farm and, after struggling on it for two years, we too went to look for a homestead in the Peace River area. Our first attempt at settling in that area was at Spirit River, but before long we moved to Gage. Loaded down with all our possessions and leading two cows, we arrived in the middle of the night, set up a tent and settled in. To keep warm, someone had to stay up all night to keep the heater going. We lived in this tent for about a month before a decent shelter was built on the quarter section of land father had filed on earlier. I lived there with my parents until I married Zina Pohaboff in 1940 when we settled on our own quarter of land."

Submitted by John and Margaret Kosheiff:

John was the youngest of the Kosheiff family. He was born in Harbin, China, in 1923. He married Margaret Kalugin in 1945 in Hines Creek. Margaret was born in Vladivostock, Russia, in 1922. Shortly after they were married, they moved to Port Alberni where John worked as a truck driver and longshoreman. Later he started his own trucking and backhoe business which he operated for many years until his retirement. John and Margaret lived on seven and a half acres until 1966 when they bought forty acres of land, remodelled the old farm house and still reside at their riverside property. They have five daughters, Agnes, Martha, Mariea, Fay and Rema one son Patopy John, and eighteen grandchildren.

The other members of George and Alexandra's family are Larry (Larrick) who married Rachel Sidoroff and Polly (Palagaya) who married Lawrence Andreeff. Larry and Rachel's son. Mike and his wife Marjorie are presently farming and ranching on the land originally owned by his grandfather George.

Mike and Viola Mihailoff - *by Mike Mihailoff*

"I lived with my parents on the homestead until 1934. I married Viola Nasedkin in February of that year and moved to Gage where I opened a blacksmith shop to serve the bustling farm community that had developed.

In 1943 improved roads made Fairview the busiest town in the area so I decided to

set up a blacksmith shop on Railroad Avenue, which I operated until I sold to Glen Shoemaker in 1964. My father, John Mihailoff, died in March 1943 and is buried in the Gage Cemetery". Mike died May 11, 1972. His wife Viola continues their story:

"During my courtship days with Mike, I worked for Mr. Hayes, a widower with five children and I did everything. I didn't know how to make a pie so Mr. Hayes taught me how. His house was just a large granary and it was so cold! I used to walk home every Sunday about five miles or more. When Mike would take me to a dance in Black Duck School, he would bring me home and come in to get warm. It would be so cold, he would say, 'I think I'll just go home and run behind the horses to get warm.' That was the year I got married to keep my feet warm! Mike often played at the dances at Ranger school, a mouth organ at first and then he bought himself a button accordion.

When we were first married and Mike opened up his blacksmith shop, I remember him saying, 'If I make two dollars a day, we will make it!' At one point he was desperately in need of dies for the shop. They cost twelve dollars but of course we did not have that much money. I remembered that Mr. Hayes still owed me my last month's wages, so we went to see him. He paid me the ten dollars and Mike had the two. We got the dies. That was my contribution to the business. The shop he bought in Fairview in 1944 belonged to Jim Moffat. Mike took a welding course at the college and added welding to his shop.

We have three children, Jerry, Donna and Janet; three grandchildren, Chris, Mike and baby Aaron. Since we arrived in Canada in 1924, I have always lived in Alberta, but I have travelled some: Australia, Hawaii, California and Greece. Mike's sister, Gwen, and I toured Europe one year. I still live in Fairview in my home and - whatever will be, will be!"

John and Martha Pohaboff - *by Zina (Pohaboff) Kosheiff*

"In 1928, dad went to the Peace River area with the Afanasi Sidoroff men and filed a homestead in Fahler, but wasn't really happy with it. He took the train toWhitelaw and walked to Fairview to file on land near the Andreeffs. The following spring we moved to the homestead and it became our home for a number of years.

When I married Tom Kosheiff in 1940 we moved onto our own land in the Gage district, which is still our home. We started with a quarter-section and acquired more land through the years. To make extra money Tom had a wood sawing outfit and grain grinder and did custom work for the neighbourhood. Later he acquired a caterpillar and did custom brushing and ploughing. He also worked out in the forest industry logging and at sawmills, later owning a sawmill of his own. In 1941 Tom was conscripted into the army and spent a month in Grande Prairie. In 1943 he worked in Peace River on the American Canol project.

Due to failing health, my parents moved to a small house on our farm. The log house from the homestead is now on the museum grounds in Hines Creek.
Tom and I farmed for over forty years, raising grain and Hereford cattle. In 1959 we lost our first home to a fire and rebuilt again in the same place.

Dad passed away in 1959 at the age of seventy-nine and is buried at the Old Greek Orthodox Cemetery in Hines Creek. His daughter Anesia married in Canada, had two children and now lives in Rimbey in her own home at the age of ninety-three.

Mom lived with us for many years then moved to a nursing home where she lived reaching the ripe old age of over one hundred years. When she turned a hundred she received congratulations from all the national and provincial heads of state including the Queen of England. She passed away in 1990.

THE ONLY CENTENARIAN

MARTHA POHABOFF

MARTHA POHABOFF

Martha Pohaboff was the only one of the Russian immigrants that lived to celebrate her 100th birthday in 1990. The Fairview Post was present to cover the celebration: *"Many friends and relatives gathered to help her celebrate. She was honored by the Dunvegan MLA presenting her with greetings from the Queen, Prime Minister, Premier, Governor General and Lt. Governor. She was cited by the recreation programmer of the Senior Home in which she lived as being one of the participants in the bi-weekly exercise program and partaking in social functions such as travelling to Dunvegan. It was very heartwarming to see her tapping her foot to the senior choir singing 'Tiny Bubbles'."*
Martha died later that year.

Martha had three sisters, Bassa Efimoff, Sophia Sidoroff and one sister who became a nun, who eventually also emigrated to Canada. She also had one brother. He was

killed during the revolution. His family is still in Russia. I corresponded with one of his daughters until recently.

Tom and I retired in 1981. Our family consisted of three sons, Karl, Danial and Wayne. Karl farmed with us but also had land in the Montegneus area. He also worked the winters with a seismic oil exploration. In 1969 he was killed while repairing his Nodwell machine.

After graduation, Danial went to Southern Alberta Institute of Technology in Calgary. Then he went to work for Alberta Government Telephones. He was one of the first three men that was trained for Fiber Optics transmission. He worked for AGT for twenty-five years until his death from Multiple Sclerosis in 1989. He had two sons who still reside in Calgary, Richard and Jeffrey. Our son Wayne lives with us.

Life, with its rewards as well as tribulations, has been fairly successful. We are now in our seventies and still enjoying fairly good health."

The Afric (Afanasi) Sidoroffs - *by his grandson Gerald Sidoroff:*

"In 1928, Afanasi age fifty-three, and his brother Luke, age sixty-eight, with a friend, John Pohaboff, arrived in the Falher area and decided to look around while the other group went to the end of steel at Whitelaw, Alberta, some eighty-five miles west. The countryside was flatland and although forested, it looked promising. The men were impressed by the land. They returned to Homeglen and in the spring of 1929 most of the families again abandoned their homes for a second time to move north to their final and permanent homes. Luke Sidoroff settled in Hines Creek and John Pohaboff in Gage.

Great-grandfather Efrem and grandfather Afanasi claimed on homesteads on NW 21-75-21 W5 and NE 21-75-21 W5 respectively in May of 1929. Abraham filed for SE 21-75-21 W5 adjacent to his father's quarter. Several years later my father John bought SW 26-75-21 W5 from a neighbour. All except for SE 21-75-21 W5 remained in the family until 1982. During the summer and fall of 1929 Efrem and Afanasi built their first shelters for the family. They were one-room 'shacks' nd an earth covered dwelling space dug into the side of a coulee on a southerly exposed slope. The underground home was about ten feet square and contained a cot, a wood burning heater, and a crudely made table and chair.

Afric Sidoroff's Home - Guy, Alberta

There was one small window in the partially exposed wall on the south side, as well as the door. Great-grandfather Efrem spent his first year in this shelter, while about a hundred yards away on the level some twenty to twenty-five feet away from the edge of the coulee embankment, grandfather Afanasi and his family spent the first winter in the shack.

The few neighbouring families in the area at that time were of French, Polish, Ukrainian and Hungarian background. As none of the other settlers were well established at that time everyone pitched in to help with house building, barn raising, or land clearing.

The tall trees were stripped of their branches and cleaned off for logs to build the houses, barns, and other buildings.

While grandfather was settling on the farm near Guy, the other families that had also moved from the Homeglen area were claiming lands in the Fairview, Gage and Hines Creek areas. Grandfather kept in touch with the others by mail and when possible would go to attend services at the Church. Such a trip usually lasted from a week to two weeks. Grandfather would be taken from the farm to McLennan where he would board the passenger train to Fairview. Having taken in the Church services, he would visit with his brother Luke and the other families and by the time he returned home ten days to two weeks would have passed. Needless to say such trips occurred perhaps two or three times a year only. Sometimes when the weather was good the entire family would also go. Those were exciting times for the younger children. The anticipation of a long distance trip to see our aunts, uncles and cousins was an emotional high. Because John Sidoroff and Peter Sidoroff were cousins, the aunts, uncles and cousins in this case would be cousins once removed (or second cousins). The greatest thrill was travelling on the train. Of course someone would have to stay home to look after the livestock.

During the winter of 1930-31 John sailed back to China. He stayed in Harbin approximately six months and on February 8th, 1931, married Efrosinia, the sweetheart for which he had vowed to return. He returned to Canada alone as he was unable to obtain the necessary papers and could not afford the price of tickets for two. He continued to work in Vancouver and on the prairies in southern Alberta and Saskatchewan during the harvesting season until he had enough money for his wife's passage.

During the winter of 1935 Efrosinia arrived in Canada. At that time John was back on the farm and could not meet her at Vancouver. She did not understand any English so some of his Russian acquaintances in Vancouver met her and helped her with immigration clearance, then arranged for her passage by train to Falher.

Efrosinia (Florence as she was known in Canada) has told her children how she was given a basket of fruit which she kept on the seat beside her in the coach in which she was riding. It had been pre-arranged that all the conductors on that train were to be told

that the lady with the fruit basket was travelling to Falher. This way they knew whom to approach when it was time for changing trains at various points along the way. Eventually the train arrived at Falher where John met her and brought her to her new home.

A year earlier, on February 9, 1934, John's younger brother Abraham, known as Abe by that time, had married Ella Nasedkin, daughter of Peter Nasedkin who had settled in Gage. They moved to the homestead for which Abe had filed next to his father's where their sons Leonard, Walter and Victor were born. Their daughter Lydia was born in McLennan Hospital. In 1946 Abe and family moved to Peace River where daughter Gaile was born. Abe Sidoroff passed away on June 16th, 1974 and is buried in the Hines Creek Old Greek Orthodox cemetery. Their daughter Lydia passed away in September 1981.

Most of the farm buildings and the family house were completed by 1932. With the help of neighbours, grandfather Afanasi built barns to house pigs, horses, cattle and chickens. He also built a blacksmith shop and a number of granaries, as well as a root cellar. Eventually he bought a tractor on steel wheels and a threshing machine - and a Maxwell touring car. By the late thirties most of the farm homestead had been cleared of trees except for the few low spots. Life became somewhat easier.

In 1936 Florence was expecting her first child. The baby boy died shortly after birth. In 1938 Gherman (Maurice) was born in the McLennan hospital and I, Gerald, was born in July 1940, in the farmhouse that grandfather had built.

Social gatherings became more frequent, especially with the Ukrainian speaking settlers among whom were two brothers Nick and Bill Todor who had filed homesteads on NE and SE 20-75-21 W5. Bill Todor courted Anne and on January 22, 1939, Bill and Anne were married. They lived on Bill's homestead until March of 1945 when they moved to Peace River. During this period they had two daughters, Elizabeth (Betty) and Kathleen (Kay). Later in Peace River they had three sons, John, Bill and Danny.

Great-grandfather Efrem Kononov, my grandmother Anastasia's father, died in July of 1939 and is buried on the homestead in a private cemetery. Grandmother Anastasia died in 1943 and is buried next to her father on the homestead.

My memories of my childhood on the farm are happy ones. In December 1947 the family moved to Peace River but continued to farm the land. My father, John, bought a new tractor on rubber wheels, quite the improvement over the old one on steel wheels. He would stay out on the farm during the seeding and harvesting season, returning to us in town if weather conditions were such that no work could be done on the fields.

John's youngest brother Nick Sidoroff was married to Helen Savard in 1946. At first Nick and Helen lived on Bill Todor's farm for some years, then on Grandfather's farm for a short period before settling down on Abe's homestead. They lived there until late

1959, when they moved to a farm just west of Peace River near the Peace River Airport. Nick and Helen raised a family of ten children. Their children Nick, Gwen, Nellie, Gloria, Nona, Constantine and Alex (Sandy) all lived on the farm while Anthony, Timothy and Bernadette were born after the family had moved to Peace River. Nick Sr. moved to Kelowna, B.C., in 1971 where he lived alone for four years. He married his second wife Mary Kotyk in July 1975. Nick died March 22, 1984. His first wife Helen died December 1990.

Grandfather Afanasi passed away in Peace River on August 31, 1959, at the age of eighty-three. My mother Florence was in poor health for many years and passed away in Peace River Hospital on June 20, 1979. Dad (John) passed away September 29, 1985 in Misericordia Hospital, Edmonton, at the age of eighty-three. They are all buried in the Hines Creek Old Greek Orthodox cemetery.

The children and grandchildren cherish the memories of these simple hardworking pioneers who gave up so much to start anew in a strange land. May we be worthy of their sacrifices."

The Peter Sidoroffs

Settling in after the Risky Trek- by Michael Sidoroff

Grandpa Luke at the age of sixty-eight and Peter at the age of thirty-six were strong and healthy and full of hope for a brighter future. We were settling into Charlie Williams' house. Father and grandpa brought in the rest of the load while mother managed setting up the household. Mother said, "Mike and Anne, look after the young ones."

I said to my sister Anne, "You look after the girls, I have Boris to look after. Come, Boris, let's see what's outside. Let's go look at the cows and horses in the barn. Oh, look, the frozen pond, let's see if we can do some sliding on it."

No sooner did Boris and I get on the pond, when father called, "Mike, it will be your job to carry in enough wood for the night, so you better get at it right now."

'There goes our fun again,' I complained to myself.

So, off we went with the task of bringing in the wood. Boris was eager to help, one stick at a time. Anne had some help from Jessie to look after the baby because mother was busy unpacking and sorting things out. It was getting dark. Soon we would need the coal oil lamps. It would be dark by the time we sat down to eat our evening meal.

Soon all was unloaded from the sleigh ready for the journey back to unload the rest of the box car sitting on the siding in Fairview twenty miles away. Everyone was ready for a warm meal mother had prepared in this temporary home. She melted snow to get

water to cook with and for tea. The pond nearby, more like a slough, was used to water the horses and cows after cutting a hole through the ice.

The cows were milked, all animals fed and bedded down for the night. It was bed time for the children, all five of us crossways on one straw-filled mattress on the floor near the heater. Grandpa was in the corner nearby, mother and father in the other room, where many of our belongings were piled.

Early the next morning grandpa lit the coal oil lantern and went to feed the animals. It was still dark. Mother lit the coal oil lamp while father got the heater going.

"You children stay in bed until it gets a bit warmer in here. I must feed this hungry baby. I'll change her after it gets warmer, then I must cook some porridge and make some pancakes for all of you. Father and grandpa are going back to Fairview to bring home the rest of the load out of the box car," mother informed us.

I saw some icons hanging up high in the corner. I said to myself, 'father must have put them up late last night after we went to bed.'

Soon after grandpa and father came into the house.

"The horses are all harnessed and ready to go. Just need to water them after breakfast and we will be on our way," father informed us assuredly. "All right now," father said, "Join me in prayer before we eat."

All of us stood up facing the icons, then crossed ourselves following the lead of father with a few memorized words of prayer. We sat down to eat, nice fresh milk on the porridge.

"This is the last of the bread," mother said, "I will be making more today. It's a good thing we still have some flour."

Mother and father had made good preparation for the tremendous move. We had sauerkraut, pickled cukes, salted pork, boiled eggs and boiled chicken; homemade butter, lots of Mazola oil, rendered fat for lard and the non-perishables mother had prepared for the journey.

Following breakfast, father and grandpa were on their way to Fairview to unload the box car, a distance of twenty miles. It took half a day to get there and the rest of the day to transfer all the goods from the box car onto the sleigh.

Darkness fell. The horses were put in the livery stable in the town of Fairview. Father and grandpa booked a room above a restaurant. It cost fifty cents for the horses to be watered and fed and bedded down for the night. The over night stay in the room cost thirty-five cents, the going rate those days.

"We still have a lot of food left in the bag that Lucaria prepared for us," father said to grandpa with notable appreciation. "What do we have here? Salt pork, boiled eggs and she gave us the last of the bread, enough for tonight and some for tomorrow morning."

Morning came early, the horses were hitched and north to the homestead they went with the last load. They arrived at the new temporary home around noon. Some of the farm machinery was unloaded near the home to be built on our own quarter section. After lunch we all got on the sleigh. Father wanted us to see where he intended to have the house built, where the barn and other out buildings would go, and to show us where the Jack Creek would flow for our water supply. It was still winter and everything was frozen.

All the farm machinery was unloaded.

Father said, "The sleigh will be needed to haul logs to build our home. Most of the logs will be skidded from nearby trees."

"The first big job is to sharpen the axes and the saws," said grandpa. "The two of us can work together. We have many trees to cut down - spruce, poplar, tamarack to be mainly used for the foundation because of its durable quality, long lasting before decaying," grandpa spoke from experience.

In the following two weeks logs were skidded and hauled and decked near the building sites.

Two weeks after our arrival, there was great excitement. Father's brother Lorne Sidoroff and his family arrived to join us at our temporary residence at Charlie Williams'. This was especially exciting for us children. Amongst their cargo from Homeglen was our beloved Marseek. We were so devastated to have had to leave him behind at Homeglen, and what excitement to see our cousins! Then the two families, with grandpa Luke to help, pulled all resources together to settle in for the big task before building homes and barns, namely to clear and break land, to plant gardens and grain. Great expectations were ahead. Spring was approaching, winds were blowing, snow was melting, the Jack creek was rising higher. A robin was spotted, Canada geese were flying north overhead and a couple of mule deer were wandering in the opening. But never mind all that, there was work to be done!

It was June. Summer of 1929 had arrived, a few small fields had been worked and some seeds were already coming up. Much of the garden was already popping through the earth. Everything was looking good. Small two-room log houses were built on both quarters, one for the Peter Sidoroff family and one for the Lorne Sidoroff family.

Hay would be needed for the animals for the winter. All the nearby meadows were searched out and grandpa went to work with the scythe swathing it down. He told me he could cut down enough in one day to make up a whole rack full, in one week he cut enough for six loads of hay. Grandpa was no slouch, small in stature but strong and healthy. The hay, when dry, was stacked properly near the meadows and brought in during the winter. The first year's crop was mainly oats cut with a binder into sheaves and piled into stacks like the hay. There were no barns or lofts to put it into as yet.

Cabbage was made into sauerkraut and all root vegetables put into the root cellar under the house.

The next big task was to build a barn for the four horses and six cows. A chicken coop was also needed. How about the "banya", the steam bath house to which the families had been accustomed? Working hard, long hours, the women helping where they were able, all was done before the cold and frost set in for the winter with the barn finished last.

Winter set in. There was talk of the railway coming north within a mile of our quarter. Long before the spring break, father inquired in Fairview about a contract to clear the right-of-way near where we lived. A contract was granted from George's Lake north for three miles, a little beyond where the town of Hines Creek is presently situated.

Work started early in the spring of 1930, giving jobs to eight people for a month. By the fall of 1930 the railroad had been extended to one mile south of our quarter. A new town was in its embryo stage with a couple of stores and a livery stable. Carl Leonard, Postmaster of the Hines Creek Post Office when it was south of George's Lake, now moved it to the end of the railroad. The town became Hines Creek.

Things were booming, the town of Hines Creek was growing. There was much work to be done on the quarter-section such as land clearing, plowing, picking roots. The women folk looked after the planting of the garden while the men were busy in the grain fields. Fencing needed to be done for a pasture around the two quarters belonging to Peter and his father Luke, leaving large portions for clearing and cultivation.

Neighbours pitched in to help one another with horses and machinery to get started. I was ten years old when father and Uncle Lorne pooled their horses to hitch up five horses, two forward and three following to pull a single-share breaking plow. I was to sit on one of the lead horses to keep them going in a straight line, keeping an eye on a stake in the ground at the other end of the field. After the furrows were made, it was easy going.

The open fields and meadows were cut for hay that was needed for the winter. Later horse-drawn mowers were used. It was fun for me trampling hay in the hay rack when they were hauling it in.

Northern Alberta winters were cold. At times more than forty degrees below Fahrenheit. Often times after the creek and the lakes froze over completely, it was necessary to melt snow in a big trough made with a metal bottom. It took most of the day to melt enough snow to water all the livestock.

Spring of 1931 is a vivid memory. It was so nice to see the snow melted away by the chinook winds. The Jack Creek overflowed its banks. It was an early spring. By May the crops were in and showing green, the garden was coming up and the mosquitoes were a plenty. Then - something never to be forgotten took place.

It happened more than sixty-three years ago when I was eleven. I remember the

traumatic experience we were all having, my father, my grandfather and we five children, the youngest of whom was Polly only two and a half years old. Mother was suffering with a very high fever. Shortly before that she had suffered a miscarriage and in the evening, on May 10th, she was very restless, breathing deep and heavy, next to delirious. 'Let me sit out on the porch', she said, 'it's too hot in the house'. Our house was a small two-room log shack with a small verandah. I remember it well. I was nearby, cranking the cream separator after father and we children finished milking the cows. The smudge we made for the cows was smoking profusely to keep the mosquitoes at bay. Father was leaning over mother, helping her to shoo those pesky buzzing insects away. Mother didn't sit out on the verandah too long. Father helped her to the bed. She looked so tired and weak.

Father said, 'We must send for a doctor. You are very sick, Lucaria. Mike, run over to your Uncle Lorne's and ask him and your Aunt Sophie to come over."

They lived about a quarter of a mile away. After they arrived that evening, everyone was so concerned. What to do? Aunt Sophie put cold wet towels on mother's forehead.

She said, "Lucaria seems to be a bit more comfortable now. She just needs more rest. She will be better in the morning. God will give her recovery from her illness."

Night time came. The fever did not let up. Mother never slept. She kept stroking her fingers through her long hair.

Clutching father's hand, she whispered to him, "Have a look at the children. Are they asleep? You be sure to look after them."

Her speech was getting slurred, her lips didn't seem to want to cooperate.

"Are you losing your voice, my dear?" father wanted to know in desperation.

Mother just moved her head from side to side with a tisk-tisk sound from her lips. It was two o'clock in the morning. Father sent someone to wake up Mr. Froome, the station agent, to send a telegram to the doctor in Fairview nearly twenty miles away. Grandpa Luke took a team of horses and hurried to get the priest to perform the last rights.

Early morning found mother in a coma, delirious with a high fever. The doctor arrived. Everyone was pleading with him to do something. His reply, "Two days ago I could have helped her. There is not much I can do now."

I was only eleven years old but I could see the doctor was giving mother a shot in the arm with a needle. Then he said, "Take away the pillows."

That's when our mother took her last breath and passed away at the age of thirty-nine. Death was attributed to pneumonia by the doctor.

Uncle Lorne had gone in another attempt to fetch the priest. Shortly after the doctor left, the priest arrived, only to set up the continuous Ecclesiastical reading according to the custom of the Old Greek Orthodox Church. It was too late to perform the last rights.

The Ecclesiastical and scriptural reading continued until the burial of the body, my uncles on mother's and father's side taking turns as well as father's cousins from Peace River. All this time candles and the lampatka (oil burning wick) were burning constantly.

The funeral procession is something I shall never forget. Six men carrying the coffin the distance of a quarter of a mile, constantly singing "vechnoi pameet" (eternal memory). A fairly large crowd followed, including a lot of children. At the grave, the priest made the form of a cross with the earth from the mound over the body of my mother before nailing it shut and lowering it into the ground. The mourners could be heard wailing and seen crossing themselves as clods of earth could be heard drumming on the pine box six feet below. An eight pointed cross was stood upright at the foot of the grave facing west. Friends and family were hugging and cuddling the children and embracing father, endeavouring to comfort us as we proceeded back to the house.

I recall many people around our home. The weather was nice that afternoon. I remember that evening. Sister Jessie, four and a half years old, injured her finger. The cows were outside waiting to be milked. She was looking for mother to fix her finger. Father, in his semi-conscious exhausted state, numb from sleepless nights, took Jessie by the hand and said,

"Let's go find your mother. She must be milking cows."

Walking towards the barn, she was oblivious to the fact that her mother was put to rest forever just a few hours before.

Father, a young man not yet thirty-nine, with a young family of five children, was now a widower. How could he cope? Cousin Rachel, the oldest daughter of Fred Sidoroff, at age seventeen, volunteered to look after the five children. As the months went by, time helped to heal the hurt. Friends and relatives were suggesting that the children needed a mother. So some began matchmaking. A friend knew of a single Ukrainian girl in her late twenties living in Saskatchewan, by the name of Paraskavaya (Pearl) Reznick. They began corresponding. Father wrote her of the established farmer that he was, with lots of potentially good soil and invited her to come and see for herself. In the spring of 1932 she arrived to meet a handsome clean-shaven man with a mustache. She met the children and things seem to click. They got married in June. Pearl took on the ominous task of managing a household with five children aged three and a half to twelve and a half. She turned out to be an outstanding stepmother.

Father and mother Pearl had an additional family of two boys and three girls. With good management on our father's part and good cooperation on our stepmother's part, the ten children grew up unbelievably closely knit. To this day we still have an excellent relationship.

The years came and went. As the children grew up, one by one they left home, with the exception of brother Tom who remained on the farm. Everyone found mates, got married and raised families. Now in the nineties some of us are even great-grandparents. We all ended up with many nieces and nephews and the only way we can keep track of them all is the family tree book that our dear sister Polly so diligently spent many, many hours putting together, doing research and compiling names and dates to produce such a coherently documented lineage back to our father's grandfather Sidor. It is a delight to trail the roots of our ancestors and to see the many branches this family tree has produced.

Turning the pages of this family tree book, I reminisce and relive the homecomings and the family reunions of the Peter Sidoroff branch. I recall the hospitality of our brother Tom and his wife Jean in 1978, the joy and the laughter of just being together in Hines Creek, Alberta, on the farm. All ten of us were present. We recalled the many sad as well as the many happy days we experienced while living in the farm house. It is now called the "cake house" by the community. We talked about our coming together to the sad occasions of father's funeral August 1962 and then the funeral of his second wife Pearl in 1966.

Another unforgettable reunion was the one in Parksville, B.C., where the family tree book came alive and some eighty 'branches and twigs' met together for three or four days. This too was a remarkable extravaganza organized by our illustrious sister Polly Elder, with help from sister Anne Jordan. One evening consisted of a well thought out program with Polly's son Keven as the Master of Ceremonies. Gifts and trophies for various categories and achievements were made by her husband Don, an Industrial Education teacher. Speeches and jokes filled the evening. During the weekend it was visiting, fishing, golfing, building sand castles and a great variety of appetizers and food galore. How happy we were to meet many of our nieces and nephews and their spouses that we hadn't met before from across Canada. The only regrettable part was to dismantle and say good-bye untl the next reunion.

All of the Peter Sidoroff children are scattered across the nation. Our dear sister Mary Hogg has fallen asleep in death. She died very quickly from an aneurysm August 1991. I have full confidence in the promise of a recreation to life as promised in God's word the Bible at John 5:28 and hope to meet Mary in the promised new system to enjoy everlasting life. All those in God's memory will do so.

The nine of us remaining will continue to reminisce about our growing up together, getting older together and who knows, we may, God willing, meet together again before or even after in the resurrection. What a joy it would be to meet with all those whose names are in our family tree book."

The Peter Sidoroffs - *by Anne Jordan*

"How fortunate we were when we arrived in Hines Creek! The neighbour next to our quarter-section, Mr. Charlie Williams, was away . We were given permission to stay in his house until our house was built. Our sincere and humble gratitude to Mr. Williams.

Mr. Williams arrived home when we were still in his house. He was pleased to have someone there while he was away. He was a very nice person and mother was very happy to cook for him. He said he was very happy to have the company and when we moved, he said he was sorry to see us go. Mother continued to bake for him and sent him food whenever possible. I remember speaking to Mr. Williams several years later. He said he thought mother was a great person and felt strongly that she deserved a better life than she had. His son Fred did not come on the scene until a few years later. Mr. Williams was a single parent - 1930 style.

Two of the animals that were part of our move were our horses Duke and Baldy. They are the ones that pulled the sleigh to the train when we left Homeglen. In Hines Creek, we rode Duke to school, which was four miles away at that time. We weren't that lucky all the time, however. Most of the time we walked. It was near forty below zero during the winter. Dad wanted us to wear felt boots (cuttinki), but we were too 'mod' for that! The new school a mile from our new home was built in 1930. Learning to read English was quite a chore. We had learned to read Russian before entering English schools so when we started to read in English we sounded every word out as we did in Russian, phonetically. For example, the words "the" and "mice" were pronounced phonetically - t h e cat' (not the cat) ran after 't h e meecee' (not the mice).

While living at Mr. Williams', the family took a walk to the corner of our quarter-section. We were to decide where to build the house. There was a bit of a hill. Mother stood on a beautiful part of this little hill and said "this would be a very good place for the house". Instead, this portion of the farm became a graveyard and she now lies buried there.

When our house was being built mother Lucaria said, "How I'd like the floor painted so it would be easier to wash!" Dad bought a quart (note: just one quart) of orange paint, but it was not floor paint. At that time they could not afford anything else, no doubt. Mother and I were thrilled. It was a joy washing a painted floor - and within a year we had washed it right off! Why? Because it wasn't floor paint. Yes, I washed floors when I was eight, in 1930.

Mother Lucaria was a very loving person, a forgiving person. She smiled a lot though often there wasn't much to smile about. She was a loving patient wife and she loved her husband Peter (Dad), even though he was a chauvinist Russian style. Grandpa Luke Sidoroff lived with us most of my early childhood life so she had to put up with two "chauvinists". Although she was a patient and obedient wife, it was not easy for her. She was very eager to learn the ways of the English, the democratic way of life and especially

the English language. For example, when we were living in Homeglen, a couple of ladies from the Anglican Church, whose names were Anne and Jessie, used to come riding on horseback distributing missionary literature. Mother loved to have these girls come. It was her opportunity to hear and learn the English language.

Mother obtained a Russian-English dictionary. She would tack this small dictionary on the wall in front of the scrub board. She would repeat the English words over and over again. My dad has told us that mother spoke better English than he did. He would say, "As a matter of fact, she spoke better English then than I do now."

Mother sewed all our clothes. In the fall of 1930, Fred Williams, the neighbour, gave us a jacket that he grew out of. Mother was excellent at "recycling". She made a fairly modern dress out of it for me which I wore for many years because it was nice and warm. Slacks were absolutely forbidden for girls, even when we rode a horse to school.

The weather was beautiful one Saturday morning. My parents decided to go right out into the garden before washing the dishes after breakfast. I was told that I was to do the dishes and do the morning kitchen chores. I wanted to be outdoors so I just dawdled. I was still putting the finishing touches on my chores when they came in to get lunch at noon. Since they loved working together, they were both in a good mood and mother did not scold me for dawdling, though I felt I deserved it.

She loved the outdoors and planted a wonderful garden. As though by instinct, she had her garden all in before May 11th, 1931, the day she died. Normally gardens are not planted until May 24th in Northern Alberta.

Mother used to sing a song about our guardian angel - in the Greek Orthodox faith we all have guardian angels. The song went like this:

Angel moi, hraneetil moi	Angel mine, guardian mine
Hranee menya va vse menooti	Guard me every minute
Hranee menya va vse chessy	Guard me every hour
Hranee menya va vse menooti	Guard me every minute

I'm not at all sure that my guardian angel did just that (he/she might have tried). It is, however, a good feeling to think we have a guardian angel.

In the spring of 1931 life became hum-drum, lonesome and uncertain. It was Friday May 8th when mother Lucaria suffered a miscarriage with her tenth pregnancy. She became ill immediately, preparing the evening meal with discomfort and pain. While serving the meal, she said, "I feel like I'm having my last supper with you. I feel very ill." She had mentioned that she was experiencing paralysis in her left side. She could not carry anything with her right arm. She could not lift the tea pot.

On Saturday she was in bed all day, no energy to wash the floors. By Saturday evening my aunt and uncle were fetched. By Sunday it was agreed that the doctor should be called but they hesitated because it was Sunday. Instead, they drove out to get Father

Solovieff but because of his recent disagreement with dad on church matters, he refused to come. She had a high fever and my aunt was applying cold wet cloths to her head. She must have had a sense that she was going. Her worry was her children. I heard her tell Aunt Palegea and Aunt Sophie that she wanted Aunt Palegea to look after Jessie and Polly, I was to go to Uncle Bill's family, Michael to go to Uncle Philip's and Syd with Uncle Lorne and Aunt Sophie. Dad was listening to all this, but all he could do was weep. He thought she was delirious - but still no call for the doctor. By Monday morning she was in a coma though it seemed as though she knew what was going on. They brought the mattress out of the room with her on it and laid it next to the wall where the stairs were then. Dad leaned over her. She lifted up her right arm and put it around his neck. She could not speak but she knew he was there. It was her way of consoling him. Finally someone went for the doctor on a team of horses. It took two to three hours before the doctor came. He gave her a needle but she died shortly after. The doctor appeared stunned by all the mourning that took place. He got an eye-full and an ear-full of how the Russians mourn over their dead. It must have looked like a movie to him.

Mother died May 11, 1931. I don't remember lunch or dinner that day, but I do remember three very sad children going to Uncle Lorne's to stay over night, Michael eleven, Anne nine, Syd six. Someone else looked after Jessie age four and Polly age two. Probably one of Uncle Fred's girls stayed to care for them. The funeral was not until Thursday. They had waited for the relatives to arrive from Peace River.

Those four days were a total blur to me. One day it was discovered Polly was missing. She had noticed that I went up the road to Uncle Lorne's off and on. Since she could not find me around the mourners she decided to walk up the road to Uncle Lorne's to look for me. After looking everywhere for her, I ran up the road, past the grave which had just been dug for the burial. There was a slight turn in the road. As I approached the turn I noticed a little bundle on the road. As I came closer it was Polly, sound asleep. She had her hat with her and used it for a pillow. With tears I thanked God for finding her before the fast moving horses came upon her. There was a lot of traffic on that road between our place and Uncle Lorne's with so many relatives around. The curve in the road would have obstructed the view.

Thursday was a lovely sunny day for the funeral. I thought, 'how could the sun shine the same as usual, nothing is the same!' Uncle Bill's wife Aunt Elena took care of Jessie and Polly. I found her sitting by the creek with the two girls beside her. It seemed she was trying to shield them from all the emotion.

At last everything seemed to settle into routine again. At the age of nine, I became the kitchen soup queen. One day we had chicken cooking for dinner - boiled chicken - and I was to make soup out of it. I thought "how nice it would be to have dumplings, but I don't know how to make dumplings." It must have been summer holidays or a Saturday

because I was not in school. I quickly decided to run over to Aunt Sophie's found out how to make dumplings.

When dad came off the field to have lunch, he said "I didn't know you knew how to make dumplings."

I didn't, but Aunt Sophie did. It was a joy to have dad pleased with my "soup". This was not always the case.

Life changed dramatically for this traditionally Russian man who was accustomed to his wife doing all the indoor work. He learned to bake bread and even milk cows. Russian men did not milk cows.

I would like to pay tribute to my cousins Rachel Shtykoff and Kay Cooke and their mother, Aunt Palegea, to mention only a few, who helped us a great deal during that motherless period. Rachel and Kay lived at our house for periods of six months each. Rachel was eighteen years old and Kay only thirteen. Dad often made comments about Rachel being a good worker. She did all the household duties and also sewed for us. It's possible that Kay did also but I don't remember. I recall when dad wanted to reward Kay for her efforts - the girls were not paid, there was no money. Someone had given dad a brand new sweater. He was so pleased. At last he would be able to give something to Kay to repay her in part. It was a bluish grey sweater, but it was a man's sweater. She cried. Was it tears of joy? It may have been better had he given her the money to buy her own sweater - she certainly deserved it.

All the aunts were of great comfort. They did not do housework for us as they had families of their own but they were of great emotional comfort. Mother's four brothers came less often to visit after spring of 1931. Uncle John Andreeff came more often than the others. He would gaze at me every time I emerged from the kitchen. He was very fond of his sister Lucaria. He himself looked very much like her but no doubt I reminded him of her also.

In 1932 dad married again. Pearl (Paraskavaya Reznick) became part of our family. This was a major adjustment for all. We may have had a stepmother to adjust to, but her adjustment was five-fold that of ours - she had five children to adjust to with many odds against her. One thing was clear, she was anxious to be a good wife and mother.

When she married dad the language fun started. She knew Ukrainian and a smattering of Russian. She asked dad to place some wood in the stove. She said it in Ukrainian and translated she said, "Please STAND some wood in the stove." Dad being a practical joker did just that. In no time, the place was full of smoke - anything for a bit of fun - that was our dad.

We also had that type of fun with the Russian-Germans in Hines Creek. In the Russian language there is the feminine and the masculine gender. One day a good Russian-German friend came along. His Russian was better than dad's German so he

always spoke to dad in Russian as best he could. On that particular day he had forgotten his Russian a bit. He was very disappointed in the weather during haying time and emphatically expressing it to dad said, "And as I was haying 'dosh kak pashla', meaning it suddenly rained. Sounds O.K. in English, but rain in Russian is masculine and he used the feminine gender. It was an amusement to dad and it should bring a smile to those knowing the Russian language.

Several years after the original house was built, linoleum was laid in the dining room only. Every Saturday we were down on our knees with a floor brush - scrubbing the kitchen floor. It did not have linoleum on it till later.

Saturdays were hard working days. Each one of the children had a specific job to be done. We girls had to prepare meals, wash and dry dishes. Floors to be swept right after the meals and the lino-type of table cloth had to be washed well and dried. Especially if it was the evening meal after which dad often used the table for his book work. He was the church secretary and woe be onto the girl that did not wipe the table cloth clean!

From the time I was eight years old my job Saturdays was washing all floors. When I was a bit older I was given the job of cleaning the wood stove - hateful job! First I would take the ashes out, then I would take the ash container and put it under the small opening below the oven door. I had to take a T-shaped tool, push it through the small opening and scrape the soot out. I can still hear the scraping sound it made - eek! This area is where the bottom part of the stove pipe is and is away at the back. I had to be on my knees in my oldest clothes because the fine soot dust would be everywhere, including my hair. This didn't seem to matter because Saturday night is bath night - a steam bath! How I hated that stove cleaning job! I noticed then that I was allergic to the dust so I would put a wet hanky on my nose and mouth. If you have ever seen a chimney sweep after he has finished cleaning a chimney, you will know what I mean. After that job, I had to clean the top part of the stove. That also was not an easy job because wood stoves can get very mucky.

Jessie's Saturday job was to "light the bath house", as we used to say. This was a stove made of rocks with a large tub set into the rocks at the top. This tub had to be filled with water. The creek was close by, but the wood had to be carried quite a distance for the stove. So as not to use the winter's supply of wood in the woodpile, the wood for the banya was gathered and brought in from the pasture. The fire had to be stoked regularly and going strong for two or three hours to heat the water and heat up the bath house. Our bath time started about four in the afternoon and the family went in turns until about seven in the evening.

Sunday was one of the better days. We could get up at eight instead of seven or six-thirty. Things went a bit smoother if we got up at six-thirty. We had to milk two cows each, separate the milk with a crank type of a separator, wash the separator, assemble

it again, etc., etc. Each one of the children knew what he or she was expected to do each day.

In the early mornings each day dad would light both stoves and put the kettle on. Mother would put the porridge on - even the parents had their own specific duties. This is so each one of us would know what to expect of the other. It was Boris' (Syd) job to separate the milk and it was my responsibility to wash the separator. This also included washing and scalding out the milk pails as well as putting the separator back together to exact specifications. Failure to do so would result in a disastrous outcome next time the separating process took place. Cream could end up in the pigs bellies and skim milk at the Peace River Creamery! Cream from the separator had to be immediately taken to the ice house and poured into a large cream can. When full, it would be sent to the Westlock Creamery in the early years, then to the Peace River Creamery in later years. The T. Eaton Co. received many of the cream cheques for our clothes and household supplies.

The ice house was a dug out which was excavated by dad no doubt by hand and shovel. It was about the size of a small room where big blocks of ice were kept under sawdust. The open area was used for storing meat, sauerkraut, milk, cream, etc. This would have been from the early thirties to the late forties, before the days of electricity in that part of the world. This stored ice was also used for drinking water. Before the ice house was built we had to melt snow for all our water supply. The good side of that was that the water was very soft and great for washing hair and dishes since soap does not "cheese up" in it like it does in hard water.

During the winter there was no shortage of ice. As soon as the lakes froze over, we could hardly wait for Sunday so the boys could shovel the snow off to skate. I recall helping with pushing the snow off; however, by the time we were finished, I would be too tired to skate. Besides, it would be getting dark and time to go in to do chores.

When the older ones grew up and left home, the young members of the family took over the same routine for chores and everyone had his or her respective job as we did.

In 1940 I was eighteen and on my own. It's only a ten year stretch between 1930 and 1940 but it seems much longer. These were the hard years, but the term "the hungry thirties" did not apply to us. We lived on the farm, worked hard and got good results.

School was difficult for me to start with, learning a new language while in poor health, and a four-mile hike to school in forty degree below zero weather. Often staying at home and getting behind in our ABC's, I made grade eight math by the skin of my teeth. Upgrading was necessary so I took it by correspondence many years later and made an eighty percent mark. This would have been a shock for my former teachers! When the college first opened in my present city of Courtenay, I took the opportunity to brush up on other subjects. Another pleasant surprise. If one's ego is lagging, I

recommend going to college. It's a great feeling to find out that you can, when all the time you've been thinking you can't!

As the teen years approached, I felt the "cultural shock" more than ever. It was one world working for others ouside the home and another when we arrived home. The customs, the traditions were so different. Dad had respect for the customs and traditions of the Canadian life, but he also held fast to the Old Greek Orthodox way of life. He hoped that we would not forget the Russian language. I am grateful for that.

The war years were difficult between 1939 and 1945, but there was a bright side to that too. The "hungry thirties" were over and jobs became easier to find. My first job was in a grocery store which was a nice change from house work. After the war my brother Michael was working in a sawmill near Prince George. I thought this would be a good time to widen my horizons and see if I could get a job in Prince George. That I did. It was no problem at all as I was known to be a very conscientious worker. I worked in the china department of a large hardware store called Moffats. Nice work and great employers. I soon had enough of the cold weather in Prince George so my next place of employment was in Vancouver in a large store called Spencers. It sold to Eaton's around 1948. By that time I was in Port Alberni working for Woodwards. In 1950 I met and married the "man of my life".

Since my husband Glenn Jordan worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway we moved often. Our first move was to Duncan where we lived for nine years, then we moved to Nanaimo and on to Qualicum. Our last move was Courtenay where we have lived since 1963. All these moves were progress - the first one was when Glenn was a Junior Telegrapher, then Assistant Telegrapher and eventually a Station Agent. This was the title he had when he retired from the Courtenay job. It is interesting to note that he was the last CPR Agent in Courtenay. Stations kept closing down one by one until now Victoria is the only station in operation on the Island. Good old CPR - brought our people to this wonderful country Canada, which we call home, and gave me and my family a great life. Now, in 1994, I am still married to the same man, Glenn Jordan, have three married daughters and eight beautiful grandchildren."

The Peter Sidoroffs - *by Polly Elder*

"In May 1931 I was two and a half years old. I do not remember my mother, her death, nor any of the happenings that took place pertaining to her death. My first memories are that of feeling sad and experiencing some type of dilemma. Older cousins were popping in to bath me, aunts and strangers were coming in to help out in various ways. There were many questions in the mind of this little confused tike. Why was my dad doing things in the kitchen when he was always working outside? How did the comfort and love of a home and family suddenly disappear? Why were my uncles always sad and

sometimes even crying when they came to visit? Later I understood.

As time went on, life seemed to evolve into a better place to be. Someone I was getting to know quite well was coming to our house on a regular basis to do the housework while dad was out doing the "dad's" work. In a smooth sort of transition, I came to realize that my mother had died and I was to have a new mother. I think I concluded that was the way all little girls got their mothers.

My dear aunts continued to come around and befriended my "new" mother. I became quite emotionally attached to my aunts and for years to come they were very dear to me. Visiting them was the excitement of my life in those very early years. Details of mother Pearl's & dad's wedding and adjustment to a new mother are vague in my mind. My first recollection of anything specific for that period of time is of my dad shaving off his beard.

Pearl (Reznick) Sidoroff

He had had a beard all of my short life prior to that, but to impress his new bride-to-be he shaved it off. To me this was a stranger; however, it wasn't long before I was sitting on his knee again. He found it amusing that I did not recognize him, and his unmistakable laugh was all I needed to hear to convince me who this stranger was.

The house we lived in at the time was about a third of what we see now. One memory stands out from life in the old house. With not much money to spare, beautification for aesthetic reasons was limited as we were now into the depression of the nineteen thirties. Wallpaper was out of the question at the time, so dad used his well-read newspaper to paper the ceiling. He subscribed to a Russian newspaper called Novoye Slovo (new word). The Russian letters spelled HOBOE CrOBO. As sister Jessie and I lay on our top bunk we read this as hawbo crawbo. It remained a joke for many years when fetching the mail. We would call out, "Dad's hawbo crawbo is here!"

Peter Sidoroff's House - 1938
Tommy, Polly, Jessie, Mary

The beds in this original house were bunks built into the wall, each one sleeping two. Before too long those bunks started to fill up and overflow with more children being born into the family. No, we did not

build more bunks, we built a bigger house. This addition was also of log structure and housed a kitchen, a dining room, a large living room and four bedrooms, plus two verandahs and a back enclosed porch. This house was indeed the work of a craftsman. The designs on the facia boards of the two verandahs were intricately carved with a fret saw.

In later years, the logs were covered with siding and painted a light yellow with a green shingled roof. It still creates a picturesque scene for folks driving by. The towns folk call it "the cake house". It resembles a pretty layered cake.

I remained on the farm for my twelve years of schooling. Most of my memories are pleasant ones. The depression ended when the Second World War started in 1939. I was almost eleven and at an impressionable age. The economic situation would change as my oldest brother was suddenly on a payroll with the army and was sending money home, but oh the emotional impact on my father! The ingrained memories of the First World War were still vivid in his mind. This was too much for a man that had already been through so much emotion in his forty-seven years. Fortunately, the Russian men weep freely and openly. This he did for days on end. Before long his second son Syd was in the army, then the airforce. Fortunately, neither saw action overseas. Many others from the district did see front line action and one of Syd's buddies by the name of Albert, was killed.

The economic state in the nineteen thirties forced the first four members of our family to leave home at an early age to seek employment. This left the farm with no male to assist dad. Tom and Vic were the remaining two sons after Syd left home and they were ages ten and four respectively. It was necessary for fourteen-year-old Polly to help in the field. Up until then, my work on the farm was mostly farmyard chores. Because these were outdoors, I quite enjoyed them - until they interfered with my social life outside home. As a fourteen and fifteen year old that was quite devastating at times. Friends, ball games, dances, and dates were very important at that age and that presented a problem.

The farm chores were no doubt common to all farmers in the years 1936 to 1948, but they are worth recording as they are not something that will be recorded in history books. Some of them can even bring a smile to one's face. The work involved in maintaining the animals and poultry and in keeping them productive created many hours of chores for everyone in the family. During the winter school was from nine-thirty to three-thirty and we would hardly have time for a snack after school when it was time to go out to do chores. Change of clothes and out to the woodpile to fill up both wood boxes, smaller split ones for the kitchen and bigger ones for the pot-bellied stove in the front room (central heating!). The next dash would be out to the barn, shovel and pitchfork in hand to make the cows and horses comfortable for the night. This involved cleaning out the barn,

laying down straw, loading the hay, putting the cows into their stalls and tying them down with our special knots. After our supper meal we would go out to milk them. The horses would also be put in by one of the boys or dad and the heat from the animals created in the barn made it rather cozy. Two or three cats would make their home in the barn during the winter and we would save our sardine cans so we could put milk in them and give it to the cats while we milked. Dad would feed the pigs and mother would tend to the chickens. In the evenings there would be mending and dad would do his church secretarial work or read his "hawbo crawbo". Our little minds were constantly nagged by the homework that wasn't getting done.

In the summer, whatever lay in store for us to be done after school was interrupted, without fail, at six to fetch the cows from the pasture. We had only to give one quick whistle to our companion, the farm watch dog, and he would be off ahead of us into the pasture in search of cows. At times it would take a full hour to find them and the question of the day was 'where were they today?' We had a description for every corner of the pasture - by Williams' place, by the crooked tree, at Danyshchuk's corner, by the church, by grandpa's hill, etc. I always enjoyed the outing personally. It was a good time to observe nature, find nests in the spring and test one's endurance when the cows decided to be elusive. Should the one with the bell be lying down, I would have to walk until I spotted one of them. Rain or shine, it had to be done, and even though we had a great rubber rain coat to put on in the rain, the thunder storms were not one of my favourite outings. It may be hard to believe now, but we took refuge under a tree! Once the cows were in the corral for the night, the smudges for the mosquitoes had to be created. The cows co-operated in this particular chore by supplying the necessary material for the smudge. This same material was also recycled in the winter by piling it for the garden's fertilizer.

Then there was that intricate crank-propelled cream separator. Every morning and every evening after milking, the milk was brought to the separator and poured into a large container at the top of this machine. Then the cranking started. It had to be turned at just the right speed to produce first grade cream. Too fast would make it too thin, too slow would make it too thick, indicating some of it was directed into the skim milk and subsequently wasted. When a city-grown relative came from Detroit, Michigan, to stay with us for a few days he was totally fascinated by this procedure. "Let me crank that thing", he begged. When he was denied the privilege for the above reasons, he was quite miffed. We had to explain.

Daily the cream was taken to the ice house and poured into the cream can on ice. When the can was full, it would be taken to the train station and shipped to the creamery in Peace River or Westlock. In a week or so a cheque would arrive, the stub of which indicated the grade of the cream. Not too often did it indicate anything under first grade

cream so we must have been doing our job right. The cans would be returned on the following train which came into Hines Creek twice a week. The skim milk would be fed to the calves in the summer and to the pigs in the winter. Plenty of whole milk was saved for the family to drink.

The pigs and chickens also created their share of chores. There was the ongoing chore of collecting eggs, keeping the nests fresh with straw and the inevitable endless task of shoveling to keep their housing clean. This, too, became a valuable commodity for fertilizer.

With no running water and no electricity, household chores were not simple to say the least. Clothes were washed on a scrub board and hung out on the stationary clothes line, none of this easy stuff where one just pushed the line out and pulled it back in again. That was a luxury when it eventually came into being, not to mention the luxury of the present day dryer. In the winter the clothes would freeze solid and had to be carried in like corpses, then laid around the house to thaw out and dry. Rather a funny scene at times, carrying stiff long underwear.

There wasn't much time for homework. We did have a specific time that we had to be in bed and often the homework was done by flashlight under the blanket. It was a privilege to be allowed to take time from farm work to do our homework. Often the assignments would not get done and we would experience flack from our teachers, who never seemed to understand the demands of a farm. We were sort of between a rock and a hard place.

In the summer we had about half an acre of vegetable garden. This took many hours of preparation, planting, then watering by buckets. Had I had a pedometer attached to my ankle to count the miles that were covered in making the trips to the creek and back, I no doubt would have recorded a trip around the world on foot.

Saturday was a heavy day but rather a pleasant one, especially when it was over! Scrubbing floors, cleaning stove, watering house plants, wiping down furniture and possibly baking for Sunday were the biggies. The one big job that was a must was to get the banya going. The banya was a separate building which is now known commonly as a sauna. As my parents originally came from the area of the Gulf of Finland, we have concluded that was where our ancestors got this idea, or vice versa. This little house had a stone heater in it on which sat a large tub for heating water. We would fire up this heater about two in the afternoon and keep it going until four o'clock when the room would be hot and the water would be near boiling. The floor was made of wood and had spaces between the boards for the water to run through as this was not just used for steaming but also for bathing.

The first shift in the bath house would be the girls. Equipped with basin, wash cloths, towels, soap and change of clothing, off we would go for our bath. It was a ball! We would

wash each other's backs and hair, scrub ourselves down, rinse ourselves off and then throw some water on the stones to create some steam. Wow! Then one more rinse and out of there so the boys could come in for theirs. Mother and dad would go in last and dad would stay in until the last particle of steam was extricated from the stone heater. This was the most relaxing time of the week for him. While mother and dad were out there, a circus would break out in the house. Freedom! The "clowns" in the family would take this opportunity to entertain the rest of us. The more we laughed the more they clowned. We managed to time it pretty well each time so the parents wouldn't catch us; however, there were times when that last ounce of steam in the sauna would run out earlier than we anticipated and we would get caught. Pity the one that was in the act when they walked in!

Sunday was a free day. Once the cows were milked, the cream separated and the necessary cleanup done, we were free to spend the day as we wished. Both meals were light ones so not too much effort had to be put on that and usually mother did the noon meal as she and dad just relaxed on Sundays if they didn't go visiting. No work was allowed to be done on a Sunday as this was the day of rest. Dad spent most of his time doing church work and mother visited back and forth with the neighbours. Sunday was also the time for company and if it was not a Lenten period either they had company in or would go visiting. Often there would be a whoop-tee-doo of a party. The Russian men made their own braga and there was always plenty of it for those occasions and of course many a fatted calf, and pig, would be butchered beforehand for a bountiful meal. With no ordained minister, no church services were held for most of my time at home.

We would take full advantage of our free day. In the summer there were endless things to enjoy. Our family was heavy on the female side, so we built plenty a play house in the trees. It was amazing the housekeeping we would do and the dishes we would create out of leaves, twigs, unedible berries, earth, etc. The mud cookies were rather tough, especially a couple of days later! We were also quite innovative in the way we built our walls out of flexible virgin willows that we weaved through horizontal bars, putting all the branches on top for a ceiling. Often we would get together with our neighbours, and our cousins from the Lorne Sidoroff family, but for sufficient numbers for playing most games, we had plenty in our own household. We would play single or double scrub (softball), "anti-i-over", kick the tin can, pump-pump-pull-away, or go burrow tunnels in the straw stack and play tag in the tunnels. What a hoot the tag game was in the straw tunnels. One never knew which way the other guy was going and there was no room to pass anyone. The odd time a pig would come wandering into the area and with all the excitement of the children's laughter would go into a panic and dash through one of the tunnels. There was no way the pig was going to back out, so there was no alternative but to lie down flat and let the pig clamber over top. Then, of course, the

good old game of "Run-Sheep-Run". The large yard with the farm buildings in a semi-circle on its periphery presented an excellent setting for this game.

The winter presented all sorts of other challenges such as clearing an ice patch to skate and then skate if there was enough energy or daylight left in the day. We would go out on a full moon night and play snow pie while we listened to the coyotes yelp in the distance, or blindfold one kid, pull him around in the sleigh and make him guess where he was. All this with the sounds of laughter in the night air. It is worthy of note that things such as the sleigh, hockey sticks, kid's wagons and even a tricycle were homemade. In the early years, skate blades were tied to our boots!

Another past time was a rather dangerous one, but we did a lot of dangerous things. The boys' idea of a fun time was to jump off the roof of the barn onto a haystack then slide down, but even more fun was trying to persuade the girls that it was great fun and we should try it. We were petrified but they found a way to convince one or two of the girls. Not me! I was too chicken to try it and they didn't edge me on because I was the little one. This, of course, was all done while mother and dad were not around. When one of my sisters got hurt and fainted sliding off the haystack, our parents had to be notified and then there was real trouble. I don't think I stuck around to find out the consequences. There were more than one hundred sixty acres of corners to hide in and by the time I surfaced, things would have calmed down.

Another challenge would be to walk along the top of a very high fence where the government-registered bull was corralled and keep oneself balanced so as not to fall, especially into the corral. Should one lose his balance and do so, you'd better believe there was a mighty fast scramble to get up and out before the bull came to investigate. Being of the naughty age group we periodically would give each other that odd accidental nudge!

During berry picking time we did have to put the odd Sunday in going to pick berries so mother could preserve them for the winter stash. That was never good news. However, once we got there it was rather fun and we would always pack an interesting lunch, which was the best part. I was one of the ones usually left behind to tend the smaller children. That was O.K. too, because I loved them dearly. The challenge was when one of them had chicken pox or measles and I was in charge at age twelve or so. Yikes! However, it did prepare me for all the challenges of bringing up my own four children.

Before I left home after graduation from grade twelve, I had experienced three funerals and one wedding in the Old Greek Orthodox Church, two minor accidents, and a few fleeting relationships. On the latter I seem to have a complete loss of memory, of course. However, the others are vivid in my memory.

My first funeral was when I was little and my recollection of it is not too vivid; however, well ingrained in my memory. It was the funeral of my cousin Ike who died at the age of eighteen from a ruptured appendix. The emotion displayed by his mother, my Aunt Elena, was beyond my comprehension and I stayed very, very close to my father for comfort. The second was my Grandpa Andreeff, my mother's father. I was just beginning to know him and losing him was a sad event in my life. When I was in grade eleven, my cousin Frances Sidoroff was brought home from Edmonton a very sick lady. She had been working in a clothing store for some time, then hospitalized in a T.B. sanitarium. Not able to cure her, the doctors sent her home via train where she died at the age of twenty-seven after a long and courageous battle. The girl cousins, of which I was one, and her sisters were pallbearers. That was my final tribute to Frances and a very sad day.

I was fortunate to have been able to experience one Old Greek Orthodox wedding in the church at home. It was a double wedding - my cousin Nick Andruff to his bride Zoya Nasedkin, and her brother Victor to Jenny Polukoshko. I was the bridesmaid for the latter couple. As well as the three-day celebration following a four-hour ceremony, there was a dance in the community hall. What a celebration! It was wonderful to be enjoying a social occasion with my parents, which was a rare occurrence. It was a wonderful and memorable weekend.

My two accidents? Both were during my early school days. The first was when I was sure I had broken my back sliding down a student-made slide on a woodpile during the winter. However, I must have only put it out and it popped back in as I rolled around in my agony. I managed to go back into class and was to keep it from my teacher as well as my parents. Only five or six of us were allowed out for recess, being the only ones to complete our assignments, so there were not too many aware of the happening. The older ones didn't dare tell since they were not supposed to let grade three and under students on the slide. It remained a very closed secret all those years. I must admit it was the most excruciating pain I have ever experienced and to this day I cringe when I see people with back problems.

The other accident was a bit more life threatening. I was in my third grade. A friend that lived beyond our place north of town used to ride her horse to school. He was a ploddy type of horse, so I often walked along with her as she rode. One school day a fellow who had a racing horse, and kept him in the same barn, challenged Greta to a race from the barn to the turnoff. I told Greta I would run ahead so we could be at the corner about the same time. I was trotting down the road on my short little legs. I heard horse hooves behind me. One would naturally turn around to see on which track the horse was galloping, not this girl. I just moved my little self over to the other track. Horse and rider just galloped right on over me. (I thought things were bad when the pig walked over me in the straw tunnel!)

The first vehicle on the scene was a wagon full of wheat heading for the elevator to unload. I was scraped up off the road and loaded onto this wagon of wheat and rushed to the nurse's station. The village had only a District Health Nurse, the hospital being twenty miles away down a dirt road. The team of horses that were so lazily clomping down the road with their load of wheat didn't know what hit them when the driver suddenly put them to a gallop with this body lying prostrate on their cargo.

The biggest challenge for the nurse was to remove the wheat from my bleeding nose and mouth. The end result was a few cracked ribs, superficial wounds on face and hands, and a bruised knee. With a good cleanup and taped ribs, I was taken home by a very nice gentleman in his smooth riding rubber-tired Bennet wagon. I knew I was the one in the wrong and was worried about my dad's reaction when he came home. I was rather pleasantly surprised. He cried when he came into the bedroom and saw me. It was the first time I was happy to see my father cry! We both cried, I more from relief! Dad's anger was taken out on the poor rider who had come to make amends as best he could. Poor Benny. Many years later I got the courage to apologize to him as we waltzed around the dance floor, he in his airforce uniform and I in my glory. I also got the chance to thank that nice gentleman that drove me home.

Aside from those two unfortunate mishaps, school was always fun for me. I found it a respite from the chores and pressures at home. Somehow at school I was able to meet the demands easier because of my ability to handle it well academically. Math was my favourite, with Grammar and Latin competing for second place. I loved Math classes. Being the first subject every morning, I always had that to look forward to while I flew through my pre-school chores at home. At times our chores would take longer than other times for various reasons and we would run the full mile to school aiming to get there on time, only to be late and get the old "stay in after school" to make up the time. Then it would come out on the report card in the comments as "too much tardiness". Well, neither of these went over too well with my dad. Too much tardiness was interpreted as lazy by him. He emphasized that even he knew the meaning of late! Then, of course, staying in after school meant we got home later than he expected us and that was not acceptable at the best of times. Another "rock and a hard place"!

Grades one to eight were all in one school house with about forty students and only one teacher. There was a pot bellied stove at the back of the room which was fired up every morning and at times in the winter we would all leave our desks and move in around the stove to keep warm. Often our sandwiches would be frozen and we would thaw them out by putting them on the hot stove, invariably burning them and our fingers as well. Our teachers were the best. I don't know how the School Board got them to come out to this small community but they did and some of them married locally and stayed.

Every Christmas the teacher would have a concert with every student participating. In retrospect I marvel at what they were able to draw out of us. We had the best concerts

and of course Santa would come and give us bags of candy and a small present. What a treat that was! The concerts were just before the Christmas break every year which would be during the Greek Orthodox Lenten period. We were not able to eat any of the chocolates until after Lent was over and that really was a test in self disciplin. Did we, or did we not.....?

We had a wonderful choir in our school. From the time I can remember until I graduated from High School, Mrs. Olstad was our choir leader. She was excellent in her ability and never lost her patience with us. Every year we would perform at the Christmas concert and enter the spring Music Festival in Fairview. Without fail, we would walk away with the shield. When my brother Tom was about twelve she got him to compete in the boys' solo section. He missed getting the cup by a hair. He was a bit shy then, believe it or not, and 'a feather in his cap' would have been a boost to his self image. He was, however, a clown and was able to carry out his performance in great style. The final judgment was made on the two runners-up performing the second time and Tom conceded the cup to Bill who was also from our school. If it were now, for that 'feather in his cap', Tom would go home pluck a feather from a chicken and stick it in his hat. No chickens now, but he's definitely a cap man with over a hundred in his collection, and still 'a clown'!

In my teens I did not leave home as early as my sisters and my brothers. I was determined to finish school and my parents were quite willing to let me do that. I was needed around the farm as this was when the older boys had gone and Tom was still a boy. Motorized machinery replaced the horses and the old equipment. In 1945 our parents bought a 1936 Chev. Were we proud of that! ... and to top that we were the only car in the district with a radio in it! Somewhere along the way at the beginning of WW II we did purchase a radio for the house so we could get in on the news around the world. We even got to listen to the hockey games with Foster Hewitt as long as Syd was at home, but after that "girls didn't need hockey" and to listen to music on the radio was prohibited by the Old Greek Orthodox religion. All these things that were prohibited by this religion were perhaps the issue with the biggest emotional strain on the first quarter century of my life.

Dad's strong belief in his Church had a very unfortunate side to it. So many of our good intentions to live a good life was turned around as being "sinful" and hurtful to him. What would have been considered an excellent way of life for young people leaving home and going to the big city, was viewed as disrespect. Most of us became active members of our own chosen congregations. This is a no-no to an Orthodox believer. When my picture came out in the Edmonton Journal as President of the United Church Young Peoples group, my dad was devastated. Then someone reported to him that I was taking singing lessons and a member of the United Church Choir, it was yet another blow and

a reprimand from other members of the church for not "honoring my mother and my father". Those of us that were open about our affiliation with another form of worship found ourselves between a rock and a hard place once again. Four generations later, Peter's two great-great-grandchildren, Mason and Molly Rose Sidoroff, are only one-eighth Russian and far removed from the Old Greek Orthodox form of worship. They have, however, been born into a family that are totally devoted to their own religious beliefs and would make any family proud of their excellent life style.

During my teens the social time with friends were precious. We had many a great ball game and nearly every Friday night there was a dance in the community hall, with people of all ages attending. We got to know some of the young people from the outlying areas and I had a host of friends by the time I graduated and left home. We usually had a three-piece band. A piano, drums and accordion. We would dance from ten at night until two or three in the morning with a break at midnight for a snack at one of the local restaurants. For some reason or other this was called a "supper", or at least the dance that preceded it was called the "supper waltz". Whoever you danced the supper waltz with would be the one that took you to the restaurant for pie and coffee. One of the restaurants was owned by the parents of my buddy Edna and her mom made the best pies in the world. With whom one went didn't matter, as long as we got to eat a piece of Mrs. Allen's pie - twenty-five cents a piece, I believe. No doubt many a permanent relationship developed from a supper waltz and those very special pies.

For a portion of my last year of school I moved into town to work for my room and board. I needed extra money and my parents had five others at home to care for and finance. This was to be a move that would help both myself and my parents. I would have more time to do the heavy load of school work as I was taking three courses by correspondence as well as attending school full time. It would also alleviate the pressure put on dad to cope with my social life, since it was his first experience in dealing with an adult child at home as all the others had left before this challenge presented itself. To him I was old enough to be dating, after all, he married my mother when they were both seventeen; however, many of the activities in which I wanted to participate with a boyfriend were either during a Lent or on a Saturday night, both of which were against his belief. It was a difficult time for him. He was always anxious to be fair with me and I certainly appreciated his dilemma.

Emotionally, this was difficult for me. Most of the time my heart ached for the family. I saw my younger siblings at their school each day since I had to pass by the elementary school to get to the High School. I was so anxious to see their beautiful faces every morning. I would walk to the corner with them after school and a tear would trickle down my cheek as I said good-bye to them at Barney's corner, especially if it happened to be sub-zero weather. During that winter mother fell ill and needed to go to Edmonton for

an operation. I went back to the farm for that period to help out. When spring came, I moved back to the farm for the summer to help on the land. Tommy was the oldest at home now but he was only fifteen. He was working like a man but they needed additional farm help and I was it for the summer.

It was a memorable summer. Tommy and I worked together on the stooking. We worked hard but we certainly had some wonderful laughs. Dad was very pleased with our work and always had words of praise for us, although he would come by on his binder, catch us doubling over in laughter, and just shake his head with a hidden smile behind his ears.

Both mother and dad succumbed to terminal illnesses. Dad fell ill with what was eventually diagnosed as Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig's Disease as it has been known since Lou Gehrig, the baseball player, died of it in 1941. Dad died in 1962 at the age of seventy. It was never officially determined that he had ALS.

Mother suffered with cancer for some time before she died in 1966 at the age of sixty-eight. Our dear sister Nadia, being a very capable nurse and caring daughter, looked after her in her latter days. Mother had become a strong Greek Orthodox by this time. She had been converted from a Greek Catholic in order that she could marry dad. While Father Solovieff was taking services in the church, one of her most valued contributions was hosting the large group of parishioners following a church service. So many of the people came via horse and buggy or sleigh from a few miles away and were so delighted with a hot meal and some socializing after church before going home. Many times she would have loved to be in church, but stayed home to cook. When she apologized to the clergy for her absence, he promptly reassured her that there was a special place for her in her other life for her devotion to the task. Dad, too, would commend her for her great contribution to the success of the day.

Throughout my years at home many changes took place and in the nineteen fifties changes took place in leaps and bounds with the end result being a very beautiful setting one mile north of Hines Creek, managed by Tom and his wife Jean for the past thirty-four years. Tom attended Fairview Agriculture School with obvious, fabulous results to farming technology. The quarter-section was increased to one whole section and later under Tom's management increased to close to two thousand acres. At the parents' request, Tom built a smaller house for them just a few yards from the big house. After dad died in 1962, the house was moved into town where mother lived until she died in 1966. Tom and his wife Jean became owners of the farm where they brought up two boys and continue to be successful farmers with Jean having a second career, first as a teacher and later as Librarian at Fairview College.

Peter Sidoroff's Upgraded House - now Tom (son) & Jean Sideroff's Home

The rest of the family all left home in their teens to establish lives for themselves elsewhere. Before his retirement, Michael was a head sawyer at a mill in Honeymoon Bay on Vancouver Island. He married Sylvia Chance during the war. Anne worked in a ladies clothing shop till she married Glenn Jordan, a Canadian Pacific Railway Agent. Syd upgraded his education after the war and received his degree in Economics. He has worked in Montreal and Toronto most of his life. He married Alberta Dickie during the war. Jessie was employed as a Secretary for Canadian Pacific Airlines where she met her husband Les Mennie, also with Canadian Pacific. Mary married Ross Hogg, a member of the RCMP in Whitehorse, while she too worked for Canadian Pacific Airlines. When she died in 1991 she was the head Secretary at a school in Spruce Grove, Alberta. Vic became an Airline Pilot and in 1981 married Dorothy Hughes, a Real Estate Agent. Rhena became a secretary, married Harold Canning, a bus driver, and is still in the working world. Nadia trained as a nurse and worked at that profession for many years. She married John Hodgson, an RCMP member, and upon his retirement, they both joined the Real Estate profession. They are still active in that area of work in Regina, Saskatchewan. I, Polly, am a Bookkeeper/Secretary, and married to Don Elder who is still teaching in Duncan. We have four married children, three sons and one daughter. Ron is in the RCMP in Alberta, Keven a Vice-Principal in Victoria, Roxanne a full-time mom after a wonderful career with the airlines, and Graham who joined the staff of a stationery distribution wholesale company after graduating from the University of British Columbia. We have seven grandchildren, Brock, Collin, Mark, Stephanie, Terri-Lynn, Britney and Zachary.

My family, my siblings and their families all have a warm and loving relationship with each other and the hardships and emotions of those days long ago have been washed over by the warm waters of the present days' happiness in each of our lives. Peter, Lucaria and Pearl would be very proud of the outcome of their labours."

Our Dear Mary

All of us miss dear Mary. I saw her as 'the sweetheart of the family', full of vitality and a great sense of humor; minute in stature, yet strong in her convictions and ideals. With her beautiful smile and her ability to laugh, she made everyone around her feel good. We lost Mary to an aneurysm at the age of fifty-six. Besides her large extended family, left to mourn her were her husband Ross, daughter Cheryl (Orville), son Doug (Debbie) and granddaughter Larissa. A year later, Cheryl and Orville named their daughter Melissa Mary. Sketchy notes of Mary's memoirs were found after she died. Her untimely death had prevented her from finishing her contribution to this book. I have recorded her notes just as she had written them:

"By the time I came along, times were a bit better. We slept three to a bed instead of five! Still, compared to today's standards, times were pretty tough. - shoes, hand-me downs, worn whether they fit or not - jiggle boots, could hear him coming for miles! - - washing clothes, carrying water, starting up the motor - missing my older brothers and sisters as they left; brothers to army and sisters to work - sisters sent nice toys and clothes now and again - getting married : parents not meeting any of their sons or daughters in law before the wedding - thought because my husband was a RCMP dad would forget about entertaining him with his braga, no such luck - Christmas: kept Lent, very few gifts, good food, presents when times were better - wrist watch, skates . . . "

A Tribute To My Mother Mary Hogg - *by Cheryl (Hogg) Eidick*

There is not one day that goes by that I don't think of you. Life is hard without you. You knew the difficulties of life. The many stories of your youth, told many hardships. Your life was not easy growing up. There were many chores to be done; shoes, clothes and a bed to be shared, long trips to be made by foot and living without the many conveniences that we have today. How did you do it? It must have been that great sense of humor that you have and shared with your family.

Your stories also had much laughter. You laughed when you told me how you and Aunt Nadia were chased by the geese. You laughed when you told me about your favourite horse named "Queenie". You laughed when you told me how the worst thing about sharing a bed was when one of the little ones wet it. You laughed when you told me all the things that happened on your walk home from school. I remember the joy that

was in your voice when you told me about the community dances and coming home to tell your mom the many stories of the evening. You told me how your mom loved to dance and laugh and joke around with you and your brothers and sisters. Now I realize who taught you to be such a "fun mom".

As I write this tribute, I realize the irony. When you spoke about your mom, you laughed. However, you also shed tears when you told me how proud your mom would have been of both Doug and me. I share those same tears when I talk about you to Melissa. They are tears of loneliness and tears that long for you to be here to share in my joy of seeing Melissa grow.

Mary Hogg

I also laugh as I tell Melissa stories about my childhood with you. I laugh when I tell her how you got your pantyhose stuck in the zipper of some jeans you tried on in the ladies change room at Woodward's. I laugh even harder when I explain how you took your pantyhose off and left them in the jeans on the rack. I laugh when I think of how you used to check our Halloween candy and at one time took all the popcorn balls out explaining how they were unsafe. The next day, I caught you eating a popcorn ball! I laugh when I tell how you loved to dance and joke around when you were listening to my stereo with me.

I laugh when I think of how you used to baby our dog Skippy and call yourself "Grandma" when talking to him. I laugh when I think of how you used to use a cushion to sit on when you were driving because you could not see the road without it.

The list of many fun times together are unending. I am warmed and comforted by them. I am comforted by the thoughts of the many things you did for me and the many things you gave me. Thank you for such wonderful memories.

Like your memories, my memories will be what helps me carry on. My prayer is that Melissa will have many happy memories, such as mine, to share with her children.

Life is hard without you. You will always be remembered and talked about with great honor and love in our home.

Life is hard without you. Love always, Cheryl.

The Peter Sidoroffs - *by Tom Sideroff*

"By the time I arrived in the world dad had been on the homestead one mile north of Hines Creek for five years. Mother would have been there about a year. Mother came to the homestead from Saskatchewan. She had come from the Ukraine where she worked as a gleaner. Mother told me the story about her working for the lord under the feudal system in the Ukraine. She, along with other women, worked with oxen doing field work.

The Reznick Sisters - Ukraine
Center: Pear (Reznick) Sidoroff

Gleaners

After hours these women would go into the lord's fields to pick the gleanings for themselves. I remember studying about the peasants and the lords and the feudal system in school. Little did I know that mother lived through what we were studying about in school. I didn't realize that it was the same system that mother talked about until I was much older.

The quarter section that dad homesteaded, which is the quarter that we live on now, has a creek running through it, cutting off about five to seven acres on the southeast part of the quarter. Dad had donated this cut-off piece of land to the church. The congregation built the first church there. Dad's first wife Lucaria was buried there. Then it was decided that the church and graveyard should be closer to a government road for easier access (no creek to cross). The new and bigger church was built by the highway. The old church and the one grave had to be moved to the existing church yard. I remember them trying to move the old church to be used for a manse at the new church yard. The other Sidoroffs, the Andreeffs, Kosheiffs and Doumnoffs (the ones I can remember) each came with their team of horses. They hooked their horses to this log building - to me it seemed like hundreds of horses. I guess there were about twelve or fourteen. They got the building as far as the creek but could not get it across the bridge. They went to work and took the building apart, log by log, and set it up again at its existing place next to the new church.

I was there when dad and one of my older brother Mike moved the grave. It was a scary day for the kids. I remember that home-made casket being handled with great care as there was no rough box. It was an emotional day for the family.

The first few years of mom and dad's marriage they had some difficulty communicating, mom being of Ukrainian origin and dad being Russian. Mom told me the story of dad asking her to kill a rooster. Mom, being a bit frightened, asked, "Who is Rooster?" Dad replied, "Do you know what a chicken is?" "Yes," Mom answered. "Well, Rooster is chicken's boyfriend." Then mom knew what she was to butcher.

I was growing up at quite an exciting time. It wasn't until about 1948 that bulldozers became available for clearing land. Prior to that time the land was cleared by hand with an axe. Each tree was grubbed out, piled, then burned. First, the sod was turned by horses pulling a walking plow. Later tractor drawn plows were used to make the field to grow the crop.

I remember dad seeding by hand. He would carry a burlap bag of seed and spread the seed by hand while walking up and down the field. Later he acquired a horse drawn seeder, no more packing the seed nor walking. Then came the tractor drawn equipment, including seeder, plow, disc, harrows and other equipment to work the land.

There was a big change in harvesting the crop in my growing up days. Dad told me of how he cut the crop with a scythe in Russia but he didn't do much of that on the Hines Creek homestead. The cutting was done by a four-horse drawn machine called a binder. It cut and tied the crop into sheaves with binder twine. They had to be stood up in the field to dry. This was called stooking. After the stooks were dry, they were loaded into a horse drawn rack and put into a stack. Later the threshing machine came along and the sheaves were thrown into the threshing machine which separated the grain from the straw. Later, the stooks were hauled directly to the thresher rather than stacking them first. This process consisted of a tractor that ran the thresher, eight teams of horses (sixteen total) with racks and about ten men. At first dad had his threshing hired, then acquired his own threshing outfit. It was an exciting time when this threshing outfit arrived at one's farm. When it left, what remained is one granary of grain and a big straw pile. As time progressed all this harvesting of the crop was replaced by one machine called a combine, operated by one man. Dad retired from farming about the time combine harvesting came along.

The straw pile was a real recreation place for the young kids. We would make holes through the pile, play tag, set traps for each other. The traps or snares were made of the twine that was found in the straw. I remember spending days in the straw pile collecting the short bits of twine that came off each sheaf. I would tie the twine together, twisting the strand of string around and around to make a rope to use for a swing.

Progress in the household was also a memorable time. At first the floor was plain boards. Later the boards were painted and later yet linoleum was affordable to cover the boards. The mud plastered log walls were first whitewashed. Then wallpaper was acquired and the walls were wallpapered. Much later wallboard was put on the walls.

On the outside, the brown logs were covered with wood siding and painted. The old shingles on the roof were painted. This gave the house that "bourgeoisie" look in 1940.

The next big event was electricity coming to the farm. No one enjoyed this luxury more than mother. She was never brave enough to light the gas lamp. What a relief it was to be able to push a switch and the house would light up. The fridge solved the problem of food spoiling and many other difficulties were overcome with electricity.

Other progress that stands out in my mind was changing from a horse drawn democrat to a car. About 1945 dad and mom bought a 1936 Chev from Mr. Rosenbaum, a local merchant. It was always my job as a youngster to get the horses home from the bush pasture whenever they were needed. At last I didn't have to get the horses on Sunday so mom and dad could go visiting. They took the car. Mom wasn't too sure of dad's driving and the idea of two ditches and one road bothered her, but they got along quite well with the modern way of transportation.

In 1960 when I married Jean Kibblewhite, a local school teacher, mom and dad moved into a smaller house on the farm. By this time dad had been quite sick, in and out of the hospital quite regularly. The doctors told us that he had Muscular Dystrophy and later they changed it to Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's Disease). We didn't know for sure what dad had, but neither was curable. He was in a wheelchair for two years. He died in 1962 at the age of seventy. Mother had their house moved into Hines Creek where she lived until her death in 1966 at the age of sixty-eight. "Baba" baby-sat our boys Greg and Neal quite often.

Our family now consists of two sons, two daughters-in-law, and four grandchildren: Darcy and twin girls Courtenay and Carissa born to Greg and Marilyn, and Rylan born to Neal and Michelle."

The Peter Sidoroffs - *by Nadia Hodgson*

"I was born on the farm in Hines Creek, Alberta, on August 31, 1936, with my Aunt Sophia as midwife. I was christened Nadezhda and called Nellie throughout my upbringing. When I went into Real Estate, I was asked if my name was really Nellie so I told them I was really Nadia, which is the diminutive of Nadezhda. Their reaction was 'why would you ever use Nellie with a name like Nadia?' From then on I have been Nadia as I was to my family as a little girl.

Our birthdays were simple when we were children but our parents made us feel important. They would always greet us first thing in the morning and give us a gift of a small amount of money, about fifty cents or so. Then we would patiently wait for Grandpa Luke to come. He always remembered all our birthdays. He would give us between fifteen and twenty-five cents and two sugar cubes. That was a real treat for us as our sugar was always bought in hundred pound bulk bags.

Grandpa used to get his daily water supply from the creek which ran by our house. He would have a yoke around his neck with a pail at each end. I don't know how he managed to have any water left in those pails after he walked about an eighth of a mile home. I recall dad offering to bring him a barrel full with the stone boat and tractor but Grandpa refused. He said this was his way to get exercise. For the last few months of his life, he came to live with us after he became very week. Mother looked after him until he died in 1948. I remember the evening clearly. We were all upstairs standing in his room. He was in the small room that used to be the boys' room. While he was taking his last breath or two, he crossed himself twice and attempted to cross himself the third time but could get his hand only part way up. He then stopped breathing and passed on to the next life.

My memories of my very early years are vague but I do recall some things. I recall walking to school a mile in thirty and forty below weather, kicking a frozen horse 'ball'. We would see if we could kick the same one all the way to school. When we finally got to school it was more fun than in the summer as we were allowed to move our desks around the wood stove to keep warm. Many times we had to eat frozen sandwiches as our lunches would be neatly lined up on shelving which was against the outside wall. Our sandwiches were wrapped in Russian newspaper so we could never pretend to mistaken our lunches for someone else's. I always envied the kids who brought their lunches wrapped in wax paper and neat brown paper bags.

I don't recall school being too difficult except when I was in grade two or three. We had a blue work book and one little square said "draw some waves". I didn't know what in the world waves were so I passed my book forward to Carl. He drew some waves for me and from then on, I was teased about "my boyfriend". I don't know what became of him. He was very intelligent so he probably became a rocket scientist.

A couple of other humiliating experiences were when a bunch of us got the strap for eating snow. As we came in from recess, the teacher stood at the door and whacked each one on the hand with a fat strap. I didn't tell mother and dad or I would have had another from them, not for eating snow but for getting the strap! Another time was in grade five when Mrs. Shepherd found all my cod liver oil pills neatly lined up in my desk. She showed everyone in the class!

When I was nine years old I was hospitalized in Fairview with rheumatic fever. What a traumatic experience! Dr. Letts gave me strict orders not to get out of bed under any circumstances. I was to use the call bell if I wanted anything. Alas, the nurse took my bell away with my food tray. That night I desperately had to go to the bathroom . . . and no call bell. I had no choice but to wet the bed and wet I did. The nurse came in the next morning and said, "Oh, what have we here?" as she proceeded to take my bed apart. I replied, "It was like that when I came here". I don't think she believed me.

Mother was able to come and visit a couple of times. She would hold my hand and after she left, I could feel her hand in mine for hours. I was just that lonely.

As children we always had enough to eat but our food consisted of the basic staples - meat, fish, potatoes and soup for every meal except breakfast. We would have oranges only if we were sick and apples during Lent but could have only half an apple each for our lunch. In the evening, during the winter months, we would be sitting around the big dining room table doing homework. Dad would be mending 'cuttinkee' (felt inner boot) and mother would be mending socks. Soon we would start begging for an apple. Oh the excitement when they would finally say "yes". We would race and see who could be the first one in the cellar to get one. One time Vic and Rhena were racing. Vic happened to be the first to open the cellar door. Rhena was right behind him but could not put her brakes on in time. There she was straddled with one entire leg in the cellar and the other on the kitchen floor. The rest of us just stood there killing ourselves laughing.

Dad was a deeply religious man. It seemed we kept Lent three-quarters of the time. I can still taste how good the corn flakes, bacon and eggs tasted after six weeks of Lent.

Going to church at Easter and Christmas meant standing for hours. We would get so bored we would drip the candle wax onto our hands and pretend we had warts. Then we would show our palms to the other kids, sneaking our display to the boys who had to stand in the male side of the church. The giggles would begin, but not for long. They were soon stifled by dad's stern look from the "creelas", altar. Easter was a big holiday for us. We seemed to have church services starting Wednesday through to Easter Sunday. One particular year when I was about twelve the Andreeff girls came for the service and stayed the weekend. Since it was a nice spring day, we decided to have a ball game. Some of the neighbour boys came over and we had a great time. The next afternoon I had confession with Father Solovieff. One of his questions was "do you play with boys?". I thought, 'Well, yes, we had a ball game with the boys last night, but what's so sinful about that?', so I said, "Yes, I do". He said, "May God forgive you"! It wasn't until many years later I realized what he really meant.

I also recall when one of the Russian ladies would come over to visit and complain bitterly that her husband came home drunk. Once when she had her 'kvas' ready for the big holiday, she came dashing over and said the old "chort" (devil) drank all her kvas. Listening to her was a great source of entertainment for us. We would disappear into a corner, imitate her and giggle our heads off. I used to love those black coloured eggs she made and would bring to our house. We could never manage to paint our eggs black.

Our Christmas was very simple but I loved it, especially after keeping six weeks of Lent. We were able to miss a day of school without any hassle because it was our Christmas which we celebrated on January 7th. Christmas eve, after the house was cleaned and all the baking and cooking was done, we hung up our stockings behind the

kitchen stove. Then we were off to bed trying to fight sleep. It seemed only minutes before mother was waking us to go to church at three in the morning. Our Santa could not afford gifts but our stockings were full of nuts, candies and oranges and we were very thrilled. There was a year when Polly tried to put her 'cuttinkees' on and to her amazement they were full of goodies. Did we ever think that was hilarious! Another Christmas I had to give up a doll I had won at a school concert. This was to ensure that Rhena, who still believed in Santa, would have a present in her sock. I was sad to give up my doll, but felt good about helping mother out.

Although we worked hard as children, doing chores such as milking cows, sawing and carrying in the wood and bringing in the snow for our water supply, our mealtimes were always full of laughter. Dad would try to be stern and tell us it was a sin to laugh at the table. I would go into the kitchen, out of dad's sight but in view of the other kids, and make faces. The others would giggle and they would get a scolding from dad. I thought that was pretty clever. When we were about five or six we would play in our playhouse that Tommy and Polly helped us build out of willows; it was very fancy with a kitchen, living room and dining room. When we cooked we made our "braga" out of cold water and horse buns to get the brown colour and used rabbit droppings as raisins. Our dishes were tin cans and our plates were sardine cans.

I recall a close call that Rhena had when I was about ten or eleven and she would have been six or seven. We decided to go skating on the creek that ran by our house. There was a water hole cut out of the ice that was covered by a cardboard. Rhena was skating along and didn't realize what that box was there for. She said, "What's this box doing here?" as she gave it a kick and down she went with one leg under the ice. Mary and I managed to pull her out but what a close call! When we got back to the house we told mother and dad that Rhena had wet herself.

We all looked forward to threshing time. The girls had to cook and bake for the crew and I think each family tried to out-do the next one with their cooking and baking. I was always intrigued by how each man brought his own bed roll. Some would sleep in the barn, others on the verandah. Some would get preferential treatment and sleep on the living room floor. We were always very proud because dad owned the threshing machine and was the "Puba", so to speak.

Going to get the cows in the pasture is a fond memory. With Fido at our side, we would stand and listen for the cow bell. I always hoped they wouldn't be too far away as I was afraid of getting lost or running into a bear. That land is all turned into farm land now.

Saturday was always a great day! We would clean the house from stem to stern, then in the evening go to the 'banya' (sauna) for our weekly bath. The girls would go first, then the boys and then mother and dad. They seemed to spend quite a while in there and we kids just had a ball fooling around.

I recall one of sister Anne's visits home when Mary and I were only six and seven. We went to the bath house and Anne complained of feeling faint. She laid herself face down on the floor and made us hold her legs up 'so the blood would flow to her head'. Wow, were those legs ever heavy! I didn't think she would ever say 'O.K., put them down'. We always looked forward to our older brothers and sisters coming home, from the big cities, to visit.

When I was a teenager, the odd time in the summer we would walk into town for a dance. It was very seldom as it seemed we were always keeping Lent and of course dancing was prohibited at that time. We would walk back home at about three in the morning. The birds would be chirping and the sun approaching the horizon. Still, during my walks today, my memory takes me back to those days.

I completed grade twelve in Hines Creek in 1954, except for a semester which I had to repeat in Red Deer, Alberta. I stayed with Les Mennie's (my brother-in-law) parents and they were very good to me; but, it was my first time away from home and I was very lonely. When I returned home I worked in the grocery store for about six months and then in September of 1955 I went to Edmonton Royal Alexandra Hospital to train to be a nurse. These were three trying, lonely years, so far away from home for the first time. Since our parents taught us such good work ethics, I survived. Mother and dad could not afford to send me any money but my dear sister Mary, who was working in Whitehorse by then, would slip me the odd ten dollar bill in her letters - bless her heart. It made life much easier as we only got paid eleven dollars a month during our training. During that time my Aunt Sophie was in the hospital and I would go in and interpret for her. Deep down inside I was embarrassed to reveal my Russian background but I kept remembering how important it was to mother and dad. How times have changed! I am so proud to be able to speak Russian now. I have always been grateful for the training as a nurse, and although I do not work as a nurse presently, my knowledge comes in handy, not only with my own family but friends at work as well.

I graduated form nurses training in September 1958 and headed up to Whitehorse to be my sister Mary's maid of honor. She and Ross were married November 21, 1958. I was able to get a job nursing at the Whitehorse Hospital and that's where I met my husband John, who was with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. We were married in 1962 and spent twelve years up north in Whitehorse, Dawson City, Inuvik and Spence Bay in the central Arctic. Our son, Jeffrey Ross was born in Whitehorse in October 1964 and our daughter, Rosalyn Denise, was born in Inuvik in March of 1968. We loved the north. It was a great experience and character building.

While stationed up north I experienced two sad events. The first was when we were stationed in Dawson City in 1962. In August of that year we received a wire saying dad had passed away. I was devastated, as was everyone in the family. While we were

stationed in Spence Bay in 1966, we received another wire in the early part of October. It informed us that mother had terminal cancer with only three months to live. I thought I would die myself, but I pulled myself together. I took Jeff, who wasn't quite two years old and headed for Hines Creek to nurse mother at home until she died. It was a stressful experience, especially with a toddler, but a worthwhile one. I am so pleased I was able to do it as mother hated hospitals. The morning after we brought her home from the hospital she said, "Nadia, I am so glad to be home. When I first woke up I didn't know where I was and then when I realized I was home, I felt so good inside." After mother passed away, Jeff, who was only two, got a 'flu bug and had to be hospitalized and almost died. It's no wonder my face was covered in cold sores and I had a stiff neck!

In 1971 we were transferred to Yorkton, Saskatchewan, and in 1974 were transferred to Regina where we now live in 1994. John retired from the R.C.M.P. in 1976 and I from nursing in 1979. We both sell real estate and are semi-retired. Life has been good, but I was oh so saddened by the sudden passing of my dear sister Mary in August 1991. I miss her so much but time is a great healer.

In May of this year, 1994, we were blessed with a gorgeous grandson, Benjamin John Kelsey. Mike, Rosalyn and Benjamin live in Regina so I am able to see him every day - my greatest joy. Life continues to be good!"

Lorne and Sophia Sidoroff - *by Nick and Helen Sideroff*

"Nick was born in Harbin, China, on February 22, 1924, just before the family moved to Canada. The one memory he has of living in Homeglen is the grocer, Mr. Montalbetti. Whenever groceries were brought home from the store, Mr. Montalbetti's bag of candies would be included. Many bags of candy came to their household compliments of the kind grocer.

He was five years old when they moved from Homeglen to Hines Creek and memories of the move are sketchy. However, he does remember a cow being tied to the back of the hay rack, which was their means of transportation from Fairview, where they disembarked from the train. The spring thaw had raised the level of George's Lake and it was necessary to tie the hay rack down to keep it from floating away.

Upon arriving in the Hines Creek area, they stayed at the home of Charles Williams along with the Peter Sidoroff family, until the log homes were built on their respectiive quarter sections. The school was four miles away at that time and his older sisters, Elizabeth, Agnes, Frances and Faye walked there every day to attend school. Nick went to school in the basement of the hotel at Hines Creek for his first year. He remembers

dropping his pencil through the cracks in the floor. What a way to get out of work!

In the summer the families in the area would go by horse-drawn wagons to the Peace River coulees to pick saskatoons. This was usually a two-day trip. Nights were spent sleeping in Charlie Stahl's granaries. Pails and pails of saskatoons were brought home to be preserved as fruit or made into jam.

In the winter, blocks of ice were cut from George's Lake or Jack Creek and stored in ice houses to be used as drinking water the following summer. Snow was melted in a huge barrel beside the stove for drinking in winter. A daily chore was to fill this barrel and the small "reservoir" attached to the stove with snow. Water used for washing clothes was melted on top of the stove in a container called the "boiler" as it was also used to boil the white clothes after they were scrubbed and before the final rinse. In the case of bathing, snow was packed into the container on the stone heater in the banya and replenished as it melted. In the summer water for laundry and bathing was carried by pail from the creek.

Nick recalls when his Uncle Pete and his dad were able to save enough money to purchase a threshing machine and did custom threshing for farmers in the area. At times they would be away the full harvest period.

Nick's brother Alex and he delivered milk to some of the residents of Hines Creek, delivering the bottles of milk before going to school each morning. Then picking up the empties again after school to perform the same routine the next day.

Nick says, "Our food was not fancy, but always plentiful. Partridge and prairie chicken were in abundance, as were wild berries, however, most of the food was grown or raised on the farm."

Lorne (dad) had a good sense of humor. He taught himself to read and write English. A deeply religious man, he was a psalmodist at the Old Greek Orthodox Church. Besides being a farmer, he also was a good carpenter, having built their homes and pews for the United Church, as well as doing other carpentry jobs.

Sophia (mom) was a strong willed, hard working person - clearing land in the early days, milking cows, gardening, as well as doing the usual household chores. She also was deeply religious, observing all the Lenten periods. She was very proud of her family, especially her grandchildren."

Nick married Helen Burke who was a local elementary school principal. They had three boys, Don, Barry and Jeffrey. Eventually they sold their farm and moved to Spirit River. The boys all chose careers other than farming, got married and have children of their own. Nick and Helen now have seven grandchildren and one geat-grandchild.

Fred and Palegea Sidoroff - *by daughters Zina, Rachel and Kay*

In 1929, Fred and Palegea Sidoroff settled three miles north of Hines Creek, Alberta with their family of five: Sam, Rachel, Kay, Natalie and Zina. Prior to the move from the Calgary area the girls had heard from their cousins that chewing gum grew on trees there and Zina was anxious to try their gum. She was rather disappointed when she found out it was just the sap from the trees! Zina remembers how hard her father worked to bring his family from China and to keep the family lucrative after settling in Hines Creek.

"I have heard from many oldtimers how honest he was on construction jobs and I remember while I lived at home he was hired to build homes in Hines Creek, two of which he built when he was in his seventies and are still occupied. We were short of money in those days but he always found enough to give big donations to the church."

Kay recalls some of her experiences as a young girl in Hines Creek. "My memories of the death of my aunt and Godmother Lucaria are vivid. We were awakened by a woodpecker pecking at our window and within a few minutes my cousins Elizabeth and Agnes were at the door to inform us of the tragedy. We all went to Uncle Pete's house immediately. I stayed to help Uncle Pete and the family. His oldest son Mike and I made a cake one day - turned out pretty good, I think. One of the things Uncle Pete asked me to do was to make the next batch of braga. How I knew the ingredients and recipe, I do not know, but it seemed to turn out to everyone's liking. I was only twelve when Aunt Lucaria died in May 1931.

One day Mike, my sister, my cousins and I took off in a wagon and horses to Highland Park to pick saskatoons. We stayed over night, sleeping under the stars. It was a beautiful night and we did get lots of berries- and I do thank God we didn't run into a bear! It was about a twenty mile trip on dirt roads. We were tough!

Rachel married Lawrence (Larry) Kosheiff January 1932 and lived on a homestead north of Hines Creek where their two sons Mike and Fred were born. They moved to Port Alberni, B.C., in 1942 when Larry worked in a sawmill. Then they moved again nine months later to Powell River where Larry worked as a radio man, returning to Fairview and Hines Creek in the Peace River country of Alberta in 1944. Larry died in 1967. Rachel went to work in the Fairview hospital for two years. Then she went to British Columbia where she was reunited with Nick Shtykoff, whom she had met as a teenager, and they were married April 25, 1971. They lived in Auburn, Washington until Nick's death in 1977. Rachel moved back to Fairview to be closer to her two sons. Rachel died February 13, 1995.

Sam married Ella Kuznetsoff, a former Homeglen acquaintance and they had two children. Kay married Hugh Cooke and had two children, Natalie married Mike

Andreeff (later Andruff) and had three children and Zina married Andy Kaija and had four children. Fred and Palegea lived the rest of their lives in that same house. Fred died on October 5, 1961, at the age of seventy-four and Palegea died on July 19,1965. Sam died in the summer of 1993.

FARMING WITH HORSEPOWER - Circa 1928 - 1945

John Sidoroff breaking with horse drawn plow - 1929

Pulling out tree trunks & stumps on Afric Sidoroff's farm in Guy, Alberta

Peter Nasedkin discing Spirit River - 1929

John Andreeff seeding with drill - 1930

Fall work by hand - Evdokia & Peter Nasedkin. Zoya & Victor in background.

Mitch Kosheiff on Binder - 1945

STOOKING

Syd Sidoroff - 1940

Mike Kosheiff, Sr. - 1940s

THRESHING

Horse drawn pickup with conveyor loading bundles onto wagon - Guy crew

Unloading into thresher Hines Creek Threshing Crew

Threshing - Gage, Alberta

HORSEPOWER TRANSFORMED

Tractor on steel wheels with conveyor belt driving thresher

Thresher in action - Guy, Alberta

John & Florence Sidoroff - progress to steel wheels & tripple-share plow

Spring work on steel wheels Syd Sidoroff - 1947

Progress to rubber wheels. Proud driver - Natalie Sideroff

END OF AN ERA

End of an era - John Andreeff - horses driven out by technology

Hay Rake - "Horses": Jeff Hodgson, Tom Sideroff, Graham Elder, Ross Hogg - 1980 - 'Driving Miss Polly' -

Cultivator/Seeder/Fertilizer - 1993 - 4-Wheel-Drive Articulating Tractor, A/C, Stereo, CB

FARMER HOPEFULLS

Sideroff Cousins - 1940 Alex, Syd, Nick

John Andreeff, Jr., Mike Kosheiff, Jr., Alex & Peter Andreeff, Nick Andruff - off to B.C. - 1946

Vic, Nadia, Tommy, Mary & Baby Rhena Sideroff - 1941

Only Mike Kosheiff, Jr., (Larry & Rachel's) & Tom Sideroff (Peter & Pearl's) remain farmers.

AND IT'S TIME TO PARTY!

- one way or another, they got there -

Horse and Cutter - off to party at Bill Andreeff's

Horseback - Easy, Fun & Cheap

Bennet Wagon, pulled by horses In the Dirty Thirties - no money for gas

Model A Ford

Back: Bill Andreeff, John Kosheiff, Natalie Sidoroff, Mike Andruff, Kay Sidoroff Sam Sidoroff, Frances Sidoroff, Dianne Mihailoff, Tom Kosheiff, Zina Sidoroff, Mike Mihailoff. Front: Vi Andreeff, Anne Sidoroff, Gwen Mihailoff, Faye Sidoroff

1940 - A Young People's Party at the home of Peter Sidoroff - Clown on the end is Mike, (who else??)

Nasedkins; Doumnoffs; Todors; Philip, John, & Bill Andreeffs; Pete, Fred, Sam, John & Abe Sidoroffs

Families of Larry, Tom & Mike Kosheiff; Tom & Terence Doumnoff; Philip, John & Bill Andreeff; John & Fred Sidoroff; Vic Nasedkin. Lo Koyman with children.

Syd Sidoroff, Nick Andruff Alex Sideroff, Mike Andruff Nick Sideroff, John Kosheiff

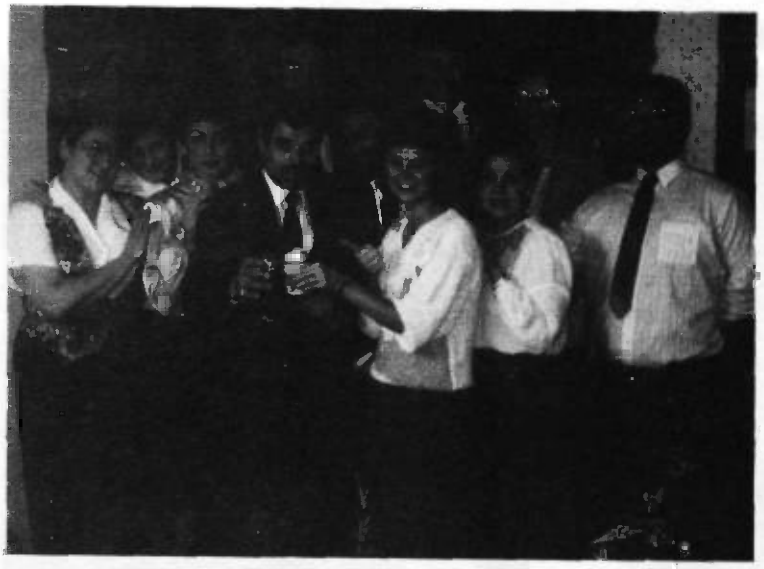
Families of: John, Philip & Bill Andreeff; Terence & Pete Doumnoff; Peter Nasedkin; John & Abe Sidoroff; Bill Todor. Far right: Natalie (Sideroff) Andruff

Nick Sidoroff, Zina Andreeff Van Nasedkin, Tom Doumnoff, Zina Sideroff, Natalie Sideroff Mike Andruff, Kay Sideroff

Homeglen Reunion - 60th Anniversary, July 15, 1984 - Attending were families of Polushin, Osokin, Lebedkin, Spiridonoff, Evanoff, Mishukoff, Doumnoff, Sidoroff, Nasedkin, Kosheiff. Dournovo.

Kosheiff Family: Back: Dan & Tom K Seated: Kathy Poulin, father Mike K., Mitchell K., John K., Sam Kalugin Richard & Jeffrey Kosheiff

Peter Sidoroff Reunion on Farm - 1978



Nick Sidoroff's (Peace River) Children: Front Row: Nick, Jr., Bernadette, Gwen, Con; Next Row: Marg. (half sister), Gloria, Anthony; Last Row: Nonna, Timothy, Alexander, Nellie

Doumnoff-Andreeff-Mihailoff Reunion: Front Row: Francis, Nadya, William, Anisa, Grandma Anna Doumnoff, Michele, Dawn, Pam; Back: Nick, Tom, Leda, Laura, Tracey, Terry, Nina, Wendy.

The Don Elder Family - 1990
Back: David, Roxanne & Zachary Willson, Ron Elder, Keven & Carin Elder, Don & Polly Elder, Graham & Barb Elder.
Front: Brock Elder, Moira Elder, Stephanie Elder, Terri-Lynn Elder, Mark Elder, Collin Elder, Jaime Willson

COUSIN GET-TOGETHERS

Andreeffs: Gladys, Zina, Mary, Ada
Sideroffs: Jessie, Natalie, Anne

At Willson's - Louise Ritco, Roxanne Willson
Lorraine Papp, Uncle Vic giving advice.

Philip Andreeff & Peter Sidoroff Girls - 1993. Zina Waterman, Anne Jordan, Fi McIntyre, Polly Elder, Doreen Riedijk, Vi Kalugin, Jessie Mennie

At Vic & Dorothy Sideroff's: Andruffs, Cookes, Kaijas, Mennies, Lillejords, Elders, Sideroffs and Kay Hughes

Farm 1978 - Graham Elder, Jeff Hodgson, Roxanne Canning, Ron Elder, Neil Sideroff, Darren Sidoroff, Greg Sideroff, Sharel Jordan, Rod Sidoroff, Lorraine Jordan, Les Canning, Daryl Canning, Doug Hogg, Rosalyn Hodgson, Cheryl Hogg, Jeannie Mennie

Victor & Joan Osokin

Paul Osokin

Jack Osokin

Tom Kosheiff

Tom Doumnoff

Mike Polushin

Vena Polushin

John Polushin

Syd Sidoroff

Nick Sideroff

Michael Sidoroff

Bill Andreeff

Helen Andreeff

Joe Nasedkin

Jim Nasedkin

Nick Nasedkin

Post-War Service and Police Force

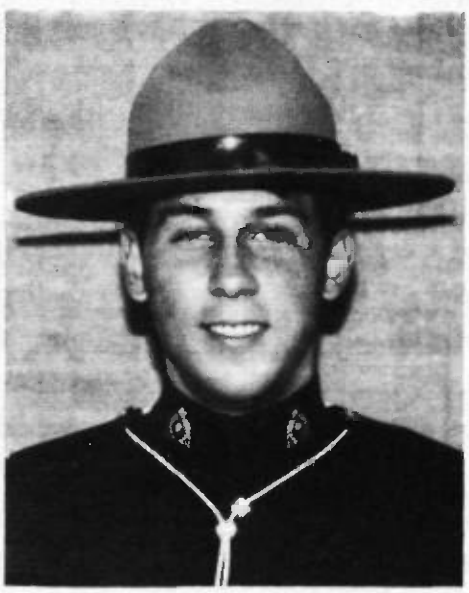
Jeff Hodgson - Army Med Corp

Aex & Peter Andreeff

Rick Sidoroff - Navy

Ron Elder - RCMP

Scott Cooke
Vancouver Police



Doug Hogg - RCMP

Don Sideroff
RCMP

CUSTOMS - TRADITIONS - THE CHURCH

Hospitality has always been a part of all Russians' nature. They met infrequently and therefore made the best of each visit. Drinks and food were always brought on the table whenever a visitor entered a home, even if it was only "zakuski" (snacks). When company came for dinner, zakuski would be served upon arrival, as are the present day hor d'oeuvres, followed by a full course meal served and eaten during the entire afternoon. Once the drinks are on the table, toasting is constant with a "na zdarovya" (to your health). To refuse the offer of a drink by a host is considered disrespectful and unfriendly.

Russians are known for their soups, the main ones being borscht and cabbage soup. In Pete Sidoroff's home, soup was made daily and served before the main course at every noon and evening meal, with the exception of Sunday.

For their parties and celebrations a variety of foods was served. Pelemeni, which probably was the most typical and greatly loved dish, was a meal in itself. This was made of small squares of pastry, filled with minced meat, pinched together in the form of a triangle, curled back and pinched together to look like shells. Hundreds were made and frozen, then thrown into boiling water for cooking and serving. They were similar to won ton soup. Piroshki were small squares of pastry filled with cabbage, saurkraut, cottage cheese, potatoes, peas and a variety of other fillings. They are baked on a cookie sheet and served with sour cream. The Russians made another type of pie which was baked in a long oblong pan and called a pirog with a variety of fillings; e.g., fish, cabbage, cottage cheese, and berries. The modern "perogies" are a favourite dish of the Russian cuisine; however, they are called vereniki. As well as pelemeni, piroshki, vereniki and a pirog or two, there were golubtsi (cabbage rolls), kotletki (minced meat made into small hamburgers), and an oven full of roasts of beef or pork and chicken or turkey, and most certainly a huge pot of potatoes. Sauerkraut, a variety of homemade pickles and whatever vegetable was available augmented the meal. Everyone is always encouraged to "eat, eat, drink, drink" and that they did! Fish was an important part of the diet; however, mostly reserved for the Lenten periods at which time meat was forbidden.

Russians were passionate drinkers of their "chi", which is tea. Although the samovar was not used in Canada, to the Russians it is more than a tea urn. It is a symbol of hospitality and family life. The samovar is filled with boiling water. The tea is made in a pot and stood on top of the samovar. About a half an inch of very strong tea is poured into the cup or glass and filled with hot water from the samovar. It is interesting to recall that Pete Sidoroff was rather innovative with the samovar he brought from Russia. The tap on the samovar (the ex-samovar, that is) was cleverly adjusted so that one could just push it with the thumb and the water would come out. It would be filled with warm water at the end of the day and used for washing up when the workers came in for a meal.

Not to be forgotten is the "braga" they made - their special homemade beer, made of four pails of water, half a pail of rye bread (four dry loaves), five packages of hops, two packages of yeast and twenty pounds of sugar. After mixing ingredients according to a perfectly orchestrated method, the barrel of goodies was sealed and left for two weeks. One should not try this without knowing the "perfectly orchestrated method". This barrel bounces, fumes and sizzles behind that stove on its journey to perfection and should one not be aware of the consequences of a poorly manufactured product, one may wake up one morning with a hole in his roof above the barrel and no trace of his concoction. For a nice clear drink it was a must to put hops and rye bread in bags for boiling. Other secret tricks were known only to them, and those that knew the intricacies of this procedure were proud to serve it to their guests. Others might not have been so anxious to display their wares, or perhaps should not have been!

Kvas was made for drinks on not summer days. It was made from black bread and yeast and was slightly alcoholic. It is still sold in the streets of Russia from small tanks.

Kasha (porridge) was eaten daily for breakfast, without fail. It was very nourishing and full of vitamins and most certainly the mainstay of the Russians - kutya, a dish made with whole kernel wheat and honey, is served as a traditional dish with which the fast is broken and at funerals when it is given to mourners.

Certain Russian traditions were downright startling; e.g., the custom of the bathouse, "banya". Every household had a bathhouse built separate to all other buildings, very much like the Finnish sauna, usually built near a stream or river. Once inside, Russians would steam themselves to full exhaustion, beating themselves with birch-twig brooms and then emerge rosy and naked to plunge head first into the icy waters of the river or roll in the snow.

The Greek Orthodox religion came to Russia in the late tenth century. Their ruler Prince Vladimir of Kiev, then the capital of Russia, had no religion. He felt his country and his people needed a faith and he himself longed for something concrete in which to believe. He took it upon himself to send scouts to different countries to seek out a true religion. Upon their return, the scouts brought back their full account of their visit to

the Cathedral of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. They were at a loss to describe their spiritual experience with the Greek Orthodox Church.. Prince Vladimir visited the Cathedral of Hagia Sophia and in 988 was baptized and decreed that the Kievan land would adopt Christianity in its Greek form. They referred to their faith as Pravoslavne, which is Orthodox, meaning "true worship".

The Greek Orthodox church structure is topped with domes, each carrying an Orthodox cross. The number of domes has symbolic significance. One dome symbolizes God as the head of the church, three the Trinity, five Christ and the four Evangelists, nine the nine choirs of angels, twelve Christ and His Apostles. The Orthodox cross is different to any other in that it has a slanted bar across the bottom. It is said that when Jesus was put upon the cross, his feet rested on a bar. At the moment of His death, the weight tipped it to one side.

Statues, considered "graven images", are not permitted within a Greek Orthodox Church. However, the Russians fill their churches with icons, a form of Byzantine art. These are saints and figures painted on wood. The centre front of the church is called the iconostasis which conceals the sanctuary and both connects and separates the priests and the congregation. The iconostasis has three doors. The central door is opened and closed during the service to signify many things - the creation of the world, Christ's enthronement, His birth and the Resurrection. During Easter week the door remains open all the time; closed, it signifies the expulsion from Paradise. Only priests - and the czar during his coronation - are permitted in the sanctuary. No woman, not even the czarina, has ever been allowed behind the centre doors.

The Orthodox believe that it is possible to recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit in a man and to convey it to others by artistic means. Therefore, the function of the icon painter had much in common with that of a priest, and although it was important for an icon painter to be a good artist, it was essential for him to be a good Christian. Those who painted icons had to prepare themselves spiritually. They had to fast, pray and read religious texts.

There are no pews or chairs in the Old Greek Orthodox Church. Orthodox worshipers consider it a lack of respect to sit in the presence of God. They stand while they worship. Benches along the walls are provided for those in need of periodic rest breaks. At the entrance of the church, tiny cushions are provided. As the worshiper enters the doorway of the church, he takes one of these cushions, crosses himself, drops to the ground on his hands and knees and touches the ground with his forehead. This is done three times. Then he proceeds into the main part of the church and folds his arms for the duration of the service. At times during the service the liturgy indicates it's time to unfold and cross oneself, which everyone does in unison. The men stand on one side of the church and the women on the other.

The choirs are unaccompanied and the harmony of their singing was a spiritual experience in itself. Peter Sidoroff was a beautiful tenor and his brother Lorne an excellent base. They did make beautiful music together. Fred Sidoroff's son Sam and daughter Rachel were other good voices in the choir. It was good to have the Peace River relatives visit periodically as they too had excellent voices and some were also fluent in the Slavic liturgy. All the liturgy in the Church was in the Slavic tongue. The Old Church Slavic was introduced into Russia as a literary language in the nineth century by two Byzantine scholars and missionaries. They wrote down and codified it from a Macedonian Slavic dialect and it was introduced into Kiev as a literary language and is still used in the Old Greek Orthodox Church. Several of the men in Peter Sidoroff's generation, as well as two or three of the next generation, read the Evangelie (New Testament) in Slavic fluently. They are called psalmodists. In 1994 only one psalmodist remains in our midst. She is Elizabeth (Sidoroff) Mishukoff who lives in Edmonton, Alberta. The services are conducted totally in the Slavic liturgy, making it difficult for the younger generation to understand. Consequently, most lost interest. For others, understanding the language was not important. Just being there was a great spiritual experience. They found it a time for reflection and meditation. It was an opportunity to "let go and let God" and to empty one's being of all earthly trials and tribulations and be filled with the Holy Spirit. It was well expressed by Rose Kennedy of her experiences in the convent, "Freed from all worldly thoughts, I was able to find in myself the place that was meant for God."

The Orthodox church teaches that God is always among us, so as a reminder, icons are hung in every home and in some homes in every room. Upon entry into an Orthodox home, a devout Orthodox first crosses himself and bows three times in front of the icon. Following this salute to the saints, he blesses the house with the words "bread and salt", an expression of good health. Then again upon departure the visitor crosses himself and bows before the icon three times. English visitors are often baffled by this custom. Every evening and every morning each member of the family has his/her own vesper time in front of the icons, including the Lord's Prayer and a variety of scriptures, depending on how learned one is in the Orthodox liturgy.

In place of grace at the table as we know it, the Orthodox stands before an icon, crosses himself and bows three times. Then repeats the procedure following the meal. This is the short version. The usual one is to fold one's arms following the three crosses, recite the Lord's Prayer and close with three crosses and bows. Should one pray without the presence of the icon, such as a snack brought out to the worker in the field, the prayer is limited to crossing oneself once without the bow.

Wearing a hat in the presence of an icon is taboo for men. Thus, every male entering a home automatically removes his hat. The devout Orthodox, as was Peter Sidoroff,

would even remove his hat out in the field before crossing himself to have his sandwich and tea. Hoever, he did not bow - no icon, no bow.

Their fast days outnumber all other days of the year. There are two fast days (Wednesday and Friday) every week. The longer ones are the two-week fast of the Assumption in August, the six-week fast before Christmas and the seven-week Great Fast before Easter. These are referred to as Lent as they are not only a matter of fasting but giving up all participation in social activities. The foods that are forbidden during Lent are all dairy products, eggs and all meats. Some of the more devout believers gave up fish during Holy Week before Easter and even fasted totally from Thursday mid-night to mid-night Saturday on Easter weekend. Grandfather Luke was one of them. Children under seven were exempt from Lent. At seven their lifetime Lent observance began - as long as they remained in that Greek Orthodox home. Most of the second generation Canadian-Russians left the Greek Orthodox faith and put the lenten periods behind them, joining other forms of worship.

During the reign of Peter the Great, various countries of Western Europe had all changed to the Gregorian calendar. Russia remained on the Julian calendar which the said Peter had adopted, until 1918. This calendar put Russia eleven days behind the rest of Europe in the time of Peter the Great, twelve days in the nineteenth century and thirteen days in the twentieth century. The Greek Orthodox Church adopted the Julian calendar and because of this, the Orthodox Christmas falls on January 7th and New Years on January 14th, creating an uncomfortable and inconvenient situation between the Canadian-Russian teens and their Anglo-Saxon counterparts.

The date of the Orthodox Easter varies and is usually a few weeks later than the western church. The date depends on the Jewish calculation of Passover and from time to time coincides. According to the New Testament, Jesus made his entrance into Jerusalem at the beginning of Passover; thus the Russian Easter always falls one week after Passover.

On the eve of Easter, as midnight nears, the priest reads a "Mass" slowly and sadly, while the people stand with their unlit candles. Then as the hour approaches, each person takes a flame from another until all the candles are lit - the bright flickering flames a living symbol of the spirit. At midnight, Easter bursts forth in all its glory. The Royal Doors of the iconostasis are thrown open and the representation of the tomb and cross removed. The priest leads a procession of all the people out of the church and all around the church three times singing, in symbolic search of the risen Christ. When they return to the front of the church for the third time, the doors are thrown open and the priest joyously announces three times to the assembled crowd, "Khristos Voskrese!" (Christ is Risen) to which comes a ringing response, "Voistinu Voskrese!" (He is Risen Indeed). All return into the church to the magnificent singing of the choir, punctuated

with the happy refrain, "Christ is risen" and its response, repeated joyfully over and over again.

At the end of the Easter service, the priests give every member of the congregation a blessing and a kiss. When church is over, no one thinks of going to bed, but to feast. Most people have their Easter breakfast blessed first by the priest.

For weeks before Easter every household prepares for the Easter feast, dying eggs, baking, spring cleaning, killing the fatted calf. Among the great variety of food on every table are two traditional Russian Easter dishes. One is the rich Easter bread "kulich", thick, round and cylindrical, decorated with frosting and the letters XB. XB stands for Xpuctoc Boskpecu (Russian letters) meaning "Christ is risen". Beside it, the thick sweet creamy white "paskha", also with the letters XB. Everyone greets everyone else with the same traditional greeting, "Christ is risen!" Response: "He is risen indeed!" and they kiss three times. Visiting and kissing goes on all week. Everyone drinks joyously. All week long everybody plays with coloured eggs. Children bowl with eggs, hide-and-seek them, and some even have egg fights. One favourite is to hold the egg tight with the top slightly exposed. The opponent hits the exposed top with his egg. The one emerging with an uncracked egg wins that round. The process continues until only one in the group is left with his egg intact. He is the big winner.

Easter had this curious epilogue. The Monday evening vespers and the Tuesday liturgy following the last Easter week service made up what was called Remembrance Day, or "Radonitsa". Russians went to the graveyards to place food on the graves of their departed ancestors. All the food was blessed by the priest. With this, the bright Easter season ended.

Difficulties of remaining loyal to the beliefs of the parents while maintaining the social contacts with friends outside the church were predominant throughout the teenage years for that second generation. When it came to dating, it was a major problem. Having to give up the dances while all the school friends were making plans to go was bordering on disaster. It was truly a sacrifice to stay at home.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Baptism are very important to the Old Greek Orthodox. A baby is baptized only two weeks or less after birth with a Godmother and Godfather present to receive the child following his total submersion three times in a baptismal font. A cross is placed around the baby's neck. This cross is worn around his neck next to his skin for the rest of his life. The baby is given a Christian name of his or her guardian angel during the baptism. Of every name, they immediately make an affectionate diminutive - Mikhail becomes Misha, Ivan becomes Vanya or Vanushka, Alexander becomes Sasha, Nadezhda becomes Nadia, Palegea becomes Polya.

The official name is chosen, from a list of recorded names, according to the date of

birth within a two-week period and that particular day becomes his/her Angel's Day. Rather than celebrating a birthday, they commemorate the Angel's Day, which is the festival of his own personal Saint. Those having to obtain birth certificates after they leave home are met with a surprise. They are faced with a different "birthdate" than they were accustomed to observing.

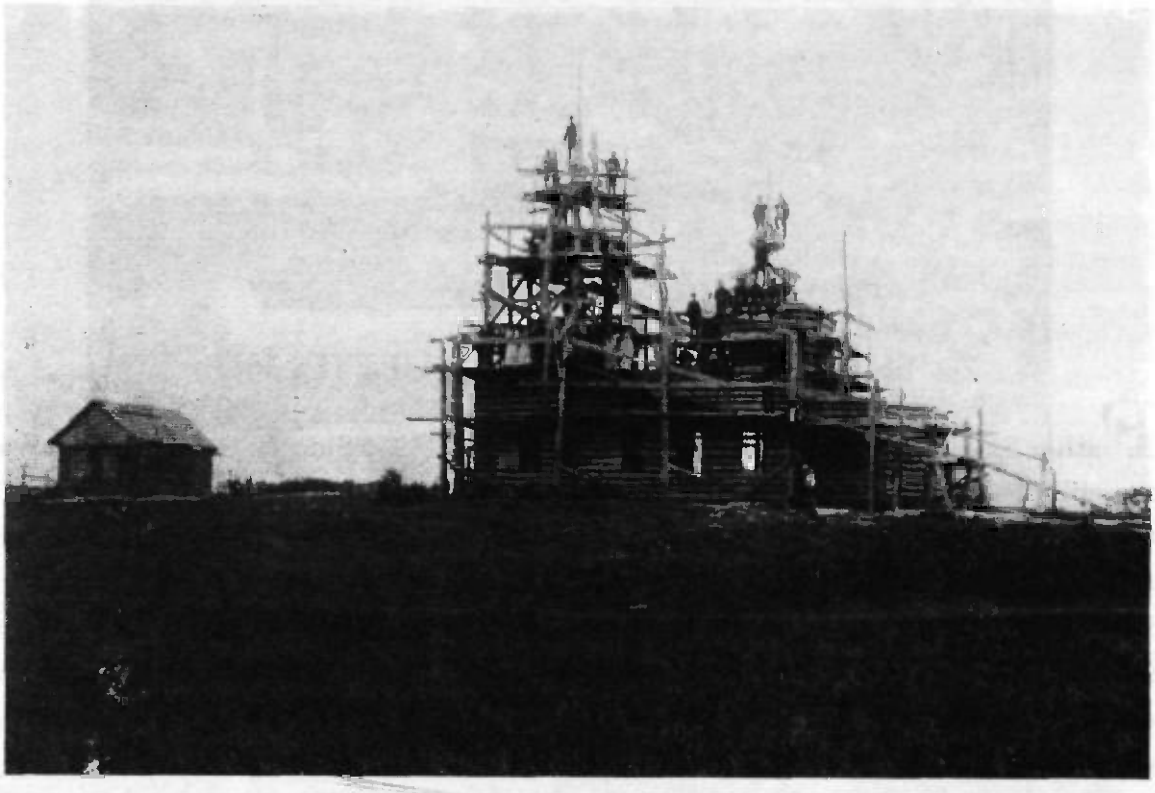
The beard for the Old Greek Orthodox male is the mark of a real man and a true believer. History tells us they thought clean shavedness made men look like apes. The women were not allowed to cut their hair after marriage but their heads had to be covered at all times. Consequently, there were beautiful heads of hair hidden under a tam, turban or scarf, only seen when the lady came in from the bath and sat combing her beautiful long hair, only to have it tucked away again, hidden from the public.

Weddings (sva'dba) were generally held on a Sunday. The congregation remained standing throughout the service. Amongst some Russians, the bridegroom had to pay the clan for his bride. Parents made the matches and arranged the marriages. Some bridegrooms chose to kidnap their brides to avoid being matched up by an arranged marriage.

The bride came to church with the veil over her face, met by the priest and bridegroom. In a short service their engagement was publicly confirmed. The bride stood on the left and the groom on the right. The priest joined their hands together and prayed for them. The veil was put back and they moved into the centre of the church for the main ceremony. The priest gave the bride and groom each a lighted candle to hold during the service. Rings were exchanged three times, the sacramental wine was sipped and finally the priest led the couple around the church three times. During the ceremony, the groomsman and bridesmaid held a crown over the heads of the bride and groom. When the ceremony was over, and at the reception, one mother offered the bread and salt and the other held an icon, blessing and welcoming the newlyweds. The bread and salt were symbolic of cleaning away past sins, starting a fresh life together, of health and happiness. There was a large banquet held, no speeches, but endless toasts and cries of "Gorki!, Gorki" (bitter), which meant the food was bitter and the bride and groom must kiss to make it sweeter.

- Compiled from memory by Doreen Riedijk and Polly Elder. Some research was done in the book Land of the Firebird by Suzanne Massie, Copyright 1980. Reprinted by permission of Simon & Schuster, Inc.

OLD GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH - *Hines Creek, Alberta*



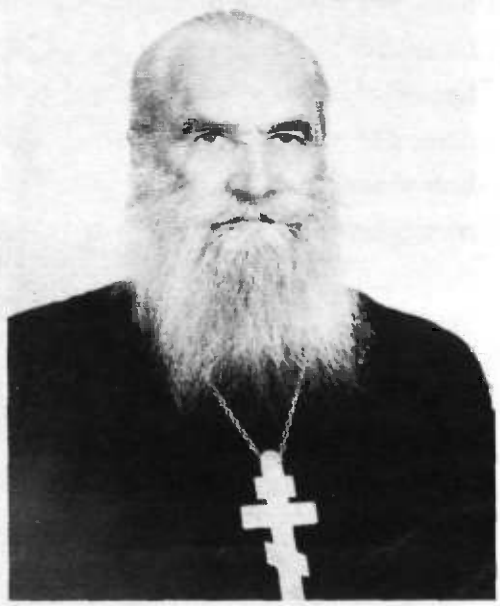
Under Construction - early 1930s

1986

THE ULTIMATE GOAL FULFILLED

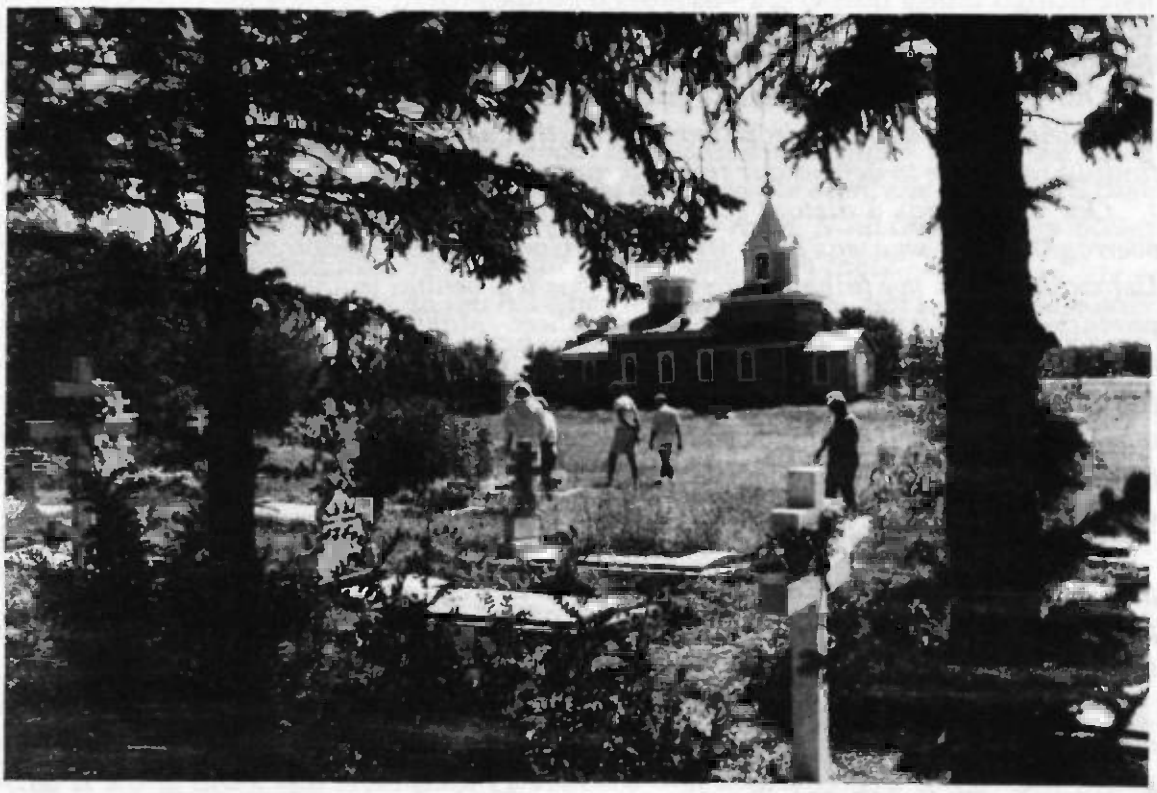
Father Starasadchev was not only a good friend of Peter Sidoroff in Harbin, but was the epitome of a christian that fulfilled to the ultimatum, his duties as an Old Greek Orthodox priest. Peter Sidoroff's ultimate goal was to help the congregation bring him to Canada to serve their spiritual needs. For almost twenty-five years they negotiated with the hierarchy in Moscow and the Immigration Department, writing letter after letter. Meeting upon meeting, discussion after discussion, took place. Peter was aging and in a wheelchair but he was still writing letters. As the twilight of his life approached, a glimmer of light shone on the horizon. His prayers were about to be answered.

Father Starasadchev was on his way! In 1961 he came. Within the year of his arrival, Peter Sidoroff died. He was seventy. Father Ivan Starasadchev was there to administer the last rights. During the funeral service, as Peter lay in his beloved church, Father Ivan paid tribute to Peter's total commitment and devotion to his church and to his faith. Be it by fate, destiny or sheer faith and prayers, Father Ivan Emilianovich Starasadchev did come, he was there to administer the last rights to his beloved friend and he was there to lay him to rest. Peter lies in the cemetery on the land which he donated three decades before, his ultimate goal fulfilled.



Father Ivan Emilianovich Starasadchev

Peter's grave is flanked by the graves of Lucaria his wife of twenty-two years, and Pearl, his wife of thirty years.



. . . and all this did pass - they rest in peace.

EPILOGUE

THE DICHOTOMY

- by Sydney Boris Sidoroff

It was May 1973 and the Aeroflot flight from Moscow had just touched down at the Montreal Dorval Airport. The cold war was still at its height with nuclear warheads at the ready, poised for total annihilation of the combatants. Was our expected visitor sympathetic to the Communist ideals of converting the world to socialism, by force if necessary? How do I defend our Canadian way of life when her socialistic state purportedly assures health care from inception to grave, lifetime employment, a life-long guaranteed annual income, state controlled prices and a forty-five day vacation annually. Our forebears foresaw the pit falls in such idealism and evaded it at a very great personal cost. Yet as our visitor drew closer to the custom's clearance gate, I had difficulty finding rationale to defend our free enterprise system.

Our visitor was a distant cousin whom we would have the privilege of sheltering overnight. Her name was Nina Ushmalkin Gourielov whose mother, Palagaya Sidoroff Ushmalkin, was my father's cousin that was left behind in the early 1920's when our parents chose to strive for a better life elsewhere. Making the decision to emigrate was extremely complex. To stay would mean loss of freedom; freedom to voice one's opinion, freedom to cultivate one's own skills as one desires, freedom to work and live how and where one desires. If one followed his religious beliefs, death, likely through the Gulags (forced labour camps) was almost certain. Emigration was unlawful, therefore a failed escape was almost certain death, especially to the devoted.

Even at risk of death and a very uncertain future, our parents chose a path to liberty for the sake of their children and their children's children. That grave decision now places our visitor not only in opposing camps but also into entirely different economic and social environments.

The customs' clearance section at Dorval airport was on the top level and overlooked a huge ground level parking area. Preliminary introductory exchanges found her to be polite, intelligent, well educated and with a very acceptable command of the English language. She expressed her gratitude for our offer to shelter her during the long wait between connecting flights. I exclaimed it was not only a pleasure and a privilege but it was also an opportunity to learn first hand what life was like on the other side of the 'iron curtain'.

"After all", I said, "our roles today could have been reversed had our respective parents' decision been reversed some fifty years ago."

She assured me life in the U.S.S.R. was comforting, especially now with social reforms coming into effect and great strides being made in space technology. All the while she is speaking she is surveying the thousands of cars in the numerous parking lots below us.

She finally asks, "Why are there so many State machines parked here?"

As we move into the parking lot I explain, somewhat unconvincingly, that travelers leave their cars at the airport until they return. That, for someone who has never witnessed such a scene before, is uncomprehensible.

When I open the trunk of my car she asks, "Is this your machine?"
The questioning face leads me to believe she is not comfortable. After all it was not too long ago when in her country brother was forced to spy on brother and then tell lies to stay out of the Gulags. Does she visualize these as being State cars driven by Canadian KGB agents, and I am one of them? I compound her perplexity by mentioning (was I bragging?) that we have another car parked at home. The word home, instead of an apartment, called for clarification. The garage door opening of its own accord did not comfort her.

Some relaxation was evident after my wife greeted her. When being shown her room for the night she refused it. No way was she going to put people out of their room or out of their bed. The floor in the living room would be fine for her, she insisted. When we tried to explain the bedroom was unoccupied since our son left, she could not understand why someone else did not move in. In her country a room coming vacant would be allocated to new occupants immediately. Her musing at that moment made one wonder whether she was thinking our housing authorities were inept and which may account for the homeless in streets of the western world.

She was very interested and excited about the kitchen appliances. When she noted there was a built-in oven, a convection oven, and a microwave oven, she had a hard time accepting our explanation. When we entered the dining room, Nina immediately looked back into the kitchen and then again studied the dining room table.

"You have two tables! Why do you have two tables?....Did you not say there are only three of you living in this house?" She glanced at us questioningly and in bewilderment. She had to be thinking these are not average Canadians because they have such opulent lifestyles.

When we entered the laundry room she gave the O.K. sign for the large, enameled, waist-high laundry tub. When we showed her the clothes washer and clothes dryer, she fell silent and appeared to be in deep thought. The family room was also a puzzlement for her.

"And what is the purpose of this room?" she asked.

Now we began to feel that her introduction to Canada is somewhat overwhelming. She stood back and sized up the living room.

"This room", she said, "is larger than the total area that my mother, my son and I have available for our kitchen, our living room and for our bedroom, which is all we have."

We were up very early next morning for her connecting flight to Edmonton. She asked whether we had a garden. "I would like to see the flora and fauna in this part of the world." Those were her very words.

We had a small ten by twenty foot area of a garden tucked in the far corner of the back yard. She studied the yard and asked in puzzlement why the full area was not in garden.

"What is this grassed area used for?" She asked these questions with such sincerity that one began to get a feeling of embarrassment. Or is it guilt? Guilt because we, present day Canadians, are fortunate beneficiaries of astute forefathers who made Canada their home and what it is today. Her life was on hold the day she was born, figuratively speaking, with little prospect of getting much better.

In the early morning light she had a better view of the homes as we drove to the airport. She had many questions regarding size of homes, how many people were assigned (as occupants) to each home, what rent did they pay and how many years' salary must one save to buy a car. There was insufficient time to give her satisfactory answers. She would have to wait for Cons and Elizabeth Mishukoff, her Canadian hosts and sponsors, to give her adequate explanations.

After forty-five days in Western Canada, Nina returned to our home enraptured with the Canadian way of life. She recalled that on her first visit she thought we surely were out of the ordinaire and were probably representative of the high elite privileged class favoured by "the State".

"To my disbelief I found everyone - your cousins, your sisters, your brothers, your relatives - all have automobiles, own their own homes and enjoy amenities far beyond their needs. To me, you all live in paradise!" is roughly what she said.

She had tonnes of excess clothing so there was a necessity to drop into a shopping mall to buy more luggage. She still could not believe she could, without queuing up, walk into a store, with a multitude choice of products, and purchase what she desired without delay. The material things, she said, she could take home to her son and mother, but the liberties we enjoy, she could not.

There was not only sadness in her face but also that expression of hopelessness as she prepared to leave, to leave nirvana and return to crowded living quarters and a life of shortages. Shortages where one is forever lining up and waiting. Waiting for necessities of life just to survive. Waiting for some miracle to give one a life similar to what the Canadian cousins enjoy.

As she passed through the gate, I pondered,
"There, but for the Grace of God . . .
and the foresight and sacrifices of my parents
. . . go I."

Syd and Bert Sidoroff

~ THE END ~

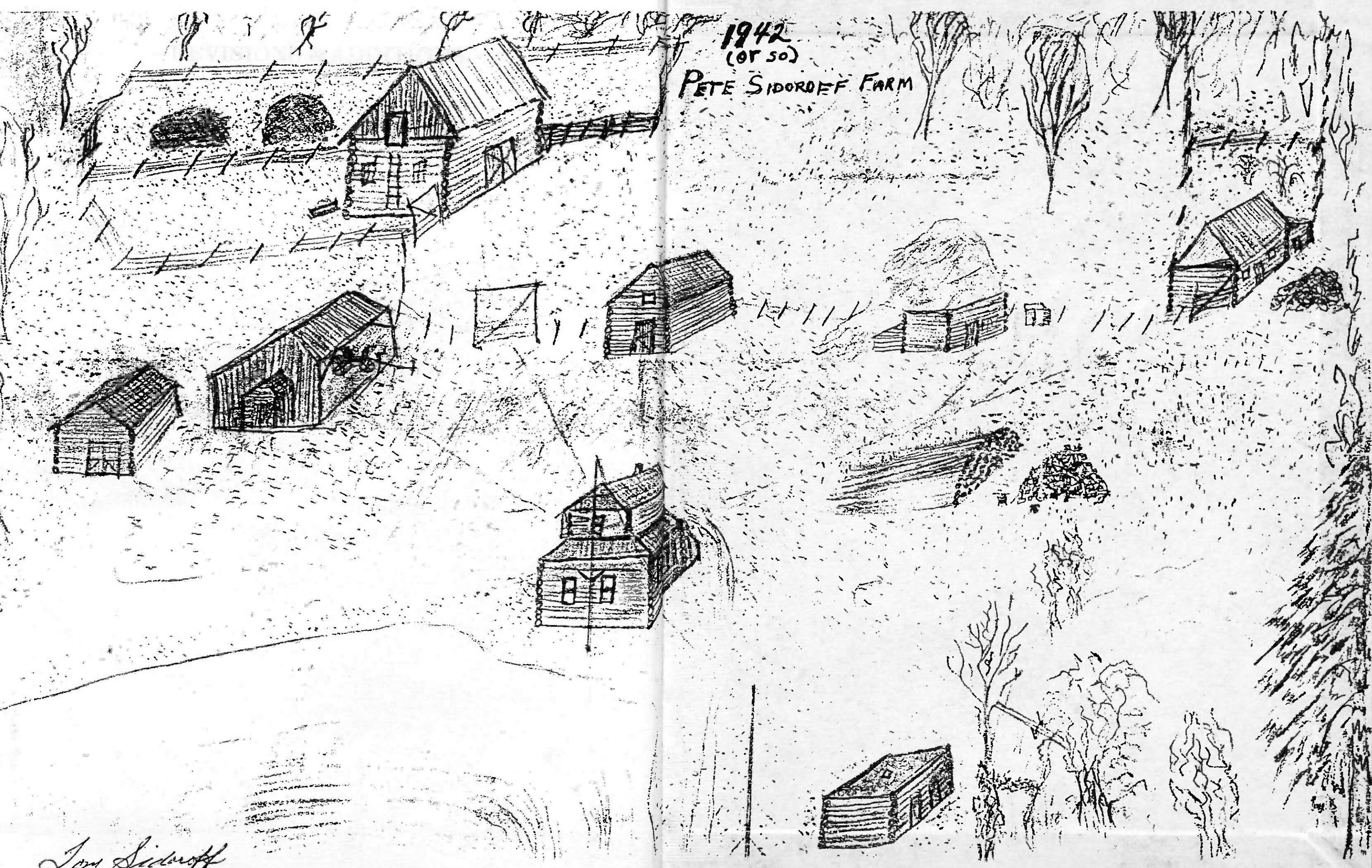
Polly Elder was born in Homeglen, Alberta, Canada, on October 28, 1928, to Peter and Lucaria Sidoroff. The family moved to Hines Creek, Alberta, in 1929. She went to the Callaghan Elementary School to grade eight and to the Hines Creek High School to grade twelve. Her post-secondary education took her to Alberta College in Edmonton. She and her husband Don Elder have four married children and seven grandchildren. Her career as Bookkeeper/Secretary ended in July 1994 when she took voluntary retirement to devote all her time to

"ALL THIS SHALL PASS".

~ REVISIONS & ADDITIONS ~

~ REVISIONS & ADDITIONS ~

1942
(or so)
PETE SIDOROFF FARM



Jon Sidoroff