

## Part One

# Paternal Line of Peter Stavrakis (Pyotr Stilianovich Stavraki)

(b. 27 February 1917 (OS), Kiev, Ukraine;  
d. 15 July 2006, Elkton, MD, USA)



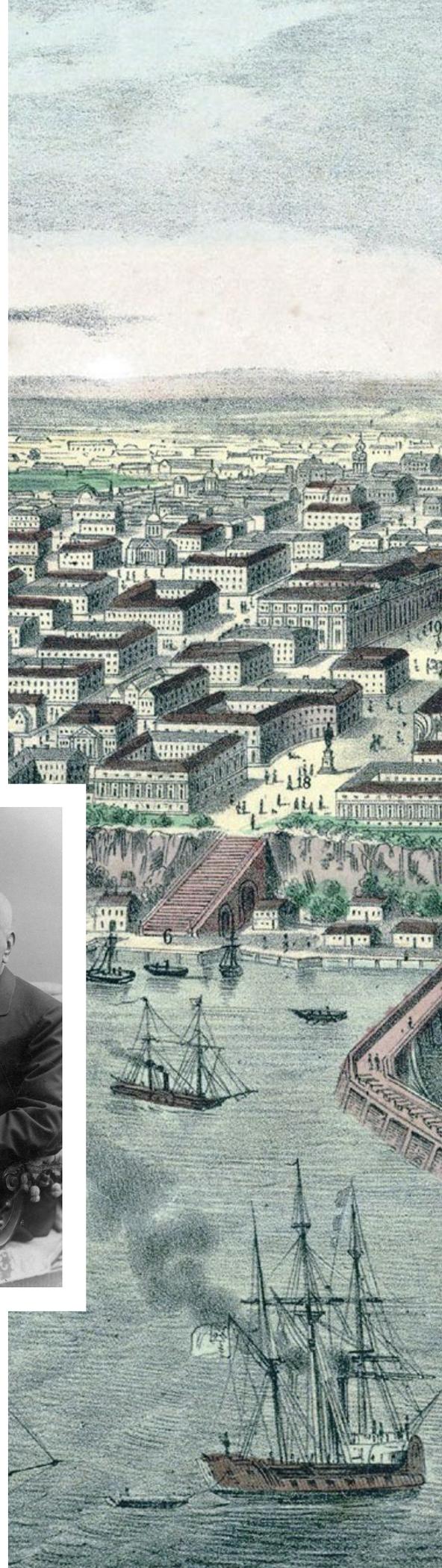
Stilian Emilianovich with  
his son, Peter, on his knee.



Emilian with his grandsons,  
Yura and Shura.



Stilian Emilianovich  
Stavraki during his  
prime years.





## INTRODUCTION

### **Peter Stilianovich Stavrakis**

This part presents the Greek ancestors of Peter Stilianovich Stavrakis, who was born in 1917 in Kiev to Stilian Emilianovich Stavradi and Ekaterina Vasilievna (alternatively called: Gregorievna) Farimskaya. Peter Stavrakis inherited Greek citizenship through his father, who was born in Odessa to a large and prominent Greek merchant family. His mother came from a landed Russian–Ukrainian–Polish family based in Kiev, and her story can be found in Part 2.

His birth coincided with some of the most extreme and bloody events in the history of Europe — the Russian Revolution, the Great Terror, and WWII. His birth day fell on 27 February (*OS*), three days before the tsar abdicated in Petrograd, which ended the Russian Empire once and for all. (Note: The calendar was changed after the Revolution to match that used the West, so in the New Style (*NS*) Peter’s birthday fell on 12 March.)

Peter was the youngest of three children, with two sisters much older than he was. Olga, born in 1907, and Nina, who was two years younger.

As the only male child, he was pampered, protected, and indulged, for Greeks valued male children far above females, and Stilian Emilianovich was no exception.

He grew up in a family that straddled two cultures and two epochs: Russian and Greek, Tsarist and Soviet. However, he did not learn the Greek language until WWII, as the family spoke Russian at home — the language of his mother.

Stilian spared no expense for his son’s education. In this, he followed the Greek Odessan custom of hiring governesses to learn German. The children also learned French from their governess, Mademoiselle Lucie, for that had been the preferred second language of the Russian Empire. As a result, Peter became fluent in both languages, which later served him well and saved our family when escaping the Soviet Union during WWII.

The period between 1917 and 1928 was disastrous for Russia, Ukraine, and the eastern states. First, it was devastated by the Revolution and the years of war. Once the Soviets took control, they proceeded to dismantle the institutions they considered “bourgeois” vestiges of the old regime. This included sending the educated, who mostly belonged to the middle and upper classes, into exile or hard labor or just executing them.

As a result, schools were closed, crime was rampant, factories ceased to produce, and farmers refused to sell their produce as there was nothing to buy with the money they would make. This resulted in famine. During this time Peter was tutored exclusively at home. By the time he reached the age of 14, some order had been restored, and the educational system was functioning. Peter’s parents then enrolled him in the public school so that he would have the certificate of graduation required for university study. Although he took the school exams, most of his studies were still conducted by tutors at home.



Peter Stilianovich Stavradi probably around 1935, Kiev, Ukraine.



Stilian Emilianovich probably around the time of his marriage.

Once the Soviets realized that certain “bourgeois” professions should be preserved, Peter’s father, Stilian Emilianovich Stavraki, a prominent physician, was given certain privileges, which included the right to charge for his services and to accumulate a measure of wealth, comfort, and consumer goods not permitted to others in Kiev.

Stilian Emilianovich made his mark in Ukraine, practicing and teaching medicine while his equally distinguished brother did so in Odessa. Both produced innovative research and introduced new treatments and technologies to the universities of Kiev and Odessa. By 1935 their students represented the majority of the physicians spread across Ukraine, and the Stavraki brothers themselves had become expendable.

This did not last long as the Greeks eventually came under extreme purges as the great terror reached them. However by that time, Peter’s father, Stilian Emilianovich, was suffering from heart disease, and his brother Vladimir Emilianovich had emigrated to Athens, a country as foreign to him as the United States would later be to our family.

The Revolution morphed into famine, the famine into the Great Purges, and then war erupted when Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941. Against this background our father Peter finished medical school, married, served on the Soviet German front, celebrated the birth of his first child,

and then fled his homeland with his immediate family in October of 1943. His tight-knit Greek family fractured as members dispersed to the far corners of the earth in search of peace and safety.

## The Fragmentation of a Family

As all Greek families, our fathers’ was close-knit and kept together as much as possible. Once the Revolution came, the men were sent off to different locations, women were left behind to survive as best they could, and disorder prevailed for the next 10 to 15 years.

This ended with the harsh imposition of the dictatorship and the beginning of the Great Terror which focused on various ethnic groups with European ties and eventually came to focus on the Greeks as well. Those who could emigrated to Greece. Our grandfather Stilian Emilianovich, who was not able to extricate himself from Kievan control, had to stay while his brother, nephews, and cousins all fled the country.

What the Revolution and Great Terror did not accomplish, the second World War did, and the rest of the family was torn apart. Our family headed west and

eventually ended up in Athens and then the US. Our father's sister Nina ended up with their cousin in Canada. Olga and her family fled eastward and still remain in Russia.

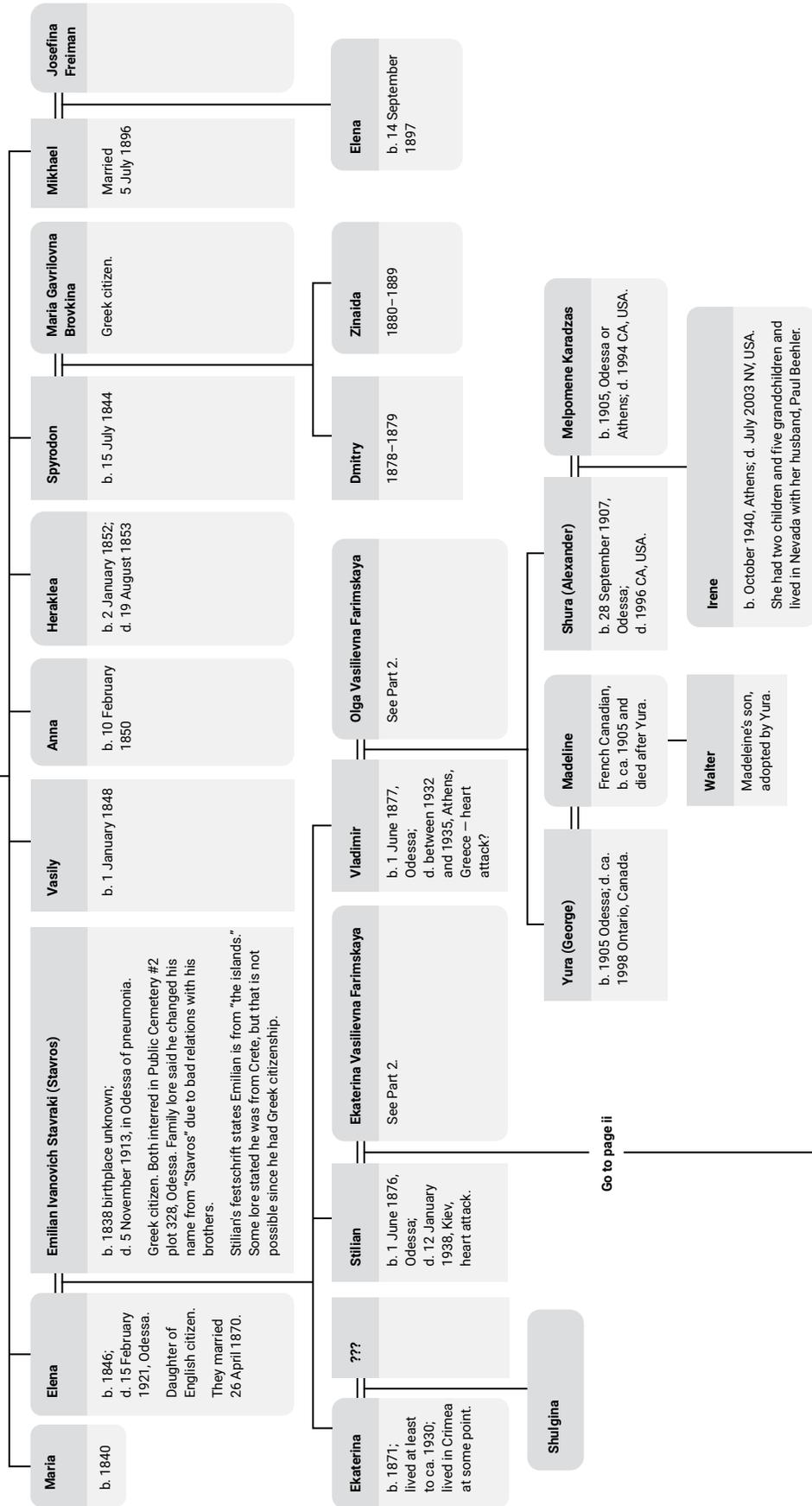
It was a tragic, difficult, and painful time that lasted through each individual's life and into the following generations who have almost no connection to one another. And we were the lucky ones: we survived the killing. But one cannot replace a lifetime of lost affection, proximity, reciprocity, and family unity (not discounting a measure of rivalry), even under the best of circumstances. It is irretrievable.

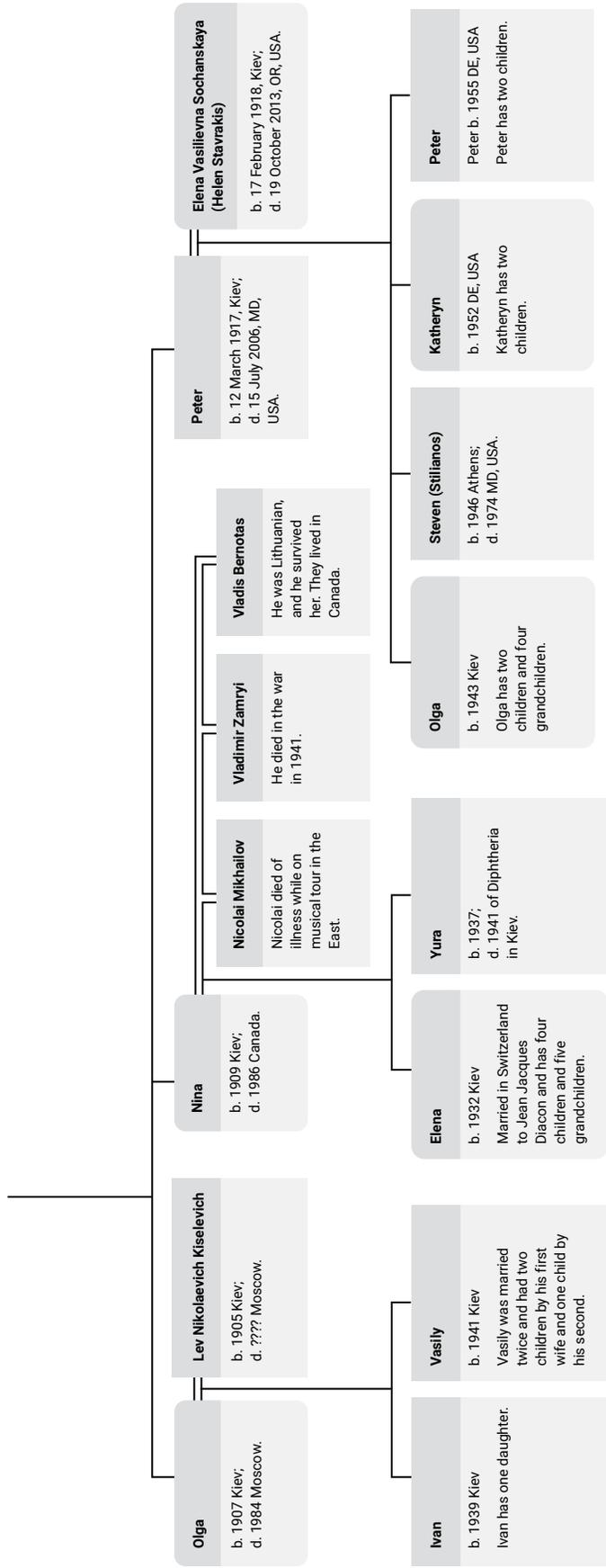
We begin this story with Peter's Greek grandparents, Emilian Stavradi and Elena Inglezi.

**Evangelos Inglezi**  
 Born in Kefalonia; moved to Odessa with son (apparently in 1834)

**Gerastim Evangelevich Inglezi**  
 b. 1803; d. 27 April 1866 (37-3a236 No. 13).  
 He seems to have arrived in Odessa in 1834 with his father and applied for a certificate to tutor Greek and Italian. He is listed as an agriculturalist or orchard owner, so he probably had an olive grove at home. Designated as an English citizen. He obtained some of his documents in Constantinople.

**Ekaterina Dimitreevna**  
 Unknown origin and surname: all their children born in Odessa.





## CHAPTER 1

### **Emilian Ivanovich Stavraki (Stavrou? Stavros?) (b. 1838 unknown location within Greece; d. 5 November 1913, Odessa)**



Emilian Ivanovich Stavraki, ca. 1910. He is listed in Odessa's records as holding "Greek" citizenship, but family lore said he came from "the Greek Islands" or from "Crete."

The latter is unlikely because Crete was under Turkish rule until about 1890 and if he were from there, he would have been listed as a Turkish citizen. Thus, his origin is unknown.

Peter's father, Stilian Emilianovich Stavraki, was born in Odessa to Greek parents. While Stilian's mother's family is well known, having established themselves at the time of the founding of the city, sometime just after 1800, the origins of his father, Emilian, are shrouded in mystery. Either they were simply lost or intentionally obfuscated for political reasons.

In 1794 Catherine II declared the founding of the warm water port of Odessa on the Black Sea at the location of a Greek and Moldavian village. Settlers soon discovered a welcoming trade environment, where grain could be purchased from the rich interior of Ukraine and exported to the West. Fortunes could be made.

One of the settlers who came to Odessa, probably between 1845 and 1860, was Peter's grandfather, Emilian Ivanovich Stavraki. We do not know where he came from, and curiously, we don't even know his exact name — only the name he officially used in the Russian Empire.

Unreliable oral history has Emilian originating from Crete, although no published biography of either of his famous sons, Stilian or Vladimir, ever mentions this island by name as the family origin. The biography in Stilian Emilianovich's *Festschrift* (1937) only states his father came "from the islands."

Peter's father, Stilian, died in 1938, so all we know of him is what Peter remembered. The story Peter always remembered is as follows:

A boy by the name of Emilian was born in Crete in 1838, the youngest of three sons, to Ioannis Stavros (or Stavrou). He had two older brothers who always mistreated him and made his life miserable. One day when the three boys were aged 9, 13, and 15, Emilian was playing chess with his middle brother, and when he won, an argument ensued. The two older brothers, as was their custom, sided against the youngest, teasing him until he could bear it no longer.

It so happened that at that time the government was assigning identity papers to Cretans. When Emilian got angry at his brothers, he went down to the appropriate office and received his papers — but under the name of "Stavrakis," the diminutive form of "Stavros."

In another version of the story, Stilian told his son, Peter, that Emilian changed his name after he came to Odessa. Peter thought it may have been "Stavros" or "Stavrou" originally, but no reliable record has ever been found.

# Founding of Odessa

Catherine II hatched a plan with her various lovers to divide the Ottoman Empire between Russia and Austria and to restore the Byzantine Empire under the control of her grandson Constantine (whose name was not a coincidence).

This led to a few Russian military forays into Crete, the Peloponnese, and Crimea, culminating in the Russo-Turkish war of 1768–1784, which gave her control of southern Ukraine and Crimea.

As part of “The Greek Plan” Catherine optimistically gave Greek names to southern Ukrainian cities and founded Odessa as a warm-water port in 1794 at the location of an ancient Greek village and a contemporary Moldavian settlement.

Her successors invited Mediterranean traders to settle in Odessa and encouraged them to develop trade, especially to promote the sale of Ukrainian grain to Western Europe. From 1819 to 1858 the city enjoyed free port status and a small number of highly successful Greek traders expanded Russian grain exports throughout Europe. Among them were members of the Inglezi family – our great grandmother’s.



Allegory of Catherine’s Victory over the Turks (1872), by Stefano Torelli. Catherine sits in a triumphal chariot in the form of the goddess Minerva, surrounded by allegorical images of grateful inhabitants of the newly conquered southern boundaries of the Russian Empire.

The picture also includes a number of Catherine’s lovers, and her favorite at the time, G. G. Orlov, who carried a diamond-shaped portrait of the empress on his chest.

(Photo credit: Wikipedia)

## The Complexity of Greek Names

Adding to this confusion is the complexity of Greek names. In the Greek language surnames are used in the genitive case. They originated from patronymics, which would have been understood as “son of...”, followed by the first name. The surname takes the genitive case, as in “Stavrou” for “Stavros” (nominative). When surnames came to be fixed, some took the genitive and others, the nominative form.

Thus if Emilian’s family were “Stavros,” he could have been from Crete or anywhere else. If he had changed it to “Stavrakis,” then he wanted people to think he was from Crete for some reason because that name is associated with that island where there is even a village called Stavrakia.

When Greek names are translated into Russian, the confusion compounds because the patronymics have different endings, and surnames are in the nominative case. The alphabet is similar, but the cases are completely different. Of course in both languages, female and male surnames are different, and in Greece, rural and married women often took the feminine version of their husband’s first names as well his surname.

In any case, Emilian took or was given the name “Stavrakis” which was then used in the genitive form of “Stavraki” for his descendants. And just to add to the confusion, “Stavraki” is also the plural and the feminine of the name in Greek.

Thus we see the name written as “Stavrakis” or “Stavraki” in the records. Both refer to the same surname.

If the whole story about the name change is fiction to begin with, and Emilian’s real name really was “Stavrakis” (or “Stavraki”), it is still unlikely he emigrated to Odessa from Crete because in the Odessa Archive Metric Books, he is listed as a Greek citizen. Crete was under the Ottomans until about 1884 or 1898, and in Odessa all Greeks from Turkish-occupied states were listed as Turkish citizens.

He was also not from the Ionian Islands because the Greeks who came from those islands after 1809 were listed as English citizens. Thus his origin remains a mystery, and it appears to have been intentionally obfuscated.

## Family Origins

However, Stilian Emilianovich was certain about one thing that he told Peter in no uncertain terms: “We have no Stavrakis relatives anywhere in Ukraine or elsewhere.”

*From Peter as told to him by his father. . . .*

•  
• My father was from South Russia, from a Greek family. He was born in  
• Odessa. Later they moved to Nikolayev. (Note: in early post Tsarist times,  
• Ukraine was referred to as part of Russia).  
•  
• His name was Stavrakis and his father’s name was Stavrakis, but his father  
• was not born with that name. The story goes, and according to my father it  
• is fact, that when my grandfather was little, about 8 or 9 – I imagine that  
• was the early 19th century – when in Russia the decision was made to  
• carry out a census and try to issue a passport to all persons living in Russia.  
•  
• They could use any name they wanted. My grandfather decided to change  
• his name from Stavros to Stavrakis. The reason for that was that he had  
• some kind of grievances with the rest of the family and decided to cut  
• himself off from them in this way. So, any kind of relatives from my father’s  
• line could not be Stavrakis but must be Stavros.  
•

The story of Emilian’s departure at age nine seems implausible and raises more questions than it answers. Where was Emilian’s family living when he was playing chess at nine years old? Where did he go to change his name and get a passport? Some versions of the story imply he ran away from his family and ended up in Odessa by himself. Others like the one above, suggest he got his passport in Odessa.

A child that age could hardly travel alone, unless he was kidnapped and forced to work on a Turkish ship. This did happen routinely to Cretans, although probably for children older than nine. Young men from the island were routinely pressed into service and could possibly jump ship in Odessa. But then there is no evidence he was a subject of the Turks, which he would have been if had he really been from Crete.

A continuing search in the Odessa archive for his immigration passport may provide the answers.

There is one other possible explanation for Stilian's repudiation of the name Stavrakis. It is possible that he simply concocted the name change story to distance himself from others with the same name. By the time Peter reached his teens, the Great Purges had begun in the Soviet Union and, like many Greeks including his own brother, Stilian found himself targeted by the secret police.

Such persecution was secretive, amorphous, and hard to pin down, making it all the more sinister and frightening. It was only in 1998 that we learned our grandfather had an informant living right in his household.

As we now know from declassified documents, the same was happening to his brother in Odessa. But Vladimir pulled up stakes and left for Athens in 1932. In the archival records he is marked as "deceased in 1932," but we know from Greek relatives that he arrived in Athens that very year.

During those years Greeks in the Soviet Union came under tremendous pressure of persecution. Many were arrested, tried in sham courts, tortured, and shot. Those who saw this coming early left, and those who could prove citizenship in another country emigrated. It is possible that Stilian Emilianovich fabricated the name change story to protect his family. Maybe Crete was used to obfuscate the family origin.

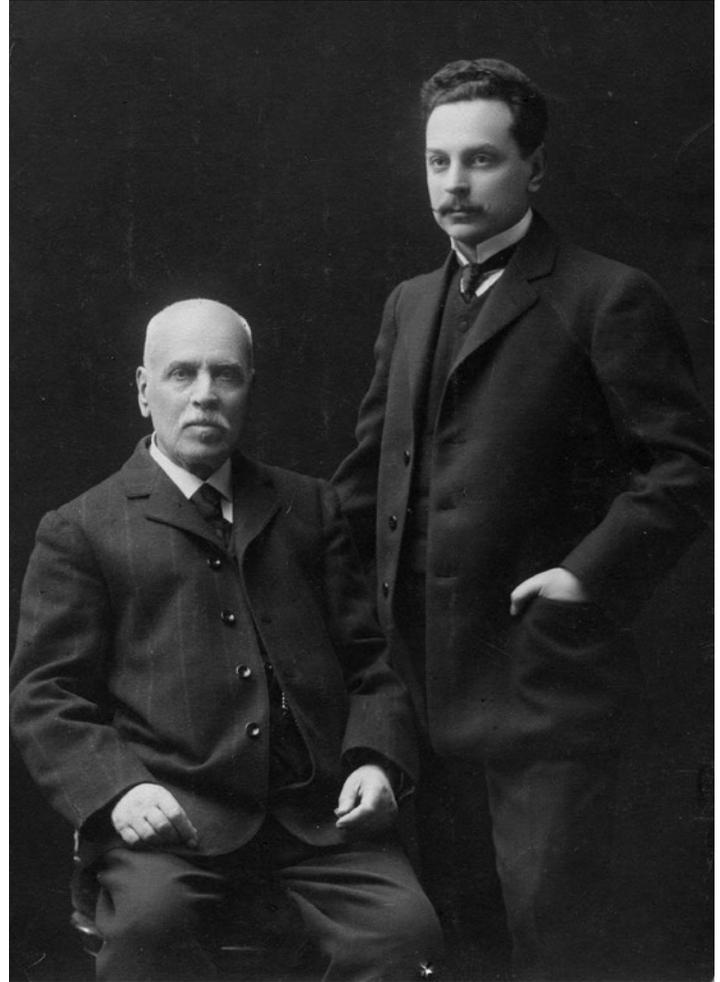


Photo taken around 1910 of Emilian Ivanovich Stavrakis with his younger son, Vladimir Emilianovich, probably in Odessa where the older man lived.

## Emilian Was a Greek Citizen

The earliest official record we have found for Emilian in Odessa or anywhere else thus far is his marriage in 1870 where he is listed as “Greek” and his bride, Elena, as “English” (Metric Books of Odessa). She was from Kefalonia, the English-occupied Ionian Island that was under British rule from about 1809, and therefore, she had English citizenship.



Emilian Stavrakis, Vladimir, and Yura, his grandson. Taken in Odessa around 1910. Emilian died in 1913 before our father, Peter, was born.

Just to add another complicated quirk to Greek history, the Ionian Islands had been occupied by Venice since the 13th century, at which time the residents received Venetian citizenship. Then in 1797, they were conquered by Napoleon before being retaken by the British together with the Russians. All through this history, they were considered Greeks even though there was no Greece.

Thus, Emilian and Elena’s sons inherited his Greek citizenship, and his younger son, Vladimir, immigrated to Athens with his family in 1932 by right of that Greek citizenship after the Soviet Union ceased to grant travel rights to its own citizens.

During tsarist times Greeks of Odessa typically retained their original citizenship in spite of incentives to take on Russian citizenship, which was an easy process that required only registration and renunciation of one’s Greek status. In the Odessa census of 1892, 79% of the Greeks in Russia and Ukraine kept their foreign citizenship, which Herlihy (2001:237) explains as a desire to maintain close ties to home communities but could have also lent an advantage in business, for Greek firms in Odessa had branches all over the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

In the case of our own family, Greek citizenship inherited from Emilian helped us survive during and after WWII. In Nazi Germany our father’s Greek citizenship and fluency in German gave him the right to work as a physician. When the war ended and we arrived in Athens, the Greeks, in true Hellenic fashion, acknowledged him as a citizen and through him, the whole family, including his Slavic in-laws, were granted the rights of refugees and citizens.

Peter’s military registration was backdated to 1938 when he would have reached the age of conscription in Greece. This was war time, and the military was desperate for physicians, so there were practical reasons to legitimize his citizenship quickly. Eventually the government even tried to send him to the northern war zone, which was totally against refugee policy. None of the other Odessa Greek relatives had been required to serve in the military.

## Emilian Gets Wealthy

On 26 April 1870, at age 32, Emilian married Elena Inglezi (Elena Gerasimova Inglezi).

Various Inglezi relatives helped our family in Athens between 1946 and 1950, and some corresponded with our parents after we came to the US in 1950. Their letters were all written in educated Russian, indicating that the authors were educated in Odessa. Our brother Steven visited Evgenia Inglezi sometime around 1966 before he turned 21 and became eligible for the Greek draft. He visited another Inglezi in Paris during that same trip.

As was indicated by the archivists, it is unlikely that a family like the Inglezis would have given one of their daughters in marriage to a nobody of inferior education and social class. This indicates that Emilian was probably not the runaway child he was purported to be. For one thing, in the story the boys were playing chess — a game of the educated and literate, not of poor peasants or laborers. Also, Emilian obviously valued education, for his children were well-schooled.

In one of the documents Emilian is listed as belonging to Guild #2, which put him in the second highest merchant class, just below the wealthiest merchant families of the Russian Empire. We do not know where he got his startup capital for his business, and none of the Metric Books mention any of his biological kin.

### Emilian's Business

Verbal history has it that he was a merchant dealing in paint (colors). The Russian word for “paint” includes fabric dye, as well as other forms of applied color. It was an odd item for trading, either into or out of the Russian Empire, and this may be a piece of family lore that is more fable than fact.

According to Herlihy (2001) the Greeks of Odessa engaged mainly in the grain trade. They purchased grain from the northern, more fertile parts of Ukraine, often through intermediaries and shipped this grain to Western European countries.

For this reason, the story that Emilian dealt in “paint” sounds unlikely. However, if it were true, then it is possible he bought and sold aniline dyes, which had just come on the market between 1820 and 1850 and revolutionized the coloring of various products, especially wool and rubber.

According to Kardases and based on an undated census (Vasilēs A. Kardasēs, 2001, p. 214), Emilian owned 9,429 rubles' worth of real estate in Odessa. We know of only two censuses taken in the late 19th century: in 1892 and in 1897.



Emilian with his grandsons, Yura (standing) and Shura, by his son Vladimir Stavrakı and his wife Olga Farimskaya (also occasionally using the surname Lashkevich).

OWNER	(IN RUBLES)	OWNER	(IN RUBLES)
Scarlatos Dem. & Nik.	23,625	Stavros Zach.	9,988
Gregoropoulou Teophania	22,117	Mavrogordatou	9,900
Mavrogordato Nik.	22,000	Ambatzis Isaac	9,750
Skliris Mich. & Krionas		Stavraki Emel.	9,429
Papanikolas	22,000	Vikatos Vas.	9,393
Koronis Georg.	21,542	Apostolou Vas.	8,800
Venardakis	21,428	Arvaniti Elena	8,784
Dialegmenos Greg.	21,000	Vasiliotis Spyr.	8,500
Voutsinas Ioann.	20,572	Arvanitis Pant.	8,067
Rizos Kon.	20,000	Stamero Pavlos	8,000
Mavroviazis Ioann.	19,286	Papadatos Polyv.	7,715
Xydi Ioann.	18,913	Mavrogordato Pant.	7,550
Amvrosios Greg.	18,071	Latris Alex.	7,125
Krionas Papanikolas Nik.	17,282	Makkas Kon.	6,900
Karouzou Evropi	17,000	Palaiologos Dem.	6,858
Gorgoli Angelina	15,000	Skordilis Igo	6,750
Mavrokephalou Maria	15,000	Diamantis Geras.	6,675
Georgiou Charikl. &		Ladopoulos Spyr.	6,600

Chart published by Vasilēs A. Kardasēs in *Diaspora Merchants in the Black Sea: The Greeks in Southern Russia, 1775–1861*, Lexington Books, 2001 (p. 214) showing that Emilian owned 9,429 rubles' worth of real estate in Odessa.

Emilian belonged to merchant Guild #2, which had a wealth requirement go between 6,000 and 15,000 rubles around the year 1850.

This chart is undated, but only two censuses were taken in the late 19th century in Odessa, in 1892 and in 1897.

Emilian belonged to merchant Guild #2. The payment of set dues gave him the right to engage in trade within Russia and privileges such as exemption from military service and the right to ride in a certain type of carriage. To qualify for this estate, the male of the family had to own between 6,000 and 15,000 rubles' worth of property and would probably be considered middle to upper-class status by today's US standards.

Just for comparison, in around 1810, the 10 richest merchants of Odessa in Guild #1 owned assets of 10 million rubles, averaging 1 million per family (Herlihy 2001).

## Life in Odessa and Nikolayev

As visible as the Greeks had been in 19th century Odessa, they were never very numerous. According to the two censuses carried out in Odessa to ascertain the “foreign” population — in 1892 and in 1897, there were 5,283 and 5,013 Greek speakers, respectively, constituting 1.6% and then 1.3% of the total population. During that time the city of Odessa grew by 15% (Herlihy 2001).

Catherine II had a fondness for the Greeks. In her zeal to resurrect the Byzantine Empire (and give it to one of her sons to rule) she named, renamed, and founded several cities with Greek names, especially in Crimea and Southern Ukraine — one of which was Nikolayev, dedicated to St. Nicholas.

From 1884–1886 when Odessa suffered an economic decline (Herlihy 2001) and the grain trade slowed, many Greek families moved to Nikolayev, and the Stavrakis family did as well. Emilian must have retained his business and social ties in Odessa, for both he and his wife were interred in Public Cemetery #2 (plot 128) in Odessa. However, when I (Olga) visited that cemetery in 2014, I could not find the grave. Either the plots had been renumbered, or the marble and burial location had been reused.

All three of their surviving children as well as Vladimir's sons were born in Odessa, although both Stilian and Vladimir went to secondary school in Nikolayev. After finishing his medical education, Vladimir Emilianovich returned with his family to live and practice medicine in Odessa.

We do not know what language the family spoke at home, although both of Emilian's sons were fluent in Russian as it appears to have been their primary language. As was customary among Greeks, Emilian hired German and French tutors for the children, and Stilian, at least, became fluent in German and spent two long periods during his early professional years studying medicine in Germany. German was an important scientific language at the time, and Stilian made sure his own children were also tutored by German and French governesses.



Peter's father may have spoken Greek also, but because Peter's mother was Slavic, their home language was Russian. Our father and his sisters did not learn Greek at home, although he was forced to learn it in 1946 when we arrived in Athens and he started working as a physician.

Emilian died in 1913 of pneumonia, just five years before the Revolution. Given that he was a merchant in Guild #2, his descendants were probably not looked upon favorably by the Soviet government. His wife survived to 1921. Fortunately, most of her family left for Athens during and after the Revolution as in the 1930s most of the Greeks remaining in Odessa were targeted for elimination and became victims of the Great Purge.

Odessa, to this day, has a Greek section. It is here that the first plans for Greek independence were drawn up in the 1820s and where the liberation society Filiki Hetairia met and organized.

According to the census, there were about 5,000 Greeks during the late 1800s, which was not many compared to the Jews who numbered around 40,000 during that time (Herlihy 2001). There were also some Germans and a smattering of other minorities.

During the early 1800s, Richelieu, the brother of the French Prime Minister, served as governor, and his statue stands today at the top of the famous Potemkin Stairs.

(Photo credit: riowang.com)

## CHAPTER 2

### **Elena Gerasimovna Inglezi (b. 8 July 1846; d. 15 February 1921)**

The family of our great grandmother, Elena Gerasimovna Inglezi, originated on the Ionian Island of Kefalonia and immigrated to Odessa sometime before 1834.

Kefalonia was one of seven Ionian Islands that had been taken from the Venetians by Napoleon in 1797. Because Greeks had settled in various countries over the last 3000 years, they have always made a distinction between political citizenship and ethnic and religious identity. Ethnically, all Greeks consider themselves Hellenes, no matter what country their ancestors have inhabited for centuries. Thus, the Ionian islanders were Hellenes even though they had lived under Venetians for centuries. The official language was Venetian Italian. In 1809 the English took the Ionian Islands from the French, and only in 1864 they were turned over for the first time in their history to the new nation known as the Kingdom of Greece.

Under the Venetians, the Ionian Islands had developed a land-owning and shipping aristocracy that protected its pedigree by publishing genealogies in the *Libro d'Oro*, or the *Golden Book*. The most prominent Inglezi member of the Kefalonian nobility who settled in Odessa was Demetrius Inglezius (Prousis 1991). He arrived in 1796 in the Russian Empire at age 15 with his uncle, one year before Napoleon's conquest of the Ionian Islands.

### **Gerasim Inglezi Appears in Odessa Before 1834**

Our great grandmother first appears in the Odessa Archive Metric Books at birth on 8 July 1846. Her parents are Gerasim Evangelevich Inglezi (1803–1866), an English citizen, and Ekaterina Dimitreevna (unknown citizenship).

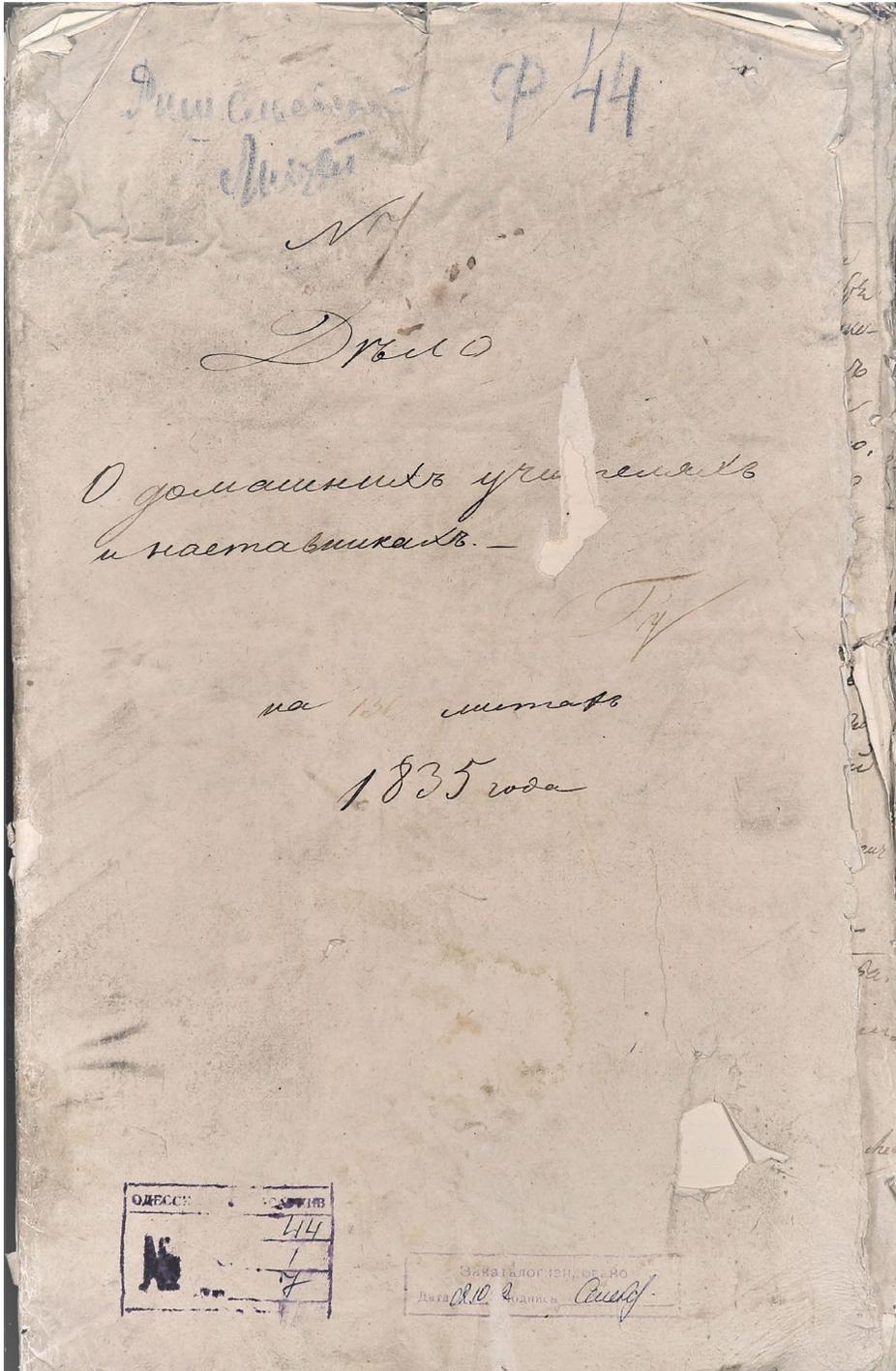
We know less about her mother, Ekaterina Dimitreevna, than about most of our other ancestors. We do know that she was the second of seven children. The search is complicated by the spelling variations of names in Russian, Greek, and English. In the Metric Books, the archivist discovered the name rendered as Inglessi, Inglezius, Inglesi, Inglesis, Inglezis, Anglezi, Englezi, and just plain Glezi. We will use the spelling “Inglezi” which is the closest transliteration from Cyrillic.

Elena's father, Gerasim Evangelevich Inglezi, was born in 1804 when the Ionian Islands were under Napoleonic Occupation. In 1809 they passed to joint administration by the British and Russians, but its inhabitants received British citizenship.

Gerasim emigrated to Odessa with his father, Evangelos, sometime before 1834. He is listed in the records as an English citizen, but we know nothing of his father except the name from the use of the paronymic.

The name “Inglezi” means “English” in Italian and originated under the Venetians. Sometime after, around 1804–1809, Kefalonians arriving in the Russian Empire are listed as “English Citizen” or “son or daughter of an English Citizen.” Those arriving earlier are described as “Ionian Islander.”

The first record we have of Gerasim in Odessa is a set of documents qualifying him to teach Greek and Italian as a home tutor in 1835. In December 1834 at the age of 31, he applied for a license to tutor in private homes. According to the application documents, he was already working as a tutor in Greek and Italian for a family (presumably a Greek one) and was granted a temporary license. In December of that year he took exams at the Richelieu Lyceum for a diploma and applied for a permanent teaching license for home tutoring.



In 1835 Gerasim Evangelevich Inglezi, who emigrated to Odessa with his father from the Ionian Island of Kefalonia (which was still under British and Russian control), applied to tutor Greek and Italian, for which a license was required.

This is the first page of the application of the license as discovered in the Odessa Archive in Fond 1. 44-1-7. A full copy and translation of the document can be found in Appendix 1.



## Gerasim Marries Ekaterina Dimitreevna

He must have been successful and highly respected, for in 1838 or 1839 he married Ekaterina Dimitreevna and fathered 7 surviving children, some of whom married extremely well. The Metric Books acquired from the Greek Orthodox Church list a number of prominent citizens as godparents for his children.

Gerasim and other Ionian Greeks retained their English citizenship in Odessa but were identified as Hellenes (“ethnically Greek”) and belonged to the Greek Orthodox Church in Odessa. Almost 100 years later, when his descendants fled to Athens, all were accepted as Greek citizens on the basis of their Hellenic identity only and the annexation of the Ionian Islands with Greece.



PLAN D'ODESSA en 1794.

Plan of Odessa in 1794 when it was first opened by Russia and given tax free status. It invited traders and merchants from other countries to settle and made it easy for them to start businesses. Many Greek and Jewish merchants went into the grain trade, exporting the rich Ukrainian harvests to Western European cities.

It had started out as a small Moldavian village that remained separate from the new town for most of the next century.



- |                                    |                         |   |                      |                                  |                                  |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| A. Fort de la Quarantaine          | F. Ecole dite de Platin | K. Douane                               | P. Jardin public     | V. Eglise russe de sainte vierge | 1. Jardin de St. Calixte         |
| B. Quarantaine                     | G. Port militaire       | L. Theatre                              | Q. Cathedrale        | W. Synagogue                     | 2. Jardin Sordani                |
| C. Port                            | H. Petit Fort           | M. Maison de Gouverneur C <sup>te</sup> | R. La Patisserie     | X. Eglise grecque                | 3. Jardin de l'Isle de Tchikobou |
| D. Ecole de marine                 | I. Hopital              | N. Salle de Banquet                     | S. Eglise catholique | Y. Marche                        | 4. Jardin de St. Evremond        |
| E. Point pour abriter les Bâtimens | J. Palais d'Alibonac    | O. Grenier                              | T. La Poste          | Z. Commerce de laine             | 5. Jardin de St. Pantele         |

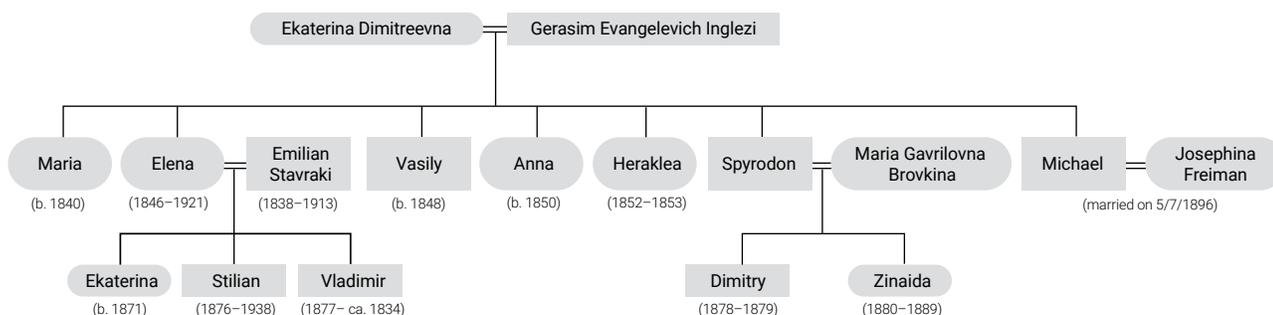
The plan of Odessa in 1814. It grew rapidly until the mid-1800s as a major grain exporting center for Ukraine and then began to decline. This decline continued after the Suez Canal rerouted trade traffic away from the Black Sea.

Our earliest ancestors, Evangelos and his son, Gerasim Inglezi, settled here from Kefalonia sometime just before 1834.

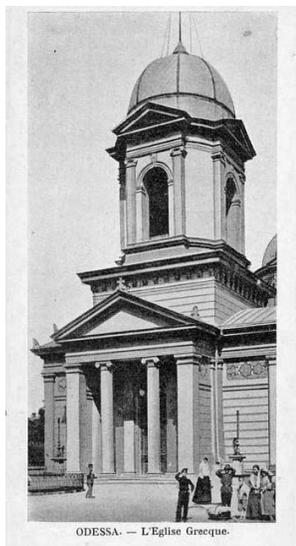
## Gerasim and Ekaterina Marry and Have Children

Gerasim and Ekaterina Dimitreevna married probably in 1838 or 1839, just three years after Gerasim received his license to tutor. They had at least seven children, six of whom survived to adulthood. There may have been miscarriages or still births in the periods between the recorded live births.

Elena was baptized on 3 August 1846. Her godparents were Gavril Paleologo, a landowner (nobility) and Anna Dimitreevna Mimi, the wife of a Greek citizen from Nijin by the name of Alexander Mimi. The Paleologi were the descendants of the last of the Byzantine emperors who settled in southern Peloponnese after the fall of Trebizond and tried to hold on to a small empire in Morea that was eventually absorbed into Greece. Catherine II sent several expeditions to Morea in attempts to revive the old Greek Empire, so it is not surprising to see that some Paleologi ended up in Odessa.



The gap between Maria and Elena probably indicates a child who died during or shortly after birth. It looks as if her mother gave birth every two years in the first fifteen years of marriage, although we may be missing some of the children.



Greek church in Odessa. This is where Emilian and Elena were married in 1870.

## Elena Gerasimova Inglezi's Marriage

On 26 April 1870, Elena married Emilian Stavraki, four years after the death of her father. Four men served as witnesses: Spyrodon Ivanovich Foskarino, a Greek citizen; Aleksei Ivanovich Russo, a Turkish citizen; Nicolai Stavrovich Ksidias, a Greek citizen; and Emanuel Ivanovich Patriki, an English citizen (Archive index 37-6-31, No. 6).

The record (*Metricheskaya Kniga* 37-3-844, No 27) shows her nationality as “English” and her age at marriage as 21. This is an obvious discrepancy for her birth date is entered as 8 July 1846, which would make her 24 at the time of her wedding. The birth date is corroborated by the later entry of her christening in that same year on 3 August 1846. That makes her 24 years of age at the time of her marriage. Had she been 21 upon her marriage, her birth would have been in 1849. This would have been impossible, for her mother gave birth in 1848 and again in 1850 to known children.



The Holy Trinity Cathedral (Greek Orthodox) at 55A Katerinskaya Street was founded in Odessa in 1795 as a wooden structure. In 1804 it was rebuilt in stone according to the design by the architect F. Frapoli and stands in its original form to this day with its beautiful white and green façade. (Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons)

However, this is not simply a recording error made at the time of her wedding. She appears to have used the later birth date for the rest of her life because her grave marker says she died on 15 February 1921, at age 72, supporting the birth date in 1849. It has long been the custom of Greek women to shave off several years from their ages. Apparently, Elena did so at marriage and successfully remained three years younger in all the records. Thus, she died at age 75.

Elena and Emilian Stavraki had three children: Ekaterina, born in 1871; Stilian in 1876; and Vladimir in 1877. We know nothing of their married life or their business, but family oral history says that "...their babies kept dying so when Stilian was born they named him after St. Stylianos, protector of children" in the Greek Orthodox Church. This may be corroborated by the five-year gap between the births of Ekaterina and Stilian, indicating possible non-surviving infants.

St. Stylianos is the Greek patron of the unborn and sick children, who also helped barren women conceive. Stilian not only survived, but his birth was followed by that of Vladimir, both of whom lived many years. In addition, both men became important healers themselves.

Like the Russians of the time, Greek women were expected to marry with a dowry. The amount of the dowry reflected the wealth and status of the bride's family and served to attract a man of commensurate social standing.



BOULEVARD (SÜDL. THL.) БУЛЬВАРЪ (ЮЖН. Ч.) BOULEVARD.

View of the main boulevard in Odessa around 1970. (Photo credit: odessaguide.com)



↑ Big Moscow Hotel in Odessa ca. 1850. Renovated and rebuilt following several fires over the years, this landmark endures from the time of our ancestors' arrival in Odessa.



↑ Built in 1887, about the time the Stavraki family moved to Nikolayev, the Russov house still stands on 21 Sadovaya (Garden) Street. During the Revolution it was taken over by the Austrians. Today it is a hotel. (Source unknown)



← Emilian and Elena Stavraki's tomb, probably around 1930. Left to right: Olga, daughter of Stilian Emilianovich and granddaughter of Emilian and Elena; her husband Lyosig Kiselevich; Olga Farimskaya Stavraki (Vladimir Emilianovich's wife); Vladimir Stavraki (son of Emilian and Elena).

↓ Written in Peter's hand, probably in the 1960s, the individuals at Emilian and Elena's grave are identified. However, he was unable to decipher the dates.

*Olga (my sister),  
"Necur", uncle Vladimir  
and "Lelia" on a cemetery -  
Grave of ???  
Yelii ??  
(Will follow!)*

This cultural background is difficult to reconcile with the story of Emilian being a runaway youth. By the time he married, he had property and money, but among Greeks that would not have been enough. He also would have had to have family and class standing in order to be able to attract a wife of the Inglezi clan. And yet, Emilian had no family in Odessa. None are listed in the Metric Books. He appears first only in connection with his marriage. Before that he does not exist in Odessa.

### Unknown Relationship to Demetrius Inglezius

The Inglezi of Odessa were a prominent family, although we do not know how the different family lines were connected. That they were connected is likely because they all came from Kefalonia, which had a maximum population of 60,000 and still to this day hosts a community of Inglezis. The most distinguished and well-known member of the family was Demetrius Inglezius, who was a city leader and even served as mayor for a period of time.

According to the historian Prousis (1991), the first Inglezi, Demetrius Inglezius, arrived in this region with his uncle in 1796 and joined the Russians at Taganrog in the Russo–Turkish War. Demetrius distinguished himself as ship captain, but we don't know if the vessel was his own. He retained the title “captain” for the rest of his life.

Shortly after the war Demetrius settled in Odessa and married Ekaterina Dimitreevna Zoyevna, the daughter of a Russian nobleman, and became extremely wealthy. They had numerous children and their son Spyrodon, named after Demetrius' father, married a Russian and is listed as Russian Nobility.

As prominent and wealthy citizens, Demetrius and his wife served as godparents to many children, a sign of high status in Orthodox society.

From 1800 onward at least three large Inglezi family lines appear in the Metric Books of Odessa. Still, so far we have been unable to link them to each other or Gerasim and his father, Evangelos Inglezi. However, the island is small, well-documented, and has never had more than 60,000 inhabitants, so the Odessa Inglezi are likely all related. On a visit to Kefalonia in 2009, Olga learned that the Inglezi name is well known and that a village with many members of the clan still exists.



Another view of Greek Street in Odessa. (Photo credit: studiolum/wang.com)

## CHAPTER 3

### Stilian Emilianovich Stavraki

(b. 1 June 1876, Odessa; d. 12 January 1938, Kiev)



Stilian Emilianovich was born in 1876 in Odessa. His family moved to Nicolayev when he was around 10 years old, just about the time this photo was taken.



Stilian Emilianovich in his teens, probably in Nikolayev, Ukraine.

Peter's father, Stilian Emilianovich Stavraki, was born the second of three surviving children to Odessa Greeks, Emilian Ivanovich Stavraki and Elena Gerasimova (Inglezi) Stavraki. Stilian and his younger brother, Vladimir, followed very similar career paths. Both became prominent physicians, professors, and researchers who published a number of scholarly articles and books and introduced various medical innovations in Ukraine and Russia.

Stilian Emilianovich finished secondary school in Nikolayev and then went to medical school in Kiev and graduated in 1901. His brother, Vladimir, one year his junior, went to university in St. Petersburg and then medical school in Kiev in 1901.

Both boys learned German at home with native-speaking nannies in the custom of Odessa Greeks. German served them well, for this was a period of great forward motion in medicine and science.

In the photos we see a severe and humorless man, but Peter always saw the softer side of his father. A glimpse of that side is visible in a photo of Stilian Emilianovich standing near his parents' tomb, the only picture in which Stilian Emilianovich's facial expression is softened almost by a smile. Of course, during

that era smiling in photographs was not acceptable, but even so, many family members managed to look at least content, if not exuberant. Stilian Emilianovich always looked foreboding.

Descriptions of him paint a picture of a man who was severe, distant, and unapproachable, yet he was opposed to all manner of violence and fiercely dedicated to his patients' welfare, albeit in a detached manner. To a certain extent, physicians must lack empathy to remain emotionally uninvolved to best serve their patients' wellbeing. Stilian Emilianovich was detached to the point where those who did not know him well felt he was cold.

It was a trait that his son Peter, our father, inherited. Our father had no interest in or feeling for how others thought of him. He could not be embarrassed, shamed, or made to feel guilty. He could not be easily manipulated, and therefore, he did not respond to the emotions of those he was treating. Because of this, he could remain objective and detached from the patient but still totally dedicated to the person.



Stilian Emilianovich in his later years. He was known as a severe, unapproachable, and serious man, although Peter described him as very sensitive and empathetic, especially toward the victims of the sham courts, torture, and execution during the purges.



The tomb of Emilian and Elena Stavraki with inscription. The man standing is their son Stilian Emilianovich, Peter's father, and grandson of Emilian and Elena.

The seated young man is unknown. This grave was located in Odessa Public Cemetery #2 plot 128. In 2014 Olga searched for the grave but did not find it. Grave markers and unattended graves were often reused. The photo was taken possibly around 1930.

Epitaph: Emilian Ivanovich and Elena Gerasimova Stavraki. His life ended in November 1913 at 75 years of life. Her life ended on 15 February 1921, at 72 years of life.



Stilian Emilianovich, taken on 16 July 1890, probably in Nikolayev, Ukraine.



Stilian Emilianovich in his teens, probably in Nikolayev or just beginning university in Kiev.

Starting around 1930, Greeks were targeted for persecution by the Soviets. Both brothers came under pressure from the KGB and feared arrest, deportation, or worse. Vladimir, who was based in Odessa, activated his Greek citizenship and around 1932 emigrated to Athens with his wife and son but tragically died of cardiac arrest around 1935.

Stilian Emilianovich, based in Kiev, either chose to remain or could not get out of the Soviet Union. Perhaps his family was too large and tied to local society to gather up and remove from the country, and he did not want to leave anyone behind.

By 1925 he was suffering from heart disease and high blood pressure, which was no doubt exacerbated by the stress caused by the terrible political situation. Some accounts reported that he wanted to leave but could not get the proper Greek paperwork in order, possibly because he was based in Kiev. Our mother remembers being told that the Greek “Consul” who gave Vladimir his “citizenship” papers was based in Odessa and had been shut down by the time Stilian decided to apply.

However, that explanation also seems incorrect. Both Stavraki brothers were already Greek citizens, so most likely there was a representative of the Greek government in Odessa or Kiev who prepared immigration visas for Soviet Greeks. The Soviets had to give their permission for citizens of other countries to leave. One or the other of these offices may have been shut down as relations with Greece soured, and the Soviets started to simply arrest and kill Greeks. In any case, Stilian Emilianovich remained, tolerated, suffered, and died in early 1938.



Stilian Emilianovich probably also around 1894 as in the previous photo, in Petersburg.

After graduating from medical school he remained in Kiev where he took an internship and continued his studies. He stayed there the rest of his life, teaching at the university.

Before the Revolution, he also made two extended trips to Berlin and Lausanne, each for about a year, to study new medical techniques, which he then introduced in Ukraine.



Stilian Emilianovich, dated 15 January 1894 (OS).



Stilian Emilianovich, probably around 1890–1894.

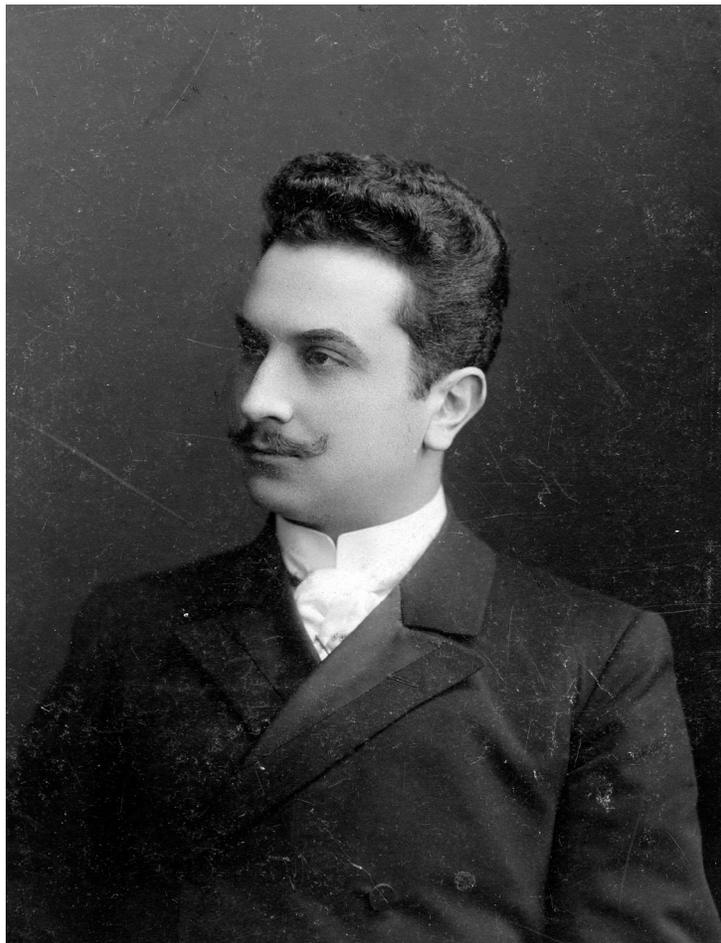


Stilian Emilianovich on 10 February 1901 (OS), the year he finished medical school in Kiev and started an internship or advanced study.



Stilian Emilianovich on 10 February 1901 (OS).

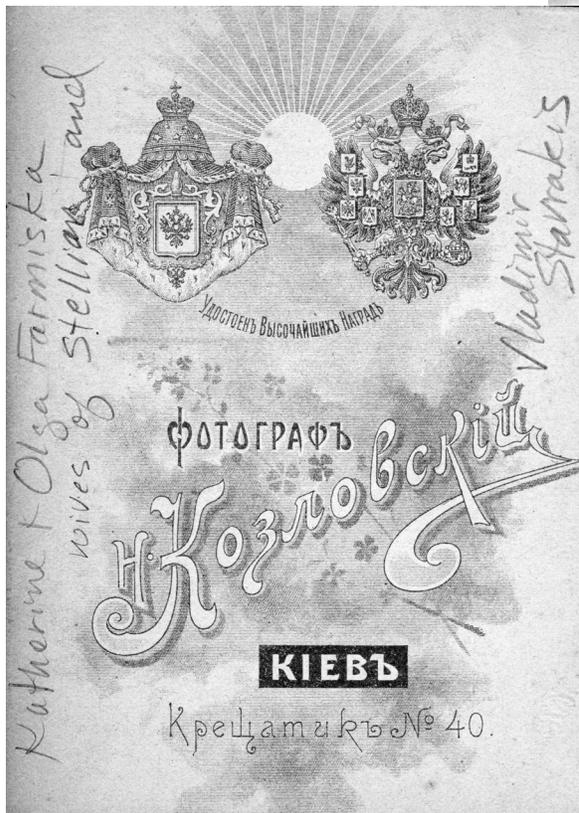
Stilian Emilianovich, around the time of his graduation from medical school in Kiev and his study research trips to Berlin and to Lausanne.



## Stilian and Vladimir Emilianovich Marry Sisters

Sometime before 1904, the young brothers met the Kiev-based Farimski sisters, daughters of an upper-class land owner, probably of Polish descent. But there was a problem. They were not legitimate. Their parents came from different classes and, under Tsarist law, were not permitted to marry. Their father had petitioned the tsar for an exception, but only his two boys were given his name.

All four sisters in the family were forced to keep their mother's name and use their father's name as their patronymic. Thus, our grandmother and her sister were Ekaterina Gregorievna and Olga Gregorievna on most official documents, even though their father's name was Vasily. Family members always called them by their correct patronymic, Ekaterina Vasilievna and Olga Vasilievna.



Stilian's wife and Peter's mother, Ekaterina Farimskaya (standing), and her sister, Olga, who married Stilian's brother Vladimir around 1902.

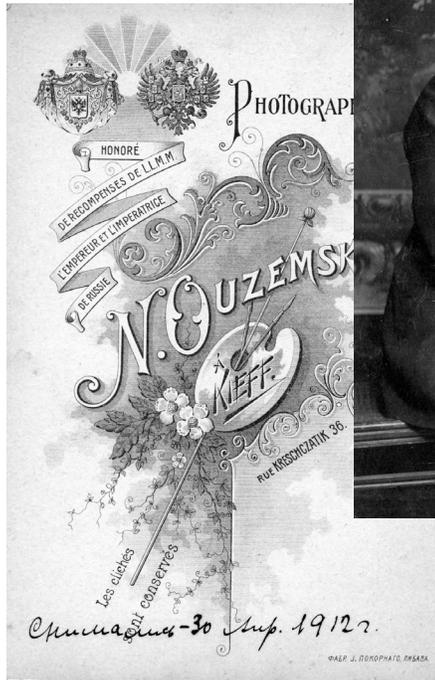
The women had their mother's last name and her father's patronymic because their parents were from different classes, which were forbidden to intermarry. Family members often used their own father's patronymic.

Thus, Peter's mother was officially Ekaterina Gregorievna Farimskaya before marriage, although our mother addressed her as "Olga Vasilievna." Under the Soviet system, these Tsarist rules had fallen into disfavor.

The back of previous photos. The Farimiski-Lashkevich family story is presented in Part 2.

The two couples were married sometime in 1904 or 1905. We know nothing of their courtship or how they met, but judging from their lives in later years, these were not great love affairs. Olga Vasilevna once told her granddaughter, Irene Stavrakis, that because the Orthodox Church forbade marriage to a sister-in-law, they had to get special dispensation from the church and marry at the same time.

Stilian and Katya's family in 1912 before Peter was born. Kiev, Ukraine. Left to right: Stilian, Olga, Nina, and Ekaterina.



Back of the photo.



Right to left: Stilian, Katya, Olga, and Nina in 1912 before Peter was born in 1917.

## Life After the Revolution

This changed during the Soviet era when the Tsarist bureaucracy was dissolved and our grandmother, Ekaterina (Baba Katya), took her husband's surname when she could. Still, her mother's surname stuck. In some documents she is known by one of three surnames: Farimskaya (her mother's surname), Lashkevich (her father's surname), Gregorievna (her mother's patronymic), and Vasilievna (her proper patronymic). (See Part 2 for a description of the Lashkevich family).

The touch of illegitimacy that forbade the use of their father's name may have been a disadvantage or even a stigma before the Revolution, but it became a definite advantage to the women afterward. It appears that their father, Vasily, died before the Revolution, but the Soviets pursued landowners mercilessly, and his legitimate son and heir, the older brother of Ekaterina and Olga, Alexander Lashkevich, had to flee to Yugoslavia. Vsevolod, the younger brother, who also used his father's name, fought in the tsar's army and disappeared from our known family record.

Anna, the oldest sister, survived the Revolution and seems to have continued to live in the Soviet Union until the 1950s. Elizaveta, who was married to a Czech, emigrated with her husband and children. Olga and Ekaterina ended up in Canada and remained there the rest of their lives.

Archival records found in 1998 by Historian Prof. Vitaly Kovalinsky show that Olga (Vladimir Emilianovich's wife) owned a house in Kiev at No. 62 Marinsko-Blagovescheskoi Street, where it says her husband resided in 1913. In the ownership papers, her name is given as Olga Gregorievna Lashkevich (curiously, using her grandfather's patronymic and her father's surname).

In 1914 Vladimir Emilianovich is again listed as residing in his wife's house in Kiev, and his profession is given as Doctor of Internal Medicine. Nevertheless, by then his and Olga Farimskaya's sons had been born in Odessa, so most likely they kept the house in Kiev as a second home and visited periodically.

## The House on Funduleevskaya Street, Kiev

Stilian and Katya (Ekaterina or Baba Katya, to her grandchildren) lived on #26 Grand Jitomirskaya St. (later Chaussée) before getting the apartment on Funduleevskaya Street number 36 in 1913. This apartment was located along the whole second floor of a rather plain and small wooden building that bridged the space between two large ornate multi-family stone mansions built in turn-of-the-century style. The house looked somewhat like a covered bridge, and until recently, was blocked off from the street by another old free-standing wooden house that was taken down in the 1980s due to being a fire hazard.

A paved courtyard separated the various dwellings. The Stavraki apartment was accessed by way of a narrow alley between the street-facing buildings. The street level had storage rooms, and the family lived on the second floor; what was on the third floor is unknown.

The Stavrakis house on 36 Funduleevskaya Street in 1995. Peter Stavrakis and his daughter Katheryn stand in the courtyard, which in the past was blocked off from the street by an old ornate, wooden house that was razed not long before due to being a fire hazard. This building is now visible directly from the street and was built as a connection between two older mansions.

The family moved here shortly before Peter's birth in 1917 and remained there until they fled the country in late 1943. They were considered "well off" and even had a maid and a groundskeeper or *dvornik*. Most of the time they had the whole second floor to themselves, which was a luxury in the early Soviet era. The additional floor was granted to Stilian Emilianovich to honor his exceptional medical contributions.

It is unknown who occupied the third floor. Svistoon, the groundskeeper, lived with his eight children on the ground floor. Peter's room, where he brought Helen to live after marriage, was located somewhere on the right and opened out onto a small roof.

In 1995 this building served as the copyright office, but by 2014 it had been abandoned and left to ruin, used only for storage.



During Tsarist times this dwelling would have been considered shabby, cheap, and unfashionable. After the Revolution, however, the rich and elegant dwellings were chopped up into one- and two-room apartments, and 36 Funduleevskaya Street, now named Lenina Street, began to look downright prosperous.

Three families plus several other individuals lived in the apartment at 36 Funduleevskaya Street between 1930 and 1942, each with its own private bedroom — a rare luxury during that period.

- Stilian Emilianovich (until his death in January 1938) and his wife, Ekaterina
- Their daughter, Olga, and her husband, Lyosig, with their two sons born after 1938
- Their daughter, Nina (widowed twice), with a spouse periodically; her daughter, Lena (born in 1932); and her son, Yura (born in 1937 and died in 1942)
- Their young son, Peter, first alone and then for a short while in 1938 or 1939, with his young wife, Helen
- At least one maid, Ksenia, and possibly a cook

According to Lena (Nina's daughter and Stilian Emilianovich and Ekaterina's granddaughter), the apartment had a large dining room and kitchen, and a carpeted hall ran along the length of the building. Peter's room had a window that opened out onto a roof. He would climb in and out of the window to avoid being seen. There must also have been a salon (living room) with a fireplace (where her grandfather toasted bread), a dining room, and a kitchen. Both Lena and Peter remembered Ekaterina entertaining various guests.



Dinner with guests in the family dining room. Ekaterina is leaning over behind her husband, Stilian. Their daughter Nina sits on the right of Stilian with a friend on her right. The gentlemen around the table are unknown but must have been friends and colleagues of Stilian's. None are recognizable as family members.



Stilian collected many fine paintings, which are now in various galleries in Kiev and Moscow. A few may be recognized on the walls behind them.

Peter grew up at 36 Funduleevskaya Street (sometimes numbered 37) pictured on this photo as it looked in the 1940s. Their house stood on the right behind an ornate wooden house. A passageway led through to a back courtyard. All the surrounding houses had been built as turn-of-the-century, ornate mansions for the wealthy. During the Revolution they were chopped up into komunalkas (cut up communal rooms with shared kitchens and bathrooms).

The Stavakis family had the whole house to themselves — an indulgent allowance by an initially grateful regime that valued Stilian Emilianovich's medical skills, at least until he had trained enough students to fill much needed hospital slots around the country.



The street has been renamed again to "Bogdan Khmelnitzki." The wooden house in front was removed in the 1980s and the empty space at the billboard opens out to the Stavrakis house.



A new modern building now fills that space (photo taken around 2005), which is a bordello frequented by luminaries currently under indictment in the US (2019).

The Stavrakis house still stands in back, but it is unused and has fallen into ruin.

## The Household

Peter was considered well-off by his peers because not only did he live in a private residence (albeit crowded with three couples, himself, and his little niece Lena), but he also had a few “luxury” goods: a camera, sunglasses, a kayak, and a bicycle — all in very short supply in the early Soviet Union. Photos of these items can be seen in Part 6.

After the Revolution, shortages were so great that even those who could afford to buy boots or bikes would have to stand in line for hours, sometimes days, only to be turned away empty handed when the shops ran out. As a result, a consumer grapevine developed. As soon as one learned that there was butter or peas or shoes in a particular store, they whispered it to their friends and relatives, and long lines of hopeful souls snaked around the city blocks patiently waiting for the normally vacant store to open its doors.

One day Stilian Emilianovich learned from a patient that a shipment of bicycles was due to arrive to a particular store. He went there at night and stood in line until morning, successfully acquiring a bicycle for his son.

Another indication of the family’s relative wealth is that they always had a maid and at times had a cook and laundress.

Peter’s mother, Ekaterina Vasilievna (Baba Katya), had no domestic skills or useful training, for she had received a noblewoman’s education. She learned to play the piano, which was considered obligatory for a girl of her class at the time, but she played badly and without interest. She knew literature but had little interest in learning, and she could not cook, sew, clean, or even run a household.

This did not seem to bother Stilian who simply discouraged (or forbade) her to enter the kitchen. He hired a cook, although he reserved the art of making mayonnaise for himself alone.



Ekaterina Farimskaya, Peter’s mother and the authors’ grandmother, was a placid person with no great passion, ambition, or energy. Having been raised in an upper-class household, she did not know how to cook, sew, or manage a household.

Stilian engaged servants, nannies, and a cook, freeing her from housework. Peter always remembered her fondly. Although, after the war, he saw her rarely as she was living in Canada with her daughter, Nina, and Helen was not particularly welcoming toward her mother-in-law.

Peter’s mother was a placid person without great dreams or desires and held a penchant for deep pessimism and despair. If there was a dark side to be seen in an issue, she would find it, but it by no means brought her down. If things could get worse, in her view, that was normal. If they got better, it was merely an illusion. And yet, she enjoyed her pessimism and wallowed in it without forcing it upon others. She liked being that way. She reveled in the gloom she could discover around her.

She never raised her voice and never got angry. If something bothered her, she simply resigned herself to the worst possible outcome. When Olga knew her in the US and in Canada, she noted that her grandmother could sit in a less-than-comfortable chair and just be. She did not actively complain, but she never seemed to enjoy anything either.

### Stilian Emilianovich's Professional Career

Stilian Emilianovich introduced a number of surgical procedures in Kiev, including the tonsillectomy (removal of tonsils) and came to be known as a brilliant researcher, celebrated teacher, and skilled surgeon. He also set up Kiev's first X-ray lab for use in medicine.



Stilian Emilianovich with his nurses and assistants, probably around 1925, at the Octoberskaya Hospital (the name in 1998). The exact date of this photo is unknown, but it was probably taken around the time of the Revolution or shortly thereafter.

He was especially known for his skill in “trepanation” — a surgical procedure for drilling through the mastoid process (the rear part of the temporal bone in the skull) to relieve life threatening ear infections. This surgery required exceptional skill in order to avoid damaging the facial nerves, which could cause paralysis in the region.

His students would eventually work in all the regions of Ukraine, introducing his methods and practicing the skills he taught them.



*Проф. Стилиан Емельянович Ставраки  
По поводу тридцатипятилетия его врачебной, научной  
и педагогической деятельности*

Stilian Emilianovich in 1937 from a Festschrift book dedicated to him by his medical students who graduated and went to work in different parts of Ukraine. The book was published in 1937. In it, he is referred to as Professor S. E. Stavraki.

Reference: Collected Papers of the Journal of Diseases of the Ear, Nose and Throat Volume 14, No 1, Kiev, Ukraine.

### 1937 Tribute to Professor S. E. Stavraki by his Students

Translation of the tribute to Stilian Emilianovch published in the Collected Papers of the Journal of Diseases of the Ear, Nose, and Throat, Volume 14, No. 1, Kiev, Ukraine, 1937:

- In 1937 students of Professor. S. E. Stavraki published a collection of
- medical articles with a forward honoring him and giving a glowing
- biographical account of his professional contributions to the science of
- medicine. By this time, he was retiring due to heart disease, which would
- take his life the following year.
- 
- Professor S. E. Stavrakis finished Medical School at Kiev University in 1901
- and then worked as assistant to Professor K.G. Tritshel for "trepanation."
- In the absence of antibiotics, severe ear infections had to be treated by
- surgically draining the afflicted areas behind the ear drum. This required
- great skill, for the procedure involved drilling through the side of the skull
- near the mastoid process without damaging the facial nerve. Professor S. E.
- Stavraki came to be known as a master of this delicate operation.
- 
- The biography states that he was not satisfied with his level of knowledge
- and skill, so in 1903 he traveled to Berlin where he studied the totally new
- specialty of the time: roentgenology (X-ray technology). Upon his return, he
- opened the first office offering X-rays in Kiev.
-

• Unsatisfied with his progress again, he specialized in surgery from 1905 to  
• 1909 by apprenticing in the clinic of Professor E. A. Bondareva in the former  
• Aleksandrovskoy Hospital. However, he soon became fascinated with the  
• new emerging field of otolaryngology developing overseas and in Russia  
• and again traveled to Berlin and Lausanne for a year of study. In Berlin he  
• worked with Professors Frankel, Jansen, Rosenberg, and Kobrak and in  
• Lausanne, with Professor Mermod.

• After returning to Kiev in 1910, he established a practice in otolaryngology  
• in the same Alexandrovskoy Hospital where he had previously introduced  
• a number of innovative surgical procedures that he had learned during  
• his first study trip to Berlin. During the war (WWI and the Revolution), he  
• worked in various Kiev hospitals as a general surgeon in the Ear, Nose, and  
• Throat specialty.

• In 1917 Professor S. E. Stavraki taught in the Clinical Institute while also  
• serving in various medical institutions and outpatient clinics.

*(Author's note: this was during the Revolution, so the biography remains very vague as both society and hospitals were in disorder.)*

• His talents "blossomed" during the Soviet Period. (Note an obligatory  
• political statement praising the glorious Soviet regime.) In 1921 he served  
• as professor in the Institute of Medicine, and beginning in 1931 he was chair  
• of the faculty of the Institute for Advanced Medical Studies. After that he  
• performed surgery at the Hospital of the Academician F. G. Yanovsky. From  
• 1934 or 1935 onward, he served as head of the Hospital Central Medical  
• Commission and later in the faculty of the Stomatological Institute.

• Prof. Stavrakis has always been a highly educated and a brilliant scientist  
• and pioneer in the field of Otolaryngology (Medicine focusing on the Ear,  
• Nose, and Throat). He was the first in Kiev to perform tonsillectomies and a  
• number of other operations including innovative treatment of tuberculosis.

• Prof. Stavraki continues to carry out research. He has published more than  
• 30 scientific works on a variety of important topics. His presentations in  
• the otolaryngology organization always shed light upon specific questions  
• and include a complete literature survey.

The biography ends with a list of his students who now work and teach (in 1937) in various parts of Ukraine. A list of S. E. Stavraki's publications was printed as an appendix and is not reproduced in this history.

## Stilian Emilianovich's Private Home Practice

Stilian Emilianovich continued to learn throughout his life. He was passionate, if not totally consumed with the acquisition of new skills. He sought answers to medical questions unknown at the time. He was widely read and had extremely high expectations of himself professionally and of others who worked and studied under him.

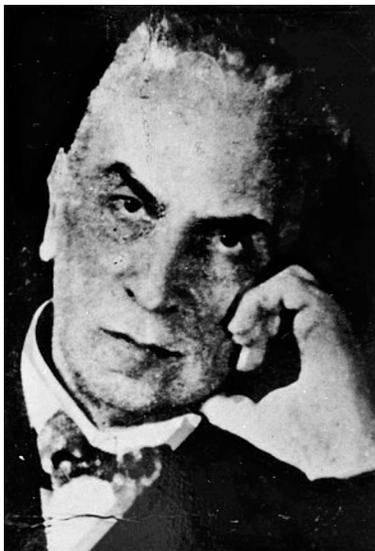


On the left: This is the photo of Stilian Emilianovich hanging in the former Octoberskaya Hospital (the name changed again) with his granddaughter Kathryn Lesley posing in front of it in 2014.

On the right: Dedicatory photo of Stilian Emilianovich hanging in the Department of Otolaryngology of the Octoberskaya Hospital in commemoration of his founding of the Department of Diseases of the Ear, Nose, and Throat.

Following two trips abroad to study under famous physicians in Berlin and Lausanne, Stilian Emilianovich introduced a number of new treatments and approaches to Ukraine.

He was the first doctor to introduce the tonsillectomy and the roentgen (X-ray) to the region.



Taken in 1937, not long before his death, Stilian Emilianovich's face here shows the strain rendered by the pressure of persecution.

This photo was given to Olga in 1998 by a successor of Stilian Emilianovich's, Dr. Bogdan Iskiv, in 1998.

**KIEV STATE INSTITUTE FOR POSTGRADUATE  
MEDICAL TRAINING**

**ISKIV Bogdan**

Doctor of Medical Sciences,  
Professor Head of Otorhinolaryngology

Home: Kashanova St. 10/47 253225 Kiev, UKRAINE	Bogovutivska St. 1 ORZ clinic Kiev, UKRAINE tel.: office (044) 213-15-85 (044) 211-89-16
--	--

Business card of Dr. Bogdan Iskiv, who was Head of Otolaryngology and now has the office at the Octoberskaya Hospital that Stilian Emilian had established and utilized.

Stilian Emilianovich (standing on the right) with Nicolai Nikolayevich Kiselevich and their nurses, probably between 1929 and 1932. The two men were friends and colleagues and successfully conspired to bring their children, Olga Stavraki and Lev Kiselevich, together in marriage.

Stilian had been worried about his daughter Olga's infatuation with a man from the Caucasus he considered unsuitable. His second daughter had rather suddenly married a musician of whom Stilian did not approve, so he wanted to nudge Olga toward a better suitor.

The plan succeeded, and their children married. Though long-lasting it was not reported to be a totally blissful union.



Portrait of Nicolai Nikolayevich Kiselevich, Stilian Emilianovich's colleague, whose son Lev married his daughter, Olga, as a result of the two fathers bringing them together.

In addition to his work in clinics and hospitals, he maintained a private practice in his home mostly in the otolaryngology specialty. He had a widespread reputation and was highly sought after for the delicate surgery that relieved inner ear infections.

According to his granddaughter Lena (born in 1932 to Nina), the medical office was at the top of the stairs. Patients waited to be seen in the dining room. The office was equipped to handle trepanation and minor surgery, and the family had to wait until all the patients were gone before they could sit down to dinner.

When Stilian Emilianovich performed surgery, a maid would clean up afterward, carrying bundles of bloodied sheets through the house and to a laundress. In Kiev it was no easy task to wash laundry, for much of the time there was no electricity or heat. On the positive side, our father, Peter, always reminded us that human blood must be laundered in cold water to prevent coagulation.

## The Great Purges, Fear, Spies, Arrests, Informers

The Great Purges started in the early 1930s and continued until the beginning of WWII. They crippled Russia's response to the Nazi invasion and resulted in the loss of about 10% of the nation's population. The Soviets established a network of spies among the populace, rewarding those who turned in neighbors and relatives who could be accused of subversive activity that threatened the state.

They came for the victims at night. The closed paddy wagon called the "Black Raven" stopped in front of the house, that frightening knock on the door soon followed, and your loved one was taken off into the night, sometimes never to be seen again.

The informer was rewarded with small perks from the victims' seized property, and the accused was imprisoned, tortured, pressed to confess to anti-government activity, tried before a tribunal of three judges called a *troika*, and either sent into exile to a labor camp or summarily shot.

Every family in the USSR suffered, and everyone lost a friend or relative to this reign of terror. Despite of their initially privileged position, the Stavrakis family did not escape persecution, and the fear touched everyone.

### The KGB Spy in the House

Stilian Emilianovich did not seek out a groundskeeper, but one day (before or during the Great Famine), a man from a village appeared on his doorstep at 36 Funduleevskaya Street. This man named Svistoon had eight hungry children, no job, and nowhere to live, and he begged for work. Stilian Emilianovich took pity on the man, giving him the little supply rooms on the ground floor, and paid him to keep the courtyards clean, make minor repairs, and usher patients up to the office.

One of Svistoon's children, Vladimir Illych, was a few years younger than Peter. They played together, climbed the neighboring verandahs, and ran around the courtyard.

When we returned to Kiev in 1995 with our parents, Helen and Peter, word of their return got around fast among their surviving friends. One person who contacted them was Vladimir Illych Svistoon, now the director of the Natural History Museum and son of Svistoon, the groundskeeper.

Our mother Helen refused to see him. It was unclear to the rest of us why, but she simply said she would not see him, and that was that.

### Olga's Story...

- Three years later in 1998, I (Olga Stravakis) returned to Kiev to start
- historical research and visited with Svistoon, who told me his story. He said
- he was always indebted to our grandfather Stilian Emilianovich for saving
- his family. His father had been displaced from a village and arrived in Kiev
- with eight children to feed, no home, and no work.
- "Your grandfather saved our lives," Svistoon said to me. "He gave my father
- work as a groundskeeper (*dvornik*) and gave us a place to live. We lived
- in a little room on the ground floor of the house where your grandfather's
- family occupied the second floor. We have always been indebted to your
- grandfather for this."
- He was a slender man, about 10 or 12 years younger than my father, which
- meant he was probably born around 1928. He wore a brown, well-tailored
- western suit with light blue stripes and his mouth sparkled with expensive
- gold teeth; his breath reeked of halitosis.
- 



Stilian Emilianovich at the height of his career.

Photo taken ca. 1934 and given to Olga by Vladimir Illych Svistoon in 1998. Left to right: Professor Jacov Ivanovich Pivovonski, physician and good friend of Peter's, whose daughter in 1950 provided our family with a document of support that was needed for us to get US visas.

Vladimir Illych Svistoon, who in 1998 was the director of the Natural History Museum of Kiev; Ilia Svistoon, Vladimir's father, whose family Stilian Emilianovich supported by making him the *dvornik*, or groundskeeper; and Peter, our father, at around age 15.

During a visit in 1998, Vladimir Illych told Olga that his father had been a KGB informant and spied on Stilian Emilianovich, his family, neighbors, and patients. Vladimir Illych showed no signs of remorse and even expressed gratitude toward our grandfather for his generosity that saved their family from starvation.



His office was upstairs on the second floor of the Natural History Museum, but the building had no heat, so an electric radiator stood in the middle of the central room, and other workers huddled close by. Svistoon's office was off to one side and seemed relatively warm. He offered tea which I declined.

He went on to tell me how they lived, boasting that his daughter had an elegant two-story apartment just across the street on Funducleevskaya (changed to Lenina, then to Bogdan Khmelnitzki). He told me she had a car even in the fifties when there were critical shortages of all consumer goods after the war.

This set off warning bells in my mind. Svistoon was basically telling me that they were extremely well-off, which could only mean they were strong party members. After all, Svistoon himself was the Director of the Museum. I asked if I might record his recollections. He seemed delighted, so I turned on my tape recorder.

As he continued to talk of his family successes, it was with a mounting sense of horror that I heard how his father had earned money on the side by informing on my grandfather's patients and neighbors to the KGB. I could not believe what I was hearing! Here was this man telling me how my grandfather had saved his family, and in return, his father spied on us and informed on the very man to whom he owed his life and that of his children.

Svistoon talked about this quite freely. I asked questions. Much to my shock and surprise, he explained things very congenially, as if describing a walk in the park. His father reported on us to the secret police. Yes, his father had turned people in. It gave him extra money. "We were always indebted to your grandfather.... " The whole conversation was surreal.

•  
• I was so shocked not only by the spying of a man whose family my  
• grandfather had saved but also by the casual way he explained it, as if  
• it were the most normal activity in the world. I then understood why my  
• mother had refused to see him three years before. She had a kind of radar  
• for traitors, something she could never explain.  
•  
• At the end, I just wanted to get away, but he asked a very kind and  
• handsome woman by the name of Ludmilla to take me around the museum.  
• Svistoon joined us for the tour, and as she explained all the exhibits of  
• fossils and stuffed animals, it became clear to me that he knew nothing  
• about the museum. He kept making silly comments about the animals on  
• display. She not only corrected him but did so in a manner that any normal  
• person would have found insulting and demeaning, all of which went right  
• over Svistoon's head.  
•  
• Before I left, he gave me a small booklet he had written about a fossil animal  
• he had excavated. It looked a bit like a cross between a Triceratops and a  
• bear, but he said it had a third eye! This was obviously totally ridiculous, for  
• no reptiles with third eyes have ever been found, not even in a bog outside  
• Kiev. It was clear that Svistoon himself had followed in his father's footsteps  
• and achieved his position by sucking up to the authorities, informing, and  
• other appalling behavior.  
•

In the last years of his life, Stilian Emilianovich suspected that he was being targeted by the secret police and felt increasingly pressured. Little did he know that the man, whose life and family he had saved, was a source of information to the authorities.

In 1938 Stilian Emilianovich's nephew by marriage and Peter's closest friend, Andrei Storozhenko, known affectionately as "Andryusha," was arrested by the KGB, incarcerated for nine months in the infamous Lukyanovka Prison in Kiev, tortured, and then unexpectedly released (see the story in Part 2).

Likely his arrest was wholly or partially caused by Svistoon, for Andryusha, having been abandoned by his mother and separated from his father, lived in Stilian Emilianovich's household for periods of time. Through his mother and his father, he was descended from landowners, a class that was targeted as prime suspects for anti-Soviet activity and annihilation by the Communists.

On the other hand, once started, Svistoon, the elder, was under pressure to continue to produce hidden enemies or fall victim to the secret police. He obviously continued to be a successful and accomplished informer because his family prospered.

This pressure probably contributed to Stilian Emilianovich's illness and hastened his death. Peter said it worried him greatly. He did not know, however, that the same man his father had saved from starvation was spying on him.



↑  
 This is an honorary picture inscribed to Vladimir Illych Svistoon on the 34th anniversary of the great victory of WWII or of a battle fought during WWII. It must have somehow been sent to the US because it was in our father's photographs.

Our father, Peter, did not know that the younger Svistoon's father, Illya Svistoon, had been a spy when he was groundskeeper for the Stavrakis family in Kiev.

→  
 The back of the photo of Svistoon, the elder, with his fellow war heroes, naming the people involved and showing that he towed the official line.

*Тов. Свистуну В.И. - ветерану Отечественной войны  
 в день 34й годовщины Великой Победы.*

*Директор Института зоологии  
 АН УССР член-корр. АН УССР / В. А. Топачевский /*

*Секретарь партбюро  
 кандидат биол. наук / И. И. Боднарчук /*

*Председатель М.К.  
 кандидат с-х наук / И. И. / К. П. Мельник /*

## Vladimir, Stilian's Brother, is Accused of Spying for Greece



Vladimir Emilianovich is sitting at the front left. Next to him is his brother Stilian's daughter, Olga, and on the right of her sits his wife, Olga Farimskaya. Standing behind them on the left are Ekaterina, Vladimir's sister, and her daughter, Shulgina.

This picture was probably taken around 1932 when Vladimir Emilianovich was about to take his family to Athens; this may have been a farewell gathering. The faces all bear signs of unhappy resignation. Our father's sister, Olga, the niece, was no more than about 22 when they emigrated; here she appears about that age.

Archival research in 2018 in Odessa revealed a very interesting and tragic record. In 1938 at the height of the Stalinist purges, arrests, Gulags, and torture, a man named Nicolai Dimitreevich Stavraki was arrested and interrogated by the KGB for spying for Greece.

A number of Greeks were arrested, some of them bearing the same names as our family members. By then, however, Vladimir had died in Athens — probably at least five years before. Under torture, Nicolai admitted that he was collecting information on troops and military installations around Odessa for the Greeks — an absurd accusation, for there were no major military installations near Odessa, and the Greeks were busy fighting their own war at home.

Nicolai was born in 1875, two years before Vladimir Emilianovich. He was not related to our family. He likely had to confess to something in hopes of lessening the torture, and he knew that Vladimir was at least outside the Soviet Union and beyond its reach. So his was a safe name to give. It is also possible that his confession was true and that Vladimir was indeed involved in some kind of spying, which is why he decided to leave.

Nicolai “testified” that he was recruited by Vladimir Emilianovich at the Odessa Medical School, where he worked as a maintenance man. When asked whether he was friends with Vladimir, he answered that they were friendly but not close friends and that he occasionally lent him money and helped his family in various ways.

The normal procedure was to trump up charges of conspiring against the Soviet State and hold a troika. Nicolai was shot.



Portrait of Stilian Kozmanov, a friend of the Stavrakis family in Kiev who was shot around 1937 during the persecution of the Greeks.

### The Execution of Kozmanov, a Greek Family Friend

Between 1919 and 1928, before the Soviet Union wrapped itself in the Iron Curtain, almost all the prominent Greek trading families of Odessa left, including our Inglezi relatives. Thereafter for a while, citizens who could prove they had citizenship outside the Soviet Union were also still permitted exit visas. Greeks who stayed behind were often arrested and shot.

This is exactly what happened to a family friend of the Stavraki children. Stilian Ivanovich Kozmanov was born in Leninakan (now Gyumri), Armenia, in 1902. Recently, Olga Stilianovna's elder son, Ivan, discovered the website that lists Greeks who were martyred by the KGB and found his mother's friend's name on the list of those convicted and shot. (KGB Protocol [http://www.greek-martiolog.ru/f\\_protocols/f\\_protocol\\_120.php](http://www.greek-martiolog.ru/f_protocols/f_protocol_120.php)).

The Greeks continue their efforts to identify those martyrs who disappeared in Stalin's purges.

Left to right front: Nina Stavraki, a family friend of Russian-Greek background; Stilian Kozmanov; and Olga Stavraki.

Back left to right: Nina's first husband, Mikhail; Olga's husband, Lyosig Kiselevich; and Peter Stavrakis.

Stilian Kozmanov, in the center of the picture, fell victim to one of Stalin's purges of Greeks and was shot in 1938. The record of his fate can be found in the next picture.

Is it possible that Stilian Kozmanov was Olga's suitor from the Caucasus of whom her father disapproved?



[www.greek-martiolog.ru/f\\_protocols/f\\_protocol\\_120.php](http://www.greek-martiolog.ru/f_protocols/f_protocol_120.php)

no.	kygopere	1895	Greece	Turkey	SHOOT
99.	Kazandzhidi Konstantin Panayotovicha	1895	Greece	Asu, Surmen, Turkey	SHOOT
100.	Kasimidi Angela Konstantinovich	1879	Greece	Trapezund, Turkey	SHOOT
101.	Kesis Ogly Panayot Ivanovich	1903	Greece	no / d	SHOOT
102.	Kozmanova Stilian Ivanovich	1902	Greece	Leninakan, Armenia	SHOOT
103.	Koronidi Georgiy Konstantinovich	1895	Greece	Kerasund, Turkey	SHOOT
104.	Dmitry Panteleimonovich Kotidi	1914	Greece	Surmen, Turkey	SHOOT
105.	Kundurjadi Miltiada Apostolovich	1897	Greece	no / d	SHOOT

List of Greeks shot in the Great Terror. Our family friend Stilian Ivanovich Kozmanov is listed as number 102. His last name is written in a different case, which is why it has an "a" at the end.

The date of the shooting is unknown, but the heading states "The materials on the accused, submitted by the NKVD of the Georgian SSR in the order of NKVD directive No. 50215 of 11 December 1937."



profession was very helpful during WWII. And then, eventually, he changed it to the Ear, Nose, and Throat. Interestingly enough, when he was aged 14, he was on the street in the city of Nikolayev when there was an accident. At that time, accidents were not very common. And somebody was hit by a car and fell down bleeding, and of course, everybody went to look at that. My father went there, and as soon as he looked at that, he passed right out. That is kind of a strange beginning for a surgeon. From there on, of course, things changed.

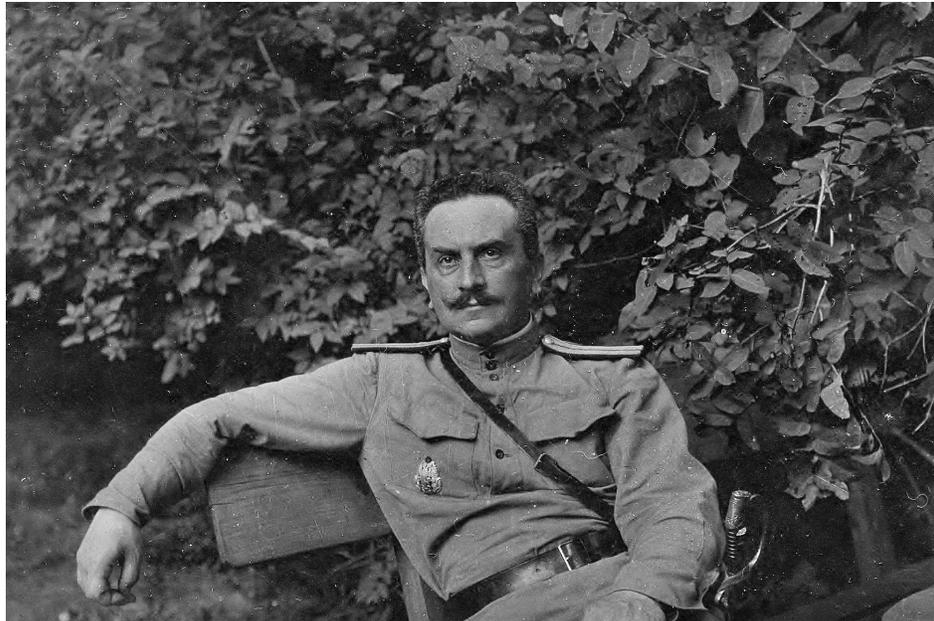
He was an extremely talented surgeon. He also had tremendous physical strength in his arms and hands. He demonstrated it to me on several occasions. He could take a *kopec* (a penny in Russia) in both hands and bend it quickly up to 90 degrees. That's not very easy to do.

The other feature of his character was that he didn't communicate with people too much. But he was very sensitive to terrible stories that happened in people's lives in Russia and everywhere else. He really was affected by that tremendously. I will never forget one time when another of those, how you call it, "Kangaroo courts" were carried out by the Russian communists of the government. The final conclusion was to shoot them all, and I walked in – he was sitting with the paper in his hand and his face was extremely sad.

I asked him. I said, "Father, what actually is worrying you?"

When he showed me the paper, he said, "It's another Kangaroo process which brings people to their death."

Stilian Emilianovich sitting on a bench in a military uniform. Peter always had this photo hanging on his bedroom wall.



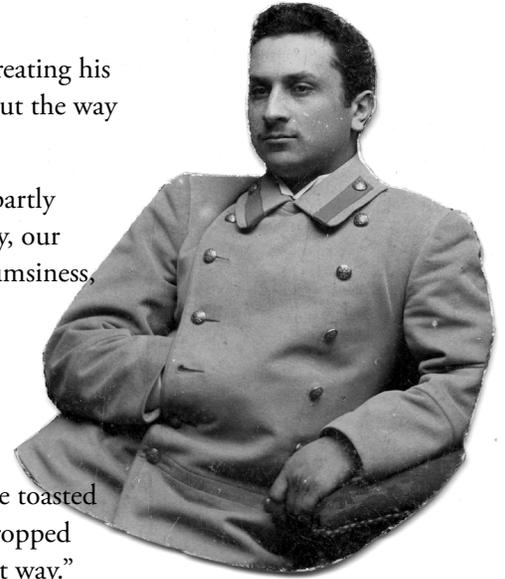
## Lena's Memories of Her Grandfather

Lena remembers her grandparents spending time with her and always treating his family well, but she also remembers Stilian as being strict or “rigid” about the way certain things had to be done.

Lena said he used epithets like *slon* (elephant) for clumsy. He meant it partly in jest and had no idea it could be interpreted as an insult. In our family, our father, Peter, was much the same and used animal names to describe clumsiness, stupidity, ignorance, and other negative traits.

Peter did not exclude himself from using these animal associations. When faced with something new and totally unfamiliar, Peter would say, “I feel like a ram (Баран) staring at a new gate.”

As an example of what Lena called strict, she recalled that he often made toasted bread for her in the fireplace using a stick. “It was hot, and one day I dropped it. Grandfather said, ‘You have holes in your hand.’ He was strict in that way.” Perhaps a more accurate way to describe him would be to say that he did not like mistakes of any kind. He was a perfectionist and expected everything to be done properly — which meant his way. Any deviation from that was unacceptable. His son Peter inherited this trait as well.



Stilian Emilianovoch Stavraki.

## Emilian Collects Art and Gemstones

Lena also recalled that our grandfather collected paintings and gemstones that he secreted away for emergencies. Collecting art was not a crime in the Soviet Union but accumulated wealth was, so he hid gold pieces, diamonds, and other gemstones with the hopes of giving them to his children to use if they ever got out of the Soviet Union.

Stilian Emilianovich had a number of famous paintings in the house, many of which were lost during the war and some that found their way into the finest galleries of Kiev. One painting Lena remembers was by Ivan Ivanovich Shishkin, a Russian landscape painter closely associated with the *Peredvizhniki* (The Wanderers), a collective of realist artists of the late 19th century. Stilian Emilianovich particularly collected land and seascapes. Lena remembers one large landscape that her mother and grandmother rolled up and took with them when they fled Kiev in late 1943.

As with the rest of us, they also ended up on crowded trains in occupied Poland, and somewhere it got left behind. Lena remembers one time when they had waited for a train all night. When they got on, the painting was not with them. Either they left it, or it was dropped or stolen. No one knew.

Stilian Emilianovich also loved the seascapes of Aivasovsky and owned several, which were left behind. Several were taken by Peter when our family left Kiev in 1943 as well, but in the crowded trains and through the chaos of flight, all but one was lost.



tremendously sick at that early age. So the pathologist, who was his friend, came, and the autopsy was done at our home. I was present. And when the heart and big arteries were examined, it shocked me and everybody. The advance of that disease was unbelievable. Indescribable! What really was the reason for that? Nobody will know.

After the end of the autopsy, the pathologist was invited to stay for dinner. He was a friend. It would have been unethical to pay him, but a dinner was an appropriate form of gratitude. We ate solemnly, quietly. We talked briefly about my father's health, and that was it.

Then came the funeral. It was actually not different from other funerals except for one thing. He was placed in the coffin in a good suit, as was the custom. The casket was open for everyone close to him to say goodbye. My brother-in-law (who is dead now), the husband of my older sister, bent over him and cut that suit with a sharp razor in several places to prevent looters from digging up the body and stealing the suit. After that he was buried in Baikove Cemetery near the chapel. The grave was marked with a large dark marble cross which was gone by the time we visited in 1995.

Toward the end of his life, his eldest granddaughter, Lena, remembered that our grandfather took to his bed often. This meant that he was seriously ill, for he was an active man who was always engaged and involved in his work. One day, as she was passing his open room, she saw a glass of blood next to him on the bedside table. What Lena witnessed was an attempt by Stilian Emilianovich to lower his blood pressure by bleeding himself. This was confirmed recently by our cousin Ivan Kiselevich, son of Olga (the elder daughter of Stilian Emilianovich). Ivan is younger than Lena, but he too distinctly remembers our grandfather bleeding himself to lower his blood pressure. In the absence of medication, bleeding can provide temporary relief by reducing the volume of blood flowing through the arteries and passing through the heart.

We know he suffered from high blood pressure, as would many of his descendants, Peter, Lena, and Olga included, even though none had been overweight.

Peter never mentioned that his father had bled himself, but he did write an article in the late 1960s about George Washington's death, arguing that it was caused by pneumonia that had been aggravated by deliberate bleeding. The article was rejected by the journal to which it was submitted because Peter, a Soviet-educated doctor, put George Washington's physicians in a poor light. A similar article appeared in the journal a few years later, written by a US physician, and Washington's issue is now common knowledge.



Portrait of Stilian Emilianovich Stavraki during his prime years.

## The Autopsy and Family Heart Disease

When Stilian Emilianovich died, an autopsy was performed. Lena recalled that it was conducted by an uncle (Peter remembered it being done by “a friend”) and carried out in the dining room on the main table.

Peter, a medical student at the time, attended his father’s autopsy. He once told me (Olga) that he held his father’s heart in his hand and was shocked to discover that it was greatly enlarged and covered by a thick layer of fat. As a result, Peter became convinced that diet and lifestyle had a lot to do with heart health. He believed that a large part of it was also genetic, but he was convinced that the genetic disadvantages could be mitigated by lifestyle changes. Independently, his cousin (also a physician) in Canada came to the same conclusion after his own father’s death, also of cardiac arrest. Both Stilian Emilianovich and his brother, Vladimir, had indulged in rich food and gained weight, and both died of heart disease at about the same age.

Both Peter and his physician cousin Yura (George, Vladimir’s and Olga Farimskaya’s son, in Canada) succeeded in avoiding heart disease, and both lived to a very advanced age. Peter himself did suffer from high blood pressure as he aged, but he lived until age 89, and did not suffer from heart disease.

However, the difference in outlook between the physicians of the two generations with a similar genetic makeup was also heavily influenced by the political changes in Russia at the time. During Stilian Emilianovich’s youth, economic success was displayed through corpulence in both men and women. Body fat signaled that one could afford to dine on rich delicacies, drink the finest liquors, and pay others to conduct manual labor. This, in turn, commanded respect.



Stilian Emilianovich in military uniform.

### Stilian Emilianovich’s Death Inspires Lifestyle Changes in Peter

During Peter’s youth, the Soviet system put a premium on physical fitness, and famines limited the availability of rich food. Thus, Peter and his cousins had two advantages growing up: exercise and a “healthier” diet.

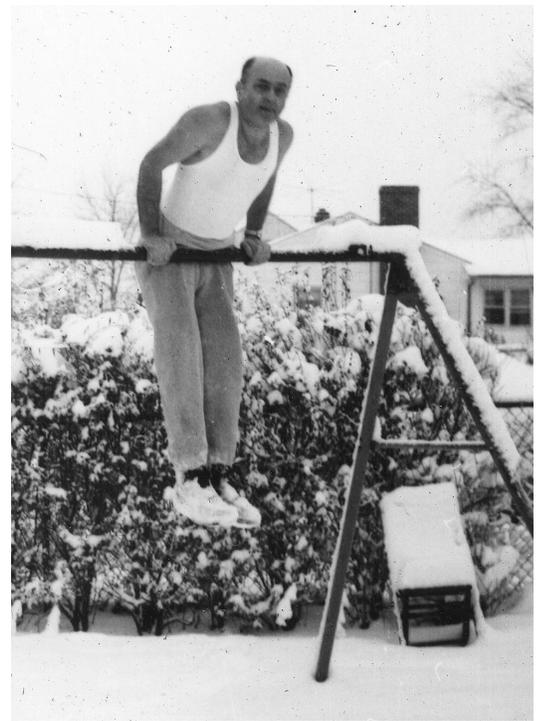
The Soviet system wiped out these old Tsarist status symbols. It implemented an aggressive and very successful program of health and fitness, which used the Latin saying, *mens sana, in corpore sano* meaning “a healthy mind requires a healthy body.”

Peter always remembered this Soviet saying incorrectly, as *in mens sano, in corporis sano*. The original saying comes from a poem by the Latin poet Juvenal, and the first line reads *orandum est ut sit mens sana in corpore sano* —

It has become the motto of many schools and institutions around the world, and the whole stanza reads:

*You should pray for a healthy mind in a healthy body.  
Ask for a stout heart that has no fear of death,  
and deems length of days the least of Nature's gifts  
that can endure any kind of toil,  
that knows neither wrath nor desire and thinks  
the woes and hard labors of Hercules better than  
the loves and banquets and downy cushions of Sardanapalus.  
What I commend to you, you can give to yourself;  
For assuredly, the only road to a life of peace is virtue.*

His father's autopsy convinced Peter to adopt this motto from Juvenal's poem, and he made a promise to himself to alter his genetic destiny with food and behavior. His children grew up hearing this often, especially when Peter performed gymnastics on an old frame of a children's swing set.



#### **Helen Introduces Peter to the Ukrainian Peasant Diet**

The heart-healthy diet was a new introduction in the life of the Kievan Stavrakis family, who were relatively better off than the rest of the Soviets. It was not, however, radical for his wife Helen, our mother, who grew up with peasant-based values demanded by her village father and serf grandfather. Their food choices were controlled by famine and poverty, so they ate frugally and adjusted to deprivation.

Further, the more privileged Stavrakis family, especially the Tsarist-era elders, eschewed physical labor, which was considered beneath them. The peasant-based Sochansky family, on the other hand, had no choice but to engage in physical labor. Thus, what was a big cultural revelation for Peter was just life-goes-on-as-usual for Helen.

To be clear, the peasant diet of vegetables, root crops, whole meal bread, grains, and greens was never a magic bullet in Russia. Poverty limited access to food, especially for the young. Furthermore, sanitation was appallingly terrible in Tsarist times. Mortality among peasants was very high and life expectancy was very low. Almost half the infants born in rural villages did not survive to their fifth birthday (Ransel, David L. "Mothering, Medicine and Infant Mortality in Russia: Some Comparisons" #236 Occasional Paper at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Yale University Press, 1975). However, the cause was not always due to the type of food as much as the lack of it, poor sanitation, contaminated drinking water, a number of medieval child rearing habits that were detrimental, lack of medical care, and abject poverty that cancelled any positive effects of healthy eating.

Our father, Peter Stavrakis, was present at his father's autopsy and saw that his father had an enlarged heart covered in fat tissue. He vowed to fight his genetic destiny and did so with diet and exercise.

Here, he is doing gymnastics in his backyard in Newark, Delaware, using the frame of a long-since-demolished swing set.

He died at age 89 of prostate cancer, having succeeded in keeping his heart and arteries healthy and strong. Similarly, his cousins, the sons of Vladimir Emilianovich, also maintained strict heart-healthy habits and both lived to about 89 with no heart disease.



In 1995, when we returned to Kiev with Peter and Helen, we searched the cemetery for the grave of Stilian Emilianovich, which had been marked with a huge dark marble cross situated not far from the little chapel.

We did not find it, and local volunteers explained that the site was probably reused as his tomb stood in a prominent position later taken over by "atheist" Communist dignitaries who wanted their marble portraits to line the main street to the chapel. The cemetery had its own hierarchy, and this location was very prestigious.

In 1998 when Olga returned to Kiev, she met Luba Kiselevich, a cousin by marriage who had visited the grave of Stilian Emilianovich in 1974 and had taken this photo, which she gave to us.

For all the evils of the Soviet system, it did introduce a number of measures that reduced infant mortality rates to levels below those of the US and much of Europe, increased life span, and improved health during those early idealistic years.

By the 1960s, however, the early gains in health had started to disintegrate as smoking, drinking, and anxiety increasingly had a drastic negative effect on life expectancy and adult health even though infant and child mortality remained exceptionally low.

## Open Minds and Stubborn Streaks

Peter remembered his father fondly, even though to others the man seemed humorless, severe, and lacking in warmth. He was also dogmatic and rigid in his beliefs. Peter inherited from his father the unbending belief that there was one right way to do something and no other. To do it any other way was stupid or illogical. Peter quoted his father often and never breathed a critical word about him. To him, his father was a hero and could do no wrong.

Like his father, Peter was a lifetime learner despite this stubborn streak of dogmatism. He was always seeking better and more effective treatment in medicine. These men were, at the same time, totally dogmatic about topics they knew nothing about and avid learners and innovators in their areas of expertise.

Our father was also known for this dual nature at his workplace at Union Hospital in Elkton, Maryland. In 1973 he gave up his practice, at a time when his son Steven was severely afflicted with a debilitating and fatal case of multiple sclerosis, to develop the first Level II Trauma Center at the hospital. When it came to medical decisions and medical knowledge, he was always open to new information and ideas, and like his father, he was highly respected for his extraordinary skill and dedication to his patients.

On the other hand, outside the hospital he often regaled his colleagues, especially the women (who found him entertaining and enjoyed his seriousness in a good-humored manner), with lectures on the proper manner to perform common domestic tasks he knew nothing about and had never even performed. For example, he loved to explain how various vegetables should be cooked or socks washed — something he had never attempted once in his life.

## **The Stavrakis Approach to “Doing it Right!” – The Bessarabian Market, Kiev 1995**

During our return visit to Kiev in 1995, after half a century of absence, we visited the Bessarabian Market, which stood not far from our parents’ homes. The Soviet Union had just disintegrated, and Ukraine had plunged into economic decline. Food was scarce, unemployment rampant, and gangs of youths wandered around jumping on foreigners for US dollars.

The Bessarabka, as this giant farmers’ market was called, stood as it had half a century before, in a high-ceilinged concrete building near the city’s center. It was more than half empty, which suggested to our parents that nothing here had changed over the last 50 years. Within the side entrance, tired middle-aged women in aprons lined up along the aisle, offering a few loaves of bread held in scarves or baskets.

Most of the stalls were empty, but a few vendors displayed small selections of beautiful tomatoes balanced in bright red pyramids next to several bunches of celery, a modest pile of carrots, and lustrous velvety purple eggplants. They were probably peasants from a neighboring village.

Seeing one such stall staffed by a bored peasant woman in a faded, light blue cotton dress, apron, and a head scarf tied in back like a cap, our father went up to her and, pointing to the lovely eggplants, asked if she knew how to prepare them.

She stared at him in speechless amazement at this apparently insane question. He took her wide-eyed silence as a “no” and proceeded, true to his nature, to instruct her on the detailed preparation of Eggplant Caviar, a dish common in Ukraine and one our family ate regularly but which our father had never in his life prepared.

As he went on in detail and as the vendor continued to stare at him in disbelief, we noticed a commotion near the side entrance, and suddenly all the bread sellers disappeared. At the upper entrance, a group of young men calmly entered and steadily made their way toward us down the main aisle. They did not look like shoppers searching for a nice eggplant to cook into caviar.

We tried to pull our father away from the stall because foreigners with dollars were a prime target of thieves in those difficult times, and our father, dressed as he was in his favorite flamboyant wool jacket with wide red, yellow, and orange plaid stripes and wearing a not-too-subtle red backpack, stood out as an obvious target. He would not budge, however, and became annoyed at our insistence. “Don’t rush me,” he said. “She doesn’t know how to prepare eggplant. I am almost finished. She should know. Those are good eggplants she has there.”

One of us called over our driver Dmitry, a tall young man who taught at a military college. He, Olga’s son, and the two of us formed a circle around Peter while he continued his explanation to the incredulous woman, totally oblivious to the commotion behind him.

At that moment, the police burst in through the upper door and, clubs raised, chased the young hooligans out of the market, passing near us and out along the now-empty aisle where the bread sellers had stood only moments before. Our father finished his instructions, nodded in satisfaction to the still-silent vendor, and went calmly on his way through the now-quiet market, saying, “The Bessarabka has not changed at all, and no one can tell I haven’t lived here all my life.”

## The Gemstones

We don’t know why Stilian Emilianovich decided to remain in Kiev when his brother Vladimir returned to Athens in 1932. He was so tied into the web of society that perhaps he could not leave. We now know for certain he was being watched and spied upon.



He was a prominent physician serving some of the highest-ranking members of the Communist Party. He taught at the Kiev University Medical School. Maybe he wanted to leave but waited until it was too late. His children were grown and perhaps so assimilated into Kievan society as professionals that they could not leave. Also, by 1925, Stilian Emilianovich suffered from high blood pressure and heart disease.

He was known for his kindness as a physician and willingly worked without pay for the poor, but he was also known for his desire to acquire wealth and material objects of value.

According to various reports by his children and his older grandchildren, he never lost hope of getting his family out of the Soviet Union and felt that converting his wealth to precious stones would help with this process.

Stilian Emilianovich liked to accumulate wealth in the form of paintings, rugs, gemstones, gold, and silver. Unfortunately, most of it was confiscated by the state when they searched the house for valuables.

His brother Vladimir, who also had the same habit, was luckier. He emigrated to Athens in 1932, taking his wealth with him before the state snatched it away.

This was also corroborated by our uncle Shura, son of Vladimir, with whom our family lived in Athens after the war. Shura said that when he came to say goodbye to Stilian Emilianovich, probably in 1932, just before he and his parents left for Athens, Stilian Emilianovich showed him a glove with one finger filled with diamonds. He took out one diamond and gave it to him, saying that “If any of my children ever get out of Ukraine, give this to them.”

He had to hide these stones because in the Soviet Union, the accumulation of wealth was forbidden except for the chosen few, and Stilian was not among the blessed. In the end he failed to get his children out, and the gemstones were eventually lost or seized by the authorities.

Nevertheless, he had one precious gift to give his descendants and that was his Greek citizenship. Our family used it to survive after the war. His widow, our grandmother, used it to distance herself from her landowning heritage. Perhaps that was worth more than any gemstone could have been.

Peter knew this. When our family arrived in Athens and Shura was asked about the diamond, he said he spent it because he did not think we would ever get out. In other words, he simply kept it for himself, for he had accumulated quite a bit of property, silver, and expensive household goods in Athens.

While Stilian Emilianovich lived, his family enjoyed a bit of protection since he attended to some of the highest members of the government. For many, his medical expertise was the last resort for survival. When he died, the Soviets descended upon the family with a vengeance, for they suspected that he had wealth and had hidden it somewhere.

One day, the police arrived to search the apartment for marketable valuables. With what we know now, the elder Svistoon may have provided them with information. They searched unsuccessfully for gemstones and gold. As they were heading back toward the stairs, the searchers passed a stone vase on a small table on the landing.

The family was standing by nervously, and one of the girls glanced surreptitiously at the vase and, by doing so, drew attention to it. The police stopped to examine it and discovered a drop of oil just under the capital, and that gave them away. The column was hollow and the capital screwed off. Stilian had oiled the threads before he concealed the valuables in it, but a little of the oil had remained on the outside.

That oil gave them away. The police unscrewed the top and discovered at least 100,000 rubles' worth of valuables hidden inside, which they simply confiscated. The paintings, carpeting, and furniture remained as the police were not interested in artwork.

Helen, Peter's wife, never approved of Stilian Emilianovich's pursuit of material wealth, and she felt uncomfortable with her in-laws, referring to them as "bourgeois." Instead, she defended her own rich and ambitious grandfather Britchkin, whom she never knew, on the grounds that he had risen from serfdom and abject poverty, served the people, did philanthropic work, served on the city council, and did not flaunt his wealth. Helen's arguments made no sense, but Peter knew better than to argue with his volatile wife.

### **The Soviet Pressure on Our Father, Peter**

The pressure on the family did not end with the confiscation of the gemstones. In 1939, Peter finished medical school among the top ten students of his graduating class. The policy was that the state assigned doctors to various parts of the country by political decree.

However, the top ten students were always permitted to choose where they would work. In the Soviet Union, excellence was not rewarded with money or income but with status and some small privileges. Peter had planned to stay in Kiev, which, to most graduates, would have been a plum location.

Instead, he discovered he was assigned to a medical practice in Outer Mongolia! To him and his family, this was a disaster. Outer Mongolia was considered the edge of the world, outside of all civilization, and as good as being exiled to Siberia.

We do not know exactly what strings were pulled, but Peter had many friends through his father. He desperately used all the connections available to him and got reassigned to Kiev. The crisis was averted, but before his diploma was issued, a new one ended their youthful hopes — the war began. Peter's nephew and best friend, Andryusha, and his brother-in-law Vladimir Zamryi were both killed in the first action of the war: Peter was also conscripted and found himself in the military.

## CHAPTER 4

### Vladimir Emilianovch Stavraki

(b. 1877, Odessa; d. ca. 1933–35, Athens, Greece)



Vladimir Emilianovich, probably around 1900.



Vladimir Emilianovich, probably between 1903 and 1915.



Vladimir Emilianovich, Stilian's younger brother studied in St. Petersburg and Kiev and then went back to live in their home city of Odessa, where he practiced medicine and taught in the medical school at the university.

Vladimir Emilianovich Stavraki was Stilian Emilianovich's younger brother. The two brothers were close growing up and followed the same life trajectory. Both became physicians. They married sisters. Both practiced medicine and taught at universities, although Vladimir Emilianovich returned to Odessa while Stilian stayed in Kiev.

They were both exceptional students and creative physicians. Yet, they were different. Stilian Emilianovich sought new knowledge and new ideas by studying in Germany. He always seemed to be exploring new fields and seeking new knowledge. He eventually settled on otolaryngology (medicine of the Ear, Nose, and Throat).

Meanwhile, his younger brother specialized in cardiology, although he also researched and published on tuberculosis and a broad range of other illnesses. He probably published more than his brother.

Vladimir was warmer, friendlier, and much more approachable than his older brother. He had an open and inviting manner that conveyed empathy, and he reached out to people while his older brother did not. His relatives by marriage in Athens remembered him as an extremely well-groomed and dapper gentleman with excellent manners.

He loved his books and took copies of his publications when he left Odessa and moved to Athens. After his death, his son Shura tore out pages of those books to line the chicken coops on his farm where our family also took refuge for a few years after the war.

When Shura left for America, Peter tried to save a few of the books and managed to haul them to the US, where he lovingly preserved them for half a century until his death. We found them as they cleared out Peter and Helen's house in Delaware, and they, in turn, took them to Ukraine and donate them to the Kiev Medical Museum.

## From the *curriculum Vitae* (typed copy left behind in Athens)



Vladimir Emilianovich, probably taken around 1920.

Vladimir Emilianovich was born in Odessa in 1877. He got his high school education in the Nicolayevski Alexandrovski Gymnasium in the city of Nikolayev. He finished there in 1896 with a silver medal.

That same year he entered the Imperial St. Petersburg University and then received a diploma of the highest degree in Physics and Mathematics in 1900.

He then entered the Imperial University in Kiev in the Faculty of Medicine of St. Vladimir, from which he graduated in 1903 with distinction and was awarded the title of Healer with the highest honors (*Medicus cum eximia laude*).

In February 1904, he began serving as a senior resident in the medical faculty of the Imperial Clinic of the New All Russia University, and in October of the same year he was promoted to the post of State Resident in the hospital's therapeutic clinic.

After three years of service, he was transferred to the Therapeutic Division

of the Odessa Old City Hospital as a Resident and later served in the new hospital of the same name until the summer of 1911. Between 1911 and 1912 he served in the diagnostic clinic of the University of St. Vladimir. From the fall of 1912, he was laboratory specialist in the Chemical Laboratory of the Imperial Institute of Experimental Medicine.

In 1909 he passed his exams and received the degree of Doctor of Medicine from the Imperial New Russian University. By then he had already published several scholarly papers.

He served in the military in the 1920s. Apparently, he was in the Tsar's army and probably served in the Medical Corps during the Revolution. This became an issue later during the Great Terror.

After the Revolution, he taught at the medical faculty at the university in Odessa.

There is more in the archival material to be translated.

After the Revolution, the Stavrakis brothers stayed in Ukraine and, at first, received preferential treatment because of their value to the state as talented physicians and teachers of a new generation of doctors. When this started to change, Vladimir Emilianovich pulled up his stakes and emigrated to Athens in 1932, still in possession of considerable wealth, silver, and furniture.

He continued to practice medicine in Athens, and years later one of his relatives (by marriage) said he was a cardiologist and treated other émigrés in Athens who had previously been his patients in Odessa.

His archival record in Odessa states that he died in 1932, which is incorrect. He left Odessa for Athens that year with his wife, Olga, and son, Alexander. Alexander met and married Melpomene Karadsas, also from Odessa, and the two of them settled in Kallithea near Piraeus.



The main building of the Odessa Medical School, where Vladimir Emilianovich taught from around 1910 to 1932 until he emigrated to Athens. (Photo credit: Wikipedia)



Vladimir Emilianovich with nurses, probably in Odessa, standing at the back left. Unknown date but most likely during WWI and the Revolution.

## Sons of Vladimir E. and Olga

Vladimir Emilianovich and Olga had two sons, both born in Odessa. George (Yura) was born on 6 February 1905 (OS), and Alexander (Shura) on 28 September 1907 (OS).

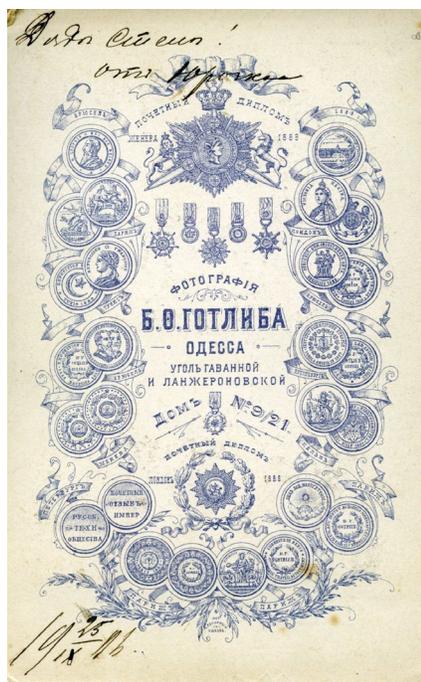
Vladimir Emilianovich with his wife, Olga Farimskaya, and their two sons, Yura and Shura.

He married his brother Stilian's wife's sister, and since the church did not permit in-laws to marry, the two couples either had to marry at the same time or get a special dispensation.

Their first child, Yura (George), was born in 1905. Yura inherited the rough manner of his uncle Stilian and all the medical talents and abilities of both his father and his uncle.



Olga Farimskaya, with her first son, Yura, born in 1905. The photo is dated 25 September 1906. He was born in Odessa.



Back of the photo.



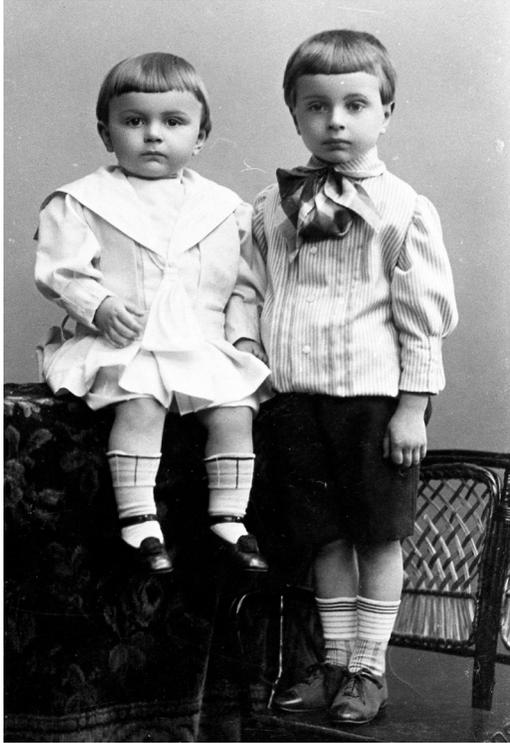
Baby picture of Yura Stavraki, Odessa. In those days, small boys were dressed in girl's clothing until they reached about age three.



Yura Stavraki 's name was later anglicized to "George Stavrakis" in Canada.

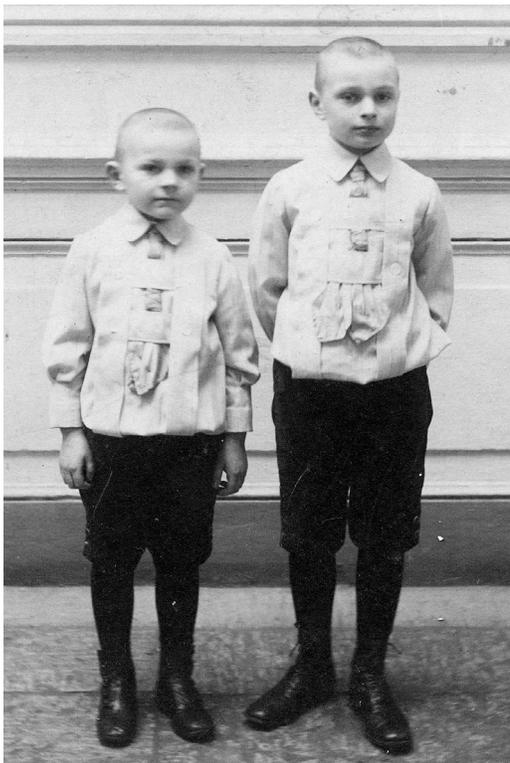


Shura Stavrakis. "Shura" is the nickname in Russian for Alexander, which is the name Shura used formally once he arrived in the US in 1946.



Yura and Shura Stavraki in Odessa. In this photo Shura is still young enough to wear a dress. He will have graduated to boys' clothing at around the age three or four. Some mothers even kept their boys' hair long, like a female's, until a certain age.

This same custom prevailed in Europe, and one of Peter's and Helen's friends, who emigrated to Denmark after the Revolution, sent pictures of her son in girls' clothing and long hair at about age 8. Upon receiving the photos, they remarked how odd this custom was in 1950s Europe.



Yura and Shura Stavraki with their heads shaved. It was customary in Ukraine and Russia in the past to shave children's heads to prevent or treat lice or infections. It was considered healthy for hair growth.

It was also common to dress siblings alike.



Shura emigrated to Athens with his parents in 1932 and married Melpomene Karadsas (Milya). They had one daughter, Irene, who was born in Athens.

In 1946 they emigrated to the US, settling in Upper Darby, PA, just outside Philadelphia. There, Shura got a job with RCA as an engineer until they all moved to California, where Irene and her family were established.

Yura managed to escape the emerging Soviet Union around 1923 to study on scholarship at McGill University in Canada. He married and never returned. His widowed mother, Olya Farimskaya, came to live with him in 1946. The two brothers had a falling out around that time and never spoke to each other again.

## Yura (George) Stavrakis

Yura finished Medical School in Odessa sometime before 1929 after studying under the eminent physician Filatov. According to archival records, sometime between 1926 and 1929, Yura made several requests for transcripts to be sent to Canada. His signature is on his graduation certificate, which is dated 1929, so he was still in Odessa on that date. The latest transcript he had sent to Canada is dated 1931, so he probably left for Canada in 1930 or 1931.

He was invited by the Rockefeller Foundation, received a scholarship to McGill University in Montreal, Canada, and completed his certification, probably for a specialty and a license.



Shura, top left, and Yura, top right, with a worried expression on his face. He arrived in Canada around 1923 to pursue medical studies at McGill University on a scholarship.

This photo was probably taken in 1917 or 1918 – a time of great tragedy for Ukraine. Yura’s expression anticipates his separation from his homeland and family. Even though he was reunited with his mother some 25 years later, his father died in Athens shortly after arriving there in 1932 and never saw his son again.

There, he met and married Madeleine, a French Canadian single mother whose son, Walter, Yura adopted. After Yura’s graduation from McGill, the family moved to London, Ontario, where he joined the medical faculty at the medical school at the university in London, Ontario.

Once he left Ukraine, he never saw his father again, who died between 1933 and probably 1935. In 1936 Yura received Canadian citizenship and went to visit his mother in Athens. Presumably, he had waited until he had a Canadian passport to travel outside of Canada.

A ship’s manifest at the Ellis Island Foundation shows Yura arriving in New York on 17 September 1936 on the *Prince of Savoie* from Naples, on his way home to Canada after having visited Athens. The record shows him living in Montreal for seven years prior to this voyage, and his occupation was listed as “doctor.”

Walter, his adopted son by his wife and her first husband, never had anything to do with the rest of the family, but he followed in Yura’s footsteps and became a prominent plastic surgeon in the UK.

Yura left Ukraine around 1930 on a scholarship to McGill University in Montreal, Canada. There he met and married a local Canadian woman, got citizenship in 1936, and went to teach and practice medicine at Western University's Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry.

This 1936 manifest lists him sailing from Naples, Italy, to New York in transit to Montreal. It is most likely that he had gone to visit his mother in Athens following his father's death, probably around 1935.

In 1946 his mother went to live with him in Canada. From later interactions, it was reported that while visiting Athens, he saw much of the antique furniture, silver, and other valuables brought from their family home in Odessa.

However, family stories tell that his brother, Shura, later sold all those valuables prior to his leaving Athens for the US, converted the proceeds to diamonds and failed to share them with his brother, claiming his brother's share had been lost. Yura never spoke to his brother again.

Secure | <https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org/show-manifest-big-image/czox0ToiMDA0ODc1NTM0XzAwOTASLmpwZy172>

No.	Name	Age	Sex	Occupation	Marital Status	Place of Birth	Country of Birth	Country of Origin	Country of Destination	Port of Origin	Port of Destination	Date of Arrival	Remarks
1	Ennio Maria	45	f	housew.	no	Italy	Italy	Italy	Italy	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 6th 1936	Italy, Bismecia
2	Rosario Maria	16	f	housew.	yes	Italy	Italy	Italy	Italy	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 6th 1936	Italy, Bismecia
3	Carosella di Anna Maria	46	m	wholtry	yes	Italy	Italy	Italy	Italy	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	Italy, Napoli
4	Margherita Del Monte Isabella	46	f	wholtry	yes	Italy	Italy	Italy	Italy	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	Italy, Napoli
5	Josephine	41	f	m	no	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	Italy, Napoli
6	Dagli Raposti	27	m	housew.	yes	Italy	Italy	Italy	Italy	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	Italy, Napoli
7	Vito	48	m	m	no	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	Italy, Napoli
8	Anna	34	f	housew.	yes	Italy	Italy	Italy	Italy	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	Italy, Napoli
9	Leidia	61	f	w	housew.	no	Italy	Italy	Italy	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	Italy, Napoli
10	Leidia	62	f	w	housew.	yes	Italy	Italy	Italy	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	Italy, Napoli
11	Angela	38	f	housew.	yes	Italy	Italy	Italy	Italy	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	Italy, Napoli
12	Carlo	34	m	Agent	yes	Italy	Italy	Italy	Italy	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	Italy, Napoli
13	Hugh George	35	m	Artist	yes	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	U.S.A., Detroit Mich.
14	Rita	33	f	civil	yes	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	U.S.A., Detroit Mich.
15	William	36	m	Artist	yes	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	U.S.A., Detroit Mich.
16	Wanda	34	f	civil	yes	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	U.S.A., Detroit Mich.
17	George Vladimir	31	m	doctor	yes	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	Canada, Montreal Que.
18	Maria	38	f	housew.	no	England	England	England	England	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	Italy, Singiati
19	Mary	21	f	housew.	yes	Italy	Italy	Italy	Italy	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	Italy, Singiati
20	Yvonne	61	f	w	housew.	no	Albania	Albania	Albania	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	Albania, Berat
21	Kostasos	34	f	housew.	yes	Albania	Albania	Albania	Albania	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	Albania, Korcha
22	Alfreda	9	f	m	no	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	Albania, Korcha
23	George	34	m	m	no	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	Albania, Korcha
24	Albina	25	f	housew.	yes	Albania	Albania	Albania	Albania	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	Albania, Korcha
25	Andrew J.	40	m	m	no	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	U.S.A.	Napoli	Napoli	Aug. 13th 1936	Albania, Korcha

Upon arrival in the US, Yura gave his address as 2935 St. Famille Avenue, Montreal, Canada. He was in transit and planned to spend only two days in the US. His Canadian passport was issued on 5 May 1936. So presumably, he had gone to Athens to visit his mother. In 1946 his mother came to live with him in Canada. By then he had moved to London, Ontario, and remained there teaching at the local university for the rest of his life.

Around 1962 I (Olga) and my brother Steven (Stilian) drove to Canada to visit Yura and Madeleine for about a week at their lake cottage on Timagami. Yura was physically fit and extremely careful about what he ate, especially avoiding green peppers, which he said were bad for the kidneys for reasons he did not elaborate.

He and his brother Shura were estranged, and for the rest of his life they never spoke. Toward the end of Shura's life, his daughter Irene begged her uncle to speak to her father before he died, but Yura refused. What caused the estrangement remains a mystery, but there was speculation that it was caused by Shura's refusal to share the proceeds of the sale of the family valuables in Athens.

### Shura (Alexander) Stavrakis

Shura left Odessa, probably in 1932 with his parents (Vladimir Emilianovich and Olya Farimskaya), and settled outside Athens, where he met and married Melpomene Karadsas. (It is possible they had met previously in Odessa as she also spoke some Russian). The two first set up house in Kallithea, and later, fearing bombing of urban areas during the Greek Civil War, they bought a small barren piece of farmland along Picrodaphne Road in rural Paleo Faliro and remained there without electricity or running water until October 1946 when they took a ship to the US. They had one child, Irene, born in 1941.

In January of 1946, Helen, Peter, their daughter Olga, and Helen's ailing grandmother arrived in Athens, and Shura convinced them to move in with them to take care of the "farm" once he and his family left for America. From then on, the lives of the two families intertwined for many years, although not always happily. We will pick up this part of the story Part 8: Exodus, which tells the story of our family adventures during and after WWII.

CHAPTER 5

**Ekaterina Emilianovna Stavraki (Shulgina?)**

**Stilian and Vladimir's Sister**

**(b. 11 April 1871, Odessa; d. unknown, after 1932)**

We don't know much about the older sister of Stilian and Vladimir. According to family legend, she was not very prudent with her choice of husbands or lovers and lost all her money to her men.

At one point, she was known to have lived in Crimea or the Caucasus with one of her partners. As well, someone mentioned she had three husbands or partners in her life.

The one name we have is that of her daughter, Shulgina, pictured in photo above and recognized by Lena Bernotas. No record of her beyond this photo exists, however.



The older sister of Stilian and Vladimir, Ekaterina Emilianovna was born on 11 April 1871 (OS). There was some talk that she was married or had partners at least three times and that she lost her money to her husbands or lovers.

Ekaterina Emilianovna, it was said, at some point moved "south" which seemed to refer to Crimea. A vague story told of her living there with a lover or husband and not being particularly frugal with her money.



Ekaterina Emilianovna had at least one daughter, Shulgina, who is in the photo above with Vladimir and his wife, presumably when they came to say goodbye before leaving for Athens.

By then she was a stout, middle-aged woman with dark circles under her eyes.



Ekaterina Emilianovna Stavraki.

Stilian before the Revolution, probably around 1890. Thus, ends the story of Peter's paternal family line.

# Appendices

## APPENDIX 1

### **Gerasimov Evangelevich Inglezi's application for a language tutor's license, Odessa 1835**

ДЕЛО О ДОМАШНИХ УЧИТЕЛЯХ И НАСТАВНИКАХ  
*FILE ABOUT HOME TEACHERS AND MENTORS*

Фонд 44, опись 1, дело 7  
*Fond 44, inventory 1, file 7*

1835 ГОД  
*1835 year*

Fond 44, inventory 1, file 7, page 22.

№. 206  
12 Февраля 1835 г.  
*February 12, 1835*

Его Превосходительству Г-ну  
Попечителю Одесского учебного  
округа

*To trustee of the Odessa school (education)  
district*

В следствие предписания Вашего Превосходительства от 20 декабря иностранец Инглези был подвергнут испытанию в общих, необходимых для начального обучения сведениях комитетом, которого протокол Правления имеет честь представить на благоусмотрения Вашего Превосходительства.

Подписал Директор Н. Синицын.

Верно: «Артым...»

*As a consequence of the prescription of Your Excellency of December 20, a foreigner Inglezi was put to the test (exam) in general, necessary for the initial training of information by the committee, which the Board's protocol has the honor to submit to your Excellency's review.*

*Signed by Director N. Sinityn.*

Fond 44, inventory 1, file 7, pages 26-27.

Министерство народного просвещения Правлению Ришельевского лицея  
*Ministry of National Education*

To Directorate of Richelieu Lyceum

Канцелярия Попечителя Одесского  
учебного округа  
*Office of the Trustee of the Odessa school*  
*(education) district*

26 Марта 1835 г.

*March 26, 1835*

No. 197

Правление Ришельевского лицея, представив мне, в донесениях 12 Декабря 1834 года (№ 2411) и 12 минувшего Февраля (№ 206) об испытании английско-подданного из Кефалонии, Герасима Инглези, и о выдаче ему диплома на звание домашнего учителя эллино-греческого и итальянского языках, приложило документы об нем.

Как в сих документах не достаает свидетельства о благонадежности Инглези от Российской местной Миссии, то, не позволяя себе выдать ему диплома на звание домашнего учителя, я представлял Г. Министру Народного Просвещения о сем, и как мне известно, что Инглези приглашен одним из здешних домов для обучения детей эллинскому языку, то я присовокуплял, не будет ли ему позволено заниматься обучением детей по крайней мере, в сем доме, пока он не получил свидетельства от Миссии.

Г-н Министр Народного Просвещения, изъявив согласие на дозволение Инглези, по уважению ручательства частных лиц в его благонадежности, заниматься временно обучением детей в том доме, в котором он призван, до получения от нашей Ионической Миссии требуемого параграфом 17 Высочайше утвержденного в 1-й день июля минувшего года Положения о домашних наставниках и учителях одобрительного свидетельства о его нравственности и образе мыслей, предписывает 13 текущего Марта (№ 3052) внушить ему, что без сего свидетельства он не может, по силе существующих узаконений, долгое время быть допускаем к отправлению обязанностей своего звания, а между тем истребовав о его поведении свидетельство от местного гражданского начальства, иметь за ним надлежащее наблюдение, как за человеком, мало еще известным Правительству со стороны нравственных своих качеств.

Предлагаю Правлению Ришельевского лицея о таком предписании Г. Министра, для объявления Г. Инглези в рассуждении требуемого от него свидетельства об нем от Российской Ионической Миссии, и для сношения с здешним гражданским начальством о свидетельстве, в оном упоминаемом.

Что касается до предписываемого наблюдения за Г. Инглези в рассуждении нравственных его качеств, то как домашние наставники и учителя, по дополнительным правилам об них 2 августа 1834 года, состоят под надзором Губернских директором училищ, так обязанность за людьми сего звания, прибывающими в Одессе, переходя к Директору Ришельевского лицея, относится и в настоящем случае к нему же.

Попечитель Н. Покровский

*The Directorate of the Richelieu Lyceum, presenting to me, in the reports of December 12, 1834 (No. 2411) and February 12 (No. 206) about the testing of an English citizen from Kefalonia, Gerasim Inglesi, and about issuing him a diploma for the title of home teacher of Ellenic-Greek and Italian languages, has attached documents about him.*

*As these documents lack a certificate about the reliability of Inglesi from the Russian local Mission, not allowing myself to give him a diploma for the title of home teacher, I represented G. to the Minister of National Enlightenment about this, and as I know Inglesi was invited by one of the local houses for teaching children Hellenic, I added that he would be allowed to teach children at least in this house until he received a certificate from the Mission, or not.*

*Mr. Minister of National Enlightenment, expressing his consent permit to work Inglesi, in respect of the guarantees of individuals in his trustworthiness, engage in the temporary training of children in the house in which he is called up until receipt certificate of our Ionian Mission that was approved in paragraph 1 the day of July of last year, the Regulations on Home Mentors and Teachers of an Approving Certificate of Morality and Way of Thought prescribes March 13 (No. 3052) to convince him that without this certificate he cannot, by the force of existing legal, for a long time to discharge the duties of his rank, and in the meantime, having demanded evidence of his behavior from the local civil authorities, to have him properly supervised, as a man little known to the Government about his moral qualities.*

*I inform the Board of the Richelieu Lyceum about the prescription of G. Minister. For inform G. Inglesi about requirement of the certificate from him about him from the Russian Ionian Mission, and of necessity for obtaining a certificate from the local civil authorities, about the aforementioned.*

*As to the prescribed observation of G. Inglesi in the discussion of his moral qualities, then as home tutors and teachers, according to additional rules about them on August 2, 1834, are supervised by the Provincial Director of the schools, so is the duty for people of this rank arriving in Odessa, referring to the Director of the Richelieu Lyceum, applies in the present case to him as well.*

Trustee N. Pokrovsky

Fond 44, inventory 1, file 7, page 37.

No. 620

В Одесскую Градскую Полицию

10 Апреля 1835 г.

To Odessa City Police

*April 10, 1835*

Г. Министр Народного Просвещения для решения дела о позволении английско-подданному уроженцу ионических островов Герасиму Инглези занимать должность домашнего наставника предписал истребовать от Одесского гражданского начальства свидетельство о поведении Инглези со времени прибытия его в Россию (с июля 1834 года), почему Правление Лицея покорнейше просит Полицию доставить оному таковое свидетельство в возможнейшей скорости. Подписал:

Директор Н. Синицын.

*Mr. The Minister of National Enlightenment, in resolving the case of allowing an English-citizen, a native of the Ionian Islands Gerasim Inglezi to hold the position of home tutor, ordered to issue a certificate of Inglezi's behavior from Odessa civil authorities since his arrival to Russia (since July 1834), that why the Directorate has humbly requested to The police to deliver the answer to him in the most possible speed.  
Signed by*

*Director N. Sinitsyn.*

Fond 44, inventory 1, file 7, pages 111-111 turn, 121.

No. 1505

Его Превосходительству Г-ну Попечителю  
Одесского учебного округа

16 Августа 1835 г.

*August 16, 1835*

To the Trustee of the Odessa school  
(education) district

В предписании Вашего Превосходительства от 26 Марта № 197 объявлено Правлению решение Г. Министра о дозволении английскому подданному Герасиму Инглези по уважении ручательства частных лиц в его благонадежности, заниматься временно обучением детей в том доме, в который он призван, до получения от нашей Ионической Миссии, требуемого параграфом 17 Высочайше утвержденного в 1 день июля 1834 года положения о домашних наставниках и учителях, ободрительного свидетельства о его нравственности и образе мыслей также об истребовании о его поведении свидетельства от местного гражданского начальства и о наблюдении за ним, как за человеком мало известным Правительству, со стороны нравственных качеств.

По объявлении о сем иностранцу Инглези и отношению с Одесскою градскою полициею, Инглези доставил свидетельство от сограждан его в Кефалонии м. Ливадо, объявляющим и удостоверяющим под присягою, что он Инглези самых лучших правил и во все время пребывания его в отечестве вел жизнь спокойную и нравственную, таковое свидетельство в подлинности подписей местными начальствами удостоверено Российским консулом в Китеру (или Кифру). Причем Инглези объявил, что как в месте родины его нет консула, то потому и нет возможности доставить свидетельство о нем от самого консула. От Полиции же досталено свидетельство в том, что Инглези со времени нахождения его в Одессе ведет себя честно, похвально как долг велел человеку, заслуживающему одобрения.

Таковые документы и наблюдения за Инглези достаточно удостоверяют о хорошей нравственности и добрых правилах Ингелези, и Правление находит его заслуживающим доверия правительства в поручении ему должности домашнего учителя; почему Правление имеет честь представить означенные же свидетельства на благоусмотрение Вашего Превосходительства и покорнейше просить начальнического распоряжения о выдаче Инглези свидетельства на исправление должности домашнего учителя.

Подписал: Директор Н. Сеницын

*In the prescription of March 26, No. 197.*

*The Directorate announced the decision regarding G. to the Minister on allowing the English citizen Gerasim Inglesi to temporarily train children in the house he was called to, before receiving a certificate from our Ionian Mission, as well as the need to receive a certificate of his behavior from the local civil authorities and monitoring him, as a person little known to the Government, from the side of moral qualities.*

*Inglesi delivered a testimony from his fellow citizen in Kefalonia from m. Livado, they declaring and certifying under oath that he Inglesi had the best rules and had a calm and moral life during his stay in the fatherland, this certificate was certified by the Russian consul in Kiteru (or Kifru). Moreover, Inglesi announced that, as in the place of his homeland there is no consul, then there is no possibility to deliver a certificate of it from the consul. From the Police, however, there is evidence that Inglesi has behaved honestly all the time that he has lived in Odessa.*

*Such documents and observations of Inglesi are sufficient evidence of good morality and good Inglesi rules, and the Directorate finds him trustworthy for the government in assigning him to the position of home teacher; the Directorate ask to issue a certificate to Inglesi granting a home teacher's position.*

Fond 44, inventory 1, file 7, pages 112-112 turn.

Министерство народного просвещения  
*Ministry of National Education*

Правлению Ришельевского лицея  
To Directorate of Richelieu Lyceum

Канцелярия Попечителя Одесского учебного округа  
*Office of the Trustee of the Odessa school (education)  
district*

17 Сентября 1835 г.  
*September 17, 1835*

*No. 520*

В следствие донесений Правления Ришельевского лицея 12-го Декабря 1834 (№ 2411), 12 Февраля и 16 Августа 1835 г. (№№ 206 и 1505) и на основании представленных от одного требуемых Высочайше утвержденным 1-го Июля 1834 Положением, удостоверительных свидетельств об Английско-подданном Инглези, препровождаю при сем свидетельство на позволение ему исправлять должность домашнего учителя, – для доставления ему оною.

Правление Ришельевского лицея не оставит взыскать с Инглези за сие свидетельство, на основании 60 параграфа вышеупомянутого положения, сорока рублей, и из них 3 рубля 40 копеек вычесть и обратить в свои экономические суммы за пергамент, по моему предложению 13 Июля (№ 402) 8 рублей заплатить здешней Городской Типографии за напечатание свидетельства, а остальные отослать, на основании препровожденного при моем предложении 21 Июня (№ 370) циркулярного предписания Г. Министра в Департамент Народного Просвещения.

Попечитель Н. Покровский

Приложенное при сем свидетельство на исправление должности домашнего учителя получил. Герасим Инглези

*In consequence of the reports of the Board of the Richelieu Lyceum on December 12, 1834 (No. 2411), on February 12, and on August 16, 1835 (No. 206 and 1505).*

*On the basis of the documents from the English partial Gerasim Inglesi, I send herewith a certificate of permission for him to hold the position of home teacher.*

*The Directorate of the Richelieu Lyceum must recover from Inglesi for this certificate, on the basis of paragraph 60 of the aforementioned provision, forty rubles, and also from them 3 rubles 40 kopecks into its economic sums for parchment, on my proposal July 13 (No. 402) and pay 8 rubles to the local printing house for printing the certificate, and send the rest to the Department of National Education.*

*Trustee N. Pokrovsky*

*Attached with this certificate for the hold of the position of home teacher received. Gerasim Inglesi*

Fond 44, inventory 1, file 7, page 116.

Взысканные с иностранца Инглези на основании 60 параграфа Положения 1-го Июля 1834 года за выданное свидетельство на исправление должности домашнего учителя, за вычетом 3 руб. 40 коп. на пергамент для патента и 3 руб. 40 коп. за напечатания оного в типографии, остальные двадцать восемь рублей шестьдесят копеек правление Ришельевского лицея препровождает при сем в Департамент Народного просвещения и покорнейше просит о получении таковых денег уведомить

Подписал: Директор Синицын

*The money that was charged to a foreigner Inglezi on the basis of paragraph 60 of the Regulations of the 1st of July 1834 for the issued certificate for the correction of the position of home teacher, minus 3 rubles 40 kopecks on parchment for a patent and 3 rubles. 40 kopecks for printing it in the printing house, the remaining twenty-eight rubles, sixty kopecks, the Directorate of the Richelieu Lyceum, sends to the Department of Public Education, and humbly requests about receiving that such money be notified*

*Signed by: Director Sinitsyn*