

LENA

FROM ESTONIA TO ADELAIDE



THE INSPIRING LIFE OF DR LENA WALLAS
(ILLIASHEVICH-WALLAS)
1905 - 1997

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Foreword

This document relates the inspiring life of Estonian Dr Lena Wallas (Illiashevich-Wallas), her early years in Estonia, her studies and work in Russia and Belarus before World War II, her remarkable survival with two young children in Belarus, Ukraine, Poland, Germany and Czechoslovakia during the war, her work in a displaced-persons camp in Germany from 1945 to 1949, and her migration with family to Australia in 1949 and subsequent years there. It is based largely on 10 taped interviews of Lena Illiashevich made by the late Mrs Elizabeth Yeatman in 1982. Canadian-born Mrs Yeatman was the wife of Dr John Yeatman, an Adelaide GP, and provided Lena with her first employment in Adelaide in 1949. Despite Lena's qualifications and experience as a doctor, she could not practise in Australia without four years of study and examinations here, so the work with the Yeatmans was as a domestic help. Lena earned their high regard, and Elizabeth Yeatman and Lena became good friends.

In 1982 Elizabeth Yeatman taped the 10 interviews with the aim of adapting the information for a post-graduate degree in Social Sciences in the University of Adelaide. Lena's daughter Olena had known of this, and after Lena's death in 1997 she and Slavko, Lena's stepson, searched his and Lena's house and the university library catalogue was examined for evidence of a thesis, without success. Much later, a Google search for "Lena Illiashevich" revealed that tapes and transcripts held in the library's Historical Documents section had been lodged by Mrs Yeatman, who did not complete her degree. Olena and I visited the library and permission was given to scan the 18 typed transcripts and papers. On reading these, it was evident the material included personal information concerning family and friends that was unrelated to Lena's story. Olena requested that the library give all the transcripts and tapes to her, and Elizabeth Yeatman's daughter, Prof. Anna Yeatman in Sydney, agreed to this.

The processing of the transcripts was a large task – the files had to be converted to an editable format, errors removed, some order made of it all, and headings and photographs added. The Introduction gives the troubled history of Lena's family in Estonia and relates Lena's life up to the 1980s (supplemented by some European political background by Elizabeth Yeatman), followed by edited transcripts of the ten taped interviews (in Lena's own words), which cover various topics in an approximate chronology. The Preface, Introduction (written in 1982–83, partly in Lena's own words), transcripts of interviews and Appendices II and III are by Elizabeth Yeatman, with some editing. Comments by Elizabeth Yeatman and additional material are shown in italics in square brackets.

The document includes many photographs that, remarkably, Lena kept with her throughout the turmoil prior to and during the war years. Unfortunately, a photograph of her first husband, Stephan Pankiw, a Ukrainian lawyer, who died on the eastern front in 1941 when an officer in the Russian army, was lost several years ago. Lena was informed that he had been taken prisoner by the Germans and executed. Despite this war crime and the many injustices her family had suffered under Russian oppression, Lena always helped those in need of her medical skills, regardless of their nationality or creed and danger to herself – a true *médecin sans frontières*.

Lena died in Adelaide on 2 November 1997, the day before her 92nd birthday, and is buried in Cheltenham Cemetery with her second husband Sergei Illiashevich, who died in 1961, and near her son Edward, who died in 2001. Lena's name lives on with her great-grand-daughters Eve Louise Lena Williams and Sahara Lena Blanchard. Sadly, when in Australia Lena never contacted her family in the USSR, lest they were persecuted by the NKVD (USSR secret police), which she always feared.

G. Williams

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Mrs Elizabeth Yeatman, Dr John Yeatman and Anna, c. 1950

LENA

FROM ESTONIA TO ADELAIDE

PREFACE

First work in Adelaide

I first met Lena in 1949. I had applied to a labour exchange for domestic help. My husband was a general practitioner, and at that time we were living in a sixteen-room house which had a three-room surgery on the premises. I had always been responsible for the running of the surgery. The duties involved answering the telephone, and the door bell of the surgery entrance, cleaning laboratory equipment, filing and putting out of patients' cards, and attending to the payment and receipt of accounts. I had two children, a boy of nine and an infant daughter. The arrival of the latter made these demands plus domestic chores an untenable situation. The war had substantially changed South Australian women's place in the workforce. This had first become evident with the setting up of munition factories in Adelaide during the course of the war. When the war ended, secondary industries were established which provided situations for women with better pay and more variation for women in the workforce. Immigrant women, as a result of federal government policy to increase the numbers in the workforce, were beginning to arrive in Australia with their families in increasing numbers. For the most part at this time many of them were what Australians called 'Balts', although the Government was already trying to adopt for them the euphemism of 'New Australians' which finally became the accepted term. Most of them were displaced persons, and very few brought any money with them. For a short time it was these women who provided a pool from which domestic workers could be drawn. For many of them immigration became possible because a male family member became a bonded worker, who could sponsor other members of his family for entry to Australia. As soon as these families left their transit camp, it was essential for the other adults in the family to find employment, and preferably the kind of employment which brought accommodation with it. It was in this way that Lena came into our lives.

Lena arrived one day and said simply that she had come to be 'my domestic'; with her came her daughter Nellie, whose name I learnt only very much later was, in fact, Olena. Neither of them could speak very much English. Lena was a dark haired, strongly built woman with grey-blue eyes. She had a calm self-assurance and a practical, business-like manner. Nellie had high wide Slavic cheek bones, and her fair hair hung in a neat plait down her back. Like her mother she had a calm untroubled expression; neither of them seemed at all surprised at the unlikely position in which they found themselves. It took me sometime because of the language difficulty to find out very much about them. I felt reassured by their friendly acceptance of the situation. In a short time we managed to

communicate with each other in our own fashion. Lena told me that she was an Estonian, but had been educated in Russia. She was a doctor by profession. Her first marriage had been to a Ukrainian who was a 'jurist and advocate'. His name had been Stephan Pankiw, and together they had had two children, Nellie, and Edward, who was three years older than Nellie. Their father had fallen fighting early in the war between Russia and Germany. She had, she said, before coming to Australia worked for a while as a doctor at a hospital in Sudetenland, and later near Aschaffenburg in Bavaria. Later she told me that she had married again. Her second husband had taught history and geography in a gymnasium in Prague. His name was Illiashevich, and it was his son, Yaroslav, who had come to Australia as a bonded worker. Sponsored by him, the rest of the family had followed him to Australia. Yaroslav by this time was working in the SA railways, and Sergei, his father, was working in the railway refreshment room.

Lena told me she could not cook, as she herself had always had a domestic [*Lena could cook – see below and page 112*]. I later realised that this was her only spoken protest at finding herself a domestic worker. I, myself, was tentative and embarrassed at employing her in this role. However she settled down at once. There was much mutual good will, and in a very short time we became friends. Nellie was registered at the Goodwood Primary School which was within walking distance from us. Like Lena she settled very quickly. She seemed to be happy at school, and when she had finished her school work, she helped Lena with whatever she was doing. She was a happy child, and even then I think I realised that she had learnt to take life exactly as it came. Lena has since said that she herself was 48 when first we met, but as she was born in 1905, she must have been 44.

It was not very long before we met the other members of the family. They came to visit Lena, sometimes in the evenings, and always at weekends. Sergei was a grey haired man of slight build and medium height. Although his English was better than Lena's, we found despite his unfailing courtesy, some difficulty in talking to him. Yaroslav resembled his father very strongly in appearance. We learned that Sergei was known to his mates as 'Sam'. Edward, Nellie's brother, was dark like Lena, whom he resembled. We used to talk with them on Sundays when they walked in the garden. When the family came Lena always prepared a large jar of cold tea; in the evenings they would repair with it to Lena's room, where we would hear them talking far into the night. I don't think we ever knew in what language they were talking, but I have since learned that as a family they always speak Ukrainian.

Lena has since reminded me of something I had quite forgotten about those days. Edward at the beginning lived with Sergei and Yaroslav in a tent outside the railway station. It was not long before this became known to railway officials, who said it was illegal for him to sleep there; the tents had been designed only for two people. There was great distress in the family about this. Lena says she told me of this and asked if he could come to us. At the end of the garden were old stables, which had long ago been converted into a large garage. However, a coachman's room remained undisturbed, and we made this into a bedroom for Edward. She says he lived there for six months. He was at that time attending Unley High School and he did his studying in Lena's room. With two families living together in the same house, remarkably, life went very smoothly. I suspect Yaroslav and Sergei brought their own food when they came, but the only difference I noticed in doing the shopping was that an

enormous quantity of potatoes seemed to be consumed every week. Lena called these kartoffel — they had been for a long time their staple diet.

They were with us for nine months. They were happy months for us, and it seems happy as well for them. The photograph albums, I have since seen, of their early life in Australia contain a surprising number of photographs of our family. We all loved Lena. By that time because of the difficulty the children had in pronouncing her name, we had followed Nellie in calling her 'Mama'. We still do, although Yaroslav tells me that she is no longer Mama but 'Babi' (short for Babushka). In spite of her earlier comment that she could not cook, she made us wonderful bortsch and pea soup, and her potato pancakes with sour cream became one of our favourite dishes. She regularly made us fresh cottage cheese. Lena and I always enjoyed each other's company. We used to work at her English with no very real sign of improvement. She still has difficulty with spoken English, and always says that I am the only 'westerner' among her friends who can always understand her. She now reads English fluently, and understands it without difficulty. She speaks six Slavic languages, as well as 'camp German' but she continues to have trouble with the idiomatic, illogical English language. When Lena did leave us it was with great suddenness. She told me one night that they had found a flat in Hutt Street, and were going there to live in the next day. I was rather taken aback, and sad that she was leaving so abruptly when so much friendship had developed between us. I must have been thoughtless not to realise how desperately they wanted their own 'place' where they could be together. Looking back I am very ashamed of my lack of perception, just as I am now conscious that the ease with which we all lived together was the result of their many years of overcrowded living, when only unflinching courtesy made life possible. Whether or not Lena sensed my dismay, or for reasons of her own, she turned up a day later, and said she would come each day to help me until I found somebody else. Her generosity was in much better working order than mine.

After she left altogether, I knew that she had found a job in the railway refreshment room, where Sergei was already working. Since then we have never been completely out of touch. We saw each other infrequently but often enough to know what had befallen both families. I visited her about two years ago with the intention of asking her if she would tell me her story. It was a hot Sunday afternoon, and there was no answer to my knock at the front door. I went around to the back, and found a dark haired man hanging a shirt on the line. It could only be Edward, although I had not seen him for thirty years. I must have made a sound because he turned, and when he saw me he said, "It is Mrs Yeatman". He brought me into the house, excused himself, and returned neatly dressed, bringing with him cool drinks. He showed me a picture of his three beautiful daughters.

He subsequently told Lena that I had been there. She rang me the following day to make a time for me to come. I asked her on this visit if she would tell me her story, so I could write about her life. She said she had often wanted to write down her story, but she had never done it. "Such things happen in my life you would not believe". I asked her if she would talk to me on tape and she agreed. After that I saw her regularly. She told me more 'off tape' than on. However she had great volubility, an impressive memory, and one way and another the story got told. Inevitably it was a cathartic experience for her. She often wept, but just as often she laughed. Sometimes she laughed so much

that she literally fell out of her chair. She is 78 years old now, and is a very big woman. Her hair has greyed, but her grey-blue eyes still have their direct gaze. She still gives the impression of a woman of great energy and strength, though she worries about her health. Once I said that growing old brings aches and pains. Her eyes flashed, "You", she said, "are sixty nine, if I be sixty nine I would be dancing!" She had always a gay scarf or a bright ribbon in her hair. When she is dressed to go out and her hair has been done, she looks a strikingly handsome woman.

Lena is almost relentless in her hospitality. I went always very early in the afternoon, and as soon as we settled in, the torrents of conversation began. When I said I must go, she would say, "No, you must eat, you must have coffee". No refusal was possible, in rapid succession there would appear coffee, honey cake, piroshkis, if it was cold a hot bowl of bortsch, or her good pea soup. Then came the constant ceremony of making up a parcel of delicacies to take to my husband.

Elizabeth Yeatman

INTRODUCTION

Early life in Estonia

Lena was born in the Province of Pskov, western Russia, on 3 Nov. 1905 [*the city of Pskov is 30 km east of the Estonian border* but Olena says that Lena always regarded herself as Estonian and that is how she is regarded herein*]. Both her parents, Martin and Julia Wallas, were Estonian, although Julia was born in Pskov of Estonian parents. Lena was baptised in the Lutheran Church and spoke only Estonian until she went to Gymnasium. The fact that she attended Estonian primary schools suggests that there must have been a significant number of Estonians in the part of Pskov bordering on Estonia. Both of her parents spoke Russian. Martin was called up by the military for six months when he was eighteen and taught himself the Russian language. Julia, because of the scarcity of Estonian schools, had attended a Russian primary school. She had boarded there with an Orthodox Russian priest and his wife, and went regularly with them to church. Martin had been born in Estonia, where he attended but never finished High School. Estonia was always the home language in Lena's family, as well as in her mother's family. Lena always speaks of both her mother and father's families as being peasants. Of her own family she makes the distinction that they were middle peasants, not poor peasants. Her maternal grandparents became 'rich peasants' or in later Soviet usage, Kulaks. Martin could remember the bad old days when his father lived in a small primitive hut. The family mostly went hungry. Alexander Herzen in 'Childhood, Youth and Exile' speaks of various friends who owned estates, as owning 'seventy souls' or 'five hundred souls*' as an indication of their varying prosperity. Lena describes this occupation as that of a 'Small businessman' but sometimes as a peasant.

*See Appendix I for maps of Europe, Appendix II for Lena's family tree, Appendix III for a brief history of Estonia.



Lena's family in Estonia in about 1908. From left: Lena's father Martin, Lena aged about three years (bearing a remarkable likeness to a young Olena), Lena's mother Julia, Lena's grandmother (seated) and Lena's grandfather (seated, with bushy beard). In the background, the house is being rethatched.

As a contractor Martin would pay the Graf an agreed amount for the milk produced on the Estate. From this he would make butter and cheese; once he had provided for the needs of the Estate, he had the right of free sale of the remainder. He was able to make a good profit, all of which he saved for the education of his children. He himself was a self-educated man. He read widely, and was very musical. He had somehow acquired a Stradivarius violin, which he had taught himself to play. He understood the value of the violin but would never part with it. Lena remembers him coming home one night when she was five years old and saying to the family, "Count Leo Tolstoi is not dead". There is no doubt that Martin saw education as the real instrument of mobility for his children in the rigid class structure of Russia under the Tsar. Lena describes the 'classes' of that time as being four in number: *Dvorane*, land owners on a large scale, to whom she always refers as the Elite; *Marchane*, business men and shop owners; *Intelligentzia*, who were of mixed origin; and *Workers and Peasants*. Although Lena speaks of her father as a 'Small businessman', she always refers to herself as coming from peasant stock. She remembers living on the different Estates. The Grafes were all members of the Russian Duma. They would spend the long winters at Petersburg, but would summer on their Estates. The family of the contractor was always provided with a house on the Estate. They associated not with

the peasants, but with the felsher (a half-trained medical person), the teacher, the estate manager, and the man in charge of the wine cellars. It was she says, "A middle-class life". They were able to follow the fashion in their dress, and spent the evenings together playing cards.

Her father always spoke of the Estate on which she was born as being very beautiful, a "second Switzerland". When Lena was thirteen her father took her 35 kilometres to visit it. By then it had become a commune, the orangery was gone, the hot houses demolished, and the lilacs and roses which grew at Christmas were only a dream. With the exception of a time between contracts, when he worked for five years for his father-in-law, Martin remained a contractor until the October Revolution. Lena's maternal grandparents had come to Pskov from Estonia soon after they were married, to seek their fortune. Both were peasants. They had very little money, but they managed to acquire some land near OPOCHKA on a little tributary of the Velicksa River. There they established a small flour mill. It was a stone mill, driven by a water wheel for crushing the grain. The mill prospered, and most of their nine children, of whom seven survived, were born there. Later they acquired some land on what the family called the Big River, the Velicksa.

By that time one of the daughter's, Elizabeth (who was Lena's godmother), had married a mechanic who helped his father-in-law to build a bigger mill which could utilise greater water power. They continued to grind wheat, corn and rye, developed a machine loom for wool, and presses for clothing material. With the exception of one man, they used only family labour. The new mill was on the road to OPOCHKA, five kilometres from the old one. They had enough land to run pigs and poultry, and gradually become very well to do. Julia married Martin before they were at the height of their prosperity, but her mother was not pleased, she wanted Julia to marry a man who owned land. She was nevertheless very good to her grandchildren. The two families seemed to have lived most of their lives in close proximity in the part of Pskov between OPOCHKA and SebezH. Lena remembers the years when her father was working at the mill as happy ones. All the children had whooping cough, but food was plentiful and living was good; she remembers food gathering with her uncle Auguste, who was the same age as she was. For a while they attended primary school together. It was at this time that Martin began to talk to his father-in-law about the importance of education. Later he was able to persuade him to send Maria, the youngest child, to attend Tartu University to study medicine (Tartu is in Estonia, and was formerly called Urev). She attended licentiate level there, and met her husband who attained a degree, and finally became Professor of Anatomy in Leningrad. Lena was obviously very fond of her grandmother who kept open house. No one was ever turned hungry from the door, indeed the doors were never locked until the Civil War when soldiery and bandits raided the house while the family hid in the cellars.

Lena showed me pictures of her mother's family. They look a strong, handsome lot, with a fine air of well being, and are soberly but respectably dressed. Her father, Martin, has considerable presence, he has a lively and intelligent look. There is a picture of Martin's brother wearing a frock coat. This is his full brother, Hans, who remained in Estonia and ran a small clothing business in Tartu. The women are modishly dressed, and the children who cling to their hands, and sit on their laps look

extremely happy and healthy. Although they are peasants by origin they are peasants who have prospered. Her grandfather at this time was succeeding even at the small mill, and her father had done well as a contractor, and had been able to put by considerable sums of money.

Lena was always the food gatherer of the family, sometimes with Salme, sometimes with Auguste, often alone. She gathered mushrooms and all kinds of berries in the long summer days. Julia would pickle the mushrooms to fry with potatoes in winter. She made all the berries into fruit cordials which must have provided the vitamin C in their winter diet. Lena learned too, very early, to work in the fields. It was she who kept the whole family going when her father was called up for military training in Lithuania and was away from home for six months. Julia was pregnant, and Lena became the man of the house, the other children were too small to be relied upon. Despite all the outdoor work which she did, she was also skilled at 'women's work'. She knew how to spin wool, make linen from the flax which they grew, and learned the fine embroidery with its traditional Russian designs. She learned from Julia, who had the pattern from Russian Orthodox nuns, to make exquisite Geipine lace. She recalls vividly the long winter evenings when they plied their crafts. During the War and in the Civil War there were many shortages. They were living in a primitive log cabin, moss was put between the logs for insulation. Kerosene was in such short supply that it was kept for festivals, and so the only light they had came from wooden flares stuck between the logs. From the time Lena went to university until she came to Australia she was too busy with other things to practice these skills. She resumed them without difficulty. I have seen the beautiful lace curtains and table cloths she has made, her cushion covers are worked with exquisite embroidery, there is even a fine woollen rug of a traditional Ukrainian design which she has made. The thirty years that went by in between have not impaired her skill, she says that these are skills of her childhood and she has never lost them. There are other things that Lena remembers from her childhood.

Hans, Martin's brother, came to Russia from Estonia. He borrowed 700 roubles from Martin to set up a chemist shop. He did this in Sarrato, a large city on the Volga, not far from Moscow. He was unmarried but lived there with a mistress. He asked Martin's family to come for a visit. Lena recalls that her mother looked very handsome on this trip. She wore a tightly fitting long white dress, and her straw hat had a wreath of flowers. They had to pass through Moscow on the way. Despite her finery Julia did not enjoy the visit. It was a hot dry climate and the presence of tarantulas frightened her into sleepless nights. Hans was Lena's godfather; he died in 1916 eight years after he had established the shop. He never repaid the loan to Martin. After Hans' death Martin tried to recover the money, but the revolution prevented this. All of Martin's savings, which he had hidden behind the dresser, were lost to him too.

Pyzheki, the little village in Pskov where the family lived, was half-way between Oepochka and Sebez, although slightly closer to the former where Lena attended gymnasium. She had to board away from home, but returned home in the summer when she always worked for her father in the fields. Martin like other peasants had been given five acres of land after the October Revolution. It was good land with fine meadows along the river. However there was no quick return. He lacked the money to buy farm animals, and except for Lena he had no children old enough to share in the labour on the farm. A neighbour who had three grown sons offered to help him with the ploughing in return for

a third share of the crops. Martin had once recommended this man for the position as manager on the estate on which he was working. The man had got the job, and Martin thought he was grateful and that he could trust him. His trust proved to be misplaced; the man insisted on a much larger share of the crop, because he had used his own animals in the ploughing. In the end all Julia's chickens were stolen, and the same man admitted the theft. It was only later when Lena was working as an accountant and giving most of her money to her parents that they were able to buy farm animals, a sheep, a cow, and a little colt Bambo. Except for the pair of shoes Lena bought at this time, none of them had any 'store clothes'. However they survived the Civil War better than most, due largely to Julia's knowledge culled from her cookery books, that lice could be killed by boiling their clothes with ashes, as soap was unavailable. Lena speaks of Julia's very high standards of cleanliness. Although everything was meticulously clean, when visitors came to drink tea, she always rinsed the cups with boiling water before she used them. Lena emphasises that they were 'middle peasants', not 'poor peasants' who ate with their fingers, usually out of the communal pot, and who lived in varying degrees of filth. In the Wallas house the table was always properly set, and despite the complete lack of plumbing no effort was spared to achieve a high standard of hygiene.

When the Civil War was over, the terrible drought of 1921-22 which combined with the destruction of the Civil War had resulted in widespread famine had passed, and Lenin's New Economic Policy with its particular emphasis on concessions to the peasants was approved by the Central Committee at the Tenth Party Congress in 1921, there began to be hope for the future of agriculture. Disenchantment with War Communism was rife, and although the benefits offered to the peasants were too late for the sowings of 1921, in 1922 sowings were extended. The harvests of that year and of 1923 were excellent. The poor peasant was still producing on a subsistence level, but the re-introduction of market processes helped the middle peasant, and the rich peasant began to re-emerge as a small capitalist. He had the right to lease land, and to employ hired labour. Lena, during the two years she worked for the co-operative, was well aware of these changes of fortune. She told me that when the New Economic Plan (N.E.P.) ceased, and the Five Year Plan came into being, the liquidation of the Kulaks which followed meant the disappearance of the best farmers. Martin was never a Kulak, but Julia's father was. Lenin at the Tenth Congress had called the N.E.P. "a defeat... and a retreat for a new attack". He saw it as a necessity to correct the errors of war communism by taking into account the "backward peasant economy and peasant mentality" (E.H. Carr, "The Russian Revolution from Lenin to Stalin", Chapter IV, "The Breathing Space of the New Economic Plan").

Student years

Lena graduated from Gymnasium in 1925. She worked for two years as an accountant, and in 1927 she gained a place in medicine in Voronazh (on the River Don, 2,000 miles from Pyszheki). It was just before this that she went to Maria in Moscow to be fitted out with minimum clothing so that 'she could

look like other people'. Except for an earlier visit to Maria near the Black Sea, and the remembered visit to Sarrato, she had never been out of Pskov. However her horizons had broadened. Some Latvians with whom she boarded when she was at Gymnasium had persuaded her to read the Russian classics. Like her father she became a prodigious reader. She read Tolstoi, Herzen, Goncharov, Pushkin, Dostievsky, Turgenev and many others. Of them all she seems to have been most excited by Turgenev and Herzen. She had never relinquished her dream of becoming a doctor. It is no surprise that she was unconcerned that her father's disapproval, or her own disinclination, had prevented her marrying during the two years she worked as an accountant. Salme, too, seems to have repudiated marriage, despite the social structure of peasant expectations. Although she did not succeed like the other members of the family in leaving home, and going on with her education, perhaps she shared, as did they, in her father's dream of education, and was no longer compelled by the rigid peasant pattern, although her loyalty to her own family never faltered.



Lena when a student



Lena when a student

Despite Lena's joy and excitement at her success in gaining a place in medicine at Voronazh, there were some difficult years ahead of her. The whole political climate of Russia was to change during her time as a student – the hope with which she had written her essay for her examinations, "Women and the October Revolution", would never in the same way be hers again. One rejoices that the dream, becoming a reality, came at a time when she and her family could be happy without fears of the future, and that Martin could feel his pride in Lena justified before the shadow of the kolhkoz [*a form of collective farm in the Soviet Union, which existed along with state farms or sovkhos*] fell across his family. Although the other three children were to achieve their own professional careers, Lena's triumph seems almost like a watershed in all their lives. She was to encounter personal difficulties as well. Undoubtedly, she, as well as Salme, were exploited during the time Lena lived with Maria and her husband. She tells stories of having to go to market before the long days began. It would seem the docent [*a docent in Russia has the same status as a Reader or Associate Professor in Australia*] saw both sisters as domestics who would work for their board. What Maria thought does not emerge. She appears to have been genuinely fond of Lena, but her filling of the patriarchal role of 'the man of the house' would have prevented her from interfering. While it was upon Salme that most of the household tasks devolved, very definite claims were made of Lena as well. The docent seems to have entertained a great deal, and he frequently sent Lena in the evenings on errands to augment the supplies of cognac and cigars. She was always frightened when she had to pass through the darkened anatomy laboratories, which were the only place where she could study. She recalls a policeman, who patrolled the area at night. He would see her light through the laboratory window and would tap on the pane to awake her, because he so often found her asleep with her head on her folded arms. With her usual resolution and common sense she soon saw that the situation could not continue as it was. She bade her mother write to summon Salme home, and she herself moved into student quarters, and managed on her university stipend. Food was plentiful during the first few years but by 1929 and the two years that followed it was very scarce indeed. It was only when Lena visited her auntie or her uncle Auguste that she got any 'extras'. Julia sent her what she could, but student food consisted mainly of soup and bread, with the occasional addition of horse meat.

It was in these years that the policy of the Politburo's was changing under Stalin. Lena always speaks as if it was the advent of Stalin which ushered in the Kolkhos and produced the terror. In fact, Lenin had died in 1924. By 1925 Stalin had consolidated his claim to leadership [*E.H. Carr, Ibid., Chapter VIII, "The Rise of Stalin"*]. In 1925 there was still an atmosphere of optimism, but the struggle between the peasant orientated market economy of the N.E.P., and the plans to introduce heavy industry had begun. In 1925 grain collecting bodies had abandoned the 'fixed prices' of 1924 in favour of price adjusting from time to time. The result was that prosperous peasants hoarded stores of grain until 'the price was right'. The harvest was good, the marketing of the harvest was not. The stage was set for the long struggle between the claims of industrial planning and the peasant-orientated market economy, and to the government the prospect of agricultural planning looked increasingly attractive. There was a record harvest in 1926, the grain collection was made by the increased participation of agricultural trading co-operatives. In 1927 there was another big harvest, the peasants after these two

good years were better off than at any time after the Revolution. However, the progress of industrialisation had swelled the population of the cities, and by 1927–1928 bread queues had already become a familiar sight. The 1928–29 prices for grain were 20% higher than the previous year, black market prices were higher still, and cards had to be introduced in Leningrad and Moscow, but only to workers. Although lip service was still paid to the N.E.P., the drive for industrialisation was for the whole economy, and increasingly harsh pressures were brought to bear on the peasant. Because of the anxiety over the grain crisis in 1929, high quotas were set in advance for deliveries in different regions, pressure was placed on the Kulaks to bear the main burden. Kulaks, and many peasants reacted with concealment of grain, and with frantic attempts to sell on the black market. Failure to fill the quotas was a punishable offence, open hostility developed between peasants and the authorities, between town and country. In the summer and autumn of 1929 the top-down drive for more collectivisation grew in intensity. The official assumption was that collectivisation would be gradual and voluntary. Stalin waited for open debate. In Pravda, in October 1929 in his letter to mark the anniversary of the revolution, he claimed that, "the middle peasant has entered the Kolkhozy". A few days later in the Party Central Committee he referred to "a mass of poor and middle peasants against the Kulak". In December 5, the Politburo appointed a commission to submit in two weeks a draft decree on the rate of collectivisation in various regions. In due course the Commission reported that Kulaks could not be admitted to the Kolkhozy, but that their means of production (machinery and animals) were to be appropriated by the Kolkhozy, and recalcitrant Kulaks were to be expelled from their region. The Party Central Committee on 5 January 1930 proclaimed the "liquidation of Kulaks as a class". In the winter of 1929–1930 any peasant who resisted Collectivisation was branded as a Kulak, and along with tens of thousands of Kulaks were evicted from their dwellings, turned adrift, or deported to remote regions. Many of the peasants slaughtered their animals rather than hand them over to the Collective.

However by the spring of 1930, fears grew that these harsh measures might interfere with the spring sowing. Stalin called a halt to further Collectivisation, but the old peasant order had been damaged beyond repair. The drive for Collectivisation was resumed by the end of the year; by the middle of 1931 two-thirds of the main grain growing areas had been incorporated, and the resistance of peasants had been crushed. Even so, production had been fatally disorganised, a higher proportion of the harvest was extracted from the Kolkhozy, but the peasants went hungry and more animals were killed because they could not be fed. Bad harvests followed in 1931 and 1932, and by the next winter the richest grain growing areas were prey to worse famine than they had known during the Civil War. Many millions of them perished. Stalin called this period 'revolution from above'. The party had never had any firm foothold in the country, for to the peasants the emissaries from Moscow were invaders who were recreating the old conditions of slavery. The production of grain did not return to pre-Kolkhozy levels until the late 1930s, but the loss in the numbers of farm animals persisted longer.



University class. Lena at back right



Lena's Russian passport, 1929

Lena got home very rarely in these years. Her family wrote very little about their experiences during this period. It was only later that she learned that Martin had counselled the peasants, who came to him for leadership, to enter the Kolkhoz voluntarily. He saw the inevitability of the coercion which was to come. He urged his children to leave for tertiary education before the Kolkhoz became compulsory. It may be that his voluntary compliance stood him in good stead, when his fellow peasants denounced him as a Kulak because his children were educated. Lena knew well enough that food was short, but she had not been aware as a student in Voronazh that fear had become a condition of life for her family as well as many others. She grieved for Salme who had become a Stakhonovite [*a worker in the USSR who was exceptionally hard-working and productive*] to get a little more food for her parents. All taxes had to be paid on time and Martin could not meet them. Julia's family had all been liquidated, and Lena was deeply shocked that her grandmother had not been allowed to stay in Julia's house. She already knew that her three friends had been expelled from university because they were the daughters and son of Kulaks. But the full extent of the terror did not become part of her consciousness until she returned to Pyzheki. She had always been wary of any talk of politics, and carefully avoided any real knowledge of politics, but she had never before lived in an atmosphere of fear. It became her constant companion, and it has never left her. So many people she had known had vanished without trace, the village was full of shock, loss and sorrow. She was not surprised by the peasant resistance, she says briefly, "They had no interest". It was not until she was working after completing university that she heard that the professors who had taught her had all been exiled, and replaced by party members. Her uncle, Maria's husband, survived to become professor of Anatomy in Leningrad. She doesn't know whether he ever joined the party, perhaps he was 'too prestigious' to be liquidated.

Early work as a doctor

From the time Lena graduated she seems to have learnt the techniques of survival. She resisted being sent to Siberia or Tashkent, and managed to get an appointment in Belarus which was within reasonable distance of Pskov. Even so she took the advice of the engineer whom she met by chance at the station in Belarus, and instead of proceeding to the place to which she had been sent, went with him to Minsk, the capital, and the medical administrative centre of Belarus. It is perhaps as well that she had the two months in the children's clinic in Minsk before going to the primitive hospital which she had to drag single-handed into the twentieth century. As always she rose to the challenge, but her relative inexperience and the heavy workload stretched her to her limits. She was very grateful to the old 'white Russian' doctor who came to her aid. She learned eagerly all this experienced woman could teach her. She had first, however, to cope with Olga Ivanovna's fear that she would report her, but Lena had a capacity for friendship which coloured so much of what was to happen to her. Lena spent only about 18 months in this hospital. When she left it had a staff of three doctors, the result of her

frequent reports to the administration in Minsk. The building had been put in good order and aseptic conditions had been established. She had coped with the enormous number of patients who daily attended the surgery nearby. She had vaccinated most of the people in the area, although she had first to lecture to them and overcome their resistance to public health measures. The administration in Minsk co-operated with all the demands she made upon it. In those days nothing that was needed in medical services was skimped by the administration. It was a matter of propaganda, it was also a source of pride. Lena ascribes the present decline of medical services in Russia to the money that has been spent on prestigious activities such as the exploration of space and the building of nuclear weapons.

Marriage to Stephan Pankiw

Lena's next job was in a clinic just outside Minsk. By then many people were dying, from starvation, killed by bandits who were looking for food, and from imprisonment in overcrowded conditions. It was one of her duties to establish the causes of these deaths and report it. She was not long out of medical school, and she was angry. She wrote lengthy reports. These reports went to Stephan Pankiw, the new attorney general. He chided her on the length of her reports, and they became friends. He had fought for Russia in the first war, and continued to fight for the Soviet in the Civil War. He was a committed revolutionary. When the Civil War was over, because of his service and the fact that his father was a worker and his mother a peasant, the authorities first put him through gymnasium then through the low school in Minsk. Just as for Lena, the October Revolution had seemed to promise a new life, a world that was open to him; Stephen believed in the new society for which he had fought. Both were idealists, and before long they thought about marriage. She was twenty-seven, it was time to marry and have children. She seems to have encouraged him, but there were complicating factors. For one thing, she was engaged to a man called Alexai, who was the second son of rich farmers who had lived in Pskov and were friends of her parents. She asked his older brother and himself to the graduation dance when she finished gymnasium. It was the older brother she liked, but he paid no attention to her. Alexai did, but he never spoke of marriage. During her years in Voronazh he and his family, who were Kulak, were exiled to the White Sea with many others, including many of her old professors, and they became the slave labour force that built the canals in Karelia. It was very unusual for anyone to return from the White Sea, but Alexai devised a more efficient design for building the canals. As a reward he was allowed to leave after two years and offered a university education. He and Lena met again in Voronazh, this time he wanted to marry her and she must have accepted him. When they arrived at Minsk, Stephan met her. She let him collect his bags, and left without a backward glance at Alexai. I asked her why. She said, "When I was poor peasant, he did not want to marry me, now I am doctor, it was different".

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9. Кем выдан паспорт *Мозарскім
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10. На основании каких документов выдан паспорт
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Начальник Р. К. милиции
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Иск. паспортного стола
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Дата выдачи *26 декабря 1936*

ФП № 529878

Lena's Russian passport, 1936

The other complication was more important. While she was working at Minsk she paid a visit to Leningrad to Maria and her husband. When they learned of the breadth of experience she had in her first hospital, they urged her to enter the Leo Tolstoy clinic in Leningrad to train as a gynecologist. She was very excited at the thought, but in the end she refused. She was already involved with Stephan, and her societal expectations were very strong. She was twenty-seven and it was time to be married. She told me about her marriage to Stephan. "He was a good man". She was drawn to him by his idealist views, but she did not foresee the consequences of this. As attorney general he was involved constantly in political, or quasi-political crimes. He made judgments entirely consonant with his convictions, which were totally opposed to the judgments he was supposed to make. He cannot have been so naive as to believe this would be tolerated, but he refused to compromise. In a short time, inevitably, he was removed from office. Perhaps he was naive, because he at once went to Moscow to appeal to the Politburo. The only concession he won was that he was allowed to practise law in Mosyr. This was in 1932 when the prisons were so full that schools had to be turned into prisons. Terror and famine prevailed. He had many clients but he was still unable to compromise. He passionately fought for justice, and again was prevented from practising law by the authorities. Lena had throughout this period, because she was his wife, been under constant NKVD [USSR secret police, 1934–1946] surveillance. Edward and Nellie had been born, and she was frightened for them even more than for

herself. She could not forgive Stephan's exposing them all to danger. She was totally a realist. In the end she sent him to his mother in "a village" far away and supported them both from her income.



Lena's Russian ID card, 1938

The War years

The last time Lena saw Stephan was in mid-1941 when he was called up at the outbreak of the war with Germany. He was not yet in uniform. She remembers him talking to Edward, and she is saddened by this memory; he perished very early in the fighting. Perhaps now the NKVD would leave her alone.

It cannot have been long afterwards that Lena made her escape with the children by motorboat to Chernigov [*Chernigov is in Ukraine on the Pripyat River downstream from Mosyr*]. She had been told to go; this is why Lena left Minsk for Mosyr with such misgivings. When she returned to Mosyr, she found the waterways authority for whom she had been working were gone; they had taken their personnel far into Russia. She worked on in Mosyr as an independent doctor with the civil authorities. When danger from the German advance threatened again, she escaped, in much more danger, to a little village near the Polish border. There she soon made friends. She paid her way with pieces of material. She was able to get milk for the children and have a potato patch of her own. As usual she healed the sick. She lived in the midst of danger from mines which the Germans had left, and with a total uncertainty of what would happen next. However she proceeded calmly enough. The only real crisis was when Nellie was kicked by a horse (see pages 64–65), and she thought her jaw was broken. If it had been broken she would have had to leave to take her where surgery could be performed. After three or four months when the Belarusian commander sent word that she was needed in Mosyr, because most of the doctors had gone, she undertook the journey without protest. She dipped into her stores to produce a warm quilt which would pay for the help in the first part of the journey – she knew when she reached the River Pripyat there were patients who would help her.

In Mosyr the hospital was destroyed. The few doctors who remained had only one large room where they could put patients. The most pressing problems were the sick in the concentration camp. This was overcrowded and the latrines were primitive. The inmates, mostly Jews whom the Germans had incarcerated, were dangerously short of food (over half of the population of Belarus was Jewish). Doctors were forbidden to treat the sick in the camp or to take them food. Lena had no fear when her medical skills were needed, and she seems never to have refused a call for help. She went immediately into the camp and took with her whatever food she could find. Again her warmth and ability to make friends came to her aid. One German Commissar had been left in Mosyr. With him was his mistress Natalia Ivanovna, a Russian woman who had been married to an Austrian, and she acted as the Commissar's interpreter. She and Lena soon became friends, and she persuaded the Commissar to turn a blind eye to Lena's activities. Later a Belarus partisan attacked the Commissar, and in the scuffle threw him over a barbed wire fence. He was unconscious and badly injured. Natalia Ivanovna summoned Lena, and he always believed that she had saved his life. The conditions in the concentration camp made the outbreak of disease inevitable. Typhus soon became rife and Lena fell ill. When she was satisfied that it was typhus from which she was suffering, she master-minded her own treatment, and made sure that Edward and Nellie were given anti-typhus serum before she became unconscious.

Her illness was prolonged, and before she had really regained her strength they heard that the Russians were not far away, pursuing the German army. Her friendship with the Commissar and Natalia Ivanovna, which would later prove invaluable to her, at this time placed her in a dangerous situation, and they urged her to flee to Germany. She, with the children, finally got transport in the cattle wagons of a train which was travelling to the west. It was an interminable nightmare journey. Bridges were blown up by partisans, mines exploded to each side of them as they travelled. In the middle of Poland the train struck a mine. It exploded leaving only the wagon in which Lena and the children were in still standing. In a camp in Poland, in which they sheltered for a while, she made another friend; she was a final-year medical student who had come away with nothing [see page 82]. She said if Lena would share what food and comforts she had with her, she would in return always be responsible for Lena's children. The camp in Poland was unspeakably filthy, and there was no food except a little for the children. Nevertheless Lena did not want to go further west but she was not allowed to remain, and after some weeks she and her new friend were forced to continue the journey, which ended at last close to Berlin, which was being heavily bombed. The end of the journey was more dangerous than the journey itself.

Lena was determined to escape. She met an Estonian doctor who said there may be a doctor's job for her in Czechoslovakia. So leaving the children with her friend, Lena made her way to Berlin by an underground railway, and managed to find an employment office. Miraculously they told her that they would send her to a psychiatric hospital in Sudetenland. This involved another journey which took a day and a night, and Lena and the children spent 24 hours in a railway station in Prague before they reached their destination. Almost at once she met another female doctor named Tamara. She helped Lena with the German language and supported her through the first weeks. It soon became evident to

them both that the German members of staff considered them "Ost" and therefore an enemy. It seemed inevitable that they would be expelled and sent to a concentration camp.



Tamara

Meanwhile, the Commissar and Natalia Ivanovna had been trying to find Lena, and found her record in the employment office in Berlin. They arrived in the hospital just in time to prevent the expulsion of Lena and Tamara. The Commissar happened to be in charge of the medical services in Sudetenland, and he gave Lena and Tamara protection which enabled them to live in security in the hospital until the end of the war. Lena says, "Always for me something happens!"

Escape!

When the war ended Lena and her children, with Tamara and her family, were put into the Russian camp near Pilsen. The Americans had been good to them, but the Russians when they arrived were bent on repatriating all Russian citizens. There were stories that none of the Russians who were being repatriated survived to enter the Soviet Union, and Lena and Tamara knew they stood in deadly peril. It was Lena who devised a strategy of escape – she poisoned herself with antibiotics and the infamous *santonin*. She had had the foresight to bring many drugs from the hospital. She became so ill that she was taken to a hospital in Pilsen where she had a medical friend. Tamara, who had care of Edward and Nellie, and her family were not taken on the transport to Russia, but were allowed to wait *[in the*

Russian camp] for Lena's recovery. In brief, after the three months Lena spent in hospital, Tamara and Lena together managed with remarkable resource to get places for them and the children in a train which was destined for an American camp in Bavaria where they were safe from the Russians. [See pages 97–98 for Olena's account how she and Edward, with Tamara's help, smuggled Lena's medical instruments, medicines, photographs and other valuables from the Russian camp in Pilsen to the American camp.]



Aschaffenburg, Bavaria

Both families spent four years in a displaced-persons' camp in Aschaffenburg in Germany. It was there that Lena and Sergei met (again). It seemed a remarkable coincidence, and they were married in the spring of 1946. The years in Bavaria were happy ones. Both Sergei and Lena were able to practise their own professions. Sergei like Lena loved food gathering, and they spent much time with the children in the Bavarian forests. By the end of 1948 displaced persons were beginning to be resettled. Yaroslav, Sergei's son, was the right age to be bonded as a labourer to Australia, and could sponsor all of them to follow him. In the first months of 1949, Yaroslav arrived in Australia. Several months later they followed, and all finally settled in Adelaide. This is half a life-time away, and Lena, although she never could practise medicine again, will say she has no regrets.

In the following pages 25–31 and 34 Lena tells her story in her own way.

Migration to Australia

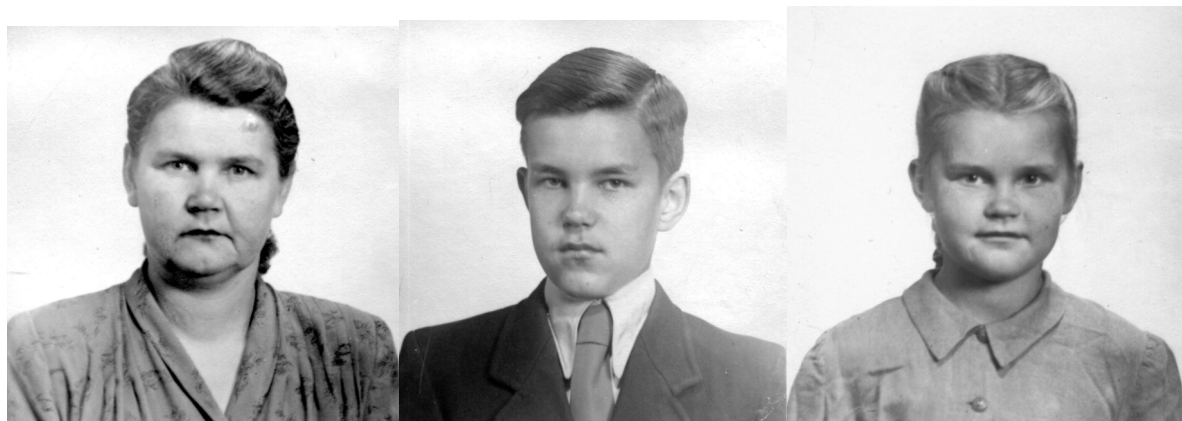
Yaroslav was twenty, twenty-one. We say 'Take him he is worker'. [It was Australian policy at that time to accept 'workers' to make possible the development of secondary industry on a large scale. The bonded worker got free transport (on ships in 1949 - later by air); their families were allowed to follow

them to Australia. Yaroslav was bonded for two years by the Australian government, and this made possible the entry of the rest of the family to Australia.] Edward and Nellie were little ones, and husband old. I was middle, ten years younger than husband was forty six [Lena was 44 in 1949]. They told me that I would never be doctor in Australia, because after said I must go four years in university, learn again. 'I couldn't, husband get very sick, and so and so, we must working. [In every state in Australia except for New South Wales, all people who had medical training in Europe were required to repeat the last four years of medicine, as well as doing a further hospital year, to be registered. In N.S.W. specialist training was accepted but the specialist could work only in N.S.W.] Australians take worker (bonded worker) separately. Yaroslav coming separately. My husband mad was about this, because some families coming all together to Australia. The same was one family, had two sons, the same was living in the same block with us, and they coming with us all together.

Slavko was taken from us one or two months before. When Slavko going, I went with husband everywhere, to headquarters, everywhere. We all want to go to Australia, only we want to go altogether, not separate our son. He (husband) was mad, I couldn't quiet him you know, because it was so far. We didn't know where was this Australia. I was looking this Australia. When we get offer after one month he has gone. I remember when we sent him on the transport to Australia, when we coming home, my husband was so upset, I couldn't quieten him. He shout, all it was that he loved him, how he never would be separate from him, and now he was separate from him. I so talking with him 'You waiting, nothing could happen, because we went the same on transport, only later. I remember, he was so angry.



Lena, Slavko, Olena, Edward and Sergei, 27/1/1949, before migrating to Australia



Lena, Edward, Olena, Sergei and Slavko in January 1949, prior to migrating to Australia

After one month we went. We just know that Slavko was in Australia, nothing more. When we, after one month we go to place in Germany, one month or more, and after we go to Naples. There was little city near Napoli, I don't remember. Altogether we were three weeks in this place waiting transport for Australia, this ship. During this, one week when was in Naples, somebody, there was couple of mothers in the same camp, near Napoli, their sons go the same ship as is Yaroslav, somebody start to talk, this ship is go down, sank. When this mother talked to me, I didn't tell husband, because how he was mad. We went everywhere, we went to telephone Geneva. Anyone who is connected with this ship, we go to. They tell us only that if something had happened to this ship, we would be told, we would know. They didn't know any more to tell us. My husband seeing that I was everywhere running, and that I am so sad, he say 'What has happened?' 'Oh nothing happen, everything will be all right', I tell him. I was worried because this lady went everywhere. She had three sons on same ship. Her husband was teacher, intelligent people, you know. She sad, three sons on one ship, all these younger men. Husband was not so sure. We happy only when we get to Australia, we telephone, we know he is safe. Bathurst near Sydney. From Bonegilla (in NE Victoria) we telephone him, and know he was all right. We could not get letters, nothing, because we was all the time in one place, then another place. First we get letters from, he was the same, they went to Australia from the same camp in Italy. We get

letters from Italy. He said in letters that he go to Australia, near Bathurst. We know that he would be in Bathurst. After he was in Australia, nothing. Just one month we was on the water. We had letters in Germany, when he reach Naples, and we know he went to Australia. Then we come the same camp near Naples, nothing to happen, he reach Australia very happy.

Bonegilla

We were in Bonegilla one week, he comes from Bathurst to visit us. After we were in Bonegilla two months, June, July 1949, maybe two or three months. In Bonegilla, when we come they make men separate, all women's and wives all separate, we can nothing to do. My husband make big trouble. Sergei start this, he was very angry, he start this. Other men were not so angry. We are not slaves, why we separate? After my husband make plenty trouble, and make with other men, we will go and live together with our wives. After many things they make such strike, they allowed it after one or two weeks. All is put separate, all the family is separate, with blankets make room for children. This was American camp before, it was so freezing, this was iron shed. In day time when it is sun, it was very beautiful, in night time you put plenty blankets, you cannot get warm. They find some iron and put middle, of this big garage, and we get plenty wood and keep warm. There was, how many families. Ten families I think, maybe six or seven families. All is separate, men and women. I remember father and mother, this young couple, doctor and husband, and children. He was always against, why separate man and woman and families [*unlike in Italy or Germany*]. I don't know why they make such things. It was very nice brick building in Italy, men and women could talk together, very comfortable, clean water, toilets, like ordinary house. We was maybe two months there, it was not like Bonegilla.

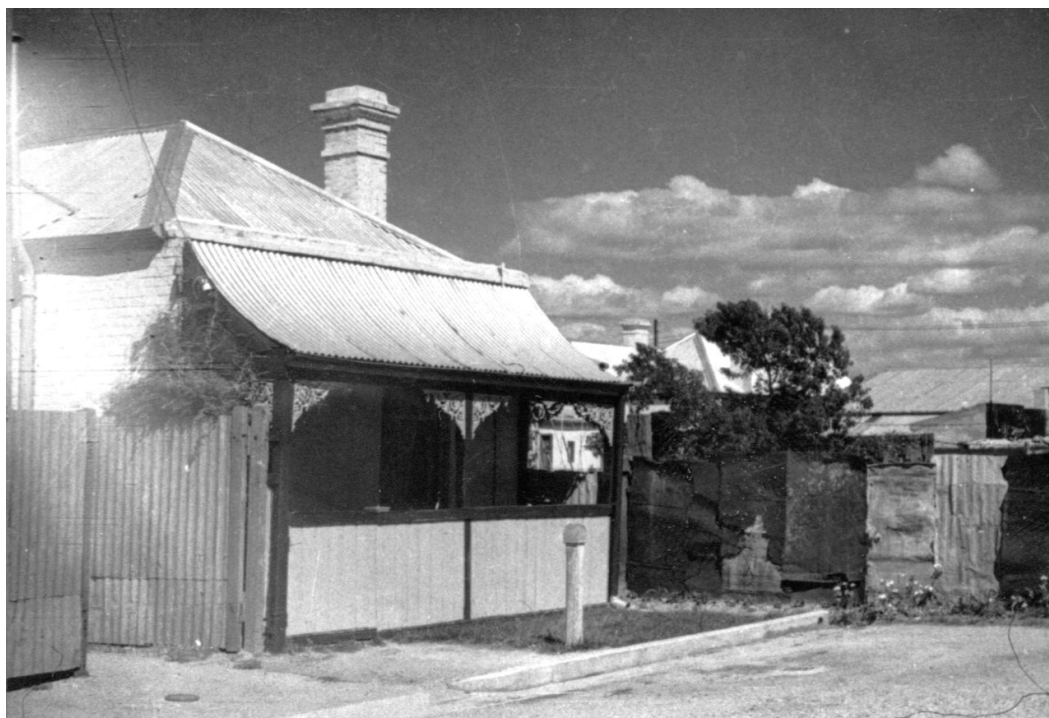
When we were in Bonegilla, we wanted to go to America. There was one younger doctor who was working with me, ten years younger than I am when he came in this camp in Germany. With me working like nurse or sister, was one young girl, maybe 24, 25 years. Mother all the time worry that she is so old and not married. Then start doctor look at her, and after they is married. I showed you this nice picture. After Germany I little bit help her, and her mother. They went to America, and his father. One brother an electrician he went to Australia, and he is in Australia today. They have little daughter, her name was Toma. She wrote to me. She is now in Perth, maybe now is married. She tells me that doctor in America is still alive. Three years later, the doctor, husband, had heart attack - passed away. She very upset. They live America, have very good house, have two sons, both is doctors now. One I think this year should be finished. They are Ukrainian. I didn't go to America. It was because there were many organisations. We put application for South America. I was against this, but husband wanted to go to South America, Paraguay. I don't want to go, I don't like snakes, I don't like crocodiles, and I frightened of them, you know. Was very easy go to Venezuela, Paraguay, even in Argentina. I think I will not go. I know it is place which is very hot, and plenty these reptiles, I not like. For America, some people have relatives there. My friend Tamara when she married her husband, her

husband had three relatives there, one who was sixty years old, and he sent for them affidavit, the same people were very easy go and the same Tamara get this affidavit. When we was in Adelaide they was in America. They send letters to me, they said we will send to you affidavit, come in America. In Bonegilla we decided to stay in Australia. We didn't go. Tamara say 'If we send you affidavit, you will be sent very quickly', because some organisation was taking these people, you put application for it, but they want only workers. Many affidavits sent, those who get there earlier they send them too. One, who was my patient when she was nine years old, she went to South America, and now she is famous artist. She married a Ukrainian. Anyway she is famous in Canada and America. Come here, you know couple of years ago, is famous singer. They take me picture of her. I went to this concert. Next day was Sunday, and she went on Sunday to Church, somebody take picture for us.

Woodside and Adelaide

From Bonegilla, we come to Adelaide, near Adelaide, Woodside. In Woodside, men and women put together. Maybe they learn, that they make big trouble if they be not put together. Yaroslav still was in Bathurst. Afterwards, when he knew that we in Adelaide, he knew that in Railway Station, they take these young men for work in Railway Institute. He get accommodation in Railway Station. He is accepted in Railway Institute, and work in Railway Station, maybe he was shunting, I don't know. In Woodside I start to go to employment office. You wanted one worker. Husband get in Railway Station, then, right away. Slavko put in application, and he get admitted to Railway Institute. This was where Festival Theatre now is. He lived there, and after when husband is get a job in Railway, he went the same to live with Slavko in Railway Station. I live together with you, at your place [*at the Yeatman's*], with Nellie. Edward had not place. Sometimes he comes to my place, and stayed with father all night. Someone notice that he is illegally stayed with father all night. After I asked you, because somebody told Slavko and husband he cannot stay together, because tent is made for only two people. You [*Mrs Yeatman*] let him sleep in shed. You told me 'Yes, there is in garden little house, which I am cleaning, and you gave me blankets and mattress. So Edward can sleep there. He can study in our room with Nellie. Nellie and I are sharing, and he sleeps very well, and we are very grateful for you that he gets this place. I think he was there six months.

After six months we got just one house. There was people in aborigine, or half aborigine. The agent told us that they would very soon be out, because they lived in house. We waited six months, during this time Edward lived first with father in tent, after your house. He start to study in Unley High School. We wanted something, we bought house, and I cannot go in, people living there and we start asking Slavko to go to agent and ask him why he not tell us the truth, that after a couple of weeks, these people be gone, and now it is a couple of years and people still there. Husband was very cross that I live separate, and all his family separate.



The family's house in Thebarton, 1952

Work with the railways

A Lithuanian doctor, Dr Lickin, he went through this university here to complete. He was very popular, he may be my age you know, may be couple of years older. He always told me 'go to university' and so and so, 'you finish'. He was at Woodside, and there was one doctor who protected him. In Woodside, the same give him a job like doctor. Sometimes other doctor went away, and gave to him job looking after hospital. After he come to Adelaide, in hospital like registrar. The same helped, and wife was the same doctor in own country, and working somewhere in factory. They had not flat, I remember tried to help them find flat through the Railway Station, through people who work there, and know people with flats. Anyway he get to university, and finish and get job after three years, very soon. At Woodside I didn't know him, I only know him when he was later here. He collected all these doctors, you know, for one meeting. Some lady doctor spoke. This was when I was in the flat on Hutt Street, when this meeting. All doctors, and Australian doctors coming, the same we was all like one another, new Australians.

It was such meeting for Australian doctors and migrants. We meet, and talking and so, and so. Such law was that everyone must go university for three or four years, to get practice, you must so start. Anyway it was for me impossible, you know. After when this husband was sick, his wife had been to university, she get doctor you know. She asked me when I went to her for new diet, for pills, 'Why you not start, I have everything from my husband', we start together'. I said 'How can I start when I have my home, my husband and family. I must be working, and I cannot stop. She finished and she is my age you know, now she is retired, still then was taking people. She finished, but it was

very hard, many times failed you know, because she found it very hard. She was not so clever like husband, still she got finished, her husband find a way, took five or six years.

I working in staff room for staff (Railway Station). There is cleaning, making all is ready for staff when they come on duty. I working in cafeteria many years, sometimes washing dishes, mostly making tea and coffee for dining room when coming Express (from Melbourne) and so. Last years, sometimes in cafeteria, replace some this cashier, sometimes another girl what sets tables. We must pay for food. Pay £5 for food per fortnight. Sergei, first, was maybe less. First was very low, this wage, but each year, we getting more and more and more. When I retired, in last year, it still was pounds, you know. I maybe get £7 for fortnight. Sometimes overtime, sometimes very overtime, get £20, £21, £22, sometimes £25, my husband, before he was sick was washing floors in kitchens.

We in cafeteria that time was washing dishes, kitchen dishes, you know, big, big kettles, things cook uses. There was in cafeteria by machines that did dishes, putting through many times. Always woman in charge of this machine. Plenty customers was. What jobs was there I did; sometimes cook, sometimes sweets cook, somebody was not there you know. Cooks was more privileged, they were skilled, no not skilled, they had been there longer. Making sandwiches, there many, many was such sections, many for breakfasts. One place was only dining room cup of tea or coffee. Express come for breakfast, another Express coming later on.

One week I go six in the morning. When I working mostly in cafeteria. I go sometimes eleven o'clock, sometimes eight o'clock, different shifts. Many years I working, I start eleven o'clock, mostly afterwards I go six o'clock, one week or eleven o'clock another week. When I was working in cafeteria open all people six o'clock. First shift finish four o'clock, twelve o'clock, another shift.

Glenfairy

Glenfairy was in Campbelltown near the banks of the Torrens River and was the symbol of safety for the whole family. The house itself was an old farm house, with limited conveniences, but it stood on six blocks of land. Lena and Sergei planted fruit trees of all kinds, a very extensive vegetable garden, and had developed a poultry yard. There they were able to achieve the kind of self-sufficient existence that for her meant safety and security. Yaroslav, Sergei and Lena at the beginning of this period were all employed by the Railway Station. Lena and Sergei worked in the refreshment room. Sergei became ill relatively early in this period (see below), and Lena nursed him for six years, continuing to work in the cafeteria at the same time. Lena stayed in the railway station until her retirement at 65. Yaroslav ran the book shop in the station. Nellie and Edward were in the process of being educated in the period of Sergei's six year's illness, with his death in 1961. This caused many emotional problems, because Sergei felt that her children had opportunities that Yaroslav had not had. Lena was forced for a period to house Edward and Olena in a house in St Peters, which she cleaned for them, and for the most part cooked their meals.



Glenfairy, Church Road, Campbelltown, 1967

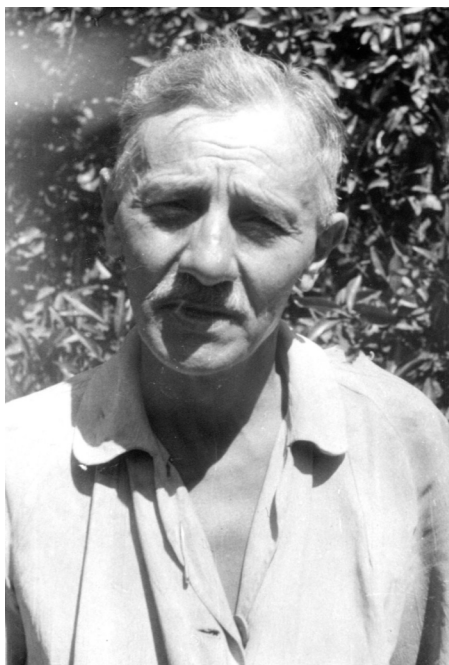
A factor which became increasingly important in the late 1970s–early 1980s was the Oban development. The Oban plan was to put through bus-on-rail transport from the city to the newer northeastern suburbs of Adelaide. Because its course followed the Torrens River, numerous properties had to be acquired by the South Australian government. This led for some time to controversy, particularly on the part of the affected land owners. The price offered by the government was predictably less than they would have received on the open market. Only \$70,000 was offered for Glenfairy despite the six blocks of easily saleable land on which it stood, for by then Campbelltown had become a densely settled suburb. This limited, in a period of inflated real estate prices, what they were able to spend on a new house. Sadly, Glenfairy was acquired by the Government and demolished. In 1982 Yaroslav bought a convenient modern house in Felixstow for Lena and himself.



Lena, Edward in his national service RAAF uniform, and Olena c. 1954.

Husband Sergei's illness

My husband Sergei very sick, 1952, 1955, 1956 he first get sick. He went for many doctors you know. He get very bad pain in back. I told him it was maybe stomach, I keep him on a diet, but this not help. Couple of times he went to Lithuanian doctor, Dr Lickin. This doctor, he told me to go to hospital, I take Sergei to hospital, I have from him letters to go to hospital (Royal Adelaide) for examination. They told me that he had abscess in stomach, he needed operation. One night I went to him visiting, my husband, I say 'How you feel, you want to go to operation, or you want to diet, or so; come home?' He said 'I think with modern methods, new instruments, skilled, clever doctors, many people making operation, it will be all right. Nothing will happen. I think it is better making operation. So they make operation, troubles come more and more after operation.'



Sergei February 1959

Sergei returned home after several operations for stomach cancer, and Lena nursed him for four years. She made up high protein foods, put them through the blender, and very slowly fed them to him. He gained weight and strength gradually, and was able to walk in the garden again. Towards the end of the time he began to go to town. She had been sure for some time that a malignancy in the stomach must have been found at the first operation. He was coughing, and she suspected there were secondaries in the lung. She took him to the chest clinic, an X-ray was done but told nothing. Forty-eight hours later he had a massive haemoptesis. It seems probable that the secondary was in the mediastinum. He lived a short time. She managed to keep him free of pain - he died at home. Altogether the illness had lasted six years. [*Sergei died on 28 July 1961.*]



Lena (in later years) and Slavko (1953-54) in the garden at Glenfairry



CONCLUSION

Lena is 77 now [*in 1982*]. She retired from the railway refreshment room in 1970. She used her railway pass to travel around the Eastern States. She renewed contact with many of the people who had come to Australia at the time she did. Many of them urged her to go back to the University to finish the medical course. She had time now that she was not working, but she knew that for her it was too late, and in any case there was another family to bring up. Being a Babushka was her priority now. She had cared for Edward's three girls until they went to school and for Tania, Nellie's older child; being a Babi was a full-time role. She and Yaroslav now lived alone at Glenfairly, but it became more than ever a family centre. She could not quite reconstruct the extended network of family and kinship, in which she had grown up, but she did the best she could. She is an intrinsic part of her grandchildren's lives, as they are of hers. Several years after Stuart, Nellie's second child, was born, the family moved to Melbourne, but in the holidays they lived in the house which they own in Goolwa, and she was with them some the time. Edward's family lived nearby, and they treated Glenfairly as their second home.



Lena, grandchildren Tania and Stuart, and Olena in early 1973

Lena has only her pension now. For a while the family had no problems; their trees bore fruit, they could live on the vegetables they grew, and there were eggs and poultry in great abundance. Like Julia before her, Lena wasted nothing. She preserved fruit, she made other fruit into drinks, the rest went into more jam that they could eat. It seemed that they had found their safe haven.

The troubles came when Sergei became ill. He was now home all the time. A time came when Lena felt that it would be best if her children moved from Glenfairry. She had no money to do this. She made an arrangement with Yaroslav to take out a second mortgage on Glenfairry. She paid regular interest on this mortgage and finally paid back the full amount. She used the money to establish Edward and Nellie in a house in St. Peters which they shared with another student. She continued to work in the railway station, cleaned both houses and did the marketing and a great deal of the cooking for both. As well she was nursing Sergei and preparing for him the liquid food high in protein which kept him alive. Nellie knew how hard Lena worked. When Sergei died after his six years of illness, the house belonged to Yaroslav.

I do not see very much of Yaroslav when I visit Lena. If he is not at work, he is busy in the garden or in his workshop. In earlier years when we visited them, usually on Sunday, Yaroslav and Lena would entertain us together. On these occasions she always set about preparing us a large meal. Yaroslav is in his early fifties now but looks younger. He works very hard in the new garden and already the fruit trees are growing. He has built his workshop and says soon he will build Lena a studio. It was he who finally chose the new house in Felixstow, which they found after many months of looking. Lena acquiesced in this, because she said it would in the end be Yaroslav's house. He loves his surrogate children, both Nellie's and Edward's, all of them are deeply attached to him. He is pleased with the house he has chosen in Felixstow. It is not far from the Torrens and is a well built modern house, with enough rooms for grandchildren to come and stay. She, too, has been busy in the garden, everything she touches grows. I think it is becoming 'her place'.

The balance between Lena and Yaroslav is changing too. She has just finished making one of the rooms into a study for him. The last time I went she was showing me round the garden, Yaroslav had been pruning a fruit tree. She said, "I am very cross with my son, he has taken off too much". Yaroslav was within earshot, his face lit up and he laughed. Never before have I heard her call him "My son". There is no question of his endless goodness to Lena. He drives her everywhere, takes her to theatre when she wants to go, even used to accompany her on interstate trips. They visit friends at the weekends, or people come to them. There is much card playing that goes on, despite her age, far into the night. Their friends are of many nationalities, but mostly what she calls "Ost". They include people who came out with them in the ship, people they knew in transit camp, or in the railway. Although most of them came to Australia as they did, and worked at many jobs, a large number of them had been professional people. Almost always their children have gone to university here and many of them have entered professions. She and Yaroslav go to the Ukrainian Orthodox church at Christmas and Easter. On these occasions there is great feasting.

I hope that Yaroslav will build Lena's studio soon. When she retired, her energy was still prodigious. She went to art school in Norwood. She first learned pottery, and the house is full of all the pots that she threw. Then she turned to painting. Her first paintings are skillfully executed copies of other pictures. In the later years she began to do landscapes, painting places she had seen. These are sensitive and appealing. She has a great feeling for light. She misses her painting, she has nowhere in the house to work. When I used to visit her at Glenfairy I always found her in an outhouse she used for a studio. Her painting was always a source of immense satisfaction to her. When I saw her lassitude in the first year of the move, I wondered if she would paint again, and hoped the new studio would not be built too late. Now, I feel that she will. Yaroslav has his own priorities, the garden is in order, the new duck pen is full of ducks, and he has just single-handedly taken down a great tree where Lena's studio will stand.

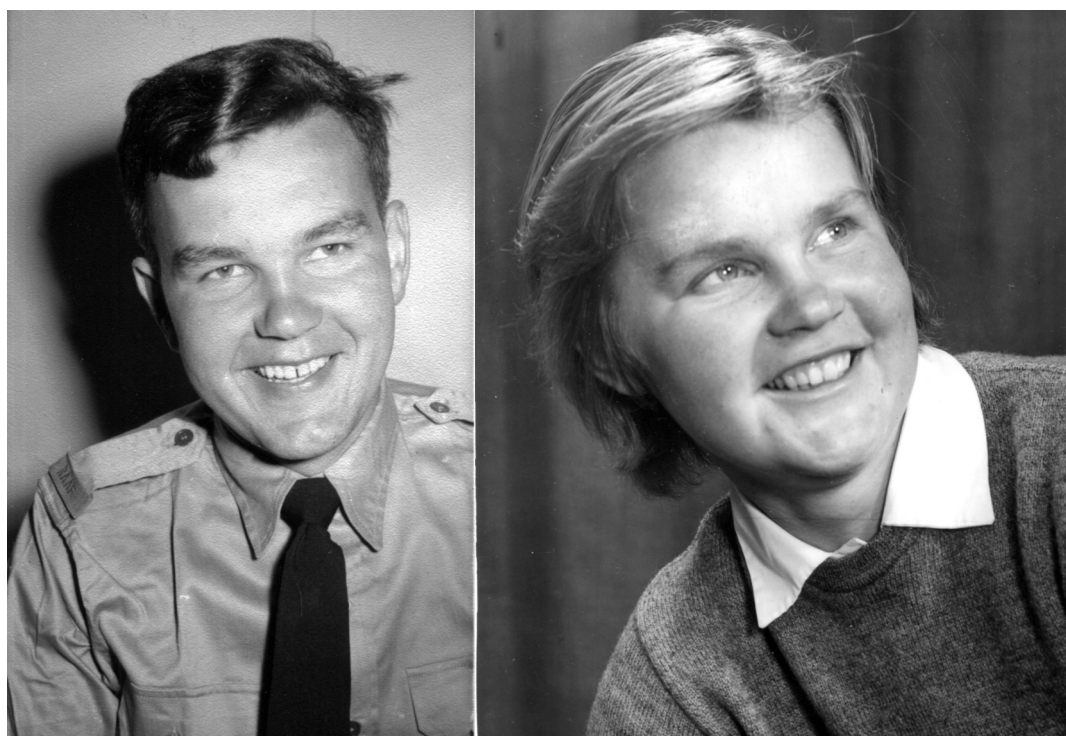
It is very interesting for me to see Nellie again. She is now almost exactly the same age as Lena when I first met her, but fundamentally she has changed very little. She is as matter-of-fact as ever; her circumstances have changed, Nellie has not. She retains her intense interest in sport, and last year became senior badminton champion of Australia [*see Appendix V for a summary of Olena's sporting achievements, pages 128–131*]. Both the children are attractive and do very well at school. For Lena's sake I am glad that they will be living here for a while. Though she would never confess it her feeling of security has been increased by having Nellie close by. In her own way, Nellie is as strong a woman as is Lena. Nellie's marriage and the overseas trip of three and a half years came two years after Sergei's death. She told me this was the worst time in her life. She had never been parted from Nellie before. I am sure she made no complaint at the time. With her background seeing Nellie 'settled' would have been of primary importance. Nellie is a 'comfort' to Lena.

Lena married Sergei in the camp in Bavaria. Had she not been married to Sergei, I think she would never have come to Australia. She knew that if she went to America that she could continue to practise medicine. She says she did not even know where Australia was. She was clear that she did not want to go to Latin America as Sergei proposed. Both of them wanted to keep the family together. [*Olena says the family was waiting for migration offers from several countries, and the offer from Australia came first.*]

I am sure that it was at Bonegilla that her strong acculturation took over. To survive in a new country at subsistence level it was essential that as many persons in the family as possible must work to feed the mouths of those who could not work. She was her father's daughter and she never for a moment relinquished her determination to give her children a tertiary education. Yaroslav would have a job, she and Sergei must both earn as well in any capacity they could. They must establish a base, where some food could be produced, which would give them the security they needed. Lena has always been a realist, and she could see that to achieve these primary needs, it was inconceivable that she could be retrained medically. It was no time to think of future rewards, their needs were immediate. Having made the decision, she proceeded accordingly. They achieved Glenfairy before Sergei became ill. When Sergei became ill, with his pension, and the money she and Yaroslav earned they could survive. In the six years he was ill she cared for him in every way she knew. When he died

she was exhausted. Soon Edward was married, and Lena was beginning to help him pay off his house. Before long there were grandchildren to mind while Edward and his wife both worked. She went on working in the railway refreshment room, and she went on pickling and bottling, laying up food with peasant thrift, making a haven for any of her family who needed it. She was Julia's child as well as Martin's, and the deep patterns of her life have not changed.

Lena is still a proud, indomitable woman. She is 78, and one could almost say that she had never had a day's illness in her life, save the one which was self-inflicted. She is most of all proud of her survival. She came as she sees it 'miraculously' through the terror and the war years: "For me there is always a miracle", she says. She established a life in Australia for her family, "Australia is a good country where no one watched you". She has her grandchildren, she has many friends and many interests. She disliked getting old, but she still has more energy than many women half her age, and if as she claims her powers are waning, they are not doing so discernibly. Her fear for her safety has always prevented her from any attempt to contact her own family. That she misses them continually there can be no doubt, they are too much alive in her mind, nevertheless I think she has accepted for a long time that they are lost to her, but she carried this sorrow in her heart and does not speak of it. She is still haunted by the 'fear that is inside her' but her vitality is not quenched, and in important ways her zest for life remains. Lena said in one interview: "Now I fear this communism. We fear this Germany, we fear everything, and are living here under fear all the time. Maybe only I, am fear. Yes, now, always. We had such life there that we always fear. Never will it go out for me. Maybe this generation not, I will always be frightened".



Edward in 1954 (during his National Service with the RAAF) and Olena in 1959



Lena in the early 1980s

Lena was 'Babi' to five grandchildren: Tania and Stuart Williams, and Xenia, Tamara and Tania Pankiw. There are now eight great-grandchildren.

INTERVIEW I – April 22 1982

Early life in Estonia

Illness and death of siblings, and school years

My sister (Salme) the first year in our second estate, near house there was little brook. We played, we catch one of these little animals. This, what you call this little animal, which rich men make with little tails (perhaps a ferret or skunk). I catch this one and he bite me. It was a very bad smell, we were frightened, you know. We ran to mother, mother put on iodine, and we playing again. My sister was very frightened. When it is night time she get plenty high temperature 41°C. I remember it was night time, about two o'clock of three o'clock in morning. My father had not horse, could not get doctor. OPOCHKA 25 kilometres away. He went to neighbour and ask him to take my sister to hospital. Mother and father went to hospital in OPOCHKA, when he coming back, sister was left in hospital, mother was too in hospital. Nobody knows - doctors told her (mother) "You pray to God that she will be die. When she will be coming out from this sickness, she will be not normal". Meningitis or brain inflammation or so. Mother all the time was with her, one, two, three weeks. Mother had some literature, she was always reading books, cookery books [*An Estonian family has recently come to Adelaide bringing with them the actual 'cookery book' which Julia used - Lena was fascinated to see it again, and these have information on how to cure hepatitis, lung inflammation, or something like rheumatism, medical and cooking books, also medical magazine from Tartu (Estonian university)*]. It said cure this meningitis by make bath with cognac. Doctor told after five weeks that she was not coming out (of coma). She was unconscious. She does not know who is mother or who were her parents, only doctor say "Pray god she will be dead, if she come out she be not normal". Mother read these books, that this brain inflammation be cured by cognac baths, washing with cognac. When father come, he cannot come often you know, one or two times a week. He must borrow horse and carriage. I was with father in this village. [*The village, where the family lived in the province of Pskov, is halfway between OPOCHKA and Sebez, bigger towns with doctors and hospital. Lena was reluctant to disclose the name of the little village where they lived, but has since told me that it was called Pyzheki - it was a very small village.*].

When Salme was four weeks in hospital and she is not coming out of this. Mother put cognac in bath, and father buy this cognac in wine shop, and she asked after she was five weeks in this hospital, if she could make this bath three times or four times. Mother then say, can she take her to home. She was all the time unconscious, there was two more children home, and me the oldest. Doctor allow it, and mother told me that they take her unconscious. They went five kilometres, there was standing a big harvester machine. (Sister) she come she said, "Oh, I know what that is" - they take her home and

mother make cognac baths. She couldn't walk, and I remember I make her toys and play with her. She is five years old, I was seven years old. She come out of it, no sign that she was abnormal. She start to walk.

We went together in school after that summer. Father teach me to read, so I went in second class in primary school. She couldn't read, she went in first class, always was behind. I finished three classes, I took two years. She passed first class, she went on second class. I finished, and I wanted to go to gymnasium. One year when I was third year, because there is not a primary school in every village, it was five or six kilometres away, we must find some place to live. In second year I was, in 1914, my first year. Sometimes we were walking and walking when there is fine weather, but it is cold and snow. It is coming such things this year that I have one brother coming to school with us, Martin, and Salme, the sister who was sick. And coming such sickness, same get in Martin, five days he pass away dead, and after this get the sickness Anna [*see family tree*], the little one at home. She was maybe four years old, younger than Martin, another Martin was later on. Maria was born in 1912 and Peter soon, and after revolution was Martin again - was seven children. All the children was very close, me, after the others. Martin was dead, I remember I was at funeral eight kilometres away. Coming home this little Anna was sick. The lady – the landlord's wife was like a trained sister [*probably Felsher*]. Mother called her. After this they take Anna to Oepochka. The hospital send her back. In five days she too pass away. I think, now, it was diphtheria, nothing else is so quick. Mother was frightened, she separated Salme and me and put us in village where we went to school. They took another little one who was sick to one military doctor in Sebezh, very good. Military doctor, understand very well. Maria went to Sebezh military doctor he said "I give you medicine, this mixture, and when is coming out this rash, after this mixture. Give all children this mixture, and they will be safe. Mother gave this mixture, for us, gave to this lady who was looking after us. I remember I was all full this rash, and Salme, Maria too was safe, and Peter I don't know whether Peter get sick or not. We all, all right was. Mother be crying for three years, could not forget these two children who be dead.

One day when I was third year I went to another school where is my uncle, mother's younger brother Auguste [*Lena's age*]. This school was not so far from grandfather's place, so I living in grandfather's house. My uncle was in third year of school too. Sometimes when there was bad weather, father asked if I could live in the school where was teacher. I lived in a room with the brooms, and there was our neighbour's daughter (Duna Lupa), who has privilege, from a big farm one kilometre away. I remember when night come, I was in this dark room, and through keyhole I look, and saw that nice room, lamp shade, she lived together with teacher in room. I remember, I was not allowed to go in this nice living, and I was so – no not upset - feeling, why was I not so rich I could be together with teacher and this girl, my friend and my neighbour? Her surname Lupa [*The Lupa family were almost certainly rich peasants, in Soviet usage Kulaks. Lena does not say what became of them.*] I remember this incident. After when we finished, we went to make exams for gymnasium, and

she was not so good, as like me was. Father had this dream to give children education. He saved his money, this was not revolution, this 1915-1916. We went and - it was 1915 - I passed and she passed, it was the same mark. One was taken, I was not taken, because she had more privilege, I was poor I was peasant, I was not taken. And father thinking there was in Oepochka this private teacher who had private school, only teach children to get ready for gymnasium. Was very popular was this Raznowski, and my father went to this teacher and said, so and so, my daughter not taken into gymnasium and she has lost one year, and can you teach her in one year, so that she can go in second year - I was eleven years, it was important. She said, "I have nothing to tell you now, that I can teach so far. Can you bring your girl to me. I will be giving exams to her and look at her". Father take me, I remember she asked me many questions, and so, I answered, and she told father, "Yes, I can teach her so she can pass exams very good, I am not sure that she will be every year in gymnasium (pass) straight through. When I will be teach her that she goes into first year, not second - she will pass every year". Such teachers I think you can not find now. She was very good. We lay on bed, saying 12 by 12 - 13 by 13. All of this by memory. I learned very well. I did very well and I was taken for first year, this Duna Lupa was in second year because she had gone before. I make all very good exams, but she was privileged. I never repeat a year. I go straight through the ten years of gymnasium. When coming the revolution, it was 8 years before, father was a little upset, they make it ten years. I was very good in gymnasium. Special mathematics, only Russian language course, I was in the middle because I spoke Estonian at home. Teachers was very happy, on my reports they write good things. The chemistry teacher said "Always you had the knowledge". History teacher wrote, "We must tell you, you have done very well, we wish you get what you want and we will recommend you for medicine".

I work when I finish this gymnasium. I come to home. Father was worried I have not job. Last year I had done special lessons for accountants, I didn't want to take lessons for teaching, because language was not so good. When I coming home, father look everywhere for job in cooperative shop. This was revolution. I was twenty-two then, this time was many times I working like mad in home - we have then got this land. *[Under the N.E.P. old estates were broken up and small amounts of land were divided between peasants. Martin was given 5 acres. The co-operatives had existed before the Revolution but under Chyanovsky, Lenin's director of Agriculture, they were allowed to continue. Later when the compulsory Kolhkozy came they were discontinued.]* I must in the fields be working in the summer. We have not enough food you know, meat or so. We make drinks of berries, and mushrooms, I get in forest. Mother is drying mushrooms for winter time, she then pickle it or fry it. After in winter she fry it with potatoes, so they have food for all the winter, and drinks from the berries. I remember one time she told me "Lena, how can we live without you?" We find berries in various places, sometimes Salme come too. Such was life, you know, from early morning to eight o'clock. Three o'clock in summer is light and eight o'clock we are home with basket of mushrooms or berries *[3 a.m. to 8 p.m.]*. In summer time we bring these berries which grow in moss, cranberries. Blue berries, too, all the time. Sometimes we pick up cranberries and mother make some juice in winter time.

Civil war

There in this village school where I go - it was civil war. I remember blood coming from mouth and so after was this typhus - I remember these years. Plenty soldiers go - you don't know which soldiers, white soldiers, red soldiers. So mixed it was, one was coming, one was going, another is coming and staying in places. Mother and father don't know - how long, which area. The soldiers take horses and food, you cannot go against, because they have these weapons, a very unpeaceful time. Sometimes when father brings us food, they stop him and look at everything. Father for long time has revolver for safety, and he take with him when he go to food bring, and all times I would be hiding somewhere, always watching and looking. If they find he has this revolver he would be put in jail. Very hard life was, dangerous time, plenty vandals.

I remember one time we was in grandfather's place, men come and we always hiding in cellars. My auntie with the children, plenty bandits come all the time. Such was life - then this typhus come, not soap, not nothing. My mother make from ash some fluid, all clothes were covered with lice. She is always boiling with ash, in our family nobody get sick from this typhus. Mother always boiling every clothes, many lice on body, not in hair. Mother always boiling in kettle. And around, every family two or three people were sick, there was death. In 1919 was this typhus. In the place where I lived then (at primary school) one girl come from Leningrad and stayed in the other room. She gets sick with this lice. In all villages people always get typhus.

After the civil war

When I finish gymnasium there was New Economic Policy. Father find me job as accountant, I walked, it was fifteen kilometres, but I live there and only weekends come home, because mother washing for me [*Lena used to walk these 15 kilometres, and after the weekend walk back again.*]. The first year they have not got horse, first money I get I give to them, they get horse. This family bring one colt to us, his name was Bambo, and in university when I come home the Kolkhos ask for horse, we must give it to them [*When the Kolkhos came all the means of production were taken over from the peasant. This included farm animals.*]. This horse was three years old then. They taking all our land, making this commune for Kolkhos. No-one want to go in Kolkhos. They taking advice from my father [*because they considered Martin an educated man*] they is always coming home, and my sister very frightened that father would something wrong say and he would be taken away, taken to jail, killed by communists [*the Politburo hoped the peasants would voluntarily join the Kolkhos. In the end it became compulsory*]. Peasant farmers were sitting on the floor and listening to father talking. Government wanted take this land away, and people work together. They were not happy these people, they are coming to my father.

I was in university, my brother was in technology college, sister Maria was in teachers college. It is not near home, it is in different cities. My brother Peter was engineer in big city for bridges. Maria

was in the same city (Vilnius). He was very talented. Maria started teaching, he went to another city to learn civil engineering. Local council from government was coming, my father said Martin (son) if you not go to school you will be taken in this Kolkhos. The local government said to my father if you not go first in this Kolkhos, your children will be taken out of school, they be not allowed to learn. My father thinking, "What is life, my life there is finished". Next day he went to Kolkhos. This local government left with him only one cow, everything is gone, only one cow. He was not Kulak. Always they [*the Party, the government*] wanted all to go to Kolkhos. When my father went to Kolkhos all is the other peasants, all is going to Kolkhos. The first Kolkhos in this village, after is compulsory Kolkhos. In '27 in '29 all was in Kolkhos. All who was not in Kolkhos, they call them Kulaks. My mother told me, "You can not know, people cried in winter time, all people compulsory taken, many people cry, all is terrible. If they was not in Kolkhos, they say, "He is rich, they take him away". When I coming on holiday my mother told me "You cannot imagine how it was, terrible. People taken to station where they go, we do not know in cattle wagons too". All is taken, food - clothes, people crying, all the villages was full of crying. People whose grandfather, great grandfather had this land, they give this land away, people not allowed taking nothing, taking their little children, where they go, we do not know". Mother was crying, my father was five years in Kolkhos.

One day I was coming, perhaps I am doctor then. I come visiting, my mother say, "I didn't write to you, we have so bad time. Was coming this meeting to make Kolkhos, these people went with my father into Kolkhos. This meeting had attorneys, and people from NKVD and these people said "Martin Wallas should be kicked out of Kolkhos. He is Kulak, he is rich, because his children learning, one is doctor, one is engineer, one is teacher". Officials of communist party they told this to. "He should be sent to Siberia". The Official said, "You should be proud that such people have children who are doctors and teachers, in your Kolkhos you have educated people, not in other Kolkhos". Then all is quiet. Mother said, "We sat in another room we was shaking so. We so shaking that any minute, shaking and crying". Salme was always with father and mother. When is coming something, such meetings, mother was giving all dinner, but all those people, such was their psychology, that they did this to my family. They are jealous, after this was all right for my father. Only one week before second world war is coming I have letter from my father. He write, "I am so old I can no longer move, give taxation, they give it in kind I can no longer give eggs and roosters. You take Salme, will you take us, that we cannot more afford to give things to Kolkhos. I want to take mother, Salme wanted to go to brother who was engineer, Maria was then married to an agrome (agronomist) no he was agriculturalist. He was teacher in gymnasium where Pushkin was exiled, I went once while he was there to see statue. Martin was living with sister while he finished school. He was very talented, he finished very early, seventeen years he was. Not get a job, university cannot take him he is too young. He wanted a job. He went to university in Pskov he finished just one day before war. I got from him, letter, that he had finished university and he had been sent to Karelia, near Finland, and was lecturer in a high school, and was deputy - assistant principle of high school. It is last letter what I got from him. He is very young, he is born about twenty [The second Martin was born in 1920. Lena received this letter in 1941.], he was twenty-one. All my family went to high school. All my fathers money was

gone when revolution came. He had put some money hidden behind the boards behind the dresser, but such money had Katerina's head. All is gone. He saved during life in younger years, he saved money for education of children, but all is gone. During the years in the Kolkhos, Salme is working very hard. When I come to visit them, she was out working every morning three o'clock. She looked after cow. She had not time to wash legs or feet on so she worked till darkness, she coming in with dirty legs. She was milking twenty or thirty cows, and taking them to field. She must make every thing clean, and do all field work. After when it was evening, they come again for milking. Afterwards, ten o'clock or eleven she come to bed, no, not to bed, but on sofa in middle room. She fall like log, she sleep, she is still dirty. My father write to me many times, "I cannot looking for this Salme, she is so hard working, and she may soon be finished for this work".

INTERVIEW II – May 5 1982

Family in Estonia

For one dressmaker, Mum sent Salme, because it was very good job. Mum had sewing machine when we lived in one village. She made dresses for everybody, for self, because mum little bit understand it. Only for kids your know. She wanted that she (Salme) be properly good dressmaker. I was many years ahead when she reached this first class gymnasium - I must be over three or four years in gymnasium because she (Salme) was always sick even when we go in primary school together. All the children sicknesses I first get. When I get the sickness I was not so sick, I remember even this measles, was not in bed. Even scarletina I get. Mum take me I remember, very was it the winter time, very snowy it was, city was very far. Mum take me, wrapped me in blankets in furs or so, and take me to city of Sebez. Another Salme is, and she catch from me this sickness, she is very sick. She gets this scarletina we thinking that she will be die. All is - was not those doctors, you know, only felshers. You know what felsher is? It is man educated like a 'sister'. I think you would call felsher was not finished university, only middle was. He would only replace doctor when was not doctor in a village. He was half trained, woman was a felsheretcha, like midwife. Midwife is like felsher, only midwife is more trained, special like sister for doctors, to take babies. And she (Salme) was very sick and this felsher coming, thinking she would die. Felsher making injection. I don't know what injection, I was only little one. Anyway she is coming out from this sickness. Always was the same, I remember I was never so sick like Salme. Was one Latvian felsher I remember coming. Later on when I started working and boarding, I live with her daughter. She was not wanting to learn, it was hard to her (Salme) maybe it was her sickness you know (brain inflammation) *[In a recent discussion of Salme's illness, Lena told me that she had lately been giving much thought to this illness, and she had concluded that Salme had almost certainly had an undiagnosed poliomyelitis.]* Father was very glad when I taught her. Everything what she had doing, special when she was making this thread, weaving and everything, she is always singing and father thinking maybe he wanted to put her to conservatorium, because he was musical, playing on violin. Violin was Stradivarius, he wanted someone in children be same.

Mother took her couple of years, maybe, she find one (dressmaker). She put her to this dressmaker. This dressmaker teach another girl and she, her and another girl, learnt other things. Big girls they were sixteen or seventeen years. This dressmaker was married and she had one child. Maybe one year she (Salme) was there, she learned a little bit, not much. They talking such things, I talking to her, they was all against men and she, when somebody wanted to marry her, she was against. In village when she was 18 or 19 years old, I remember was coming – she was engaged. They making one coming to parents home, and she was bride coming, she was engaged. And next day she should be coming to registry office to make this document to say she be marrying this man who take her to his home. And she went with him, and after half way, she change her mind. She said, "No, I don't want you - I don't like you, take me home. Now I don't want married to you", I don't know

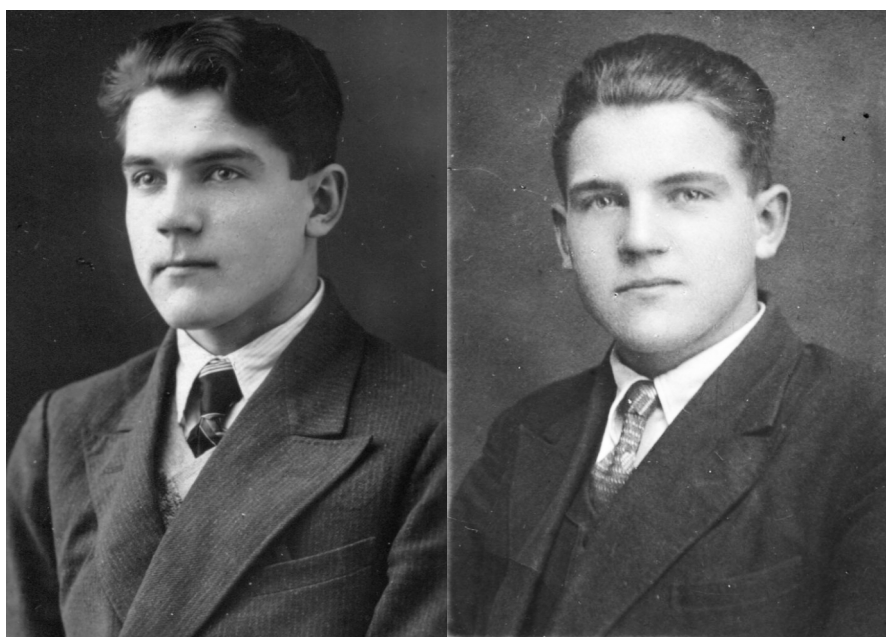
then, I was not home, maybe I was at university or something. He said, "Why?" "I don't want be married before Lena, because I am younger", she find reason, before Lena marry. "After when Lena marry, I will marry, when she be not married I be not jumping ahead of her". When I talking to her she was talking about the men not being good things. She learnt from this teacher. The teacher was married, but I said, "Who told you", and she said that "All people who was married say men no good". Such things - Mum was worried and everybody worried, father was always worried about her. She argued with father, and father said she cannot be quiet. She is always teasing him. She was frightened, maybe, that all the peasants coming and taking from him orientation. Anyway maybe it is not important. She is never married, so much as I know she is not married.

And I was married, and I coming home when Nellie* (Olena) was born, I ask her (Salme) to come for three months, and after because I lived near border of Poland (Belarus) and always NKVD don't allow it from another province, coming in this military zone. Because it was not far border many people not lived there, only for temporary. Still was, because Poland was not Russia, until after second war. Anyway she come for three months because father write me a letter. She was so hard worker, she working day and night and always, she is frightened because something happen to father and mother, only she was one home with parents and she working the same as everybody on this collective farm. She was Stakhonovite, that is the one who is best worker. They give sometime little bit more of something when was celebration. Some little bit material, everything was short, you know, something present give to her for good work, grain, rye because our district growing only rye grain not wheat. Only in summer wheat be, make sowing in the spring, rye you must sow in autumn, and they come up when green. They put in autumn. They just coming out, and after comes snow, plenty rain coming is not good, maybe its gets rotten. When frost coming, is snow. All winter lie under snow, when spring come there is plenty, snow is melted, it start to grow again. It is very fast, and by end of July will be ready, and start to collect this kernel. This was when father private. My father private about 1918, collectives start to organise about 1929. **[Lena told Olena she called her 'Nellie' after the 1905 popular song 'Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nellie', which Lena liked. During the dark times of hardship and terror marking the USSR in the 1930s the song would have raised hopes of better days ahead. But it would be many years before the Australian sun shone brightly on Lena and her children.]*

Twenty-nine, 1929, I was at university. When I went to university my father still was private. I must all my documents give to university to show who I am. If I was rich, I maybe not allowed to make exams. Because we was poor, only one horse, is young colt, and this, when I working I bought one colt. All my money when I was working (as accountant), I collected all money and gave to my parents. They wanted horse, you remember horse was taken when he go for military service (this was pre-revolution, horse was stolen) afterwards when he had no money, they work one very old horse, much money you know. *[Martin went to Lithuania leaving Julia pregnant. He was gone until the end of December. His horse was stolen. Without his horse he managed to get as far as Vilnius where the Cheka gave him his rail fare to get home. Lena had to get in the harvest.]* When was winter they take horse, when I was at gymnasium to bring food for me. They complained that horse was very old and could not too often bring this food for me. I soon finish the ten years. Mother can buy some lambs,

wool from them make everything clothes, they made linen, put this linen, and after we take it to water and afterwards brush, and make it in to materials, clothes. We cannot buy it, no money. When I was working, this way they get little bit richer, I put first money when I was working to get good shoes. One Latvian coming to where I live, boarding with my felsher, felsher's daughter, and coming another daughter who was married to Latvian, and she bring plenty things. I working August time, I bought first my shoes and then my blouse and my skirt. *[This married daughter was living in Leningrad where shops still sold some goods. Here a picture of Lena in her new clothes was shown. Up to that time she had never had any 'store clothes'.]* I working overtime for this money.

In 1927 I went to university, for this my auntie (Maria) my mother's sister, she was doctor. She working in tuberculosis sanitarium. She invited me go to her for holiday. It is near Black Sea *[again pictures show, of auntie, and Salme as little ones]*. "You see how peasants look, my grandfather, it is my father, is mum. Salme is on the hand. This is my grandma, this is my grandpa. This is brother, and this one is Maria. And this is Olga, Olga mother sister is. Elizabeth *[Elizabeth was Lena's godmother]* is not here. This younger brother Ivan, in Estonia call him Jan. This is my brother who was born in 1920, Martin *[this is the second Martin.]* Here I am in university group.



Lena's brothers Martin (left) and Peter

When Kolkhos come my grandfather is dead. I remember he passed through our village to this Opochna hospital, doctor say his condition is gangrene of lungs. It was cancer of lungs, I think so now, because always too much smoking, sometimes drinking. He had a good time was. He think it gangrene, I think it was cancer. He died before collective farm. When it start to organise this collective farm, all is brother, this Jan/Ivan, was sent to White Sea on the top (Beloye Mora – White Sea). There

is not anything, ice and snow. All, they call Kulaks they send to White Sea, or Siberia or so. Another, this oldest this Alexander, who is married, was sent the same way to Operation Volga, was working there. They connected Volga River with Moscow River, Moscow–Volga canal. They work like slaves. This wife was also thrown away from their home. Mum told me even this grandma, she comes to my mother because my mother was in Kolkhos for half year. When she comes to my mother, mother give to share, and coming was this boss for this collective, said to mother, "If you take this woman in your home, tomorrow, the same for you be thrown away".

My grandma, she was maybe 80 years old, she was older than me now. She went to son's wife far from this, her side of home. In village, one room, she had two children. They allowed her [*Alexander's wife was also called Lena*] to live this room, because she was very good, she learned in St. Petersburg before it become Leningrad, she learned dressmaker, this is Alexander's wife. She was very good dressmaker. She can everything do, costumes, head [*wig?*] and beautiful dresses. She just put the material on the table, make design, and make it up. She finished very good school in St. Petersburg, making dresses for elite people, and she was very good. Sometimes she make for me a dress. I take her mum's wedding dress, we take her all of mum's dresses, good dresses [*these dresses must have dated from the days when Martin was a contractor on estates*], material was very good. She say if you help me with children, I make for you dress. Sometimes I lived there for one week, for five days, for three days how long I can, because I have home the same work. Children was very weak children, you know. Always was diarrhea, or dyspepsia. She went to doctor and nothing get. I think it was not because it was unhygienic, because they was rich, had plenty clothes, had everything. She made very good home. This children was very weak, always home. I remember one child they bring, when I work in university first year, bring child Voronazh, because there were good doctors. And speak to me and so and so. She was girl, she die there, because something was great damage. I don't know. Nobody can help her, she died in there in Voronazh, and she went with other child home. It was maybe 1925 when my first year was. After, what happened I do not know. Grandmother went to Lena, Alexander's Lena, I don't know what village is, in district of Pskov. They lived first near the river where the mill was, not far away – not Belarus. Later on they take part of the Pskov district and make it part of Belarus, and part from another from Pskov, they make Kallinan, another district. Pskov, always change. When Lenin was alive it is all right you know [*Lenin died early in 1924.*]. Famine coming with Stalin, after then all is changed, all is worse. He killed my interest in politics. I just don't like to run the risk you know. Later on I read. We was all outside politics, only we do our work. This is way it is all right when Stalin coming.

University and first work as a doctor

I went university in 1927, I finished in 1931 - five years we learn, for one year, for two years. Because we have not holidays, all through we work. They wanted soon as possible doctors. They wanted doctors coming cut shorter. Last two years they make for one year. Other years it was normal. After

coming this collective they needed plenty doctors, they wanted show propaganda. Every collective, maybe, have doctor or so, this gives the feeling that everything is clean and they wanted all together, and everything is doctors soon as possible. We worked all time, no holidays, we wanted practical. Summer time we went to big hospital to practice in some cities. We study day and night - four years altogether - before was six years, they pressed. I don't know how it is now. They pressed, we have not holiday. I never go to home. In holidays we worked in hospitals. Winter holidays, Christmas and Easter holiday we was not allowed anywhere go; all worked through. When I finished they sent me to Belarus straight away, because this country was behind, it was new republic, you know. They wanted send me for Siberia. Then they wanted send me to Pakistan, Middle Asia, Tashkent. I start again make application, I cannot go far from city – Siberia, was nine people go to Vladivostok. Five was go to Tashkent. I start again make application, I was running everywhere and I heard some was sent to Belarus. Then I put another application, I said it (Belarus) was just on border where my parents live. They take me and I was very glad. They changed me and I was sent to Belarus *[a new republic]*.



Lena's parents Julia and Martin Wallas

When I come to Belarus, first I visited my parents, they are not far from station where I must go to Belarus. I was waiting on this station, from this station I must go 25 kilometres, I must go to village. And I sitting on this station, and went to find one man who take me because it was October–last days of September. It was very rainy and dirty and I sit in station, come one young man and asked me "Can you look my things, I must go somewhere". I said "Why not". He start to ask me where I going. I said "I finished university, medical university, and I sent to here to go 25 kilometres". He said "When you sent there you never come out of this village - that village, there is not transport, there is nothing, border of Latvia, or something like, and you be such young person and you will be finish your life in this village".

I said "What I must do". He was engineer from metallurgy. It was very damp, it is land which is very wet. Water come out from this land, he must make this canal. Taking first from earth this very good burning turf [*probably peat*]. They put this for drying, and in winter like very good coal. Belarus very low lying and they get to some very good land, and for this he make canal. Water go, draining this water, and what was left on the top, very much this turf, and they make for city for factory. The same said me, "I go to Minsk", the same was capital. "You go with me and they give you another direction. I been to this place, and I liked this place. The same with you, not go to other place. Be straight away, not wait for transport for 25 kilometres. You go straight in capital city in Minsk". It is another part of Belarus. It is all right to go.

We must go through fields, through orchards, through many, many big cities, till we reach Minsk. I was sent to this place like children's doctor. Kindergarten, and little children, looking after, like a consultant. They wanted first organise such children, was nothing, you know. I went to Minsk, and I went first to this big medical, like education centre, control for all republic. I told that when I went to university, we told that first we must spend at least one year for children's sickness. I just talking, explain to this lady who was secretary, and coming behind me was one man. "What you talking, we need it, I take you, what you talking?" I said "We are told first we must specialise in little children for one year". "We needed doctors. I take you, and we go now from this". Five girls had been sent from our university to Belarus. I asked another girl, and another girl the same coming here. I was stupid, still we can go together, and explain. They left us two months going to children's clinic. Then they take me near a village one hospital, no doctor, he put me in hospital. I was very naive. He was working in centre district, he take me in horse and carriage, fifteen kilometres from this centre. Where I come to this hospital, I must first find a room for me where I will live. Then I go to one chemist. I must say, mostly people were Jewish [*Belarus appears to have many Jewish people, a little more than 50% of the population. It would seem that pre-revolution because of its position on the Polish border it was a refuge for Jews. They were not in ghettos and seemed to escape pogroms. However, even in White Russia Jews were never allowed to own land, so were forced into business activity at one level or another.*]. The same man who take me, he was Jew too, and chemist, the place where I was one night, the same was Jew. I see only little town, like Clare. He recommended me you go, there is one old wife and man, the same Jew, because mostly was, all was mostly, when it first allowed, settled with Jew this part of Russia. Belarus was the place where these people lived very good together, very nice was. I said all my life I worked for these people, mainly in Belarus. I got this big room, they lived in the big room. They was very nice people. They had two sons. They was in Germany, one sister worked, was something in big city in Kiev, and they must help. The sons who was in Germany they send money, mostly was German in marks. They helped one another very well. Always send something for father and mother. And one daughter, two daughters maybe more. I was only one night with the chemist. They found me this room.

When I went to hospital, it was only one kilometre away from this. Surgery was in this town. Surgery was not possible, if you look at this you would be frightened. When I went to hospital, the kitchen was without floor, there is two or three patients, not doctors, it was such mess, they could not

station anyone there. All is new, not doctors, not anything and those felshers they no good without direction. I was only doctor, only one doctor coming, sometimes, was old doctor. Maybe she was sixty years old, very good doctor. After when I come, after seeing clinic big city I was shocked. I start, very few people, then was people coming to doctor. They coming plenty, sometimes was fifty, sixty, was hundred people. I remember one day one hundred and twenty people, all in surgery I was looking after epidemic, small pox and everything. During these three, four years what I was there I don't know what I did. Then I asked to send to me another doctor to help, so I can go surgery, and I must every day go. Was not big you, know, was four bed for women who was for birth, and 20 beds was others. For these women was all the time miscarriage, and all the time comes another lady, this doctor. She was very glad because she accidentally come one time, two times in a month, sometimes one time in week, because this felsher nothing to do. Sometimes you know this miscarriage running blood, and maybe all this blood coming may die. She helped me, and she teach me very much. I remember one woman say I bring her, was winter, 15 kilometres, bleeding all the time. I get her to hospital and stop this blood coming. She was there one month because she was very weak and couldn't go, and I took everything that was possible and she was coming out after one month. She wanted to get something to eat get (for family) but I asked her to stay as long possible. I went to visit her after one month to home. Village was busy, because other villagers was coming, it was like market. She told me "Doctor thank you very much, if you not coming, not helped, I would be nothing, lying on the bed. Now I can go to see my children and husband". For many times such one was. Yes, sometimes I give transfusion. Sometimes, more often, give glucose drip. I was twenty-seven years old, not married not anything; not man, nothing, only work. I had two felshers and two young nurses I start to ask organisation, they sent to me one doctor, then another, there was three doctors coming because when I asked I went to centre. I said I cannot work under such conditions. This old lady was working, who had helped me, was frightened because her brother was sent to Siberia. He has owned an estate, under the Tsar, he had his own little hospital on the estate, she was so popular, and after when collective start [1928-29]. He appears to have been a Kulak, if he lasted this long – not a Dvoranye [*a large land holder, often a member of the nobility*], brother was sent to Siberia, hospital was taken from her, and because there was not another doctor they kept her. Anyway I don't know, this is more politics. First year she worked with me, after, something happened she was sick, she was Olga Victorovna. She was sometimes very funny, when raining, it was not close, and sometimes she must be walking one kilometre from village to hospital, and sometimes was this little dog, very strange, she put skirt over his head, for an umbrella. Always she was frightened, she do not do something wrong, when she didn't know me she was always not trusting me. When she know that she can trust me we could be very open, and we had nice time, and she teach me.

INTERVIEW III – May 26 1982

University

In 1929 we were very short of this food, too [1928-1929 was the period of first Kolkhozy, in 1930 along with the liquidation of the Kulaks, joining the Kolkhozy became compulsory for middle and poor peasants]. We eat everything, bread. 1927–1928 was all right you know because I live with Auntie. I eat with Auntie. In 1928, or end of 1927, I get this stipendium. I take one half and give to Auntie. 1929 was worse and worse. And in 1930 there was nothing to eat. We looked for this food. Sometimes mother send me some food. There was not enough, you know, it was awful. Bread we get one kilo, one and a half kilo, I don't know how much, we eat mostly bread, you know. Then we go to this student restaurant. They will have not too much. Sometimes it was horse meat, but mostly some soup, pea soup or barley soup mostly. No fruit, we have no fruit. I was very well and strong. Sometimes I went to Auntie, I had uncle, Auntie's youngest brother [*Auguste, the same age as Lena. It was he with whom she went food gathering when she lived with her grandfather.*]. He has stayed with Auntie, but he had many conflicts with Auntie's husband. He was such the same, liked easy life, you know. After revolution there was plenty everything, not too much learn. Then he find one woman, very nice she was. She was telephonist, brother was nothing. She working connecting telephones for city. She take him, and after he is married four months to her, he went to Industrial Institute, and he finished this Industrial Institute, was industrial engineer. Before Auntie was troubled with him. He doesn't want a flat, after he was married there was born one child. He had a good job, telephonist rent accommodation, and sometimes I went to them, if they want to go out, they have this child, I help with this. I go there sometimes, something to eat.



Lena (right), 1928



Lena when a student

I worked very hard learn 1929 to 1931. I finished in 1931, worked hard in the summers, at clinics in the country, and all over Voronazh. This program which was maybe six years, we finish this in four and a half years. Very hard conditions. Now it is unbelievable, when you see these students. I think they have it nice and good, and they don't want to learn. When we knew such conditions and such life, we didn't have student life. We was only concentrate for this, thinking that someone was paying for you, we must not stop, we must learn. Something was wrong because after, some professors, many

professors was banished. Ideology of the old professors was different, you know. They (the Party) wanted to change everything, how we study, even the system. They were very famous professors, and they wanted a difference, you know. I think the west cannot understand what is happened. It was the same system, still it was old professors, when I was there. After I heard it was different, many banished, they don't know where they banished. They are coming at night time and taking them, where they taken nobody knows. Coming new professors, communist party professors who was in the party. Old professors don't want to go, when they go, they must be off the list. Auntie's husband was all right, he was not in party, but he was very prestigious. They needed young professors. He was then docent [*in Russia a docent had the status of a Reader*], anatomy professor was very old, he wanted to get this professorship. I remember sometimes he give me job. He went with this professor, somewhere on Black Sea to catch fish, or animals, I don't know. He wanted this lymphatic system to learn. He put this injection in the back of my arm, should be an injection straight into the gland. He had not all the time patients. He said "Lena, come here". I remember one night, all night, I must give him this arm. And he get this professorship, he had many troubles. Maybe later, I don't know, he may be Party member, it took long time to get this chair you know. He was always work, and plenty books he wrote about lymphatic system. That was his specialty. I remember when I first go to him, when I must make this anatomy exam, we had books we must learn. In his house he has many books translated into Russian, so big, so big. We had another books for students to study from him. When I come for examination, he asked me to sit down with other students. He asked me such questions what was not in this book that other students read. Other students said, "We do not know this, why you ask Lena this?" "Ah Lena, she live in my house, there are plenty books she must read, this was on my table". I have not time read his books. I must always know more than other students. Some other students was on my side. They said "We don't know this one, why you ask Lena?" I must always know very much better, deeper, maybe it was good for me. Yes, if I had time. I must supply for him what he want for his parties, many things, still I must learn more details than another students, still I must be his slave.

My thesis about 'Woman, and the October Revolution'. You know when there is revolution, after war was for long time, this civil war. When this is coming this revolution, people, and specially young people, they are like budding flowers. Such is life coming, and this was coming after this starvation, and after this was, people different way from the old regime. Tsar's regime is gone. Like in France after the revolution, coming blossom everything. You cannot understand, full of hope, you know, and all is taken to the university, all is wanting to learn something. It was depressing for so long time, that only privileged people can go to university, nobles and rich people who can afford. It was such for young people, plenty hope. The world opened for you, why you not take this when world is open for you. I wanted to go. I take exams for three things, I take exams, in medical, agricultural and veterinary. I wanted to get somewhere I can learn. I went to ministry, and one girl who was there with me said, "You know this university list has three hundred members", there was three thousand that write. Three hundred numbers, my number was 149. The list came saying who is passed and who is taken for university. I was taken for veterinary, but I do not want veterinary. I jumped on train and went to

university, and looked if I had passed exams or not. When I see I passed in medicine, I went to this house where was Auntie. They were making renovations, all was full of building materials. I now asked this doctor, this husband what he liked to eat. I told him I be domestic to him, and I all his cleaning do for him, I everything for him looking for jobs. "What is happening?" he said. I has such energy, I was so happy to get this university (Voronazh) because it was my dream. [*Voronazh was situated on the Don River 2,000 miles from where Lena lived.*] Most of the university staff were Russian, and Russian language was used. Tartu university had affiliation with Voronazh, students could move from one to the other. Maria (Auntie) and her husband had graduated from Tartu in 1922–23, he with a degree, she without. [*Tartu was originally Lit'ev, an old university town in Estonia. Before revolution Estonia was part of Russia; see Appendix III, 'Brief History of Estonia'*].

After just one week I get free travel, free to go home (railway pass - given to students). When I come home my father doesn't believe it, that I pass. He meet me at the railway station, it was seven kilometres from my home. I did not write nothing. He said, "No, poor Lena, you not pass you are coming home". I said, "Daddy I passed!" He doesn't believe, when he sees documents then be believed. He was very happy, very happy was. I wrote my thesis 'Woman, and the October Revolution' (for university entrance) because for me it was easier to write than a scholastic thesis on Pushkin, it was free choice, you know. I wanted to write how I feel – women not go to university, without complication, poor woman, and such fool like I am, I can learn university and everything. I write, I don't know what I write, write just what I thinking. There was many theses. There was 'Woman and the October Revolution', 'Eugene Onegin', 'Pushkin' and 'Leo Tolstoi', you did what you choose. It was part of entry exams. "Character of Lenin" too. If you passed very well all mathematics, and physics too, you were taken for university. We was sitting 3,000.

Prior to and at university

After I finished gymnasium, I was working for two years as accountant in my local district with cooperative. After I think there was plenty of young man who want to marry me, but father doesn't like it, and I like it, he doesn't like it. I write my Auntie, she is living in Moscow at that time, that I was wanting to go to university, and she write, "Please you come ten days, when you come, I will buy for you everything", because I had nothing, no proper shoes, no clothes, mother make me coat from lamb, red wool, yellow wool. I bought shoes when I was working, first shoes I had. Auntie wanted that I be looking like other people, because all money that I earn I must be give to my parents. I showed you picture of the shirt and shoes she get for me. I wore them all the time I was at university. I gave one big picture, and little picture to my father. I wrote to him when I must enter university that I must have little picture for document, because I don't want to pay money to people in Voronazh to take little picture. They sent me big picture, because they don't understand what I want. I must wait, there is not much time, I have no money for photos. Local administration put stamp on, and after I got this picture I must put picture for university, for identity, that I am Lena. I must go to bureau, like here, is

unemployment. I finished my job, I was unemployed I must register. Now is not such things, when I was there, I must register and I get twenty roubles every month. This is unemployment money. I met there one Siberian girl who is working, passing exams, for university, only she wanted to be teacher, and I was medical, We together, so we can learn together. We lived, I with my Auntie, this is in Voronazh, she rented one little place, I think. We together day and night. We drink tea together until seven o'clock in the morning, sometimes, then we sleep couple of hours and again, we worked.

I wanted make entry exams for medicine, agricultural, veterinary. I make application. This was all in Voronazh, not only teacher but medical too, in different faculties. This was different place, and different reactions, this was other time, and we can not go one place, and then another place. It was such time. I told you that I passed. After I went home and told my father, and he was very happy, and afterwards I went back to my Auntie, and I wanted first year to work as an accountant because I wanted the money. Then Auntie tell me, she had two domestic girls, you know, and she will be taking my sister, and I can live with her because Salme working, and I would help her. After six months Salme is alone, she must do the work, before was two. I cannot too much help her because after when I see she is behind, I must take anatomy exam. I cannot manage it, it is too heavy for me, lectures in day time in university, and night time working in anatomy, learning. I cannot do it. I put in for stipendium, and they give me stipendium. I told Salme to write to mother that they will call back Salme. I say to Auntie that she get sick or so, it is too hard for her. She get very cold where she is cooking upstairs. She is always cooking for ten people. There were students in house who were working with docent, there were two boys. She cooking separately for students, and coming always many people for dinner. Weekend parties, too, many coming for shooting and sport. It was heavy life. When I get this stipendium I went this university boarding house. After one year, just one year, somebody put of an application in university office, say my family has plenty land [*once Kulaks were out of favour with the Politburo, sons and daughters of Kulaks were not allowed to attend university*]. I was nearly out from University. I lose my stipendium. I think this was second year of university, and I must write to father that he must send me all these documents, and after everything he send me, I was again all right. I waited two months. The stipendium was thirty roubles a month. [*I asked Lena how she managed without the stipendium for two months. She replied that she always saves some money.*] It was very little but we managed, because there was more food, in university restaurant there was food, it was cheap. We buy not so many clothes. Sometimes mother send me something, and always I like give money to my parents, not much, only little, when I come home for holiday, I like to have some. I only had what I needed.

First year there was plenty of food, 1927, 1928 all right, 1929, 1930 it was very bad. There was not enough meat, we eat sometimes, but always we eat horse meat in university restaurant. In boarding house, in one room lived five or six students. Little rooms there was not very much, two men or two women was in little rooms. Very simple, you know, with these students was self-administration. I was the student who looking after money. Sometimes students clean, sometimes woman come to clean. I don't remember very well, organisation was by self. We went out to eat. We, all students, study in same room, all five of us in same room. Was sometimes there was room in university library

for study. University library was not only for medicine, there was all students working the same in different courses.

I remember one time I lived in little cottage. In this little cottage there was one big room. There was six or seven students, one who was married. He was last year of architecture. He had this little child, and I was looking after child. Once Kulaks were out of favour with the Politburo, sons and daughters of Kulaks were not allowed to attend university because she (wife) wanted husband who was having last exams to go to country. Students laugh because I looking very well after child. "How you will be when you have your own child?" I remember this. They write me the first year I was married. They were still at university, because I was earlier, I was finished. Another before me wanted to be doctor, one was learning to be midwife, one was one year only. They write "Now we see how you be looking after own child". I was finished, but we kept connected, you know, because we was always living together. We say we will be never forgetting each other, and afterwards we forget everything.

I had other friends too, Irma, Natasha and Yuri. Irma and Natasha, they live separate. Yuri also, he went with Irma to high school. Yuri, we called him, his name was George, was very proud of Irma. He was proud of Natasha too. Irma was not medical. She was other course. We were always together; I show you pictures of us together. All was tall. Irma was very elegant, I was contradiction of Irma. Yuri was the same, perhaps not so elegant as she. I was the same students are now, not very elegant. Irma has so long hair, was very thick. She put two plaits round her head. She was first year university, with me. They were very nice looking girls. I showed you. They was richer people, you know. We were always together. They have one more year to finish when they disappeared from university. Maybe they say dangerous things, such was the time, you know. I never knew where they went. Later, I heard they had gone to big city. They have jobs like secretary, like accountant, office jobs. *[Lena has told me since that they had to leave university because their fathers were Kulaks.]*

Belarus – initial work

Anyway, we must work hard, not time for much. We must all the time work, because our course was compressed. Different these other groups, easier to learn and quicker to get. Such was organisation, because they needed doctors so much, as soon as possible, I think teachers was not so. Sometimes peoples was behind and we must help them. Doctors was sent everywhere, special new republics, Ukraine, Belarus, and plenty there got to Caucasus, and this Tashkent which was middle Asia. I was first when I was finished, to be sent to Siberia. Then I asked, I said that I have old parents, I must be near parents. Then they told me, they send me to Tashkent, and I was worried, and again I said "Maybe some place nearer than this". Then they send me to Belarus. I remember one girl student, was in practical clinics with me, they send her to Tashkent. After I hear from some one connected with this girl, that after she was killed. I don't know whether it is true or not, but they said it was true. I went straight away to Belarus, to Minsk *[Minsk is the capital of Belarus]*. I was there (in Belarus) till the start

of second world war. It is all Belarus, where I was. The Dnieper Basin is nearer the Ukrainian border. From one place, to next place (Mosyr) where I work in one big factory, which made materials for furniture.

Belarus – when married

Later when I was living with my husband, I find very nice place in the same city. Another doctor was there, and she must be moving to another place. She knew my situation and she helped me. I wanted to go to this place near the water. She tell me where I must go and ask. I write to my sister and Salme coming. I went to this place, where there was administration, and asked I might go. It was very hard for me to get this place because there was very nice accommodation, everything very good, very good job. This Dr Wuchinka, he told me "I will be good help to you", because I was friendly to his wife and daughter, because she was being transferred to nearer administration centre, nearer him. It was promotion too, you know. When I went to factory, I take little room, and another room, because there was no accommodation, everyone want accommodation. All houses or so, very seldom. Sometimes people, who had long lived there, were better. This place was Mosyr, by the River Pripyat. It is near the Ukrainian and Polish border. This River Pripyat coming from Poland. It is very swampy, summer time you go there, you will all go down, when it is frozen you can walk over it. When it is coming early spring all is flooded. My administration was all the same, all rivers. I was only doctor for this Pripyat [*Mosyr is in the Pripyat Marshes*]. I was doctor there for all ships, and all these people who ferried the River Pripyat. I only doctor for this. All is people who is looking after this river, cleaning this river. All ships that is coming, all the workers, I must see. This Pripyat is 100 miles from Poland. In Pripyat, another river is going in, this is Pina, the city is Pinsk. Halfway is in Poland, half in Belarus. I have accommodation. I have two rooms and kitchen, all is very good.

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Belarus – when married (continued)

I had my own room, big sitting room, and kitchen. I sometimes put the children to sleep in sitting room, sometimes in my room. Sometimes we eat in the kitchen, sometimes in sitting room, sitting room the same as dining room, like here. We were very happy we had two rooms for house, and kitchen. Everybody wanted this place very much. I work there long time, till the war started. It was five years, more. Then again I was, later. Altogether I was there ten years nearly. Twenty years I was doctor before I coming to Australia, eighteen years, nineteen years. I was in Belarus eighteen years and three years I was in camp, a doctor, just the same, in camp in the American zone. I was doctor in Czechoslovakia in territory which Germany take, then a protectorate (Sudetenland) Germany taking Czechoslovakia, the way Russia take countries now. When I coming here in 1949, from 1931 to 1949, nineteen years, 18.5 years I had worked as a doctor. I got this job in waterways in Mosyr when Edward was 3.5 years.

Belarus – war years

My husband was killed very soon, early in the war, in 1941. Some people come, he was mobilised. He coming my place, because he was in other place, far away. *[Lena has sent her husband to live with his mother - Lena will not give the name of the place. She sent him there when he was once again, in Mosyr, in trouble with the NKVD. She supplied him with whatever money he needed to live. She thought it safer that he did not attempt to practise law.]* Because mobilisation was in our city, he coming to say goodbye. There was many thousand people altogether must go. I don't know, they walking through my place and gone, and after I don't know how many people, because there was so much chaos. Because during this year Germany coming one way, others going other way. We don't know where we were. Nobody was care about us, and when war is come administration give me one motor boat and give one man that I go little further, go in Ukraina. This is called Chernigov, electronic place, hydraulic or something. This city not big city, there was one doctor, not the same as was water transport doctor. I stay with him. I see that he don't like me stay. Then I went to my patient, who is sometimes coming to my surgery. They was very friendly, give the children strawberries and so.

Then I go back to Mozyr, some weeks after. Many military people coming, moving somewhere. Nobody know what is going on, and people not so friendly, Ukrainian people you know. Then one time I went to River station. I ask one ship, one little ship, I said, "Where you going? Oh we must take something from Mozyr". Maybe one week, when I coming to this place, because I coming first time in motor boat. I take something with me, the children too. We went on little ship at night, because it was not very nice, all this fire and shooting was. All is quiet at night, but I see this fire, coming after

shooting, you know. I don't know, it was really such unpleasant. But it was very nice night when I reach this little city. Very pretty this little city, just on the border of Ukrainia (Chernigov) part of the Dnieper Delta. This doctor was not so friendly, you know. They very frightened, they don't like other people. I went again to River Station. They said we go back to Mozyr, yes, you can go too. I very happy, Germany not yet taking Mozyr, still was Russian. I went quick and brought my things and children, and we was loaded on this ship. Little ship, like other ship. There was not so many, about forty of fifty, and the people who run the ship. And we went the city down to Mozyr, and when we reach small island, about the middle of the trip, we get this big storm. We was nearly sinking. River is very wide, was very big storm, one moment people would go to side of ship, and captain calling out, "Go to other side of ship", make balance you know, and people running in a panic. It is not long, just coming big clouds, and now raining. Storm not last long, and we were saved. This was autumn, August or September. When we get back to this city, NKVD was there, "Why you coming back" asked me, "Why doctor coming back". I said, "I heard that is hospital still here, I coming back". Then I ask what is happening. They say a couple of days before administration go with big ship far into inside of Russia. I ask them to take me, they said you can go on other ship. They didn't take me, all this Water Administration people was gone. I was left behind with children. There was nowhere to go. This little ship go back again, they must supply things, I don't know I can't remember. I said where will I keep myself, because in this city all the doctors know me very well. The hospital is still in Mozyr, city hospital, not water transport. The front was very near, they shooting all the time near Polish border.

I went just by one friend, solicitor's wife, very old husband was, I stay there in their place. In the surgery there was nothing left, because not administration. All is gone, nothing. I went to this city doctor, mostly they was Jewish. They said "Many is gone, because they is frightened, they heard what Germans do with these people." All was mostly population the same, more than half of them Jewish, and they frightened what the Germans do with these people who is doctors, they had gone before I went there. Only a few is left. Some chemists too coming with doctor who was Jewish. He was very friendly with me, all doctors was Jewish. Dr Linsk, Dr Greenberg and so on. Plenty I living very good with. TB doctor was not Belarus, I, the same, not Russian, not Belarus, Estonian. I never hide my origins, you know. I remember one day, this TB doctor, she has called me, she has pain in her stomach. I diagnosed appendicitis. She didn't want to have operation, but she must go. We was always friends. There was two sisters, one was gynaecologist, another was just therapist. Working in a clinic in the city because was big city, all clinics, and big hospital. Dr Louis was there, and this chemist, all was under government, only, working you know. These city people always call me, when I was working under Water Transport. Always in the night they is coming. I not supposed to go when they coming asked me. I always went and sometimes I don't take money, or something. The Belarusian people always good to me, village people they always good, to me too. I say, "I don't want, I not coming to you that you give me money". They was always thankful, the Belarus people, I never forget these people, they very good to me.

I coming back, and the same after maybe one week was, maybe sooner, hospital start evacuation because front was coming nearer and nearer. I think was 50 or 100 kilometres away; and

again coming to my place was NKVD, I was not the same time home, I was in hospital. The lady tell me they was coming, and staying, "What she doing, is she going or not?" She says, "Yes, they will be going". I take my children, I take everything what I have, you know, only what we can carry. I ask in hospital, and they will not come, only one doctor, the one I say must have operation. She has the first aid car, like the Red Cross on car. She told me, "If you want, I will be taking you". I said no because I heard she may be going to partisans. I said, "No, I will be going where the hospital go with horse and cart". I was given one horse and this cart and we loaded things, only one this Red Cross car. I was frightened, because somebody tells me not to go, she doesn't tell me, she tells me she will give me lift, I say, "No, I will go with others". It was awful, awful, awful, because was coming fire bombs, and shooting, shooting. I was mostly walking. I put the children on the top of other things. I remember near the Ukrainian border, they give an attack, was big shooting coming, and plenty this aeroplanes. The children and I went, there was near, this forest, and we go this forest, the leaves hide us, and all was swampy, and all these snakes. I bring the children there to protect them, and all these snakes. I frightened of these snakes, more than shooting. We reach this village. My legs covered with blood, after the shooting you know. It was such a nice warm day. I was carrying my Nellie, she little one was, and Edward, on hand, was with me. I never left them, shoes were gone, all scratches and blood on my legs, and I reach one village. What is happening to this village is what is happening to me. I went looking there. It was maybe 25 kilometres from Ukrainian border, maybe nearer Chernigov, and I talk myself to the man who is first (in the village). I take my things off cart and put on the side of the road. I went this house and I say, "Can I stay here one time?", and they say, "I don't know", and I say, "I have some things, I can pay for you. I am doctor, I will bring some things, I will all see", they say, "All right, I have one son, not long married, you can stay in their room together with son". In front was one little room in father and mother's place. I take some materials, you know, some food, I remember I have one box, smoked pork, dry bread and so. I say, "I have children, maybe you have cow". And I stayed there, was very nice people you know, special this young couple, they have not children, they wanted children. They very liked my Nellie.

I stayed, was not Germany, was not White Russia, was nothing. I remember first night Germans burned everything. All is burnt, all is lost in fire. First day when I stay, they go away further in Russia, in the Ukraine. I don't know where is gone, just go with everything. This night all is put in the fire, all that is in the Kolkhoz, animal, little horses, little pigs, cows. People went to save with water, but not many people left, because many had left, not only because of military, but also guards come after us. Maybe this was planned, this Germany planned, is only narrow road, many was hurt and wounded. Myself not move, and I asked what was happening to village. I tried next day to help, all this people were frightened, all is burned. They start to build underground shelter, because always is coming these planes. All is bombing, bombing near the little river Brizhinka, always was bombed. I remember this old man and his son, son build such hole, and we stayed there, all was primitive, really primitive. Sometimes was frightened that there would be bullets. After one week it was quiet. Little food, there was potatoes because it was Kolkhoz, not private. There were plenty of potatoes in the ground. They started to prepare for the winter, because winter was very hard, you know. They piled what collected

in the Kolkhoz, and they see that I stay the same in this village, and they gave me one piece of land with potatoes. "You keep it self, and we will make for you big hole, and put straw in the bottom (for potatoes), and when you need it you will have food". This was about 200 kilometres from Mosyr. I live with town people, same family. They give me some meals, I pay. I have some material, clothes material, many pieces I have, I give for people when they give me milk. And some people who know I am doctor, they coming to me. Very sick people I come to them, and they give me bread. I have some medicine, prontosil [*early form of sulphonamide*] and antibiotics, and I cupped people too. This was very popular then, but not so popular now. It was used by some German professors, and very much help when people have lung inflammation, and very much helping when people have ache in the back. People very believe in this one, and I went doing it. When I was working properly I ordered sister to do it, I don't do it myself, it is not my job to do it. People believed this, and still is here in Australia. I put it for my husband, he wanted this.

Olena is kicked by a horse

One day when potato is ready, for one months past, I went to pick up this potatoes, and it was end of September. The wife of the young man, this daughter-in-law, they went the same from my place. She said "You give me Nellie, I take, you go, and I will be watching her". Edward can go with other boys. We had to watch, you know, because plenty mines in fields that some soldiers left. All this road is mined, they wanted help to these people. They went only at night, and plenty of people was killed, and killed is sometimes one soldier who is not wanting to fight. Many of these is left in villages. Nobody looked for them. For anyone it was not safe. I picked up potatoes, it was one hour, two hours, Edward come, "Mum, Mum!" I think something happening. This young woman bring for me one Nellie, face is all blood, all face is broken. What is happening. She find one little horse, take herself, the horse is left, you know. [*Nellie had been kicked by the horse*]. I thought her jaw was broken. I examined her. I was very glad this jaw was not broken, only I had materials for sewing up. I was so frightened. I have this antibiotic, prontosil, it is first antibiotic like sulphonamide. I take this. She was so swollen, so bruised. If jaw is broken, I must somewhere take her, I could not do this. I was so glad it is not broken. After, I don't know how many weeks; she was long time, I take this bandage away, she had only milk teeth, I think perhaps they may be destroyed the same. I take these teeth, and until she was seven or eight years she have no teeth. She always whistled, she was such funny girl, tongue between the teeth. The same night I say, "Why you do this?" "I wanted to have horse" and horse kicked her. People very liked her. After seven years teeth grow again, she was all right, she have good teeth now.

[Olena recalls the incident. "As the Russians retreated eastwards, they left mined roads and bullets, grenades and other ammunition were scattered about. We kids used to explode the grenades and remove powder from the bullets. The Russians also abandoned many horses, which ran wild in the fields and woods, and my brother Edward and his friends used to catch and ride them. Once (probably in late 1941, when I was four) I was helping dig potatoes with a young woman (who wanted to keep me – see below), when I saw Edward and his friends riding bare-back. I stopped them and

asked Edward if I could ride with him on his horse. He refused, but one of his friends said I should catch a foal that was running with the horses, grab it by the tail and twist it, and the foal would stop and kneel down so I could get on its back and go for a ride. I caught the foal and twisted its tail, but the foal did not oblige. Instead, it kicked me in the mouth – teeth flew out and blood was everywhere. The woman picked me up and ran to my mother in the house – I left a trail of blood. The boys abandoned their horses and ran after us to see what would happen to me. As usual, my mother ticked me off and then attended to my injury. Up to the age of 13 I had two red marks under my nose; fortunately the teeth I lost were milk teeth and my new teeth grew in due course.”]

I stay maybe a couple or three months there. People coming, they wanted me to come back to same city where I was working, you know [*Lena received a letter from the Belarus Commandant*]. There is nothing, and there is coming Germany people who make the government. There is big camp there for many prisoners, Russian and Ukrainian when this Belarus Germany taking. It is maybe 200 kilometres away, where is this administration (Pinsk), big centre before war was. We know Germany taken all this, Russian is going army, Germany take Ukraina and all is occupied [*Pinsk, so called, because it is on the river Pina. Waterways Administration, unlike Medical Administration which was in Minsk, was under the control of Moscow. Here Lena speaks of Pinsk as being the local deputy centre - at other times she speaks of Gomel in this context.*] We have not seen Germans, only one time, and everyone hide in silos, through village they have gone, we have not seen them. I didn't know what to do. People say "Oh we needed you, because plenty prisoners sick, our doctor is needed. You come again, not like water transport doctor, only like doctor". I didn't know how I could go these hundred miles or so. I ask this young couple, they say for 25 kilometres we can take you, I say "I know some patient, my patient will come when I am nearer water. You take me this village, and maybe I find another one. I give you this". I have very warm quilt, I make it myself, a new one, I fill it with wool. I still have left this old one. I make new because I have the material. She is very glad. She wanted to keep this Nellie at her place. I say, "I never left Nellie without me, where I would be, there would be Nellie". She said, "Why not leave her a couple of months, when you be coming back, you take her". I said, "No, I always take her, she is my child". She very much want her, this Nellie.

We go, we is very much frightened of these mines. We was very careful. We reach one village, and there they knew me. [*During this trip back Edward also found live hand grenades, this was in the middle of November, so the swamps were frozen and they could safely cross them. The forests were full of partisans. There was a big prison camp in Gomel, not far away, which was German territory. Belarus was being controlled mostly by Belarusians, there were a few German officials.*] They take me 15 kilometres. I was overnight this village. They know me, they take me to river station, signal lights there. Always there is malaria in this district. They was often sick from malaria. We must always give prophylactic for this, always give them these tablets. We have special stuff, aprichine, was the same. We always give drink before, for protection when they are bitten by insect. I say, "You bring me this village", there was another lady in this village, I had cured her daughter. Edward get sick there. I

went there to little chemist. I want something to give him for this worm inside. Sometimes I give this and I know, he was vomiting, and he has pain. I want to change the drug and so. *[This drug was Santonin. It seems not to have been known in Western medicine, probably because this type of worm infestation does not occur. Lena refers to it again in another interview.]* We was overnight there, the next day he is all right, and we must go the other side of River Pripyat for this signal man. I knew this signal man. He was very sick, he was always in hospital with malaria. I asked this lady, and she said, "Oh yes, my brother is coming from concentration camp now, and I give to him horse". It was five or six kilometres from bank of river. The village was on other side of river. Always near this river very swampy ground. All is still wet, still very cold. He first go with Edward and one case, and after I take Nellie on hand, and we passed through the river Pripyat, and we reach this man. He is very glad, he does not know. He make us dinner special, because he was very sick. He was many times in hospital. I knew doctor in this river transport, and one time I went in the station centre where they studied malaria, and there was this professor who made lectures what was very good cure, such was many doctors working like here. He gave me this injection, injection very painful, because sometimes after this injection come necrosis, you know dead tissue, because it is not very good dissolved. Just coming in my surgery and the doctor I saw said, "This kind of malaria I cannot cure". This man was in hospital and always he has such high fever, I think he die. I said "How one cures this is coming, and is necessary". In one week I make this injection, this was therapy, not prophylactic. He is in hospital and he say, "It is four years I have suffered this malaria, always coming in summer, and coming in winters, and all the time. There is not remission, you know. Doctor do this for me", I say, "I try". I ordered from chemist this medicine, and I start to give him this. After this he never gets malaria. He is thankful for me. When I coming now, I needed this help. He helped me. It was only 15 kilometres from the place where I working. I was so glad. He gives me woollens for children, they lived quite good, plenty fresh fish for dinner and so, and next day he take me to this place where I was doctor.

There was Germans, Russians, plenty of empty houses, only left in them what they must, maybe half of them in prison, like concentration, some Jews what was in camps, was very sick and women go to them and say I coming. I don't know where to stay, just one my patient who has little girl of three or so, I cured when she had TB. I sent her sanitarium, and now she is very good, she is six years old, and women meet me and say, "I will give you accommodation, your children will be with me, with my girl". For work she found accommodation; she said there is one empty kindergarten, or something like this. Then, after a couple of weeks I tried the accommodation. I don't remember how it was, just coming was some Belarusians. They say "Here is Germany, we must listen what they tell us". There is some hospital, not doctor. I go and make myself tell what I am, I say "I don't know what is here, some people I do not understand, they were working like therapists. There was no good hygiene. I never see the Germans, so I was connected, coming people asked me go looking for sick people. Very cold was, these rooms, you know had nothing. This women always helped me, was she I heard was open laboratory, and there was one, her mother, you know, who come from Leningrad University laboratory. She make some vaccines from what is left in laboratory, making prophylactic against typhus. I make it for my children, for myself. It was maybe not so long, two, three weeks I

worked now with some Jews. *[Many Jews had been killed, shot and thrown in the River Pripyat to drown.]* Chemist now in concentration camp. They know that I coming, through colleagues. I was not frightened that maybe they might killed me, Germans. I take food, people bring me meat. They call me when there was sickness. I take meat and loaf of bread. They was very poor in the camp, they was very glad. After, I know that Germans know I was there, they wanted keep me. One Russian lady coming, Natalia Ivanovna *[Natalia Ivanovna Grosser has married an Austrian. Her only son was fighting in Russia. She had met him in Czechoslovakia for his holidays. She was very unhappy about him. She was probably the mistress of a German official and acted as interpreter for him.]*, she translated for Germans. She later come to me, she say she will take me, no-one is allowed to go to the camp. After she is friend, you know, and after she give me her address, you know in Germany, and say, "Where I will be you come to me, and I will be of help to you". Later on was accident, the commissar whom she translated from German to Russian, I think she is his mistress, not wife. This commissar, somebody attacked him, he jumping over the fence, barbed wire, and she called me. I made very good bandage for him, some ribs is broken, and make this morphia. After two or three weeks when all is alright, she went with him to Germany for holiday. When she coming from holiday in Germany, this lady told me "He was never so glad to see you, because doctor in Germany had said, "If you had not this doctor you would be killed". After he was good to me. Such things happen to me, I don't know why. He was big *[important, powerful]* man, this German.

INTERVIEW V – June 16 1982

Belarus – first year in practice

I was doctor in my first year in practice when I come to Belarus the first time. I had been only in hospital in big city, in big clinic, when they took me in such a provincial hospital, where was kitchen without floor, not doctor, only was this old lady coming, I told you, only maybe one or two times a month. She not lived there. She lived another place. There was only two felshers, they was from military. For them it was promotion. Sometimes you know in Russia such things. They working in medical part of the army, and sometimes they was promoted because they making good jobs. They even giving them a high-school education, you know, gymnasium. In army sometimes there is a war or so, sometimes they learn something about medicine, and then promoted and give good jobs. They get made felsher and mostly was put somewhere there was not doctor, everything they must be. It was not big hospital, maybe 25 or 30 beds. It was for pregnant girls too, but no gynaecologist. It was very hard. I start too this surgery where is taking these patients. It was little village, but not village like Clare (South Australia), only living there about one thousand people. I must be doctor for surgery, and every morning must look at patients in hospital, and make order what should be done. In surgery patients coming all the time. There was one midwife, midwife was for hospital too, and was one nurse who was cleaning this place. All patients was plenty sick. I remember first when they know is coming doctor, there is sometimes 120 patients in one day, mostly there was 70 or 80 patients every day. There was chemist too, not like now, you must dispense yourself.

It was very hard, and sometimes full was waiting room these people. It is not like here, special autumn and winter, they was sitting in cold, was not enough wood make warm waiting room or surgery. Outside was same very wet this country, Belarus. I remember looking at this child, he was smallpox, and I frightened you know, it was very dangerous. We always have in hand this vaccine. There was not enough felsher to go to whole village, I must go, myself, make inoculation. Such for one person was too much work. There was only cart, not good horse. I start to go to administration. I say must be more doctors, one doctor must stay in surgery. In hospital I is looking how is make clothes, how is supplying wood so it be warm, food, everything for one doctor. Doctor was administration officer too. They sent me one who had finished in Minsk university. He was not young, he was the same before felsher who had a high-school education. He wanted to be doctor, and he went to university to be a student to be doctor. Very nice was, he coming, he bring ambulance and we working together.

Famine – 1932

This year was 1932, all over Ukrainia and Belarus was hunger. They make this artificial hunger. People not wanted to go into collective, government make them, then government send all food to cities [1932 - "Grain collections, a higher proportion of the harvest was extracted from the Kolkhozy

than had been obtained from individual peasants. The peasant went hungry. More and more animals were slaughtered because they could not be fed. Bad harvests both in 1931 and in 1932 crowned the calamity... the richest grain growing areas were prey to famine". E.H. Carr, 'The Russian Revolution from Lenin to Stalin', p. 161.] There is nothing left for them to eat. They was not short food, was really no food. People eat leaves from trees, grass, animals food, such things are. In Ukrainia some people eat children, in Ukrainia it was awful, very rich soil there, but it is all political. Administration take all, 10 million, 20 million people dead. Belarus was not so bad, only some parts. In the place where I was for one year, was very bad. I go sometimes to my parents you know, I bring some, or this flour, make for Edward special food. When you have some gold ring you can go to 'magasin' (a magasin is a government store, somebody hungry, there is food, and you go, there is, you can get what you want.), because they badly need this gold, and for gold you can get semolina, same this flour, white flour. Just when Edward was little one, I needed. Mother gave me couple gold rings, I go to magasin and I keep him alive. Was many, many criminals, somebody know somebody have something to eat, they was killed. Many times called me.

When I moved from this hospital, I make everything ready and ask for one more doctor. I was in administration surgery, the same was come here, and I remember many cases. Coming this military and NKVD call me, somebody was killed, because somebody coming from another city to find food, and for it killed. I must go and identify for death certificate [*identifying the cause of death*]. This is another little provincial city where I am only 12 or 13 kilometres from administration. I lived there, again I live in one room, kitchen we use together. Only one little kitchen where we make primus. I must take one woman who was looking after children, because they not allowed me to stay home looking after children. I was working I must have help. Was trouble with these women too, some girls was all right, some was bad. I must sometimes go for two or three days, on one week go away. Was very bad, it is all politics. Belarus this part where I live was all Kolkhos, production is flax. It is growing and from seeds make linseed oil. Cultivated this flax, when is made linen. When it go to mill, before must be put in water for three of four weeks, and after put in air so on the grass will be dry. After they take it, they colour it. It is big production, government wanted. Maybe contract made with another State, because it is very good linen.

They make such demands, collective could not produce so much [*artificial quotas made by government; when quota was not filled producers were called 'deviants'*]. They arrested people, all the schools was full, all the jails was full. All is arrested these people because they couldn't produce enough. They killed people, they shot people. They say this head of collective should be executed, because he is enemy (of the people) not produce what government needed, this flax. It was terrible. I must go these jails, these schools. It was primitive, when I go in I smell these people. People nothing had for hygiene. I don't know, nobody write about this. It was awful, people frightened was. You cannot describe what conditions was this year. [*This was the result of Stalin's decision for the five year plan for the production of heavy industry - and the end of the N.E.P. which had allowed peasants to produce freely for the market, and gave the same freedom to small factories producing consumer*

goods.] It is not going so bad everywhere, but in every place was something needed, perhaps this grain, this corn. Everywhere they were trying to raise production. People cannot raise production because it was thankless, they was not interested. [Peasants had no incentive. Chyanovsky, appointed by Lenin as Director of agriculture, was sacked in 1930 as being pro-Kulak. He had always maintained that peasants would not produce grain unless they had some incentive (Theodor Shanin, in Peasant Communities). Chyanovsky died in 1937 in exile.] When their own was, they was interested in something. I think for Australia, and for another people who have not knowing what was happening, they do not understand, because you yourself was in fear, frightened all the time that you something say, something not so doing, not do what they say, the same will be waiting for you. Ukrainians, I don't know, Ukrainians was awful. People not bread, not nothing. They died in the street, they lay there. They make artificial hunger, yes, taking all food, all grain, taking away from collective farm, left people nothing. And the same in Belarus, this flax they take the same.

I remember this autumn, behind our surgery was big shed. People come start take flax away, bring back grain, but was not good administration, sometimes this grain left in the wet, and it was all gone, rotten, not for people, not for government. They take people, sending them another place, officials was. I don't know, nobody knows. Because they moving people from one place to another place, people have not listen what the government say, they take this people, send in Siberia or another place. Maybe now is all right, maybe like civil war, the collective makes chaos because people don't like. They still doesn't like it, you read this book what I give you, now you read Solzhenitsyn.

After the Revolution

When they (the Russians) take Estonia, Latvia, Baltic countries, they put Estonians and Finland people in Karelian Republic. Karelia (Karelskaya) something like Siberia. They put these people in Karelian Republic, give only eggs, cheese, 200 grams grain for one day's food. Growing forests, they must take wood, and build themselves houses. Some survive, they write this in letter. Some people they allow to stay there, other people they will not long be there, they will be send somewhere, you know. How many stay I don't know. Such was life after the Revolution. Before Latvia and Estonia were independent republics, but before second world war they take all Estonian people and Finland people who were around Leningrad, what they think is against government. They put them in Karelia which is new republic, and they put them in forest, with nothing, you know. They divided between themselves only little bit they can take. All is fright, Karelia is right on top, north of Leningrad, border of Finland. When Finland have a war with Russia, Russia was beaten. Russia take very strong army from Siberia, still have Finland beat them. Russia cannot win, Finland is still independent. They make peace and Russia have only this one piece of land, Karelia. They take from Karelia these people away, and put arrested. Nothing they can do, they just put in a train these people, special people of Estonian origin, and Finland people, plenty these people around Leningrad. I, and my people living there (Province of Pskov), it is not far from Leningrad, and all these people from collective. Taking these people, giving

only axe, or shovel, and hammer maybe, and 200 gram food. If you can survive on this, and hard work, you make this house, or shed, or so. There is very cold, and much snow, and all is slave labour building canals.

You know I tell you about one couple I live with. Sons was in Germany. One day they coming and arrested this old man. This man doesn't know why he be arrested. They sent in jail, which is in big city, not here, somewhere in big city. Wife was very upset. Maybe one week, maybe two weeks is passed away. She doesn't know nothing about this husband. I remember, I think it was Saturday evening, she make cup of tea in dining room, was front room. She invited me for cup of tea. She was upset about this husband, he was old man, like me now, maybe little bit younger. I remember he was all grey hair and so. I remember was pieces of sugar, somewhere she get, we have not such things, and she gave to me. You not put sugar inside cup of tea, you put in mouth and then you drink tea, and coming NKVD in full uniform said, "Where is your gold?" She said, "I don't know where is my gold". "Your German marks?" She said, "I don't know". They said, "You didn't know, I know, give me lamp, where is you hiding this gold?" She said, "I don't know". "Give me light, I show you where is gold". I was there, I was sitting. I don't know what is happening. She has kerosene lamp, she was frightened. She had a hurricane lamp also, she give to him. He look the ceiling, up the ceiling, bring from there this German mark, and some was this other small money; not so much. They know because it is sent (from sons in Germany). After this, take this German mark, and small money with them. He said to me this NKVD man, "Now you see. How such people you live with behave, they hiding it from government, such things". After one week this husband coming home. He told, he said he in little room was, and there was filled up with people. "I tell only you, because we living with you, what such conditions are, and they ask where is your gold, where is your money that you get from Germany?" They give him only one herring and not water, and nothing drink, and he said before he was thirsty, and he thought, "Why I sacrifice myself, and I must tell them I have couple of marks. I will be hurt very much if I hiding these things", and he talked, you know. Was not giving him sleep, many people stand. There were thousands of others like him. They sent him this room, he cannot move, he cannot sleep, they give him herrings to eat, and not let him drink. He suffered for this drink. They say, "Where is this mark, where is your gold?" And they make this torture. They say, "You took them magasin". Even you can get something, dress, some shoes. Mostly these Jewish people, because before they live in Russia, they is everywhere, sometimes in France. Sometimes they is parents, and their children (living outside Russia) they sent something to them, mostly money. They (the children) do not know, that they be sometimes tortured. Maybe they hide money in corner, not go to government, not give this money. Sometimes come officials, looking everywhere, maybe it is hidden. When someone is suspicious they make official search. Such were these people, and when he is coming back, they taking this all, he is free. Such is life everywhere, you know. There is many, many such things, you cannot always remember, it is forgotten, but this I see myself. *[This was the result of a decree for the establishment of a currency built on gold to restore the relation between industrial and agricultural prices – this began in 1922. See E.H. Carr, "From Lenin to Stalin", Chap. VI, "The Scissor's Crisis".]*

Not many good things was after Revolution. Before was couple revolutions; Kerensky revolution in February, then is Lenin revolution in October, new calendar. After this Lenin revolution, for couple or three years was civil war, fighting everywhere. This was very bad. Very good was when they give private, divided all this land, and gave it to peasants. The peasant has his own, they worked like mad. They getting plenty food, plenty grain, they make money on grain. I working one time, after this gymnasium for this cooperative (as accountant) I counted how much peasant should pay, and people did very well. Everything was own, they was all interested, children working and so. They put children, who can, for education. They lived good life. This is called N.E.P., new economic policy. After this when this Stalin come, after 1929, is making collective. People under N.E.P., who was good, only doing a little bit better, they is taken Siberia. They called Kulaks. People who were not so good they put in collectives, and collectives is not working, and people does not like these collectives. People, young people wanting to go to city. They must stay in collectives, only allowed to finish primary school what was local – five years. There is high school the same, but when you went to city to go to high school, you must have permission for this. People wanted from this collective to go away, such politics, the young people keeping in country. This was just after death of Lenin [*Lenin died in 1924, and Stalin achieved complete power in 1925, but the period of optimism carried on until the time of establishment of the Five Year Plan – with the consequent destruction of the Kulaks, and the enforced Kolkhozy*]. All is destroyed, all these who head state, all is destroyed, all is liquidated. Industrial sabotage and everything, they fighting enemy. Civil war was 1921–23, improve only about 1925. Maybe five years was things good, maybe it start 1924, I cannot remember. Twenty-five, twenty-six, twenty-seven, it was very good, twenty-eight it was very good. Yes it was five years, this new economic policy.

Then start to arrest, send people moving, put people in train. They don't know where they go. They sent to Siberia, part with children, like cattle wagons. Millions, millions, millions was the same. After this it was no good, all was tense, everybody frightened. Very soon, many years was 'Magasin'. It was not black market, it was government, government could not find this gold. All that belongs to people like rings, bracelet, brooch. People is hungry they go to these special magasins, you take one brooch, or one ring and maybe you get five pounds of semolina or ten pounds of white flour, maybe something else. The same mother gave to me, couple of rings, wedding rings, engaged rings, and there was my brother when he was small was given five gold roubles, mother gave me some and say, "Maybe I should not tell you", and she gave to me. All money was put in bank for father, all money for education of children, all was gone, couple thousand roubles for education, for special things children needed. I used these rings, and get for Edward couple of pounds of semolina, only for him. [*At the end of 1921 a party conference advocated the establishment of a currency based on gold... by the end of 1922 the relation between industrial and agricultural prices had been restored to its pre-war balance.*] E.H. Carr, *ibid*, Chap. 6, p. 56.]

You know there was money for doctor. I was quite all right, because I got not one pay, I had couple of other jobs. I paid all food what I need and I had money for travel home. For hygiene in

factory, should be another doctor, I did all, they gave money, so I get more than other people get. Sometimes I go in big city. I remember many times, sometimes get some food in shop, sometimes shoes, sometimes I go to button shop, get things for other people too. People go night time spending quietly, but when somebody decides to buy there is not enough, sometimes people say I wanted to go into city, they come see me, and say, "Doctor you go, what you needed". I said, "Piece of material for the children, for blouse for myself". When we could get some material, not silk, not linen. I remember in all big cities was the same thing, because it was special for big men, Party men, special, magasin, their wives go anytime. They have nice food, food what they wanted. Other people it is nothing. This time, bad time, they have special. Nobody who is not special, Party or so, can enter this shop. Party men, you know, communist party, or big NKVD or wife of so, it was part of the special magasin and they can get what they want. They was privileged you know, but not professional people, only political. Maybe it is not the same now. I don't like to put it here for you to write, I don't like say. I don't know. Oh, Mrs Yeatman, it was very bad. I cannot tell you, I frightened all my life because I have children. I was not so bad, I was not always hungry because sometimes patients bring me something special, they bring me eggs or something like this. They still had chickens or something in the country. It was traditional for long time always something give to doctor. Such time I cannot say that I was hungry, I always get something, but when I asked something for money, I will not get. I tried two or three times, then maybe the fourth I get. And later on was always this bazaar every Sunday. People from collective, they wanted something, city people always get more things than in country. They get materials, stockings, something, and they always (ex)changed, you know in barter get pound of butter, give three metres of material, something gave, you know. It was watched by NKVD. When you want chicken you maybe buy money, because they needed money the same, to pay this tax for so and so. The bazaar was free, but NKVD they looking sometime, they watch people who is buying, people who is bringing, what they bringing. They watch everything, what he buy, what you buy, what you spend. Everybody try to hide, it was such that make people afraid. People was always frightened to make friends they frightened to be talking; because always was not sure what they said, sure that somebody heard, that they be arrested. Maybe you don't know, this is special your friend, and you tell friend things, and they call him and say, "What you talking about us?"

The same when I hear from my husband, "You be coming to this place where is my mother". I don't want to go because I was settled down. But he said, "You come, I get accommodation and everything for you". When I came there (Mosyr) is not accommodation, only one room, and next room was own bedroom. Mother coming to see me couple of days to see how I settle down. She is always helping me, because Edward was only two and a half. I needed somebody. I went to his mother, his mother didn't want to come. Then I call my mother. She was coming, he (father) was still on collective farm, and she was old, she could not for too long leave Same and husband alone, only one week can come. I say come this time, and then I will be moving. I was then first time in this central administration (Minsk) then I go to Mosyr, that was where he (husband) was working then. There was not job, I get very quickly job in factory, where is making this furniture. I lived for this one room, in Mosyr. I was free, I was not pregnant. I lived there maybe one year, not more, then I apply for this job, what I told you,

water transport. One time I went to this house, they was Polish origin. He was arrested, he was working in the same factory where I was doctor. He was working night shift. Always he was coming to our room, or separate room I don't remember. They was not living together very well this wife and husband. Always I hear then fighting in this bedroom. There was little kitchen.

INTERVIEW VI – June 30 1982

Employment with the Water Transport

When I was in Water Transport job they (NKVD) call me; they coming this wife, and said her husband was taken. After few days, they call me too, because I had lived there, you know. They wanted to know about him, I said, "I can tell you nothing about him". They said, "You shared one kitchen with him." He reads this paper (Polish), but we not discussed about this paper, nothing. Also said he was very good man, he was worker, always night shift he was working, go very early, you know, and when I am coming from shop, I really help him. He worked the same this factory (furniture factory, where Lena was doctor) I don't know, I think he makes steam in engineering part, put coals there. He disappeared, and for a long time wife didn't know. I think before was she said me, she get from him one letter. He somewhere in the North, in Siberia. I don't know, I forget. I saw her because he nine year old daughter got dysentery, and she came for me and asked for help. I had this new medicine against dysentery, was good, bacteria-fac, not by injection, but by mouth. It is new treatment. We give to drink with this ampoule and they absorb this bacteria-fac inside. This time all hospitals was closed [*The hospitals were being used as gaols*]. I saw her before this, because we were both in Mosyr, but there was not tramways, she just was always walking, maybe one kilometre from my surgery. I saw her before when I didn't know her husband was arrested. She came to me, I don't know how much later, but then I knew from other people, it was not so big city, people talking, always talking about arrests. I remember one time when they arrested many Jews, they say they was Trotskyites. I remember coming one day my ambulance, say this man is gone, that one is gone. They are my patients, and after they say all supported Trotskyism. One time I remember, again, Belarus people, these women was coming, crying and say, "My husband is taken away, I don't know why". They tell me, I don't know whether is true or not, that this man was in Ukraine when they fighting against Russia. They call this army, 'bandit army', they don't say this army was Ukrainians fighting for freedom. They coming all the time taking these men, they don't know why, and many these people what disappeared, they are coming back you know, same as this Jewish husband, where I live. [*See Interview V*]. Sometimes they don't come back, I don't know, all is secret. It is terrible, I all the time thinking I be taken away, because I was not Russian. I was Estonian, Edward and Nellie was my nationality (their father was Ukrainian) and all the time before war I was in fear. I was fear when I left and was coming back to hospital. You must always imagine how things will be.

I was happy when I was in Waterways job, it was not so busy. I was busy, because people know me very well in this city, when doctors go to see patients in their home, they are very busy; there are not these cars to go to see people. It can take three or four hours to visit these patients [*Lena went to see non-urgent cases on foot*]. When it is urgent, they sometimes called the country centre who have ambulance, you know if woman was all the time bleeding after normal birth, or sometimes there are accidents on tractors or machines, and in city was only one first-aid car where there is room

to put patient. Always if it is night they call me, sometimes I said I will be help to you. They asked me if there is something in my place happen, or I can go to something which is urgent, and sometimes my people call, and I would go walking if I was home. I was always walking. They lived in all directions in Mosyr. I was moving from factory to special Water Transport surgery, also in Mosyr, different administration, city belong to Minsk (administration) but Waterways belong to Moscow. Administration officers was also in local branches. In the same city, when I wanted to get this job, I must go to Gomel. You will not get this job, this my friend saying who was leaving this job. Was just after Christmas when New Year starts. Saline was in my place, because father say, "Maybe you will get for her job, collective is very hard to her". Because Mosyr was near Polish border, NKVD must give for her document, give to her for three months. I get three more months, six months, one half year. She live with me together, and then she went again back to home. After that I must get a domestic, some was too young girls, I was not satisfied, and after I find one woman, she is very old, 73, 74 years. She is very good and she very good was, because when she was young she was domestic for doctor, for solicitor. She was very good worker, she was very good cooking, looking after children, only Edward always ran away. This surgery where we lived was near the river, and she said I cannot be responsible for Edward. I put Edward kindergarten, and I, myself, when I was visiting, took him with me. He was only home breakfast and to sleep.

I have two rooms for myself there, kitchen for myself, kitchen under same roof was, and I had one room office, and my woman she went separate sleep. I put up screen for her in office where all records were kept and supplies. Here sometimes the accountant came, but she was separate from his part. There was another room for waiting room, and there was examination room. There was one room for my nurse, she was not only nurse, but midwife, and there was another room for dentist, all rooms together under same roof. Another part, kitchen, sitting room and dining room together, big room. There was little garden, couple of trees, couple of bushes. Toilet, it was outside, very cold was, and I was very glad that I had deep drainage, like here. There was such creek, and all the water from kitchen ran away there, only toilet water run underneath (underground).

I had one woman who was cleaning, ambulance coming morning. This was an excellent job. I get money for administration, and for doctor, and for visiting homes. I get, altogether, one thousand roubles, which was good money, because there was not sanitarium, but afterwards make building where many showers was, because sometimes you wanted when people coming from ship, and workers on the river. I must looking after them also. They was building ships, ship wrights. I must often go by boat. Later on I get motor boat to go to people who was living in the country what serve this river. I had motor boat special, and when is somebody sick they telephone. Up the river and down the river I must go. It was not often, but sometimes prophylactic work was. It was malaria district, and some men come in spring when you give tablets, quinine or so, they put in pocket, they not swallow and sisters must visit every home, and put tablets in mouth. There were voluntary workers, and sometimes, you don't believe, there was such propaganda. They make every doctor (give account) how he doing with malaria mosquito. Every ship when they find and bring this killed mosquito, they get money. There was such people, because there is many when comes spring and

very warm, come down plenty water, like here, some houses is under water, and sometimes there were so many mosquitoes, we must kill them with petrol. Under my administration, I don't know, or remember how many come with mosquitoes in boxes. These doctors in the west, they don't believe it how everything was. In winter all was ice, from end of November, December, January, February and March ice was break up, warm days break up. Sometimes, bridges all is gone, this ice is very thick, and destroyed all bridges. Mostly was bridges needing workers with crane to fix middle. Winter was more quiet, quiet job. People on river didn't want to come in ambulance, it was too cold. Surgery was always open from nine o'clock till four o'clock was visiting. In country when I must go I must rent sleigh and horse when it was urgent; it was supplied by administration. In city often I was out visiting until seven or eight o'clock, no sleighs no horses, only always walking, but sometimes there was sleigh.

It was only big [*important*] men who had cars. In the second place, I told you, near administration (Minsk) there was wife of NKVD, he was big, very big man. She has children, she coming always in my ambulance, her sister who is high school teacher is coming too. They coming often, she has three or four children, and sometimes she is pregnant, and they is talking, always talking, with me. Her husband has car, and organisation have car too. One time I remember was very, very funny. I am coming to her home. I examined her and I see she has sickness called Ileus, when inside, the intestine go over (involted, Tortian, acute restriction) she has vomited with excreta, you know (retrograde vomiting, faecal). I say we must go with car, very quick to the clinic Vitebsk (nearest place for surgery). Should be quick make operation. And, in one moment is car, I sit in this car, and in this car was not seats. It is funny. I was very glad I get this car. Such people who was security police, black car but without seats, in the back only holes, you know two holes. We sit, she sit beside me, road make of stone (metal) not dirt, very rough. It was first road for cars, very good, but rough, jumping, jumping, jumping. I told chauffeur, as soon as possible, quick as possible you drive and get to Vitebsk for operation. It is forty kilometres, about one and a half hours. I just went to clinic. I told them she must have examination, and so she went, and surgeon say, you are lucky, it has really worked this time, such drive with this road, it (the bowel) had itself come straight, no operation. It is one chance in a million in such case. She jumping, jumping, jumping all the time, I not care, I only want to get there. She is now not needing operation, and this surgeon say she will get well. It is one chance in a million, if she is left long time she will get this bleeding and she will be dead (infarction, obstructed bowel). She was very glad that there was not operation. Such things happen, many things I remember. Her husband was chief of NKVD, and because he have car, we fast go only one hour take to go to clinic, and the surgeon say you bring her here, and this jumping, jumping, jumping has cured her.

I remember one other case, strangulated hernia. The same I tried myself, I put this ether and everything, sometimes it is helped, sometimes it is not so necessary. I put on cold cloths, sometimes I have success, and sometimes I must recommend operation, very quick. If it is minor, sometimes use manipulation, sometimes give bag (Truss) but if it is bad you will get necrosis, it should be as quickly as possible get loose. Support can work sometimes, but it is better make operation, it not come again.

For surgery we must always go Vitebsk. Clinic is very good, they have doctors, they have midwives, they have medicine, it is university clinic. It was then the nearest place for surgery. I think after war they make new centre.

There (Vitebsk) Edward was born. I began this labour on Friday, maybe five or six doctors work alongside of me, coming doctors from all country. Sunday with express (train) they take me to Vitebsk, and Monday morning Edward coming, ten pounds was - first baby. It is the express coming from Latvia to Minsk. I think, they put me in first class express, and one very good woman doctor come with me. She used to come very often. She had not very good accommodation, she come to my place for cooking. She was very tall, very nice, she take me in clinic in Vitebsk. She was all the time with me, very good friend was. She was Gina. She was for children doctor, pediatrician, nice person was. She was the same in my clinic, she worked in the centre with me, come other doctors later on, three doctors was. I was every kind of doctor, every doctor should be.



Lena with her mother Julia Wallas and Edward, c. 1936

I remember this doctor coming centre, he bring woman he cannot manage. We put her on the table, she cannot born child, child might be dead. We cannot do operation, not facilities. We go inside with instruments, we save the woman. I only did minor surgery, not inside surgery, only when I was student I assisted the surgeon. Sometimes during the war I helped another doctor as assistant, or sometimes for anaesthetic, injection of evipan (pethedine), sometimes ether, sometimes chloroform with mask, couple of times, other times I helped in camp.

Lena contracts typhus

During war I was just coming back with motor boat, occupied by Germans when I come back. These Belarus people they want me to stay. I have accommodation with one patient. She very kind to me, she too have this daughter the same age. There is another doctor who is left here, he was not real doctor, he was laboratory doctor, he know nothing how to cure people, he understand prophylactic treatment. He told me was one lady coming, was pregnant, baby not getting born. It was not hospital you know, it was only one big room with things. This woman had been in labour long time, three or four days, it was first baby, she was thirty seven years old. I went to her, there was not foetal heartbeat, the child was dead. I just went inside. I look for instruments, I find only hook, I cut with the hook this neck, but there was no instruments for taking body. I put in my fingers, and I take the head, and then the rest. She was all right. After three or four days I get typhus. I thought maybe I get in myself some blood, and I am poisoned by this child. Other people said, it is the water from the German camp. It was terrible there, all these people living on each other. Families, relatives bring food, there was dysentery, there was typhus, and I get this typhus. I get this heart injection, very good, camphor and cocaine. I give to nurse, and say when I be unconscious, you give to me. It was not hospital just one room, just examination room. The same room where I make operation on woman. I looked at my hands, nothing broken was (no lesion on skin where infection could enter). Then I get fever 39–38°C. I speak to this doctor, he take what is left over of baby to laboratory (for post mortem) and I think may be typhus, I will be going in hospital.

There was another laboratory where nursing sister was and she was Belarusian. Before was, nobody knows it will be war, her husband was solicitor. Somebody's friend, who is Jew, working as chauffeur, told her, "I recommend that your husband go away, he will soon be arrested, as soon as possible he should go to big city". Her husband took ticket and went somewhere, disappeared, may be in Leningrad or somewhere, wife doesn't know, they have one daughter who is doing medicine in university. After when husband disappeared, they taking wife. She was working in T.B. hospital. NKVD take her and put her in jail. She told me later when I was coming out of typhus. NKVD coming every night put her in very cold room, always asking, "You know where is your husband". She said, "I don't know". Then every night putting her in cold bath water. "You know where is your husband", and she said, "I don't know", and she didn't know. She be living one year in these conditions, and then she be allowed to come out. It is maybe one year before war start. She worked in a brick factory, she could not get back her old job. After when is war, nobody cared about her and the interrogation. Daughter write her, you can meet your husband, and she meet him somewhere near Voronazh.

After she come back to her own house and winter time, and she was nurse in this hospital in Mosyr at night time. Daughter was coming from Leningrad, because Leningrad was surrounded with Germany and people was frightened. There was plenty people left and was very cold in Leningrad. When this daughter coming from Leningrad through snow and winter to the village in Belarus where is mother, she come in this laboratory where was this vaccine, typhus vaccine, and collected them all

up, and mother working in this one big room which was hospital, people self bringing wood and so on for heat. And she working in laboratory with this daughter. I told the daughter, to give this vaccine by injection for Edward and Nellie, because I don't know what is, I give her all my medicine. I was then still in my home. I told this my domestic woman, come to sister and say she must give me this injection when I need it, because camphor is not easily dissolved you know. *[Camphor dissolved only in oil when it is heated. It is used as a muscle, hence heart, stimulant. The cocaine would be added to make the infection less painful]*. I was there weak with fever over 40–41°C.

INTERVIEW VII – July 14 1982

1942-1943 – trains to Poland and Berlin

I was sick six weeks with typhus, in this hospital. After when I coming out, for maybe one year, when look in light all such black spots before my eyes. Maybe one year, maybe couple of years, because I was not long there, because coming Russia again these Germans push out, and we must go out. They very quick coming the Russians. This was 1943, 1942 I was sick, 1943 Russia coming, pushing out Germans. There was mostly then Belarusian government, Belarusian Commissary. There were a couple of Germans who were looking after too. My friend [*Nathalia Ivanovna (Grosser)*] who was translator, interpreter, when the Russians were maybe 50 kilometres, or 100 kilometres away, she told me, "You must be prepared, they coming, and when they catch, they take. You must be ready such tomorrow, the Germans will be taking you away". I was frightened, you know, stay because I was under German government, and they kill. They not looking explanation why I left, or why I stay. Maybe I can somewhere hiding, I don't know, if I stay, they find me, I be dead. Depression was for me very bad, life was nothing, and I decided I must go. I remember one night we sleeping just on straw, about 100 of us, near the station 10 kilometres away, but there was not train.

There was sometimes coming cattle cars, we go in them, we not know where we go. We must leave, we frightened to stay. They (Germans) make orders that we must go, but where they will be taking us we do not know. They just come, and we go, the Germans we go with. Everywhere was partisans. When we just pass one bridge, Pripyat River, maybe was couple of minutes later, this bridge was exploded. We all night travelling in direction of Poland. We pass border of Poland, and there is again partisan, there was shouting, and our train is stopped in the middle of forest. We thinking we are finished. They didn't attack this train, after was quiet. We was frightened, thinking that maybe was still some front, some German officials. It was not attacked, but we was all crying, we thought it was finished. Near we hear voices shouting, burning. I don't think it was Polish partisans, still was, I think, Belarusians. Border was very close, but they did not attack, again train was moving Polish direction. In Poland, I think it is when we passed this forest, was little mines, was destroyed, little bit, not much, this locomotive engine. We stay three, four hours, not longer, they repaired and we moving again. I don't know how long, one day we moving, and another day was big mines. They give (us) nothing, but they told us that we must be ready, and I make little packets of dried bread and meat, and what I have, nobody gives us, we must be keeping. When we was in occupied part of Belarus, we have not much to eat. They give us one pound of bread. I have one cow, I bought one. Nellie was little, you remember she has not front teeth. I working in a surgery, was near my accommodation. There was this little garden where she was, and she always whistled, put tongue where was not teeth, and I know where she is, and I bring her cold milk, because we has nothing. There was only local government, Belarusian consul, and some officers (German).

In Poland between Babrienzow and Pinsk [*Pinsk is on the Pina River, a tributary of the Pripyat*] our train, just middle of the night catch by mine. If you believe, all was under, only one wagon left standing, wagon where we was. We stayed three of four days before we can go and take other locomotive. Our wagon stand alone, all was crying, it was unbelievable, awful pictures was before our eyes. There was maybe five or six families in our wagon. When locomotive come, all must be put together again. We moving again, another big city. All as unordered, we don't know which is our train, when is go, where is go. We was, I think, in Babrienzow, it is big city. Some lady say, "Can I take Edward, and go to market or so?" I say, "You will not be late because we don't know when is our train go". When after ten or twenty minutes we is ready to go, she has not come back with Edward. I was very, very frightened. I take Nellie from wagon, and stand near these steps. Just when train is moving come this lady, and we jumping in wagon. I don't want leave Edward with this lady. Big wooden trunk with books, many things was heavy, I should take off this wagon, and just as train starting they come.

Not far from this city in Poland, I don't know how long we go, there was some camp where was all people they take from Russia, mostly from Belarus. There was hunger, they not food, there was only in Poland what they could give us, so we survive. There was barracks, three tier bunks, we must take all our things put this room, where we told we must go. This manager say can only for children give little bit milk, Nellie and Edward get, not bread, and there was all these people swollen with hunger. Dirty toilets was such you cannot believe. Nowhere for rubbish, all the time coming people, coming not going. People looking for rubbish bins, hoping find food, you know. Everything in toilet, such was awful, dirt, flies, lice. We was there about two or three weeks. No food, only I have this dry bread. Sometimes somebody taking the same, we share a little.

In this camp I meet one student taking the same, we share a little. Someone told her doctor coming, I am coming. She coming into my room, said, "I heard you be doctor, and have two children".



Ходила и шаталась
но отделилось как
получившая сейчас
уже "жизнь"
играет как это
"можно выразится"
Ваша Кора

Kora was the student, who wrote these sad words on the back of this photograph sent to Lena:
Walking and thinking about life at this time and how it plays out – how can this continue? Yours, Kora

She has nothing. Germans take her from prison, because one German officer was injured in the leg, and femoral artery was cut, bleeding, and she made tourniquet, and was transferred somewhere in hospital, he didn't lost much blood, you know. She was last year in university, somewhere in Siberia, and they put her in concentration camp. She told me this story, and she said "I have nothing, when you have something for me, bread or a cushion, some clothes, you give me, and you need me because I will be help to you always with your children. Sometimes you go away, I will watch your children. When two people together they can always be to one another help". I give to her cushion, I gave her one blanket, and clothes what I have.

After three weeks there was one soldier, working like doctor in surgery. I went to him, I told him that I the same am doctor, and he may take me to help him. He say no, he cannot do and after three weeks there came order that we must go another concentration camp, go nearer Berlin. This time was Berlin all the time bombarded. It was just before Christmas, and always was England, America, not yet Russia, was bombing Berlin. We know about this because was in paper something written, and talking, you know. I not wanted to go. I wanted go nearer Belarus. I ask this doctor please give this order that we are sick, we cannot go. He didn't give this. He was Polish doctor, you know, he is working for Germany. I asked him, begged him, "Please, we go this big city Lodz". No, he didn't give this order, we must go into the bombing. It was cold, winter coming, snow little bit coming. Always when we are living on the Pripyat River I make always these woollen socks for children, put rubber from car tires. Russia left plenty of cars, destroyed, so many people used this rubber. It did not let water through woollen shoes, rubber outside. When water was frozen I always made these for the children. Anyway was cold, not know where go, compulsory was that we go in these cattle wagons, it was not like train where go people, was very cold, snow coming, and we must go. It was just coming three days before Christmas, plenty people, all is crowded. In this concentration camp (near Berlin) there is all nations, there was Estonian, there was Slovakian. Belgium and France had another concentration camp; they had better food, there was better everything, not like ours. There was big food halls for Belgium and France, there was other food halls when was coming all Ost, you know people east of Germany. For us not so good care, not so good food. Give only turnip, potato, not butter. When the water boiling, we must self peel potatoes and such things.

It was maybe one week before (Christmas), because this student who was my friend. She said it is like the League of Nations. There was Ukrainian, Latvian, Russian, Lithuanian, Estonian, on the other side of fence was French, Belgian. I remember only we were very upset, because when we get rooms, plenty Polish people was, fanatic for religion, all is near barracks. Everyone is looking at the sky, they crying all the time. In our room was one intelligent Polish lady. I remember after a few days, when we are settling down, she said we must not only be talking, at night we must play cards. I had never played Propherance [*Lena said that her parents played Propherance, when her father was a contractor on an estate. Lena says, "It is a very complicated [card] game", she had to be in prison camp before she got to play it.*]. It was privileged game in Russia, only for rich people, middle class, accountants or so. It is very complicated. She said I will teach you Propherance, and we will play

cards. We played couple of nights, three or four nights, and then it was Christmas Eve. Edward is sick with something, a cold, I don't know. He has temperature, I watch him. I think on Christmas Eve it is nobody will be coming, not American, not English. It is very near Berlin, we were waiting there, we don't know what they may do. We think we maybe go to Berlin, to employment agency, maybe we get job in country, working for something, we didn't know. I washed the children, we put them to bed, and we was sitting playing cards till twelve o'clock, and after went to sleep in bed. Four o'clock was big alarm, siren, it is coming English or American planes. It was Christmas Day, everyone wake up, and running. My student friend say, "You take Nellie and I will watch Edward". It was only wooden barracks, temporary sheds you know. I take Nellie, we don't know where to go, we had not long been there. Everyone is running, this siren is going, they say, "Go in the bunker", you know what is bunker? Yes, I don't know where it is. I run, run, I see something back under the door. I run through the door and just then they start to bomb us. Such bombing, such explosion, we don't know. Very many explosion, and there was plenty men, all was men, only I, maybe workers was, all young men, oldest forty. They sit always together, in this long bunker, in the corner, near the door, I sit with my Nellie. Bombs coming, the door is iron, you know, but with the bombs falling go boom, boom, boom, but not break. And I the same crying like Nellie, and I don't know how is Edward with this student. Sitting and crying I was, and these men looking frightened. I don't know what I think in this time, one or two hours we sitting there, maybe two hours. When I coming out, when siren speak, all is finished, bright stars you know. These men coming out and looking, say, "All is quiet", and I coming. It is getting light, and I come to our camp. Some is without barracks. Some of this roof is gone, you know, and I not see this my Edward with student is there. Then they coming, they told me they was frightened start windows being broken, and the wood coming down. They see the doors all broken and they ran away. Edward was just pyjamas or so, without clothes, and after we knew that only 13 kilometres, another camp, they also bombed, and destroyed completely. There was little river, and they bombed this river, and all is burning, all is flame, and all these people is killed. Ours was only broken, this was, you know, we was safe, others all destroyed.

Berlin to Czechoslovakia

Later, this student, my friend told me that she hear that there is one ambulance, who is giving first aid for people who have something suffered, and here is one doctor. I said this student, "Go and find out, I am maybe myself killed". She told me, "Yes, people say there is one doctor". Then I went to this ambulance and there was German sister, I find that doctor is Estonian, from Russia, the same like me. I talked to him, he knows about bombing and so. I said to him, "I beg you, save us, send us somehow another place, that we cannot stay here". He said, "All right I will be talking to sister, and maybe we send you to Czechoslovakia, or somewhere there is quiet place". German sister said, "You must go to Berlin, to Berlin employment". After three or four days, he gave us direction what we must do. This student first I go, she left with my children. I went to Berlin, I was frightened that again coming bombing, maybe we next be destroyed. I remember I went to Berlin. It was, I don't know, underground

this train. I went to this office. It take maybe one hour to go, we was very close, electric underground it was. I remember this transport. We must walk one kilometre to the station. I couldn't speak German. I little bit know some words, and I find this employment office.

When I want to go out from Belarus, I told you, this lady, this friend, Russian woman who was working as translator, interpreter [*Natalia Ivanovna Grosser; see pages 23–24, 67, 81*]. She gave me address. She said, "Keep this address on your body, not lose this address. When you will be one time in Germany, somewhere out from Russia, you write to me letter, and I will be help to you. I have in Czechoslovakia, from when I was married, whenever I want it, one room at sister of my husband. When you will be in Germany, you always write to me letters. I will be help to you. You remember I talk to you about this big man, partisan attacked him, and he broke these ribs, and I looked after him". She said, "I will be in contact with this man", maybe she was his mistress, I don't know, "and he always help to you". I said, "What is for this", such mess was. I have forgotten this. I put this somewhere in my things, I don't know. What she write I don't know, maybe letter of recommendation.

When I get to this employment office, here is one doctor again. I told the secretary I want see doctor. They send me to one. I told him what situation I have. I have two children, and I have one lady who is looking after my children. I find he help to me. I tell him, "I want something, it doesn't matter which work, I want something working". He told me, "It is very hard to find, because you have two children. I don't know where I find for you such job where you can have this children. This lady, no I cannot, that you will be together as well. I must give to her, because she is young and without children, I must give to her another place, another job, and everything, because she has not finished her education or so". I asked him, "please" because I needed her, but he was very tough and said, "No, I send you in Czechoslovakia, Wiesengrund [*now Dobruška*], then you can be in touch. She will go to another city, not far, you can write so and so. You will be glad I send you nice city". What can I do?

One day again, I don't know how long this is, maybe two or three days, all is people stamped in prison camp, all these people, Polish people crying, and in this tent crying all the time. It is such an unsure position because you don't know what are going to do." We don't know what we can take. I remember I take this trunk, something left, because we walking, and this heavy was. They gave us our ticket, and what direction we must go. People are very jealous because we are going, I don't know luck, or something, something was helping, maybe this doctor. Because they needed doctors, because of this war, Germany the same. All the time was such – awful, and when we come to station again siren, and we don't know if we be going at all, or sometime delayed because some part of Berlin was bombing all the time. [*See Appendix I, page 123, for a map of the Wiesengrund–Pilsen area.*]

They sent me to big psychiatric hospital in Czechoslovakia. We went two nights in train for Czechoslovakia, and always there is bombing. I don't know, I cannot describe this awful time. All is dislocated, all is frightened, looking for this aeroplane. Search lights come, where is train the same stopped, the light again, and again is stopped, maybe one hour and is explosion. When we reached Czechoslovakia, there is quiet and we come to Prague. This student, this girl, left me because she has other ticket, and I left only with my children.



Lena in Wiesengrund, 1944

From Prague, I find out where I must go. I don't know where is this Wiesengrund. Anyway the Czech people is very kind. I understand them a little because language is Slavic. They very Germany hate, and when they know I am Russian or so, they are very helpful. They put us on train and we go again one night. We had been living in the station for one to two days, I don't remember. They were more out of the war, than in war. It was a protectorate from Germany (Sudetenland). We reach the city. I don't know where is this hospital; Germany was at war, but their organisation was very good. I coming out from train to station, and coming one man ask, "You are doctor?" My name too. There was two white horses, like long ago, and a cart, a closed cart waiting. It was like a dream. I was such depressed, and asked, "Where I going?" I never been psychiatric, and what I doing at psychiatric hospital. I want not lose my prestige. What I do, how I do. In Germany was very high education for doctor. I thinking after all this mess, that has been, and now such, two white horses, like picture in history, you know. And everything we have put on, and we drive, very tired, long time we drive, one hour or more. Everything destroyed, the same was. About a month, six weeks before was this bombarding. Such a big hospital [*in Dobrany*] was, like Adelaide Hospital, was for three thousand psychiatric beds. Many big blocks, all brick, of three or four storeys. Some was bombed, only three or four blocks, because they had made mistake. The rest of the bombs fell on the fields, where it was not built up. I see these blocks that are bombed, even it is night I see.



Edward and Olena in Wiesengrund, 1944

We stopped and he took our things and asked at one big three-storey building, and he just said to me, nurse dressed in white uniform, and she take us and show us our room. She opened the door and there it was. Just was New Years Eve, when my Nellie was that night. Always in Russia I not make Christmas tree on Christmas Eve or so, but put Christmas tree for 1st January. When we went into this room was nice, was three beds, all with nice things, warm blankets, and on the table this Christmas tree, and presents for children. You see, I just see, children surprised. We stand, I don't know what nurse think. There was water, one kettle, everything I needed. All is dinner, or supper ready, you don't believe. I don't know where I was, where I sleep, and I don't know what thinking. And she didn't know, she just left, she saw that we so upset and so crying. Just nobody told us such thing. I washed children and put them to bed, and so and so, and next morning, I was funny dressed you know, peasant boots and cheap dress of wool, next morning came one lady. She said she was Ukrainian, and they got from Berlin such letter coming doctor with children. I, and another, have prepared. She said, "I am one month here from Kiev, I have mother, and brother, I am finished one year doctor, and we are one month here. I was more worse position than you, and when I know that you are coming, I tell everyone". Now we talking Ukrainian. She told me about the bombardment. "There was twenty patients killed, because when the siren is sounded we must take all these patients to cellar, come to bunker". I said, "I don't understand German very well". She said "I do know German,

little bit, not so much, and I will be help to you. Now you must go with me and I will introduce you to the director of this hospital, German director". It was psychiatry, what they give to me first, because I don't know German, put me to look after sick people. I only when somebody sick, look after these people. *[The Ukrainian doctor was Tamara, who remained with Lena to the end of the war and then in the Displaced Persons camp in Aschaffenburg until 1949. Tamara migrated to America where she worked for many years.]*



Lena (left) and Tamara (centre) in the grounds of the hospital at Wiesengrund

[Olena recalls an amusing incident in Wiesengrund in May 1945. With no children of her age to play with, the young Olena would occupy herself by wandering in the hospital grounds and loudly imitating animal sounds – roosters, dogs, cows, horses, sheep – a full farmyard. An American soldier passing by was surprised to see that all the calls came from a small girl. He took Olena to a large army tent nearby and asked her to make the calls for the numerous American soldiers who were relaxing on stretchers in the tent (troops from General George Patton's U.S. Third Army – see Appendix IV). The soldiers were very impressed and plied Olena with chocolates (army type, wrapped in waxed paper and foil), which she promptly ate. But soon after Olena threw up the lot!]



Adolf Hitler Place, Wiesengrund



Czech actors portray U.S. Army soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Division during the Pilsen Liberation Festival, an annual celebration in honour of American soldiers who fought there as part of General George S. Patton's Third Army in the closing stages of World War II.

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Czechoslovakia

The Ukrainian doctor told me that the room they had for me was not ready when we come. The room they give me was prepared for another doctor they expecting. Not for me was this Christmas Tree. It was all got ready for another doctor. I told the children, no one had said the little presents on tree were for us. We did not touch these things. Now I understand they are ready for another doctor, or another family. We were moved then to another room and Edward get sick. He gets lung inflammation in this new room. One week or more was sick. I give antibiotics, it was warm, he was soon all right.

I was then really looking after sick patients. They give me first these patients who can walk. I was not a psychiatrist, for all these patients you must write, schizophrenia or so. This Ukrainian doctor [*Tamara*] knew better German, very nice, and she told me, you tell me about these patients, I will be of help to you writing German. All the doctors were very good for us. There was one lady was doctor, who was long time surgeon. She was not just German, she was such a person from Russia, or somewhere who was a German married. Her husband was somewhere because of the war, I don't know. There was director, German, one doctor, I cannot remember all now. They was very good for us, always good. The Ukrainian lady was always so, to speak for us. Very bad was this one, who was economic administrator. He was try to make push that we go into concentration camp. We not belong to this hospital, you know. Always was the system, he was German, always looking for us, and just he push all the time, press with doctor director. This was doctor, who is patient director for hospital, and who administrated for doctors and for patients. He was doctor of everything, but other administrator he pushing all the time, and this Ukrainian doctor, this young doctor, we don't know what to do.

Mostly every day was alarm, always alarm was, working, working and going bunker, bunker was underneath. Everyday was siren, all was coming English planes, American planes, mostly English, all the time day and night, sometimes two or three times at night. I remember that Nellie had measles, and the same with measles, I wrap her and we go in bunker. All the time. We living same room where there was patient, who every was on duty, mostly duty was not doctor, only one doctor is on duty, mostly was all these nurses and sisters on night duty, and they always take these patients the same in bunker. I told you before when I coming was plenty ruins from one time bombing. It was like big city you know. Wiesengrund, one or two kilometres away. This city was big administration for mental patients. The hospital was like Flinders hospital [*in Adelaide*], many, many big buildings for three thousand people. Two hundred was killed when this bombardment coming, some nurses was killed, the one a couple of months before we coming. We was always such, in stress or so. We don't know how long we be there. I said to this Ukrainian doctor, "What about for this lady, this interpreter (Natalia Ivanovna Grosser), I forgot for her, somewhere she lives, where she disappears, I don't know". I show here this letter, this address, say somewhere here is. I don't know. Ukrainian doctor say, "Forget this

one. Just we must make this economic administrator, he makes orders we must go. We must go in concentration camp". We called 'Ost' you know [*Ost (East) not only were the 'Ost' enemy, but the Ost people were despised by Western Europeans. Lena says in a later tape that the 'Ost' people were thought of as 'Undermensch'. They were treated differently from others as this tape shows. Whenever they left camp, or wherever they were situated, they were required to wear arm bands saying Ost. Lena says it is essential to understand this attitude.*] He say, "You don't belong here, you are our enemy and so and so". Not gave us food. We went to plenty chefs, was against Germany, the same, they give us food. This Ukrainian lady, she was young, and there was young man, sometimes, who liked her, and sometimes I get the same. This bunker was very bad when Dresden was bombed. It is terrible on this night, it is not far from Czechoslovakia. I remember it was all in light, and in blue and yellow fire, all the earth is shaking. We think it is coming here. We didn't know where it is, how far away because all is shaking. Next day we know that it was Dresden. After this Dresden there was plenty killed, some couple or three people coming in our place, was one doctor, one nurse and one student. They talking, talking now they were saved. They say they running away from city, they run, run, run, behind was city and they survived. There was plenty, thousand, ten thousand, hundred thousand, all is gone. These people coming, next week coming and tell us. We saw and heard this night. All the time was frightened, because this siren all the time sounding. This man all the time push us, push us we must go, and was ordered that one week we must go.

One day coming this female interpreter for this Germany man, who lived in Mosyr, find me. Say, "Where you are, we looking all in Germany, all in Berlin. When we went in Employment Office we find", I make so big eyes, you know. This man coming with her, this German Commissar I helped. He told me "Where is this doctor, I be help for my life. She saved my life, and I must save her life. We were everywhere in Poland looking, thinking you are in Poland. We writing everywhere, and only in Berlin, in employment office we find you, first trying, and coming here". We told him what was the position with us, that we must go in concentration camp. He said "Don't worry, nobody touch you, you will be safe". The woman say that he is the same big man for all this district. "I am his friend, I teach his two children in piano. I told you when I give you address, that always, wherever you will be, you write this man, and this man will be help to you". Coming this big man, bigger than economic administrator, bigger than all is. He was very nice man. He made me introduce him to this man. He said, "This is the same district where I live, it is not far from here in Sudetenland, maybe couple of hundred miles away. This other man will be quiet, because this man was coming, her friend, was bigger for all the medical administration in occupied Czechoslovakia. I don't know, she is coming, this time, for me, there is always a miracle. It is not only this time, I don't know how you can explain it. He told that nobody touch you, "You will be quiet here". He arranged conference, this doctor conference and told this man who was always worried that we here, not touch us. He would help this man, man was so surprised he come, because he himself was big man too. All was different for us. These doctors too. How protection makes different life, and different people.

We stayed in Wiesengrund till the end of the war and Americans coming. One time we didn't know who was coming, who be occupying. We didn't know because different talking. All is wanting

Americans, you know. Was talking that Russians the same night occupy. We stayed there one year, and on 5th May 1945 these Americans occupied our district.

[As discussed in Dwight D. Eisenhower's book, Crusade in Europe (1948), the U.S. Third Army under General George S. Patton pushed rapidly eastwards into Czechoslovakia as far as Pilsen (10 km NE of Wiesengrund), which was liberated on 6th May – this was part of the deepest American penetration on the western front. Patton was known for driving himself and his troops hard, and because of his rapid advance on the western front his army reached Pilsen before the arrival of the Russians, who were rapidly advancing from the east. Germany surrendered to the Allies on 7th May and hostilities ceased at midnight the following day, so Lena and family were saved from the Russians by less than two days. Without the mighty efforts of Patton and his troops, there would have been no American camp in Pilsen to provide refuge for Lena and family; they would have fallen into the hands of the Russians and never reached Australia. Eventually, all of Czechoslovakia was occupied by the Russians. See Appendix IV for information on the liberation of Pilsen. (GW)]

Czechoslovakians, maybe, more wanted that Russians come. Some people they believed because they are Slavic people; and because they under protectorate, Germany was very good for Czechoslovakia, not like Poland, or Belarus or so. In Belarus made such bad things, this Germany *[Lena is now talking of what happened in Belarus.]* I remember they are burning all these villages, they not knew, somebody tell them they are hiding partisans or so, many villages were burnt, the same nearer Mosyr. One teacher who had one little girl, little girl sometimes she come for sick, and I cured her. They take one, next one and throw her on the fire. Mother was mad, they survived you know, because they take people out and say, "you look". For punishment, they take some children, take some woman, some take and throw on fire, not because they hiding these partisans. Just you know many villages in Belarus Germany burnt. You cannot know, you cannot believe we lived such life. We did not know when it would be us. It is very good that I have such friend (the interpreter) many was the same arrested and handled. She was, all the time, always our side. One time, I told you, she ran away look for me plenty was arrested, nurses and doctor, and she ran away look for me thinking I was the same arrested, and she told me that I was the same in danger. She said if they coming to you, and you will be taken for prisoner, we will be helping for you. I said, "You cannot help, if they come, I will be dead". Anyway I survived. There are many things that I cannot tell you. For me was the same, I think I will be die in the siege, or die in Germany. Such was, no choice. Just when we went out from this Belarus, from this Mosyr, we only twenty or maybe 25 kilometres through bridge, train go through bridge, and just behind was partisans, was blown up. Only one minute when this one was bombed. There was plenty mines, when we go with this train. I told you, when we go in Poland near Belarus, all this mines train go, and our wagon is left. I don't know how I can describe all these things, you know.

In camp at the end of the War

After when this Americans coming, there plenty people coming. Americans collected the Germany people, wives and children coming to our hospital. I remember, I was doctor, plenty coming pregnant woman, in labour. I must take, people, looking for me, and I helped deliver these children. After coming such, plenty big trucks and something taking these people, and was told some who lived in this hospital could go with these people. We didn't know, we wanted to stay with this Americans. One doctor who was coming from Dresden, she was from Yugoslavia. She left, and plenty nurses coming later, one was Latvian, couple Estonian, they was coming a couple of months they working there and they went the same as these. Only I left with Tamara, this young Ukrainian doctor, with family, brother, mother and auntie, and mother's brother, they have two boys, the same age like Edward. We don't know what is happening. After one or couple of weeks when all was empty, there was the soldiers barracks the same, Russian soldiers from Caucasus. All the time was such movement, you know. This Americans, always put in our hospital because it was plenty big always was coming such big these trucks and taking people. They go in 'big Germany' was told.

After one week, couple of weeks I don't know is coming Russian officer, NKVD. "Oh, yes, we must go home for children. They coming from Pilsen [*Plzen*], a big city in Czechoslovakia [*10 km northeast of Wiesengrund*]. Looking for Edward - "You must go home". Edward was eight or nine years old [*actually 10 years*]. "Oh yes he just reach home, he will be in school". Such things talking you know. And one day they coming this truck, say, "We will be picking up you, and you will be going home". They told, before, that Saturday coming with truck and taking us to their camp. I sent Edward, this time we knew, because brother of Tamara's mother, he, because mother was not pure Ukrainian, mother or father was Polish, she was married Ukrainian. They knew that this Polish have special American protection Polish people, because Germany very suffered, and the English the same, was special camp for Polish people, and this brother went in Polish camp. It was five or six kilometres from the hospital, and I sent Edward there, I think Edward will not be with me, and how can they take me with one child, and he will be left. When they coming on Saturday Edward was gone, I was with this family, they took everything. I ran to this American, because in hospital was American headquarters. There was head officer, and something secretary. I went and said, "You are American zone, why Russians coming with car and truck and want taking us?" The secretary said, "This officer is not here, we don't know where he is. We don't know what is that, we can do nothing to help". I said, "We cannot wait because they coming to pick us up". "Oh I don't know, I can nothing to do". I said, "I have not son here, my son is six kilometres away". They coming with car, say, "Where is your son?" I say "I sent him to Polish camp". They say they take Edward with car, it is not far away. They coming with truck and car. They take us with car and take us to Pilsen, to own [*Russian*] camp. There was plenty people, Russian people, people from the east. They give for us one room, for me one room with bunk on the top for children. Next door was this Tamara with family. Tamara was attractive, you know, such young

lady, I don't know twenty-five, twenty-six, twenty-seven. Mother went somewhere working, and she the same, working in kitchen.

It was maybe four or five days we was there, one week, with Tamara we went in city, camp was just out of city. We cannot go without permission out. We asked permission go to city, to buy or to see, I don't remember why. We get this permission. Children left with mother, my children, and brother left there. He was something working with car or with trucks. He was mechanic, he was young man, sixteen or seventeen years. I went with Tamara to Pilsen, to city. We went in Kino (cinema). It was 'Ivan the Terrible', Russian. Tamara say, "Go and see Russian film". I never seen before when I was in Russia 'Ivan the Terrible'. I see it all, my hair coming up.

Lena takes antibiotics and other drugs to make herself very ill and so avoids being sent to Russia, and the family gets to the American camp in Pilsen

We come back to camp, I see Edward on top of the gate, said, "Mama, Mama, Mama, where have you been. Come quick, quick." We must start packing, and three o'clock in the morning will be go train in homeland. All is ordered, all must pack and go. At three o'clock in the morning will be such train. All must packing, all is ordered we going homeland, homeland. All people should be ready to go homeland. He was shouting on the other side of gate. When I got through gate and went to my room, there was mother with my Nellie. I take my head start to shout, crying and shout, I will get mad now, I shout for all my strength. Mother said, "Do not shout, not will be help to you, not shout". I said, "No, I mad, I shout, I am mad, I not go". After she quiet me "You must something else, not this one", and I think I will be poisoning myself. *[Lena was prepared to take these desperate measures because they knew that Russian citizens who were repatriated usually never reached Russia. They were killed en route. Solzhenitsyn says a similar fate awaited Russian prisoners of war. Lena showed me an 'Australian' published some years ago talking about a book 'The Last Secret' by Nicholaus Beknell and Andre Deutsch, about forcible repatriation to Russia. This Australian had a front page article. Churchill knew the fate of those who were forcibly repatriated.]*

I have plenty antibiotics, sulphonamide, plenty I take from this hospital. I look after sick patients, you know, I had plenty medicines. I had something, in Russia I give for worms, these worms, that I give for Edward when we come from this village, he was infected, and I get this from the chemist, called Santonin. This very poison, you can take only two or three powder, no more. When you take more you can very quick poison, it was very potent. I think what I must do. I start swallow, antibiotics, till I got vomit. When I get vomit, I tell Tamara you go, I will be telling that I have acute appendix. I start to vomit, and take three or four of this powder, Santonin *[a strong purgative]*. It is for long worm, not little one, not tape. In our country was, in Russia, because not so hygienic, you know, in country worse than city, they coming from septic, more longer, coloured like earth, but longer and thicker than earth worms. Sometimes in young ones can come blocking in intestine if not treated. The eggs live inside, will stay without medicine. I take this medicine and vomit and vomit. I told Tamara, Tamara looking for

me. I said "Go and find doctor" camp doctor, you know, and I will be saying I have acute appendicitis, and I will not go, and you will be looking after my children. I must go hospital, make operation acute appendicitis. She find this young doctor. I told him that I cannot go with this transport, because I am doctor, I know, I have this acute appendicitis. He looking for me. I vomit - "Oh nothing, will be all right. Nothing to upset, I think it is not". He said to me, I start again, I taking more antibiotics, taking, taking, and vomit all the time. It day time, afternoon, when doctor was there, it was eight o'clock, nine o'clock at night. Then after nine o'clock coming two men to Tamara. Two NKVD who was looking after these people to be collected. They wanted to go out with Tamara, you know. I was on the top because nearer was Nellie and Edward sleeping. Tamara was sitting with mother. I was on the top with this bowl you know, vomit, vomit all the time. They wanting Tamara, they say, "What is this woman there". I say, "I am sick, we need a doctor. I have acute appendicitis, I needing operation. If I not taken, I will be orphan my children. I must get help". I vomit without stop. I don't know if it is antibiotics, or this Santonin. If I take more Santonin, maybe I will be dead. I vomit, vomit, vomit. They say, "Why this doctor nothing to do for you"? They sent twelve o'clock at night another doctor, coming again young chap. He, maybe, because ordered by NKVD, big men, they give from American jeep. I wanted only go regional Czechoslovakian hospital. We have there a friend in nerve clinic a very good doctor. Not only friend, but he is very sympathetic to us. He was head of nerve clinic, and he sometimes coming as consultant in our hospital, and we talk with him, you know. And one time in Pilsen in this hospital all doctors invited us for one dinner, and we knew some. They were very sympathetic for us because we too were Slavic people suffering from Germany. They was very nice for us. I want only reach this, with such doctors, knowing what I talk about. They put the American jeep, they have not own jeep, because not far away was American camp, where American collected people, such one. Put one jeep. I take this bag with medicine, that they don't know, I put over my things I needed to take with me. Because they will be looking medicines and maybe know that I make simulation, and the doctor was travel with me in this jeep. We reach clinic, this doctor was not allowed to go inside. Take me in hospital, it was modern, not like in Russian. Put bed, coming three or four doctors around me. "You have acute appendicitis and you now will have operation". I said, "Doctor, I not have operation, I was in city today. I poisoned myself, eat very bad these sausages. I am myself doctor, and I not needing operation". They sent me through yard another clinic. I not have operation. There was duty doctor, he want me this tube to wash out all my poison [*a stomach pump*]. I didn't take. I said, "Doctor give me better this Kohl (charcoal) which absorb all this poison. It was very big used. He said, "All right we give you this Kohl" and he said, "when I give my own patients I sorry for them swallowing this". I say only give me plenty water. Kohl will not help this. He said, "Nurse, give plenty water". Because I was vomiting all the time, and I think, I myself was washing this out, all the poison what I take. Nurse, when I finish this water, put in bed, nice, very good. Then I take this Kohl, water all is coming out. Then is coming doctor say, "What is the matter with you. Nurse say she is frightened that you so many jugs of water you take, and always you vomit". I say, "No, doctor is all right". And when the early light it come, it is stopped.

I was in this hospital. They make these X-rays, they make laboratory tests coming one doctor, coming another doctor. I make little bit sometimes, when they putting thermometer. I make little bit warmer. My children were left, family left, Tamara left, because they looking after my children. They not go this transport. They tell me, "Oh yes, they looking after my children". They make one hole in the fence, when all was quiet. They went this American camp, they knew Tamara's uncle was there. Polish people were taken over there. They all things taking to this brother of Tamara's mother, mostly my things left. The children coming to me. I very sick, they making every day examination, and every thing, make laboratory examination, so, so, so. I nearly there one month was I was not feeling sick, I was frightened to get up. If I get up then I be finished. Nobody coming from this camp more. Tamara take all with brother, and one time she come to me and said she was talking always to these doctors, and one lady doctor was very suspicious. She think is something wrong, because all the time I lie by myself. It was lady, not man, lady always lady. She (Tamara) was connected with another doctor, she connected with this doctor who in nerve clinic was, over one hundred or two hundred steps away this nerve clinic was. So he told this Tamara, and said it is very dangerous keeping me in this hospital. He say, "I be looking at her, I say she is very nervous, and she will be transferred to this nerve clinic". I was such depressed, I don't know. I don't stand up, I only stand when I must go to X-ray, or something. Tamara come and tell me and I said, "Yes" He said, "In my clinic I can keep her so long, until you say she can go to American camp, something safe place. In my clinic I am director I am head of the clinic, how long she needs she can stay, anytime when she want go to American camp, I will discharge her from hospital".

One month I not walking, my legs go underneath, and I went this clinic. One day he told me, I so frightened. Many people went to garden, and say to me, "Go little garden". I frightened to go. I lie all the time. One day he coming say, "You will be all right soon" and bring me lollies. I don't know what he is thinking. I lie, I say I am sick, I cannot walk. When Tamara comes, sometimes mother, children coming all the time, bring some things to me what I have. This medicine was the same under my bed and this other case. They bring some books me. I still have some books, and cushion, one time Tamara bring for me this blankets what I have. All my things is in this Russian camp, all is left there. I only these two little cases have. One time after one or two months, I was altogether three months in hospital, this time was very, very strongly established this American camp, and this Tamara relatives were there in this camp. She had all things belonging put in American camp. Only my things left. I had one big trunk, there was some dishes, sewing machine, things like that. I don't need it. Some I take books. I thinking that I have such profession that I can every country or so, myself for living earn, with sick people. Nothing to carry or so. Such things I taking, but not for earning, I take when I go out from this country. *[See below for Olena's account as to how she and Edward smuggled many of Lena's possessions from the Russian camp to the American camp.]*

I was there three months, one month therapeutic clinic, and two months was in this nerve clinic, and one time this doctor director, he think me I was only very depressed and such. He told this Tamara, "I think I must give to her, she very depressed, I very worry about her. I think she need electric shock". When she told me electric shock, I said, "Tamara, I am all right, I not need it, tell him I

not needing electric shock". I am only frightened, I all the time lie, I not go in garden, only because I am frightened, I not want to go in Russia, I know what they will do and told him, "Please I am healthy I don't need this electric shock". See, I was depressed, you know. Then he told any time when we needed, he can lie, and keep me in hospital how long we needed. Only you tell me any time she wants go. One time Tamara tell me all her things, and she, now, was in American camp, and next day come transport for another, big camp in Germany, and when we reach big Germany, no one Russia will be taking us, you know. She said, "I come take you, and you will be ready. I bring to you dark glasses and so". I was frightened that some of these officers, all looking in the train, was looking everywhere, hunting these people, this Russian officers. I was ready and he discharged me from hospital, this was in autumn, nice autumn day. I cannot stand my legs, so, three months nearly lie all the time, ah my legs! "No", I said, I will be go. Tamara coming with mother, and children coming, and she self coming and taking me, my case, a dress for me, these glasses, and I must go in train. We went to train, we reach this American camp, no go through gate, there was hole again in the fence, broken this big hole in wooden fence, we went to this room where was her auntie. For me was not this room, she make it her room, and evening was, night time in this big hall, all were dancing because war is finished [*end of war in the Pacific, on 14th August 1945*], all was dancing and plenty Americans, girls and men dancing and music and singing. I couldn't dancing my legs aching, oh mine God. I was so sore, and next day couple of days we should be go transport, and coming this Ukrainian commandant. I said my husband was Ukrainian. All was Ukrainian people, and mostly was Ukrainian people coming to Czechoslovakia from first war. Was immigrated, run away from Russia, mostly elite, because revolution coming and mostly finding shelter in Czechoslovakia, Poland. They called old immigration, you know. We was new immigration [*Ukraine was the only Soviet country which did not achieve independence between the wars*]. All here was mostly old immigration, only Tamara and I were new immigration. All is living in Czechoslovakia, for thirty or forty years, like we in now in Australia. They educated there, my husband (second) educated in Czechoslovakia, university and everything.

[Olena recounts how they escaped from the Russian camp in Pilsen

When the Russians reached Pilsen in western Czechoslovakia in May 1945 they searched the area looking for people they regarded as Russian citizens, who were to be moved to a Russian camp in Pilsen prior to their "repatriation" to Russia. When Lena became aware of this she told Edward to hide on several occasions so we could not be moved from Wiesengrund. Only on the third attempt by the Russians were Lena, Edward and I placed in a Russian army truck and moved to the Russian camp.

We had been at the Russian camp only a few days when word came that we were to be put on a train that night for transportation to Russia. Lena was determined not to go back to Russia, so she took antibiotics and other medicines in sufficient quantity to make herself too ill to travel. Although the thugs from the NKVD (USSR secret police) were suspicious, they placed Lena in a Czech hospital in Pilsen, initially under guard, where she remained seriously ill for three months (see pages 24–25 and

94–97). Lena confided in a Czech doctor at the hospital as to what she had done, and he shielded her from the NKVD. Tamara, a young Ukrainian doctor who was staying in the Russian camp, then took care of Edward and me. We had to obtain permits to leave the Russian camp when Tamara took us to visit our ill mother in hospital. On one such trip we met some Poles from Western Ukraine (friends of Tamara, who was also from Western Ukraine) who were staying in the American refugee camp in Pilsen, and they told us about it. When Tamara, Edward and I next saw Lena in hospital, it was agreed that we all had to escape to the American camp.

So a plan was hatched. The Russian camp was a former German barracks situated on the outskirts of Pilsen. At the back of the barracks was a secluded, overgrown jungle-like garden; our room in the barracks was the last in the block and near the garden. While playing in the “jungle” Edward and I had discovered a loose iron upright in the fence, and that pushing it aside made a gap allowing us to leave the camp unnoticed by the armed Russian soldiers guarding the camp gate. Although permits were always required to leave the camp, Edward and I could get out without permits at any time we chose. Back in the Russian camp, Tamara wrapped clothing and valuables of Lena and some of her own possessions around Edward’s and my waists, and we would then sneak out through the hole in fence. After closing the gap in the fence and making sure that the coast was clear, we would hurry to the American camp about two or three kilometres away in open countryside. There we would leave the items with Polish friends for safe keeping. Over several weeks Edward and I carried Lena’s most important possessions to the American camp, including books, papers and photographs (many of which appear in this document), medicines and medical instruments, sometimes making several trips a day, sometimes together, at other times alone.

At the hospital in Pilsen Lena was prepared for her move to the American camp. Although she was very weak and had extremely swollen legs, Lena left the hospital with the assistance of the Czech doctor and we all caught a train that took us to the city limits. From there we walked about a kilometre to the American camp. Lena moved very slowly and with great pain, but with Tamara’s help she made it. **FREEDOM AT LAST!**

We entered the American camp unnoticed and were assisted by Polish friends and some Ukrainians. After a few days we and many others were required to move to the American displaced persons camp in Aschaffenburg in Germany. On a hot August day we trudged along a dirt road through the countryside to a railway station to await the train to Germany. The long line of people moved slowly along the road, with bullock-drawn carts carrying our belongings. Lena was still very ill with badly swollen legs and walked so painfully, but with Edward’s and my help she made it again. Tamara walked with her relatives. We all caught the train and were on our way to Aschaffenburg, where our family was to remain for four years, with Lena and Tamara on the hospital medical staff – see pages 108–113.]

[From Wikipedia – Displaced Persons Camp

The difficulties of repatriation

Over one million refugees could not be repatriated to their original countries and were left homeless as a result of fear of persecution. These included:

- *Ethnic or religious groups that were likely to be persecuted in their countries of origin. These included a large number of Jews, and others.*
- *Poles, Ukrainians and some Czechs, who feared persecution by the communist regimes installed in their home countries by the Soviet Army, in particular those from provinces (Galicia, etc) that had been recently incorporated into the Soviet Union.*
- *Estonians, Lithuanians and Latvians, whose homelands had been invaded in 1940 by the Soviet Union, and remained occupied after the war.*
- *Croats, Serbs and Slovenes who feared persecution by the communist government set up by Josip Broz Tito.*
- *In a portent of the Cold War, individuals who simply wanted to avoid living under a communist regime.*

The agreement reached at the Yalta Conference required in principle that all citizens of the allied powers be repatriated to their home country. The Soviet Union insisted that refugees in the American, British, and French sectors who were or at some point had been Soviet citizens be sent back to the Soviet Union. A large number of refugees resisted this, fearing that their fleeing Soviet rule had condemned them as traitors.

American, British, and French military officials, as well as UNRRA officials, reluctantly complied with this directive, and a number of Soviet citizens were repatriated. Many of these met with the hardship they feared, including death and confinement in the Gulags. There were also cases of kidnapping and coercion to return these refugees. Many avoided such repatriation by misrepresenting their origins, fleeing, or simply resisting. Rejecting claimed Soviet sovereignty over the Baltic states, allied officials also refused to repatriate Lithuanian, Estonian, and Latvian refugees against their will.

Similarly, a large number of refugees who were repatriated to Yugoslavia were subjected to summary executions and torture.

A large number of Poles, who later agreed to be repatriated, did in fact suffer arrest and some were executed, particularly those that had served in the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, or in the Polish Resistance against the Nazis.]

INTERVIEW IX – October 13 1982

Tania Chudolij in America

When we get to this country (Australia), you know, we stay this country. Because again there is nobody. We live in this Bonegilla camp (in NE Victoria), there was mostly people from our camp (in Bavaria) people that we knew. Again when you go in America, there is not accommodation. They, self *[her friend Tania, a nurse from the DP camp in Aschaffenburg and her doctor husband]* was not settled down in the USA, husband get job like assistant working in hospital. She was nurse helping husband very much. She get this job like nurse, and the same hospital was, different ward. After many months, not four years *[four years as it would have been in Australia]*, husband make this examination and they open their own practice in Rhode Island. Before they were in New Jersey, when they coming from camp in Germany. They opened clinic just the same street, where is Brown University, in Rhode Island. She wrote, "It is in America very hard to get into medical faculty of university". It is very good, because they have two sons, and they very loved these sons, don't wanted that they go somewhere. "It is very good it is in our street, like home university". First son did I think go to another university, but other son went to Brown University.



Tania Chudolij and Dr Peter Chudolij

Move to Australia

What is happening (to us), Yaroslav still was separate. It may be was more important, because we didn't know, he was our sponsor, and he gets job, we didn't ask Australian Government, and he is maybe not allowed come because he is on contract. Maybe he will be stay, without him we will not go. Was too much trouble when he was taken alone. When he was separated, husband was very upset, very cross, because other families sons was not separated, and coming the same ship like we did. As soon as we come Bonegilla, the same ring up, "How is Yaroslav?" He was in Bathurst (NSW), and after one week he come visiting us in Bonegilla. Everything was alright. One and a half months we was in Bonegilla, because the end of June we coming to Adelaide. And after when we was in Adelaide, Yaroslav make application to Railway Institute, for something in the railways. They taking him in Railway Institute, he goes work in station, he was like shunter, or porter. He started his job in Railway Institute, where Festival Theatre now is. After I get job in your place, and husband get job in railway station. Only thing, we have not accommodation, you give for us accommodation, they had this tent. Nellie was with me, Edward was between. Mostly sleep in tent. Somebody saw he is coming over there, and somebody saw he was illegally in the railway station, and said it was not allowed, and I asked you. You said there is garden house. I cleaned it and he sleep very good there. He was at Unley High School in intermediate, day time he study in our room. Nellie was at the Goodwood primary school. Yes she was eleven then, I think was one year older than Tony [*the Yeatmans' son*]. After when we went to this accommodation this flat in Hutt Street, we bought this house in Thebarton. Yaroslav, paid only a small deposit, £300, we paid over three or four years. We borrowed it from bank. I always my pay, husband give me his pay. Three of four years I pay this house, every three months. And after when we go, we sold this house for £800. We put for sale and twenty people coming wanted.

Thebarton to Glenfairy

I remember when this house (in Thebarton) was empty we just couldn't go to this house, broken windows even in front, it was very nasty. Part aborigine, part Australian people. There was children, much rubbish. When it was clean everything, we were very happy. It was a nice house. In first room Edward and Yaroslav slept. We have middle room with little window, with husband. Nellie sleep in sleep out. There was kitchen, and one little sitting room. Sitting room and kitchen-dining room and kitchen, how you like. Outside was toilet, very little garden, apricot tree was only one. We lived there maybe two years. I can't remember. I think Edward was in last year of high school.



The family's first house, in Thebarton, 1952 (with Olena, lower)

When we put for sale, and we was glad to sell this house, because we wanted money for this house, which we find [Glenfairy – they had been looking for a long time for a house in Campbelltown which stood on a very large block near the Torrens River, where they could grow food and be to a large degree self-sufficient]. All of this money, £800, Yaroslav give for this house. After one year, people who bought other house, put for sale, get £1300. We had put new floor in and everything, maybe if we had asked £1000; nothing more done was, when we left. We didn't know prices so and so. This house cost £3,600 (*Glenfairy*). They want £800 deposit. We paid off this house many years. Yaroslav pay mostly, I remember one time I had collected one years or maybe more £250, I give to him for the house. In Hutt Street we paid rent, not much, because we started to complain this agent, because he told us that these people will be out from this house in less than half a year, they lived there three years. These people paid for us 10/- for every week. We waited for Thebarton nearly three years. The hotel where we lived in the flat in Hutt Street was sold. The people who had rented to us went to old people's place. They not wanted us to go out this house, we moving into other flat in this house.



Glenfairy, guarded by German shepherds Varta and Sirco at the front gate



Above: Lena, 1952 (left) and 1953. Below: Lena and Sergei on the front steps at *Glenfairry*



Edward and Olena

Fifty-four (1954) we coming here (Glenfairy). From Glenfairy he (Edward) was in university. He was two years in university, was very good, I be very glad. He was very good learning in university in geology faculty with credits. Afterwards in holidays went to work at this, something soft drinks at race course, and start to work. They ask him if he will be full time. He thought that he would take part time. *[Although Lena supported Edward by helping pay for his books and fees, he decided to end his university study with one year to finish his degree. Lena was against it.]* After, I don't know long, somebody tell him, "You are educated man. Why you do these jobs when you can get clerical jobs...". He went to taxation office, he get job there, and he is still there. He did very well, he can do very well now. He get couple of promotions when he was married.



Edward and Olena at Glenfairy, c. 1954

[Edward was very tall, 1.97 metres (6 ft 5 1/2 in), like his father Stephan]

Nellie went to school at Adelaide High School. She went on bicycle and she rode, even from here (Campbelltown). Somebody notice that she is very good playing this sport, softball, other sports. She was always champion sport at school, and was prefect. I still have this hat. I wanted her to do something at university. She wish this physical education at university and was working part time, she has recommendation from the university, at Girton College. She saw your girls at Wilderness School, when she did practice at university. One time when she was married, after coming from overseas she was in big Catholic School on Cross Road, name Cabra. Something too in North Adelaide she went to help one family when there was sickness, at that time too. In Cabra, one Ukrainian man who was finished university, his wife she met at Cabra. All holidays at university she is working the same, because I cannot afford that she will go interstate for these sport carnivals, Melbourne or Tasmania, and Brisbane and Sydney. She was everywhere, Perth, you know. When she was at university she got this blue certificate for sport, the highest degree they can give at university, because she still has cups from university. Still, her cups, I must clean. They have name and everything. Here is one. She throwing this disc and everything. She is for this sport very good. I must clean all. I am not keen for this sport, you know. I just make such fun with my son-in-law. I say all is sport, this silly cricket I never understand. I am not so keen. He said, "Babi", he sometimes call me Babi (grandmother), "You are doctor you must understand sport is very important, is very healthy". I said, "I don't know, sport yes, some people play sport normally, nor for competition". She is play every sport, she is sport mistress at Girton School. Even in England she was in gymnasium. *[On returning to Australia, Olena taught softball to University of Adelaide physical education students, and Lena looked after Tania during the day. Olena's many sporting achievements are summarised in Appendix V, pages 128–131].*

Happy with life in Australia

I not tell you that when we coming to Australia, Australians say to me, "Do not be thinking you will be doctor in Australia". They not say, if you go back to university for four years, you can again be doctor. Only later we know this. For me never was possible. First we must work educate children, we must get money for house. Then I have sick husband, six years, not possible. Very early husband say, "You forget about being doctor, you put cross underneath". Later many people, I told you wanted me go back to university, was too late. I was very good doctor, I must tell you. Always I wanted only to be doctor, was not possible. I not unhappy was, Australia very good place, all is free, nobody watch what we do. I work very hard in railway station, but all my life I work hard. My family is safe. In Pripyat when I go see patients I walk many miles. I very strong is. We live here now nearly forty years, I have many friends, my grandchildren very much love me, respect me too. They bring their friends, say, "This is my Babi". They are proud. When husband so long sick was, was very bad. I must put my children in other house because Edward argue with him, Slava (Slavko) stay. I must shop for both in market, cook for both, clean too. Now I don't know how I do this, but I am strong. When I retire, I make pots, I paint, go school in Norwood. This year I stop this. I have easy life, weekends I go visiting with Slava,

we play cards, friends come here, all younger than I am, more Slava's age. I have my pension, why I be unhappy. Come I show you my new ducks, many babies have. Slava make pen for them. I show you too Slava put insulation in house, and make air conditioner.

INTERVIEW X – December 2 1982

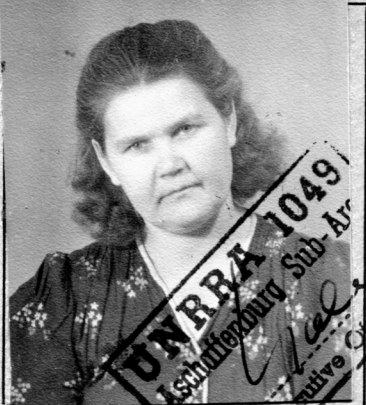
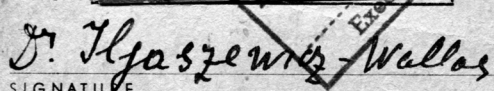
Aschaffenburg and Lena's second husband, Sergei Illiashevich

Elizabeth Yeatman writes: The tape which told of Lena's journey to the American camp in Aschaffenburg, Bavaria, where they lived for four years, was damaged. I asked her if she would tell me this story again. She told me of the pain she had felt in the loss of her profession. She had worked as a doctor in a displaced-persons camp in Bavaria. It consisted of five camps in close proximity, the camp was so large that all professional people continued to do their own jobs, and was allowed by the Americans to become a self-sustaining township. It was only after coming to Australia that she ceased to be a practising doctor. It was on this occasion that she told me her greatest regret was that she had not accepted a place in a Leningrad gynaecological clinic (The Leo Tolstoi clinic) where she could have become a specialist. Her uncle (Maria's husband) was at that time Professor of Anatomy in Leningrad. Because of the vast experience she had had in her first two and a half years in her first hospital near Minsk, they both urged her to enter the clinic and train. She finally refused this because she had already promised to marry her first husband.



Lena in Aschaffenburg

Briefly what I had wanted, in particular, to record from the damaged tape was the story of her second husband, whom she married early in the Bavarian period. Sergei, her second husband, arrived in the American camp a little later that she did. She was living in her quarters with Ukrainians, many of them from the first wave of immigration. He arrived with his son Yaroslav, space was at a premium and he asked as a Ukrainian of the first wave, whether they could make room for him in this accommodation. This was agreed. Because of their mutual interest in forests, and food gathering they spent much time together. (Sergei by an earlier marriage had four children, of whom Yaroslav was one. They had been divorced and Sergei lost contact with his first wife and the other children who were living in Prague. Like his father, Yaroslav did not attempt to get in touch with his siblings, although urged to do so by Lena. Some years later Yaroslav had contact with a brother in California, who visited him in Adelaide.)

	THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE PERSON DESCRIBED BELOW AND WHOSE PHOTO IS AFFIXED HERETO IS EMPLOYED AS:
	<u>Doctor of DP Camp 258.</u>
	UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF UNRRA TEAM 1049. THIS CERTIFICATE IS VALID ONLY AS LONG AS THE PERSON IS RESIDENT IN ASCHAFFENBURG
	NO. <u>225464.</u>
NAME <u>ILJASZEWYCZ-WALLAS Lena.</u>	NATIONALITY <u>Ukrainian</u>
PLACE OF BIRTH <u>Gluboke.</u>	DATE OF BIRTH <u>3.11.1905.</u>
DATE EMPLOYED <u>1.12.1945.</u>	DATE RELEASED _____
DIRECTOR <u>Gue</u>	

UNRRA 1049
 Aschaffenburg Sub-Office
 Executive Officer

RT. Thumb. E10

SIGNATURE

Lena's Auxiliary DP Employee's Certificate, Aschaffenburg, 1946

When Lena was about thirteen when the civil war was at its height, a Ukrainian soldier appeared who had fled from Finland and was lost. It was mid-winter and the snow was heavy. He was completely lost. He asked Martin Wallas, Lena's father, how he could get back to the Ukraine. Martin

told Lena to harness the horse and drive him to the station to catch a train. This remained with her as a distant dream, part of her memories of the civil war.

In the Bavarian camp on Christmas Eve there were many parties and celebrations. Sergei who had taught geography and history in the gymnasium in Prague, continued to teach in the camp. One of his students asked him to a party. When he arrived he picked up a Bible, and looked inside the cover. The student told him that she had been given it by a Ukrainian priest at the time of her confirmation. Sergei read the inscription and found that the priest had been his father (Sergei's father was a Ukrainian priest). He was greatly struck by this coincidence and on returning to his quarters he told the story. He said further that he remembered a young girl in Pskov who had driven him to the station when he was lost. He had never seen her again, but he remembered vividly the steadily falling snow, and his relief at being helped homeward. He wondered what had become of her, Lena said, "I am that girl". It seemed to them both that fate had brought them together, they married a short time later.



Medical staff at the hospital in the Displaced Persons camp in Aschaffenburg, where Lena worked from 1945–1949. Tania, fourth from left in back row. Lena, third from right in front row.



The gardens in Aschaffenburg which the family enjoyed

Olena's recollections of Aschaffenburg

When we arrived in Aschaffenburg in August 1945 signs of heavy bombing were evident, although the streets and roads had been cleared and debris pushed aside onto the footpaths. We and other Ukrainians were allocated a red-brick former German barracks in the La Garde* camp. Our family of three shared a large room with ten other people. We had a little corner on the left of the door, with a single bed and two wardrobes which we arranged to give some privacy. I shared the bed with Lena (Mum) – she faced one way and I slept at her feet, while Edward slept under the bed. Directly opposite us was my future stepfather and his son, Sergei and Slavko Illiashevich – Lena always said that she felt sorry for them. Another eight beds were next to the walls, leaving access to the single window. We lived like that for about a year until my mother and Sergei were married.

*[**La Garde** was fully Ukrainian... it was a cultural center for all others camps. It had a High school (= Gymnasium)... many concerts and/or entertainment was performed there. This was camp where Ukrainian elite were housed... as medical doctors, professors, artists, priests, etc. Many organizations were there, such as: PLAST (Ukrainian scouting org.) and SUM (Ukrainian Youth Association)... in USA, it became SUMA (Ukrainian Youth Association of America. Jarko Sichynsky – online.]

In the early days, American soldiers camped in tents next to the DP camp. They were very friendly and we often talked with them, and they gave us kids rides in their jeeps.

During that first year, schools, hospitals and sporting activities were established. I joined the scouts and took part in their activities, including camping, sports, marching and singing. Lena, being a doctor, had a senior position in the hospital, and my stepfather was a high school teacher. Because my mother and stepfather were professional people, after they married we all moved to the basement. There were pipes going in all directions and a stove that Lena could cook on – we kids had plenty of room. Later a small room became available on the top floor of the two-storey barracks and we stayed there to the end. This room had two bunks, a single bed, a wardrobe, table, some chairs and a stove in the middle. One bunk was on the right of the door and just fitted between the wall and the door; Mum slept on the bottom and I slept on the top. The other bunk was on the left and further into the room and was used by Edward and Slavko, while Sergei slept on the bed next to the wall on the right.

The building was quite long, and there was a stove at the end of the corridor that people cooked on. My mother obtained fish oil and used it for all sorts of cooking and it stank out the whole passage. She was not popular when she used that oil – I can still smell it!



The barracks at the Aschaffenburg Displaced Persons camp

Outside was a large soccer pitch, and all the kids had plenty of room to play. Balls were very scarce, so whoever had a ball was most popular. Whenever the boys were playing soccer I was always there. Most of the time we kicked sardine tins, so my right shoe was always worn out – fortunately Mum was able to buy shoes on the black market. Other games we played included two fires (a ball game), volleyball, basketball, and a baseball-like rounders (played with a sharpened 15 cm stick instead of a ball). All the kids had a great time and I have fond memories of those days.

School started at 7.30 am and we had afternoons free, when Sergei, Edward and I often went to the woods for exercises such as climbing trees and swinging from tree to tree – it was great fun.

Mother joined us in the woods at weekends when she had a day off, and we collected mushrooms, blue berries, strawberries, cherries and chestnuts. They were most enjoyable times.

Between our two-storey barracks and a single-storey building was some vacant land that was available for cultivation. We had a plot in which we grew tobacco (for Sergei), carrots, radishes, tomatoes, beetroot etc. Perhaps that is where my love of gardening developed.

At the end of the soccer pitch was a large hanger. Inside stood a tank, which very soon was stripped to a shell, kids and adults having removed all usable parts. The ball racers were great for wheels for carts, scooters and billy carts. We and many others made cages where we kept rabbits to add protein to our diets, because we tired of eating soya beans with all our meals.

In this hanger I had my only serious fight. The bully of the camp was a basher kid and everyone kept away from him. One day in the summer of 1948 I was feeding my rabbits when he came along and pushed me into the cage head first. I was angry and jumped out and swung at him. We started to fight and the kids formed a circle around us, all cheering me on. The outcome was I knocked out a couple of his teeth while I only had scratches on my neck and face. I went to the hospital to have my scratches attended to, and I was glad my mother wasn't there because she always told me off before fixing me! After the fight the bully wanted to be my friend and gave me his billy cart, but I gave it back because other kids teased me that he was my boy friend.

We stayed in the DP camp in Aschaffenburg for just on four years, when we were chosen to migrate to Australia. Other countries on the list were Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela, but luckily Australia chose us first. We moved to another camp in Naples, Italy, for three weeks, then on 22 March 1949 departed Naples on the SS Svalbard, arriving in Melbourne on 20 April – the voyage only took three weeks, a record.

The link to the passenger list for this voyage of the Svalbard –

<http://immigrantships.net/v6/1900v6/svalbard19490420.html>

It gives the names of individuals and families who migrated to Australia after World War II from various European countries including Germany, Hungary, Russia, Ukraine, Latvia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, etc. Most passengers were World War II refugees or displaced persons.

The list of 878 passengers includes the following names:

0199	ILLJASZEWICZ	Lena
0200	ILLJASZEWICZ	Olena
0201	ILLJASZEWICZ	Serhij
0508	PANKIW	Edward

Olena, being a minor, travelled on Lena's passport. After arriving in Australia Sergei, Lena and Slavko changed the Polish spelling of their surname to Illiashevich, while Edward and Olena retained Pankiw (pronounced Pankiv) as their surname.

Occupation of Czechoslovakia

Lena continues: When the Russians first occupied this country, Czechoslovakia, they coming in this country, and the same in Germany. They killed, they raped girls, they doing very nasty things. In two days before occupation, there was sometime bombing, and much strafing from aeroplanes. I hid the children on the floor. We were very happy that Americans were occupying our place, not Russia [see *Appendix IV on the liberation of Pilsen*]. But we see Russian officers walking everywhere, officers with guns. They coming our place. They say, "Oh yes, we will be taking you. Soon your children will be starting school in Russia". They say they take children separate, they take me separate. This is why when they say they taking me and another the same Tamara, I was frightened. A friend, Tamara's uncle was in Polish camp because he was half-Ukrainian and half Polish. I send Edward to him. Polish camp was separate because they is independent, like Estonia is independent. Polish, Latvia, Estonia was before was independent. They was connected with the Americans. The Americans said this to Russians, "These people you do not touch, they are independent"; they make separate camp under the protection of Americans. Russians make own camp, and the same all people taking in their camp. I don't know if they find out that I was, and Tamara was, Russian citizens. Ukraine was not independent, they is all Russian citizens, they not even hear their own language, they always hearing Russian, they under Russian government, and nothing.

American camp in Czechoslovakia

You ask me how I got to American camp in Bavaria from Czechoslovakia. They put us in what was cattle wagons. All is Ukrainians from first war, and one was the same, mostly it was old Ukrainians, was from Prague, and the American coming and take this Prague. They all was free, all these people who was in Ghetto, in prison. The same lady Ukrainian who was suspicious that she was Jew was freed. This lady was in wagon, only she and I was without American permission. Because she was later, and I was occupy place, someone don't want it, you know. I don't know how is she. She wanted the same altogether us, because it is Tamara friend coming, related to Tamara. Because was Germany suspicious that she wearing something, Jew always wearing, leather jacket like this. She come in Ghetto Tamara always help her, send her some parcels during 1944-1945, maybe one and a half years. Whenever come American to inspect, look papers you know, Ukrainians hide my children, and I hide too, other lady the same. We was very frightened but we safely come to camp.

When we go in transport you must understand that they are mixed camp, this American camp. All is was from Czechoslovakia Ukrainian, more was like my second husband, some was from Poland from Russia. Some was through Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, some Germans. Some were from first war, and special was ships from Leningrad, when Lenin coming and Bolshevik coming, organised

these ships coming, and if they was rich they coming to Germany coming to France, Czechoslovakia, to Yugoslavia. Because my husband try to find his brothers. He couldn't make contact because he doesn't know, he wanted make many times contact and couldn't find, because here in Australia, again start looking for his family, here is one the same name but is different. When some coming from Yugoslavia, we have now some friends from Yugoslavia, maybe you heard, he asked them 'of some family Illiashevich'. Yes we knew one, the name the same, but he couldn't be sure, and never make contact with his brothers. Some people said they were married, some people say that had children, and some said other things, but he couldn't make contact, many disappeared in second war. When I first saw him in civil war, he was fighting in Civil War, and got lost, coming from Finland, big snow and everything confused, he wanted get back to Ukraine. It is such coincidence, it is funny, then I see him again in the camp in Bavaria, in Germany.

Ukraine not independent from Russia

Ukraine should be the same independent. Something happen, this politics, they lost the Civil War. In war they fighting with Russia. First Ukraine take Kiev this capital, and after coming more these Russian partisans, Russian Bolsheviks, and they take over everywhere. Only Polish Ukraine is left. Some Ukrainians live in Poland. It is left like independent. It is called district of Galicia.

Polish very bad behave with Ukrainian people. When this war is, second war, they want independence. They start fighting again, wanted own government make. Germans put many of these people wanting independence in jail, and killed some. Tamara was young and enthusiastic about this Ukrainian independence. When Germans come is the same government, was in 1918. *[The Germans occupied Ukraine for some time after World War I. They were then fairly benevolent, but after the beginning of World War II they were not.]* When Germans killed these prisoners of war, and keeping some in sickness. It is awful, Tamara was the same fighting when the Germans occupy, to camp, to work in factory. Tamara, the same, I don't know how she coming out from this.

My second husband Sergei was fighting in the civil war, and he was the same fighting for independence, and when he saw it is Ukraine lost, he went with some other people through Russia and Polish border into Czechoslovakia. He was at that time in Polish Ukraine, he was very sick, he had typhus. He told me when he is coming Christmas, Polish people give every patient Christmas present, but they have nothing. When he getting healthier and better, Polish people was still very bad. He went through Polish border to Czechoslovakia.

Lena's first husband Stephan Pankiw

I wanted you better to understand this. I didn't before tell you about my first husband. He was the same Ukrainian. He was only two years younger than my second husband; Sergei was born in 1895, my first husband in 1897. He was the same, young man, taken in first war for fighting. When he was twenty he was in civil war fighting. He was Stephen. He was young, he didn't know who he was fighting for, he was only eighteen years when it began. He was from workers' class. His father was worker somewhere in Ukrainian city, and he was dead, poisoned, from poison gas coming from coal. Stephen was orphan. He was nine years old. Mother taking him her father's brother living in Siberia. Uncle later went to Canada, clearing land, making farm. The Ukrainians going to Canada was Polish side, because in Poland, for Ukrainians, was very bad, not land, not food, nothing to live for. Family when possible leave everything in Poland, go to Canada. Many, many go. We was Ost for Germany, for Germany, 'UnderMensch', when we must going something out, we must wear this arm band saying 'Ost¹', because all who was Ost was UnderMensch, perhaps in English 'under class'. If you want to write this biography for me, you must understand this, under human.

I married Stephen. He was very good man. He was victim of this tyrant regime, my first husband. He was very good educated, mother was very good and everything. Because he was half peasant, half worker, when finish civil war, they put him for school. They give him high school education, they give him university education. He finished law in Minsk University where I meet, in Belarus. He was, how I tell you, I don't know, because now I frightened the same tell. He was just from university, give him Attorney General. He cannot self anything do, he must always do what NKVD tell him, and he cannot this change. He was against this, he was very educated and very knows how is America. When he married he was victim of this system. They take after when he cannot help thinking for himself, they take from him this job. He was very, how you say ambitious, how is so, he make revolution and make good life for people. What they doing he is against it. He was very unhappy, and I cannot see how I can helped him. He went everywhere and could not get operation. In Moscow to get back this job what he earned, not help, nothing to help, because NKVD not like him. Just put him another city (Mosyr), and give him only law office or something. Anyway when he went law, he was against these people (NKVD), coming to city they have not these courts of law. They take everything from them, put in jail, others was shot, it was 32, 33, I told you, all was jails, even schools. After I see nothing he can do, I sent him to mother. He went, just is coming war, when start war he coming back, and last time I see him he is sitting with Edward, and then they taking him [*Stephen was called up for the Russian army when Germany invaded Russia*]. I working the same under pressures. I must not make mistake. I must every night, everywhere I went I was watched what I doing. And I still is feared, I still coming here. Sometimes I thinking it is impossible, Australian people don't believe us, sometimes I think that you don't believe. I frightened all the time. One step by bed, I still frightened. Fear is inside and sometimes going on all the time.

[Lena again speaks of the time in the Russian refugee camp in Pilsen, see pages 93–98].

When we coming with my family, I said Edward was not with me. He was in Polish camp with friends, Tamara's mother's brother. He was Polish side of Ukraine, only everybody say he is Polish side Ukrainian. Many, many here say they was on Polish side, they were not on Polish side, they lived in Yugoslavia because they frightened you know, all the time. Plenty, plenty such they crossed over border. Anyway because Estonia was under the Tsar the same, poor people was, same as Ukraine, all was the same victim without independence. When they coming the same I was frightened how this finish, how they went to pick him (Edward) up in car, in own car. Czechs was very good for us these doctors. They know that we are victims of this time. Not all people, but some people because they had suffered from Germany people. They hate Germany, not people, German government, because they was independent. Germany take like Polish under protectorate. Sudetenland, Bergamia, nice places, all is taken you know. This was not Sudetenland, Germany call it Sudetenland, it is Dobjanic. Czechs always talking and give us more when we go in shop, because all was cards, food cards. Sometimes we get little bit more and something very rare. The same doctors, I don't know, not all the time, because if they are good all the time there be something suspicious.

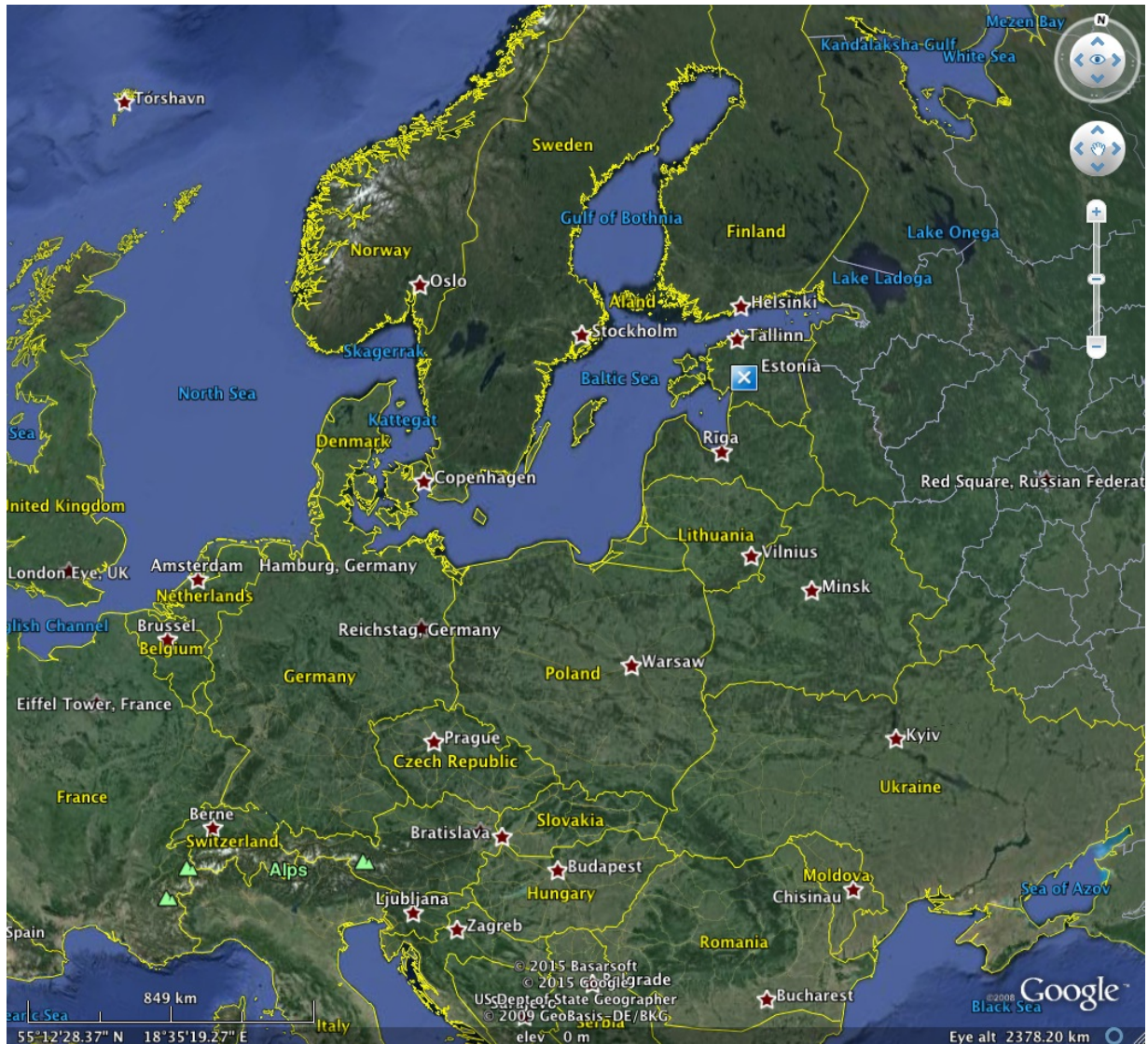
Religion

The thing I didn't tell you. I am not religious. Mother the same when I was little girl, my father the same, not so religious too. He was Lutheran. He believed, not believed Church and everything like this, he believed some make like many people, make harmony in this own place. He explained me when I was little. He went to church, and mother went to church. Mother when she finished three years in primary school, she boarding with one Orthodox priest because school was so big distance, you know. Was not school like here in every village. She must maybe make every day five, ten kilometres with walking. Parents doesn't wanted that she do this every day, she home only for holidays, and she lived with Orthodox priest. They had influence the same this, she was Lutheran, she went always in church [*i.e. in Russian Orthodox Church*]. When we was little the same was, we lived so far from church. She told, and father told, you have one God. When I was at primary school asked father if I can learn scripture. Father say, "Should, God is one, scripture, the same one, I allow it". I like it too, I always get good points for this. Mother was always coming at Christmas time. She sent us in Orthodox church. One or two times coming, this Lutheran pastor in city 25 kilometres away. Mother take us sometimes, sometimes not, went only with father. She learned me which I was little one, this popular prayer, Christian prayer, how you call this, one moment I look dictionary. Yes, the Lords Prayer, Our Father who is in Heaven. Everything where I was, even under this bunker was, when something is wrong I always am talking this prayer. I believe only my language, not Russia, only my Estonian language. I know how is Russia words the same, but I think when it is Russia not so help to me. I don't know, maybe I silly. I don't know, sometimes, where is bombing, operation on husband, always this prayer, "Our Father, the Lord's Prayer". I knew it in Russian. I knew it in Slavic because in Russian Orthodox church is always in old Slavic language, after and I think is the same, only when Ukrainian church separate is all in Ukrainian language. Ukraine separated from Russia because they hate Russia. The same religion you know, but they hate in Old Slavic, very simple language, and after from it all Slavic language come, even Bulgarian. Church always when they take for Greek, Greek Orthodox church, old Greek the Lord's Prayer, I only from I pray from Estonian language. Because it is mother learn, when we little children, when we was little, three or four years, and left forever in my mind. When something wrong – I think everywhere I was, when I was in concentration camp, I told you, near to Berlin, when I go to bunker, I say this prayer, I think all the men are also frightened, and they same pray. Even now, I pray this prayer, I don't know. I not so religious. I growing up without religion, because everywhere in school when I finish they are against it. I know everything, full story about it.

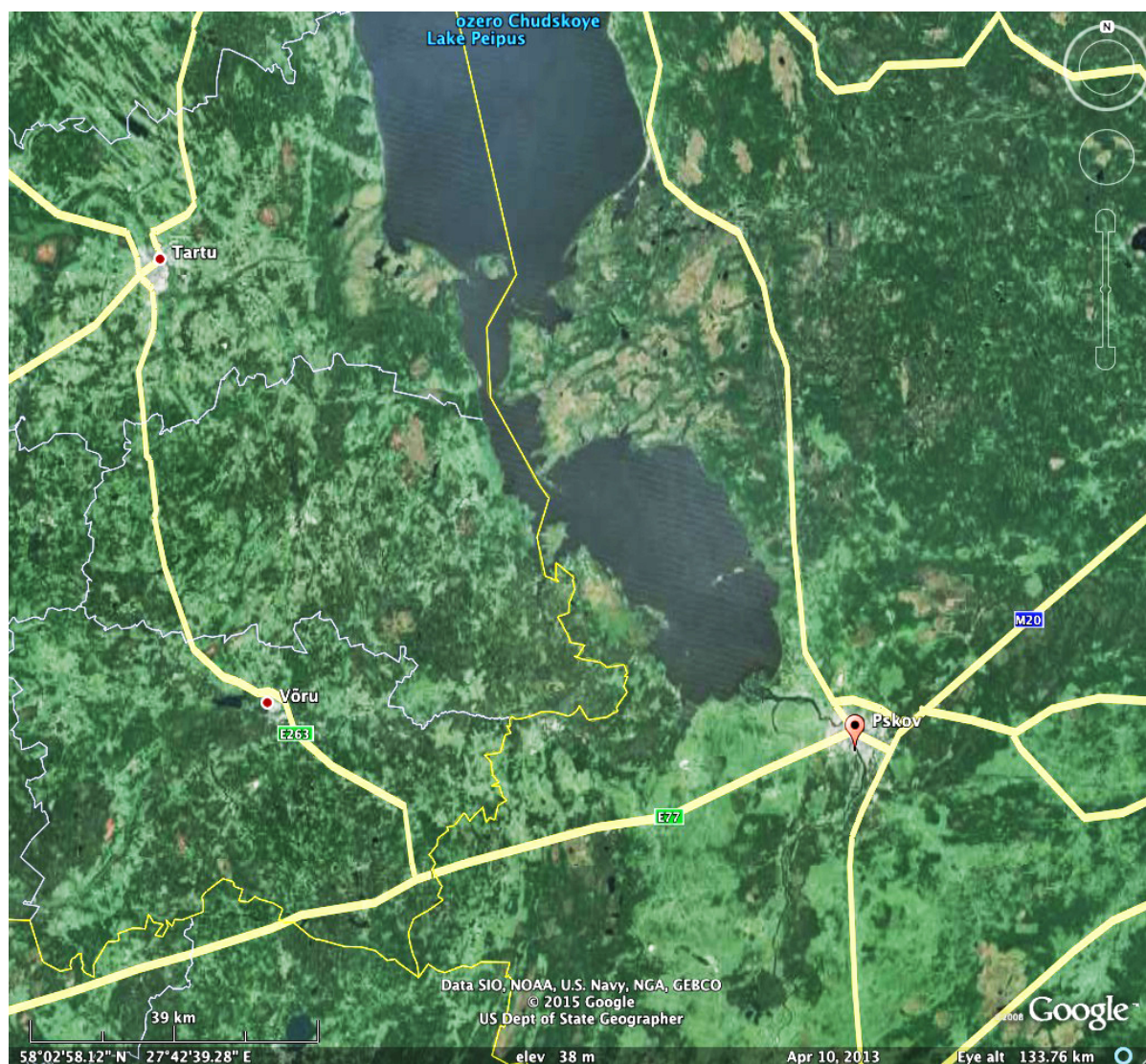
When I pray, "I be forgiven my sins", I cannot blame doctor who make operation on Sergei, and everything is wrong. Sergei's father was a Ukrainian Orthodox priest. Sergei went to Ukrainian church here, not too often, Easter and Christmas. He is not believed so much, he was not against religion. He was against these priests, always fighting between themselves. Here is the same. He was very against this old priest, and when he was unconscious (after operation) and always talking, "I thinking that they all is coming all together at my funeral". He was under this morphine, sedated, what Dr.

Steele give him. He was against not religion, he was against special this Catholic Ukrainian, Catholic – they take when they was in Poland. Catholic Polish church, here is again another story, we never finish when you so interested. Maybe I should not tell you. I have two these husbands. I have so much trouble. I had not life of my own. Another husband (Sergei) he was good man and looking after good when we was in camp. He liked nature, and liked very much children, went always with children in forest where this camp was in Germany. Camp was all right, but when we reach Australia he wanted to go to Paraguay. I said I will not go to Paraguay, crocodiles and everything. I will go in Australia, there is people I know, I go. Everybody wanted safe place far away. Paraguay, Venezuela, all these papers was ready. I say, "If you want to go, I will not go and I stopped". And the same in America when I was here Bonegilla. I nearly go. My friend will send affidavit. He say, "We stay in Australia".

Appendix I – Maps



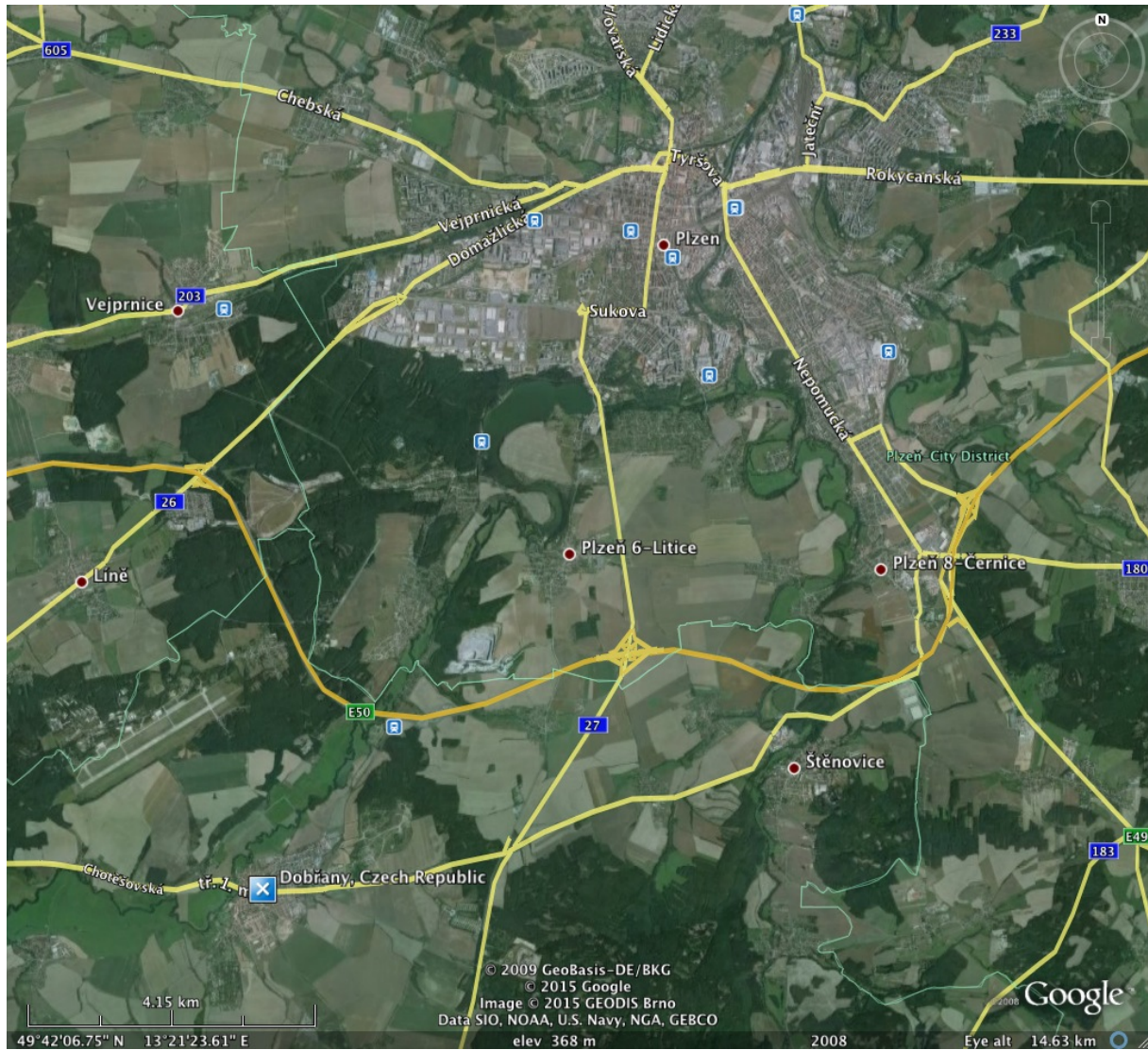
Eastern Europe



Tartu (Estonia) and Pskov (Russia)



Estonia, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia



Dobrány (formerly Wiesengrund) in the SW corner, about 10 km SW of Plzeň (Pilsen)

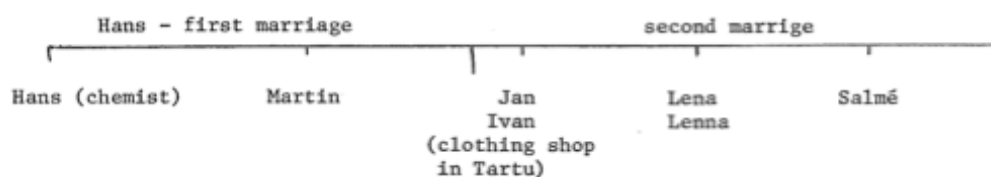
Appendix II

Lena's family tree

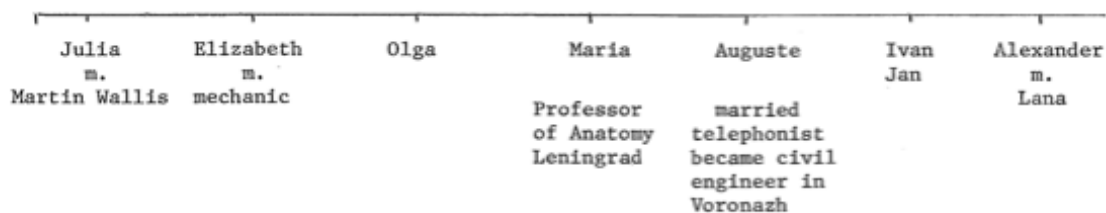
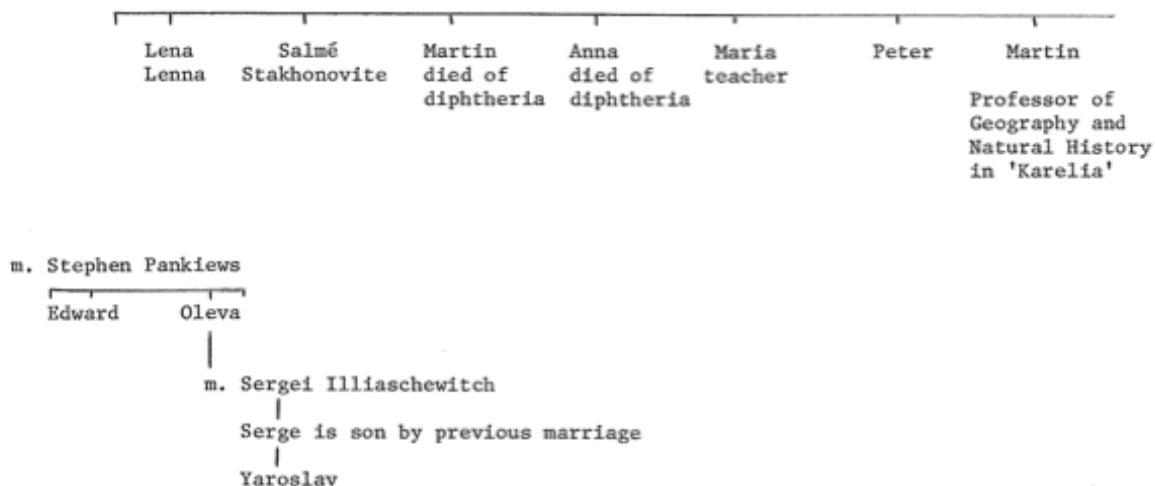
FAMILY TREE

Parents of Martin

Han's - first marriage - wife died early - second marriage

Parents of Julia

Peter and Anna (Estonia)

Julia and Martin

Ivan - is the Russian form of the Estonian Jan
 Lena - is the Russian form of the Estonian Lenna

Appendix III

Brief History of Estonia

The Grafts, owners of estates, were of German origin. Estonia was successfully invaded by the Danish King, Waldemar II, in 1219. The whole of the northern part of the country came under his control, but the people remained in continual revolt. After a great rebellion in 1343, Waldemar IV sold his portion of the country for 19,000 marks to the order of the Knights of the Sword, German crusaders who in 1224 had come into possession of the southern part of Estonia. For six hundred years the Estonian people were serfs under German landlords. In 1521, however, nobles and peasants put themselves under the protection of the Crown of Sweden. Two hundred years later, in 1721, after the wars of Charles XVIII of Sweden, Estonia was ceded to Peter the Great of Russia. In 1817 Tsar Alexander formally abolished serfdom, but the conditions of peasants in Estonia remained essentially unchanged. By 1881 Russia was attempting by every means to 'Russify' Estonians, but Estonians continued to work for independence and autonomy.

In 1917 the Estonian Diet met at Reval, later Tallinen, to establish a bill declaring their independence. The Russian coup d'etat later in the year changed the course of events. The Baltic nobility took their stand on the 1721 Treaty of Lystad, and declared themselves the authorised representatives of the country. The resumption of hostilities by the Germans resulted initially in the overthrow of the Bolsheviks. Baron Bellingshausen, leader of the nobility, put a request to the German emperors to be united under German rule. By the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Russia renounced her Sovereign rights over Estonia. With the collapse of Germany at the end of the Great War (World War I), the Estonian Provisional Government gained control, but continued to be attacked by Bolshevik troops. It was not until 1919 with the aid of Finnish support, and the help of the British navy, that the whole of the country was freed. Nevertheless further Bolshevik attacks persisted. The Estonians finally took the struggle into Russia, and in May, captured the province of Pskov. It was not until December 1920 that the armistice was declared, and a peace was concluded in February 1921.

In 1921 de jure recognition of Estonia occurred, and it was admitted to the League of Nations. Recognition by the USA followed in June 1922. Following the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact in 1939, a mass repatriation of Germans to the Reich took place. A semblance of Estonian sovereignty remained, but in July 1940 incorporation into the USSR was voted by the newly elected Estonian Parliament at USSR instigation. When the Germans attacked Russia in June 1941, Estonia once again fell under Reich domination but the end of World War II found it once more back in the Soviet Union.

Appendix IV

The liberation of Pilsen, 6 May 1945 (see also pp. 88–89, 92)

Extracts from Dwight D. Eisenhower's book, *Crusade in Europe*, 1948.



With his main forces pushing down the Danube, Patton's Third Army was now reinforced by the V Corps from Hodges' army. Patton directed the V to push eastward into Czechoslovakia. The corps captured Pilsen May 6. In this area the Russian forces were rapidly advancing from the east and careful co-ordination was again necessary. By agreement we directed the American troops to occupy the line Pilsen-Karlsbad, while south of Czechoslovakia the agreed line of junction ran down the Budějovice-Linz railroad and from there along the valley of the Enns River.



General George S. Patton

[http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/gallery/2013/aug/21/almost-history-pilsen-may-1991/celebration of liberation of Pilsen – in 1991, 45 years later](http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/gallery/2013/aug/21/almost-history-pilsen-may-1991/celebration%20of%20liberation%20of%20Pilsen%20-%20in%201991,%2045%20years%20later)

[http://www.army.mil/article/79337/Pilsen_Liberation_Festival_Honors_the_U_S_Army_as_a_New_Generation_Learns_the_Lessons_celebration of liberation of Pilsen](http://www.army.mil/article/79337/Pilsen_Liberation_Festival_Honors_the_U_S_Army_as_a_New_Generation_Learns_the_Lessons_celebration%20of%20liberation%20of%20Pilsen)

Appendix V – Olena’s sporting achievements

Just five years after Olena arrived in Australia in 1949 as an 11 year old refugee with no English, she was selected to represent South Australia in the Australian Softball Championships to be held in Sydney early the following year. But that was just the first of her many sporting achievements . . .

1. From *Badminton Sidelines*, Melbourne, December 1982

To open the yellowing pages of the thick scrapbook of OLENA PANKIW was a revelation in more ways than one.

Olena who??

Badminton players in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne know Olena as Leni Williams, noted not only for her ability on court, but also for her exuberance, cheerfulness, and talent for ‘talking’ her way, gleefully, through most situations.

To the people of Adelaide, reading the sports pages from 1954 to 1963, Olena was a sportswoman to be proud of – an allrounder for whom the only place to be was at the top.

The scrapbook’s first clipping is headed “Beginning – 1954”, and tells how Leni was noticed by State selectors while playing softball for Adelaide Girls’ High School and was invited to join the esteemed ‘Sabres’ women’s softball practice squad.

The ‘beginning’, however, goes back much further

Born in Europe before the war, Leni has troubled memories of her very early years in war-torn Europe during the advance of the Nazi regime of fleeing with her brother and widowed mother of being hidden by villagers of the strafing of refugees as they pushed their belongings in handcarts along country roads of her doctor mother’s efforts to administer aid to the wounded, with the most primitive of surgical instruments . . . and ultimately internment in concentration camps

Outside help came later and the family was transferred to a displaced persons’ camp in Germany at the end of the war. While in Germany, the scrapbook tells, Leni played volley-ball and baseball with boys at the school she attended, and these games shaped her sporting career in Australia.

Leni’s family arrived in Australia when she was eleven and settled in Adelaide. Her mother, now remarried, was unable to practise as a doctor in this country and worked as a waitress and other various jobs to help the family acquire their first home.

Leni’s first ‘Aussie’ school was Goodwood Primary, where she played basketball, then she moved on to the Adelaide Girls’ High School and the gradual development of her many sporting skills.

The invitation to play softball with the Sabres gave the team a shortstop of some excellence, and the team went on to many fine victories. So too did Leni, and she was selected in the State softball team in that first year, and for the following nine successive years.



Leni the softball star.

Not surprisingly, Leni's choice of career led her to take a Physical Education teacher course at Adelaide University. In one year, she

- represented Adelaide University in badminton,
- was selected in the Australian Universities' Badminton AND softball teams,
- was the Adelaide University's javelin, shotput and discus champion.

She received a university 'blue' for badminton in 1959, and in the same year was nominated by the Softball Association for the S.A. Sportswoman of the year award.

In 1960, Leni was selected to represent S.A. in the Badminton Carnival held in Melbourne. While all this was going on, Leni appears to have had plenty of time on her hands and proceeded to notch up some interesting results in both CRICKET and HOCKEY. Playing for 'University' in Women's Cricket Division 1 matches, she was mentioned regularly in the Sports columns with scores in the mid-thirties. With 'Graduates' on the hockey field, Leni also excelled, and again caught the eye of State selectors, subsequently being invited to join the State practice squad.

In 1963, Leni gave the local talent a breather when she married George. The newlyweds sailed off on the liner *Strathmore*, on her last passenger voyage to England, where George was to spend three years in postgraduate work.

In England, Leni gravitated to the nearest badminton courts, and Lo! – she appears in an English newspaper as a member of the team selected to play County badminton for the Reading and Country Badminton Club.



Reading and Country Badminton Club, with Leni in centre of front row.

After several years, much travelling and a trek through the Sahara, Leni and George returned to Adelaide to live happily ever after and catch up on old friends and interests. Their lives enhanced by the arrival of their two children, Tania and Stuart, the Williams family moved to Melbourne in 1975. Since then, Leni has become part of the badminton scene, competing with the Waverley club in A and A Res Grades, played State Pennant and was a founding member of the Eastern Ladies' daytime competition. She happily finds time to continue her interests in hockey, netball and softball, together with the children's athletics. Her garden produces food for the family, as well as the chooks and ducks, while the cat, dog and goldfish round off the menagerie. Added to this, Leni is an avid reader and the lights burn long into the small hours of the morning at the Williams home.

This year at the Australian Badminton Championships, held in Adelaide, Leni took out the 'Senior' double, winning the Senior Ladies' Singles and the Senior Ladies' Doubles, partnered by Audrey Hale. At the Victorian Championships she was runner-up in the Veteran Ladies' Singles, and winner of the Veteran Ladies' Doubles with partner Beth Williams. The Veterans' Tournament at Ballarat saw Leni representing Central Association, the winning entry in the teams event. In the Individual Events at Ballarat, she won the Ladies' Singles and was runner-up in the Ladies' Doubles with Val Worn, and runner-up in the Mixed Doubles with Ritchie Burkitt.

Sadly for all her friends in Melbourne, the Williams are transferring back to Adelaide next year. No doubt Leni will pick up the threads of all her sporting interests, and she promises to stir up some activity in the daytime Ladies' Badminton.

To comment on this amazingly talented sportswoman, one can only say Olena Pankiw was terrific but Leni Williams, you're the Most!

Other sporting achievements of Olena

- Australian Intersivity javelin champion, representing the University of Adelaide, Perth, 1959.
- Captain, University of Adelaide and Australian Universities softball teams, Intersivity, Brisbane, 1960.
- Captain, University of Adelaide and Australian Universities softball teams, Intersivity, Sydney, 1961.
- Captain, University of Adelaide and Australian Universities softball teams, Intersivity, Adelaide, 1962.
- Represented Berkshire in County Badminton, UK, 1965-1966.
- On returning to Adelaide in 1967 after 3½ years overseas, Olena represented South Australia again in badminton in 1967 and softball in 1968. She then called it quits on state representation to start a family, although continued to play A-grade badminton and softball.
- First place, Husband & Wife, City to Bay (Adelaide) 12 km foot race, 1974 (based on finishing place of wife).
- Founder (in 1984), inaugural President, and Life Member of the South Australian Ladies' Badminton Assocn.
- Former captain and Life Member of the Lions volleyball team, Adelaide.
- Best Sportswoman, Atalanta Jamboree 1986, sponsored by the Auckland Badminton Association, NZ.
- Gold medal in softball, World Masters Championships, Brisbane, 1994.

Olena studied Physical Education at the University of Adelaide in 1957–1959. In 1960–1963 and 1967–1968 she taught physical education at two secondary schools in Adelaide, in 1963–1965 at two secondary schools in Reading, UK, and at the University of Adelaide in 1969. She also successfully coached softball and netball teams in Melbourne and Adelaide in the 1970s and 1980s.



Olena Pankiw, Australian Intersivity javelin champion, 1959.

thecourier.com.au

SPORT

World War II concentration camp survivor a regular at championships

Putting fun into badminton

IT'S no surprise that Leni Williams is making the most of her senior years.

The World War II concentration camp survivor has missed just one of 31 Australasian Daytime Ladies Badminton Championships.

As a founding member of the championship, it was one of her colleagues who said her larrikin nature had "put the

DAVID JEANS

fun back into badminton".

A Ukrainian and Estonian national, Williams immigrated to Australia in April 1949, landing in Melbourne after spending five years in displacement camps waiting for a country to accept her and her family.

Williams recalls escaping a Berlin concentration camp in 1941 on the night the city was bombed, living in an abandoned kindergarten armed with a gas mask and her mother performing grisly operations with a pocket knife on land mine survivors.

"Mum wanted me to become a dentist, so I played sport instead," Williams said.

Williams has competed on a national level in softball, badminton, athletics and hockey.

Her love of badminton stemmed from the individualism of the sport.

"If I play good or bad it's all up to me, and it's not about who you know," she said.

"It's one thing you can play right up until your 80 or 90."

The 76-year-old said the "jamboree" – as the competition is also known as – was more than a badminton competition.

"The competition is strong, the ladies make new friends and you get to see the country," she said.

david.jeans@fairfaxmedia.com.au



Leni Williams