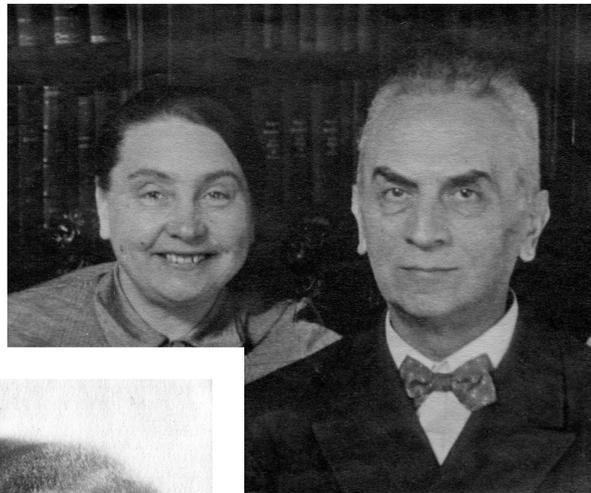


## Part Two

# Maternal Line of Pyotr Stilianovich Stavrakis



Vasily Ivanovich Lashkevich,  
grandfather of Peter Stavrakis.



Ekaterina with her  
husband, Stilian.



Peter Stavrakis with  
his mother, Ekaterina  
Vasilievna Farimskaya.

СВИДѢТ  
зу ЕГО ИМПЕРАТОРС  
во изъ Кіевской Духовно  
і приложеніемъ казенной  
Старо-Кіевской  
7, состоитъ ст  
ась Ноября  
всоть восемь  
Марта мес  
отъ восемьде  
перина. Род  
ружии, Кронш  
Григорій Урод  
онная жена е  
православные.  
при Кіевской  
імя... Конс



## INTRODUCTION



Peter, Nina, and Olga Stavraki  
(left to right).

Peter's mother was the youngest of six children born into a large, prosperous land-owning family, whose unauthorized marriage resulted in her using two or three different names throughout her life. Her father's name was Vasily Lashkevich, but he and his wife, Olga Farimskaya, came from different classes that were forbidden to marry, so the children were considered illegitimate and not permitted to use their father's name or patronymic. In later years, Vasily's eldest son (and possibly the second son as well) was legitimized by the tsar's conciliar for inheritance purposes, but the four girls did not receive this privilege. Thus, our grandmother was called Ekaterina Gregorievna Farimskaya, after her maternal grandfather and not Ekaterina Vasilievna Lashkevich as would have been the custom. After the Revolution when social classes were abolished and she was married, she used Ekaterina Vasilievna Stavraki or Ekaterina Gregorievna Stavraki and occasionally her father's surname of Lashkevich. During WWII as a refugee in Germany and afterward living in Canada, she used her husband's surname of Stavraki.



Peter's mother, Ekaterina Farimskaya, the youngest child of Vasily Lashkevich and Olga Farimskaya. He was a wealthy landowner, and she was of a lower merchant class. The classes were not permitted to intermarry, so their marriage was considered illegitimate. For this reason, before the Revolution, the children were obliged to use their mother's surname and their maternal grandfather's name for a patronymic.



Lashkevich family portrait circa 1898, when our grandmother was about 17. Left to right sitting: Dmitry Stein, Elizaveta, Vasily Lashkevich, Ekaterina (our grandmother), Olga Farimskaya (the elder), the wife of Alexander, and Alexander; standing left to right: Anna, Vasily Dobrolyubov, the wife of Vsevolod, Vsevolod, Olga (the younger), and Alexander (the heir).

We know very little about this family line because the Soviets criminalized the landowners, so it was safer to blot out all family history and even destroy traces of their existence. The Soviets would have preferred to simply annihilate the living souls totally, but that was not realistically possible at the time, so they implemented a program of persecution that selectively victimized the most vulnerable. The objective was to punish the descendants of the landowning classes retroactively for the privileges enjoyed by their predecessors. This particularly affected women and children who remained behind when the men left to fight for the tsar around 1918.

As time went on this victimization increased until, eventually, just to speak of one's ancestors became a severely punishable crime in the Soviet Union. One never knew when an ancestor, and eventually any family member from any class, would be criminalized. Neighbors were paid by the new regime to spy on neighbors and report suspected secret sympathizers of the old regime or supporters of "counter revolutionary" activity. Informants were rewarded with small favors, such as bits of extra food, bread, used clothing, or slightly larger accommodations.

Safety lay in silence, and growing up, Peter was carefully sheltered from the past. What little he knew of his mother's family and the life of his grandparents, he never talked about. He was aware that he came from a large close-knit family, but many of his relations had fled the country during or after the Revolution and were therefore dangerous to mention. Included here is all that we were able to glean from the carefully filtered memories of a violent past, although in the future the archives may yield more secrets.

Change always came slowly in the Russian Empire. It was a conservative society, maintained by strict controls of church and state forces that reinforced traditional social structures and repelled new ideas. Peter's parents and grandparents lived all or most of their lives under the tsar in a society where they ranked near the top of the social scale. Their lives were orderly, prosperous, and predictable. They had security through service to the empire and received the blessings of the church. They owned land, which brought them a comfortable income, and enjoyed a number of class privileges. Their children were born into an orderly and highly structured society, anticipating to continue living as their parents before them.

This conservatism was built into the fabric of the empire and had nothing to do with Slavic culture. The ruling family was German, and they held on to old Russian traditions more tenaciously than even the German royals of England did, for it benefited them and brought them enormous wealth. But new ideas and desires did creep in and ultimately became impossible to stamp out. The inequity and misery became too obvious to ignore. When change came to Russia, it was sudden, abrupt, and violent.

Within five years after 1917 the empire was gone, and the Soviet Union had emerged. At this time, the Lashkeviches lost everything. Their world disintegrated. Their wealth and status evaporated. Their families disintegrated. The men of the family joined the White Army, fled the country, or died. Some, like our grandmother's younger brother, Vsevolod, vanished, never to be heard from again. Some escaped to neighboring countries. Mostly it was the women and children who were left behind. Our grandparents, those once-privileged descendants of a proud landowner were now condemned to lives of poverty, fear, and homelessness. The lives they had foreseen as children had ceased to exist.



Vandalism in the Winter Palace in December during the Revolution. Painting by Ivan Alekseevich Vladimirov (1869-1947), a Russian painter and draftsman, who worked in the realistic style.

This painting depicts the anger that characterized the attitudes of the lower classes against those who had enjoyed privilege. (Photo credit: <https://russiatrek.org/blog/society/russia-in-1917-1919-the-paintings-of-ivan-vladimirov/>)

To control the population and quell any efforts at resistance, the fledgling Soviet state created brutal mechanisms of control using fear, terror, and oppression as tools. Citizens were paid to report on neighbors. Trust was destroyed and the social fabric came apart. Police monitored every aspect of life, and the state kept a firm hand not only on what people did but also on what people thought. Information was censored. The Iron Curtain had been drawn around the Soviet Union.

For protection, it was prudent to lie low and remain as invisible as possible. Photos, letters, and family records were destroyed. It was safer to forget the past, for policy could change any day, and someone in the past would retroactively be deemed a criminal. The survivors coped, some better than others, but all were damaged souls, like doomed characters straight out of an old, Russian tragic novel.

The extent to which Peter's remaining maternal relatives were persecuted and targeted for annihilation is poignantly illustrated in the story of the short and tragic life of Peter's maternal nephew Andrei (Andryusha, son of his first cousin Tatiana Dobrolyubova), who was descended from landed nobility on both his mother's and his father's side. Andryusha's life demonstrates how the state mechanisms of terror functioned and developed over time. The story is presented in Chapter 3 of this part.

Of the six Lashkevich children, those who stood to inherit lands or had married into noble families suffered most. Our grandmother and her sister, Olga, fared better than their siblings because they married down the social scale. Their husbands, two Greek brothers of the merchant class were highly regarded physicians, which gave them a measure of protection within the new Soviet state when other members of the professional classes were being decimated. Even the Soviets came to realize that it may be prudent to leave a few physicians alive.

During the years of Revolution and the chaotic period that followed, the family fragmented. Until about 1928 those who had not fought in the White Army and who could prove foreign citizenship were permitted to emigrate. Our father's Aunt Elizaveta left in this way with her Czech husband. Around that same year, our father's Odessa cousin, Yura Stavraki, went on scholarship to Canada and never returned. A few years later, the whole Odessa Stavraki family claimed their Greek citizenship, packed up, and emigrated to Athens. Those who remained tried to minimize contact with each other so as not to draw attention to themselves.

In 1943 our family also left Kiev. Once in the US, our father tried to reestablish contact with other family members who had managed to escape the Soviet Union. Upon disembarking from the *Nea Hellas* in Hoboken on 22 April 1950, we were met by our father's two cousins, one of whom, Vladimir Lashkevich, our father was seeing for the first time in his life. Vladimir, who was 16 years his senior, had left Ukraine around 1919 and yet, here he was, anxious to meet his blood relation. Peter also went on to reestablish links with the sons of Olga and Vladimir Stavakis, who had moved to Athens in 1932 and now resided with his cousin and sister in Canada.

In the long run the effort to unite proved unsuccessful as only a thin fabric of relationships remained, and in the new world, the old threads that wove people together proved too fragile to rebuild. Their lives no longer lie among familiar streets, the family language, and the warm world of one's ancestors and childhood. For us, the next generation, it was even harder. Our relatives were scattered all over the world. The ties were too insubstantial to endure and most melted away in time. We did not even have memories to bring us together.

In the end, all we had left of our father's family were the photographs that we publish here and a few recollections. We grew up knowing almost nothing of our paternal family. Contact with family members behind the Iron Curtain became dangerous and considered subversive. And indeed, one time a Moscow cousin of ours was denied permission to accompany a team of Soviet geologists for a research trip to Libya because he had relatives in the West. We in the US also never felt totally free of the eyes of the state or of nosy neighbors. Whenever we had discussions that turned political, our mother always closed all the windows.

Shura and Yura Stavrakis, our father's cousins, also took precautions. Shura drove all over the US with his family, ostensibly to see the parks and natural wonders, but underneath, he felt safer when he was on the road. His brother was afraid to speak Russian in public, which amused Olga and our brother during a visit to Canada, since his English remained heavily accented and obviously Russian.

Over the years we collected and recorded many family stories in hopes of one day organizing them into a coherent record of the past to pass on to our children. This project began as an annotated photo album interspersed with somewhat disconnected recollections and interviews. And then we came upon a unique and previously overlooked photo. At first it looked like just another group of unknown ancestors and friends posing in a big room sometime just before the Revolution. At first there was nothing distinctive about the photo. If our father had ever described the event it depicted, we had not paid attention. In any case, the photo was taken before he was born. It was just another grouping of unrecognizable faces lost in time.

After his death, we set about organizing the photos, and taking this one out of its plastic sleeve, we discovered that, on the back, someone had carefully identified every single individual. With the help of our Russian friend Victoria Sermiagina, we were able to transcribe the names. This information opened up a whole new window into the life of our family on the eve of the Revolution and made it possible to weave together many of the stories we had previously collected.

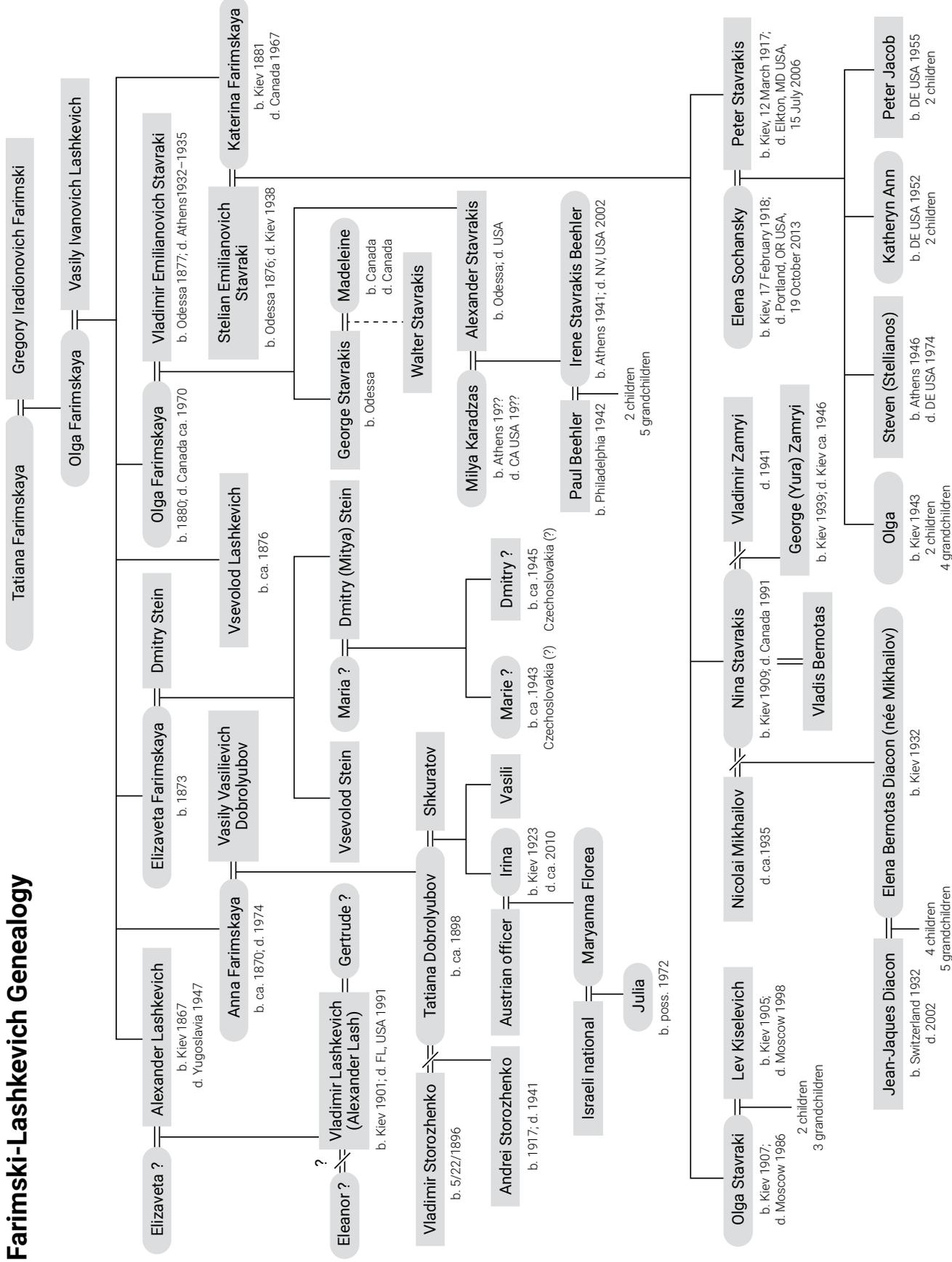
The photo was taken at the wedding of our father's socially prominent first cousin Tatiana Dobrolyubova to Vladimir Andreevich Storozhenko, sometime around 1916. A year later, the year of our father's birth, Tatiana (known henceforth by her nickname "Tanya") also gave birth to a boy, Andryusha, who grew up as Peter's closest friend. The moving and tragic story of his short life is told later in this part and demonstrates the suffering that befell even the innocent after the Revolution. It is just one of the stories we were able to rescue from the silence of the past.



1. ? гойтор  
 2. Е. В. Сиваджа  
 3. Та Александров  
 4. Пырков  
 5. М. Пырков  
 6. Зина  
 7. Надежда Александровна Дюк  
 8. А. В. Сиваджа 9) & 10) Еван Георгий Уманец 11) Вера Касп. Уманец  
 С. Сиваджа 12) Маврико 13) Катерина Александровна 14) Еван Мух. Кабунас 15) Н. В. Сиваджа  
 16) мр. Кабунас 17) В. В. Уманец 18) Белл Бакара  
 (Уманец 19) 19) Еван Вера Уманец 20) Вера Сиваджа 21) Вера Касп.  
 Сиваджа 22) А. В. Сиваджа 23) Олга Мавриковна 24) Надежда Козун-  
 че 25) Алена Вера Уманец 26) Вера В. Сиваджа  
 Вера 27) В. Пырков 28) Надежда Александровна

Photo of wedding of Tatiana Dobrolyubova, Peter's first cousin, to Vladimir Storozhenko somewhere near Kiev, about a year before the Revolution. Peter's mother is on the left. The groom identified all the guests on the back. A larger, labelled version with the transcribed names can be found on pages 40 and 41.

# Farimski-Lashkevich Genealogy



## CHAPTER 1

### Vasily Lashkevich and Olga Farimskaya

Peter's mother, Ekaterina, was the youngest of six children in a family with two boys and four girls born to Vasily Lashkevich and Olga Gregorievna Farimskaya in 1882. They were wealthy landowners with estates somewhere outside of Kiev and also in Yugoslavia. Vasily and Olga probably married around 1865, for their children were born between about 1867 and 1881.

What little we do know of Olga Gregorievna Farimskaya comes from the birth and baptismal records saved by her granddaughter, Lyena Bernotas, where we found the only mention of Olga Gregorievna's parents and home.

Born on Kotlin Island off St. Petersburg, Olga Gregorievna Farimskaya belonged to the lower merchant class. She married Vasily Lashkevich around 1865, but it is a mystery as to how they met, for they belonged to totally different social circles.

She bore at least six children by her husband, with our grandmother being the last in 1882.



As was the custom of the day, Olga Farimskaya was probably 18 to 20 years old when she married, putting her birth date sometime between 1842 and 1847. From the photographs it appears she and Vasily were close in age. It seems they died before the Revolution, and neither is present on the photo of Tatiana's wedding.

Their marriage was a matter of controversy, for they belonged to different classes, which were not permitted to intermarry. Thus the children were considered illegitimate. Apparently, the church did not accept such restrictions, for Olga and Vasily did marry, and he then petitioned the tsar's conciliar to sanction the union.

Before the Revolution, Russian society was highly stratified with strictly defined classes enshrined into law called the Table of Ranks originally established in 1722 by Peter the Great. Property and vocation defined each rank with corresponding responsibilities and rights. The classes functioned much like a caste system in that

they defined family occupational roles and social status and regulated the transfer of hereditary property. Marriage across classes was forbidden. It differed from the caste system in that one could advance up the social ladder, but such advancement had to be earned by service to the tsar or by accumulation of additional wealth. For the gentry, advancement was possible through direct service in the tsar's household or the military for specified periods of time, a concept we return to later in our story of Andryusha.



Vasily Ivanovich Lashkevich, maternal grandfather of Peter Stavrakis. On the back the date is given as 1885 in handwritten ink. We know almost nothing of his origins and life. He was a landowner, or *Pomeschik*, with some estates in Ukraine and also in Yugoslavia.

He married Olga Farimskaya from St. Petersburg around 1865, but because she was of a lower merchant class, the marriage was never fully approved, and the female children were not legitimized. Thus, our grandmother, Ekaterina, and her sisters used their mothers paternal surname and patronymic.



Table of Ranks: In old Russia every citizen (excluding serfs who were not citizens) was born into a defined class, determined by family property and vocation. The law was clearly spelled out in the Table of Ranks established in 1722 by Peter the Great and strictly enforced in subsequent years. (Photo credit: Wikipedia)

Генералы	Генералы	Адмиралы	
	Штабс-офицеры	Воеводы	Обер-офицеры
Мажоры	Обер-офицеры	Штабс-офицеры	Обер-офицеры
Полковники	Генералы	Коллежские регистраторы	Обер-офицеры
Мажоры	Полковники	Коллежские регистраторы	Обер-офицеры

Ekaterina’s paternal origins beyond her father remain unknown. Vasily belonged to the *Pomeschik* class (landed gentry), who controlled property and made their wealth from rent and agricultural production. Etymologically, the name “Lashkevich” seems to be of Polish or at least of western origin, and we know they had hereditary estates. We do not know where these estates were located, but from the early 16th century the Polish Lithuanian hegemony stretched across Ukraine, including Kiev and the lands east of Dnieper.

In the past, the Poles controlled giant fiefdoms that eventually splintered, although some landowners were able to hold on to the choicest pieces through subsequent generations. These families eventually “Russified,” and by the early 19th century their descendants made up a large proportion of the wealthy landowning class of Ukraine. It is likely that the Lashkeviches also descended from such landowners.

Olga Gregorievna had much more humble origins and belonged to the *Meschane* social class that, in Russia, ranked well below the landowners and wealthy merchants. In the west this class was generally equated with the “petite bourgeoisie.” They were small business owners with assets of at least 500 rubles.

These two classes were not permitted to intermarry. It is likely that the church did not adhere to state rules for marry they did even though the union was not considered legitimate in legal terms. Vasily then submitted a petition to the tsar’s conciliar for official approval. This was an office established specifically to maintain social order and keep the classes’ distinctions in line. It took many years for the petition to work its way through the famously Byzantine imperial bureaucracy. When the decision arrived, it granted limited legitimacy to all the children (or so it appeared), but the use of the father’s surname was only

permitted for the heir, Alexander, and possibly also to his brother, Vsevolod. Olga Gregorievna and her daughters were to retain her father's surname of Farimski, in the Russian feminine as "Farimskaya," and to use their maternal grandfather's patronymic.

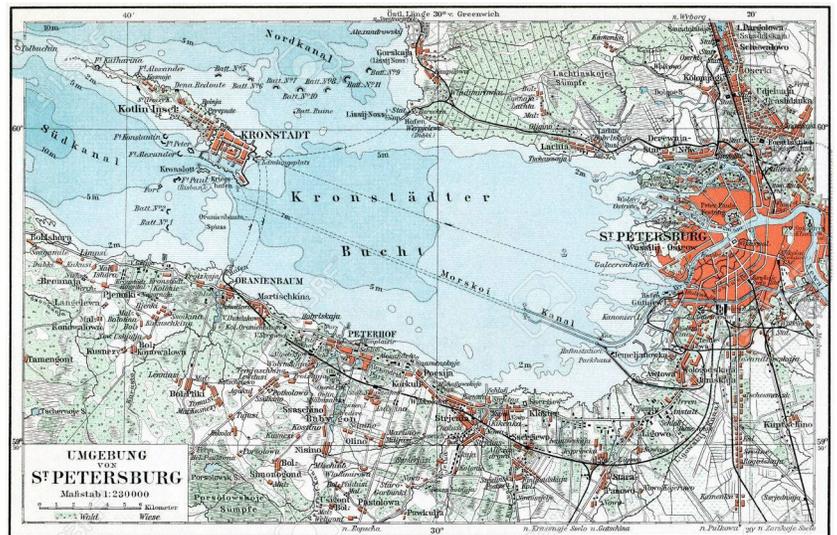
After the Revolution, classes, inheritance, and illegitimacy were abolished, so people could use whatever names they wanted. Thus, on some records our grandmother continued to use her mother's name, and on others she used her father's or husband's name. During the WWII she switched to her husband's surname, which was safer in Germany and more in line with the local custom in Canada. Her sister, Olga, continued to use her mother's name and her grandfather's patronymic in the title to her house in Kiev and in unrelated baptismal records. She also switched to her husband's name in Canada and probably also in Greece.

Based on the people who attended Tatiana's wedding, the family moved in a prestigious circle, so the stigma of illegitimacy could not have been great. Among the guests depicted we see members of at least three prominent families: the Dobrolyubovs, the Storozhenkos, and the Ilyashenkos (see photo of Tanya's wedding below).

We do not know how Vasily and Olga met, for they did not move in the same social circles at all. Further, they lived in totally different regions of the empire. Vasily was based in Ukraine, and Olga grew up on Kotlin Island in the Bay of Finland just outside of St. Petersburg. In our grandmother's baptismal document, her mother is listed as having come from "Kronstadt," which is actually a fortress on Kotlin Island and part of the city of St. Petersburg ("Petrograd" as it was called at the time of her birth).

In the Russian Empire, the upper classes were closely bound to imperial service, both military and civilian, and the Lashkevich family was no exception. Most of the men served in the tsar's military forces as officers and performed court duties. Only those of a specified social rank were permitted to serve in various duties at court, but the service often led to advancement up the social scale and to increased privileges. In the photo of Tanya's wedding, many of the young men are wearing imperial uniforms, indicating that they were, at that time, in the service of the tsar.

We do not see either Vasily or Olga on this photo, so presumably they had died before.



Peter's maternal grandmother, Olga Farimskaya, was from Kronstadt, a fortress on Kotlin Island, pictured here in 1706. It was a small, fortified settlement on Kotlin Island in the Bay of Finland, which was taken from the Swedes in 1703 to protect the new city of St. Petersburg and settled by decree.

Today it is connected to both the north and the south mainland by highways. In the 1850s, it must have been an isolated settlement, so how Olga and Vasily met remains a mystery. (Photo credit: Wikipedia)

In 1917 the tsar was executed, but the fight for the empire and the peoples' way of life had just begun. Over the next year most of the young, upper-class men joined the White Army and kept up fierce resistance until their ultimate defeat in 1922. Reprisals against them were so severe and brutal that those who survived the battlefield fled Russia, never to return. This included the old man's heir, Alexander Lashkevich, and his son (Vladimir – later known as Alexander Lash in the US), who both ended up in Yugoslavia. His younger brother, Vsevolod, disappeared.

In most cases, the women and children were left behind without money, housing, family, or means of support. They were ill-prepared for the new social order where everyone was expected to work, as they had no practical or marketable skills. In many cases the younger women were forced into re-education centers to acquire new skills while others were simply assigned to factory jobs; the older women were left destitute. The Soviet society neither wanted these upper-class women nor did it let them leave, so they found themselves trapped in a land that reviled and punished them for their previous lifestyle.

The beautiful Tatiana, Peter's cousin, ended up working in a ceramic factory while her mother-in-law, Maria Patrikeevna, huddled in a small, unheated room, dependent upon the charity of other family members. In 1917 the year of Peter's birth, Tanya had given birth to her first child, Andrei Storozhenko, and left him with Maria. Peter's mother took him under her wing as much as possible, and he and Peter grew up as close friends and brothers.

Ekaterina and Olga, the two youngest Farimski-Lashkevich sisters, fared better than the more affluent siblings of the family, for they both married Greek physicians (who were brothers) with excellent professional credentials and from the merchant class. When the Revolution came, these two families found themselves in a relatively advantageous position, for while the new Soviet state persecuted and executed the upper classes, it needed skilled professionals. Doctors were in especially high demand and, therefore, fared better than those on the higher end of social scale.

Thus it was that our father, Peter, grew up in somewhat better circumstances than others of his generation, and he actually considered himself "well off." He always had fond and happy memories of his childhood. After his father's death in 1938, things changed, and the family was targeted for harassment, but WWII started and the internal terrorism was replaced by the bigger external catastrophe of Nazi occupation. The powers in charge decided that the young people were more useful sent to the front instead of prison.

In the end, the descendants of Katerina and Olga and their Greek husbands proliferated and remain flourishing to this day.

## CHAPTER 2

# The Children of Vasily and Olga Lashkevich

### Ekaterina Farimskaya, Our Grandmother

We start the story with the youngest of their children, our grandmother; skip to the oldest son and heir; and then describe what little we know of the other children.

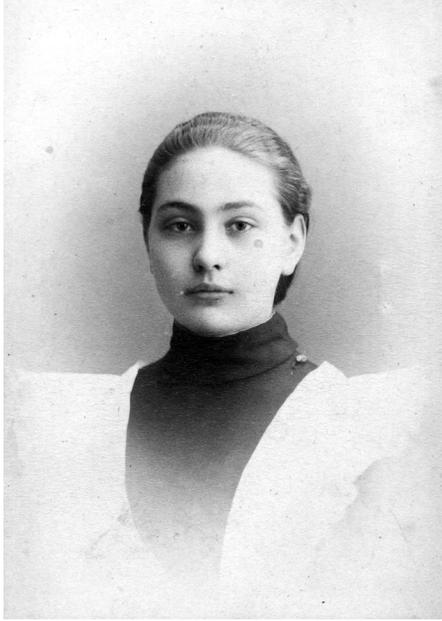
Among the papers saved by Lyena Bernotas, Ekaterina's granddaughter by her daughter Nina, we found a baptismal certificate for our grandmother Ekaterina. It was translated from the original Russian by the "Allied Military Government" in 1946 and probably served in place of a lost birth certificate after the war when she was getting her documents to emigrate to Canada.

According to this certificate, Ekaterina Farimskaya (Peter's mother) was baptized in 1882. It goes on to say that her mother, Olga Gregorievna, (spelling as on the paperwork) "...is the daughter of Gregory Iradionovich Farimski and Tatiana Gregorievna, citizens of Kronstadt, St. Petersburg, Russia." The godparents were: "Alexander Konstantinovich Jarovoi, Forester of the Kiev Office of Imperial Estates" and "Filomena Franzevna Kravtsova, wife of a nobleman." The clergyman officiating was Vasily Ptizin. The document's original issue date was on 2 August 1896.



Peter Stavrakis with his mother Ekaterina Vasilievna Farimskaya. Photo appears to be taken in Crimea on a summer trip. The family rented cottages in Crimea and often traveled to Suxum and the Caucasus during summers.

There they met up with the other Stavrakis family from Odessa, and the children spent their summers growing up together.



Ekaterina Farimskaya, mother of Peter Stavakis and our grandmother. She was the last child of six born to Vasily Ivanovich Lashkevich and Olga Gregorievna Farimskaya in 1882.



Alexander Vasilievich Lashkevich and his wife (possibly Elizaveta?), the oldest son and heir whom the tsar's conciliar legitimized.

ПАСПОРТ № 29  
14 1933 г.

# СВИДѢТЕЛЬСТВО.

По указу ЕГО ИМПЕРАТОРСКАГО ВЕЛИЧЕСТВА, дано сіе свидѣтельство изъ Кіевской Духовной Консисторіи за надлежащимъ подписаниемъ и приложеніемъ казенной печати въ томъ, что по метрической книгѣ *Старо-Кіевской Вознесенской церкви, подъ № 57, состоитъ статья записанного такъ: родилась Надежда шестидесятого тысяча восьмисотъ восемьдесятъ перваго года, а крещена Марта шестидесятого тысяча восьмисотъ восемьдесятъ втораго года во имя Екатерины. Родители: С.-Петербургской губернии, Кронштадтскій мѣщанинъ Григорій Иродіоновъ Фарыискій и законная жена его Матіана Григорьева, оба православные. Воспитанники: именитый при Кіевской Удѣльной Конторѣ Александръ Константиновичъ Яровой и жена его Яковлевна Григорьевна Яровой Кравцова. Таинство крещенія совершилъ священникъ Василій Птицынъ съ приобщеніемъ. Церковный сборъ отпущенъ.*

№ 10000

Августа 2 дня 1896 года.

Членъ Консисторіи *Транзиціи П. Крауценскаго*



Секретарь *С. С. Сидоровъ*

к

Столоначальникъ *И. Н. Никольскій*

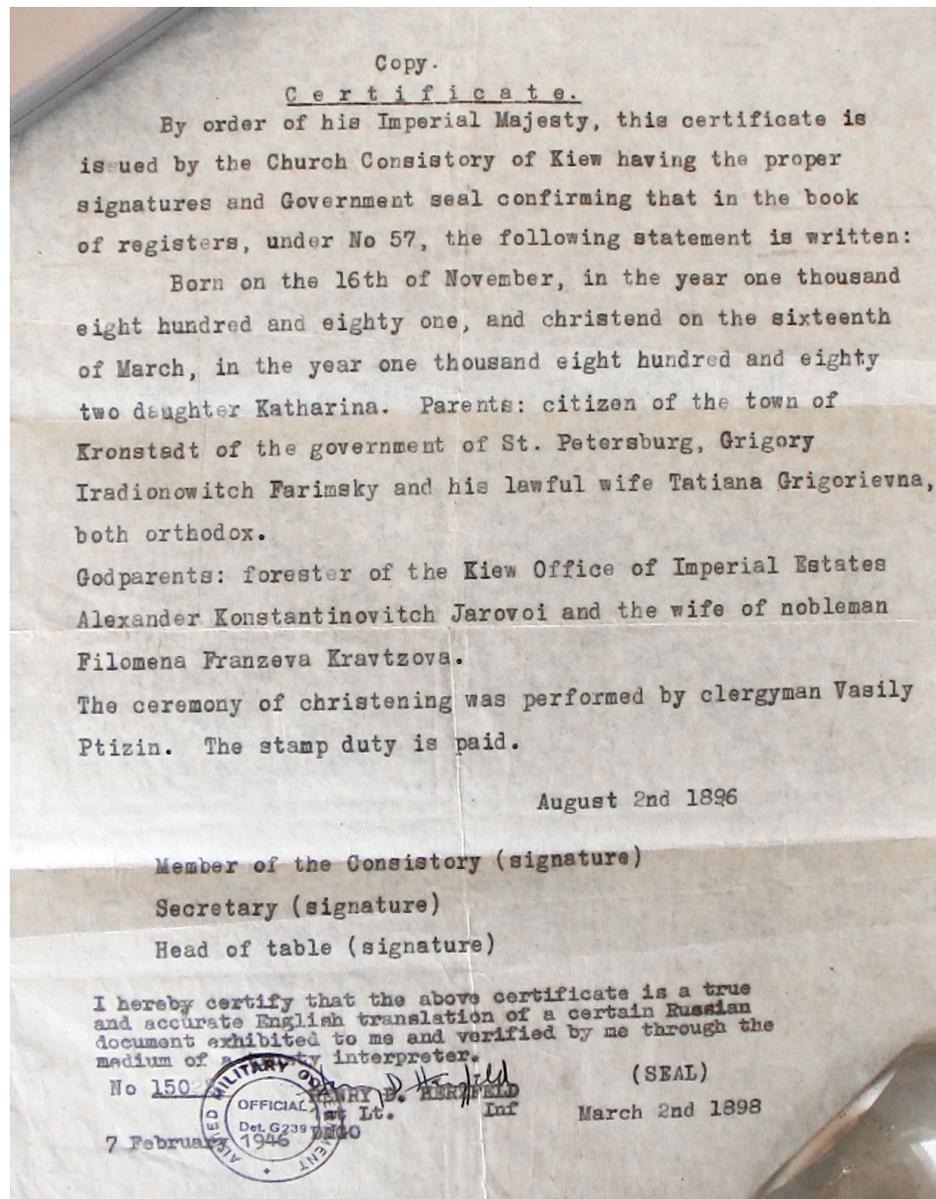


*2 Августа 1896 г.*

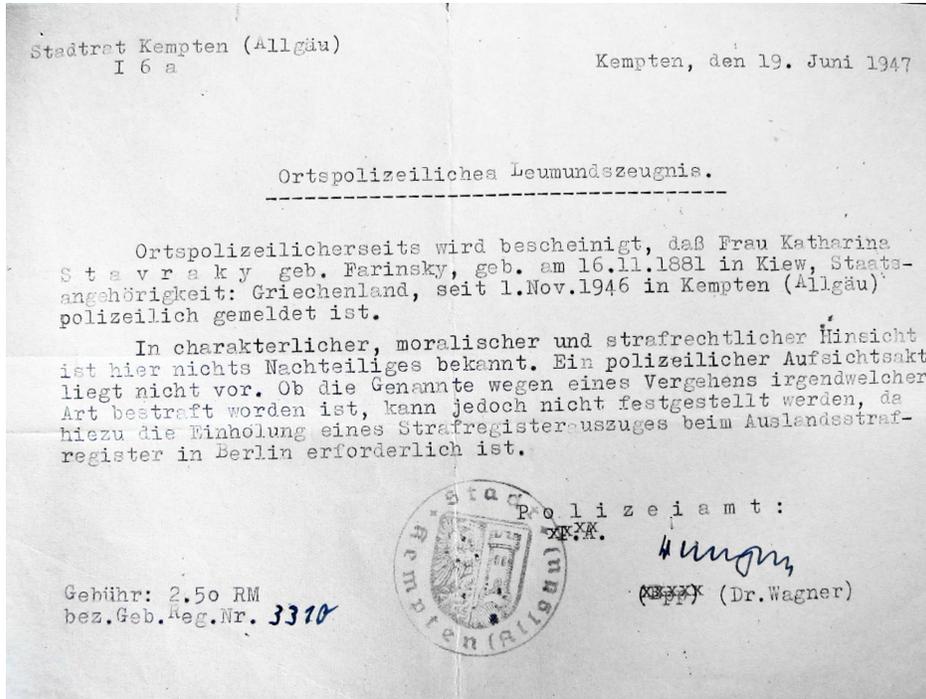
The top says "passport" and documents the birth of Ekaterina Farimskaya, listing her grandparents. It appears to be a prerevolutionary copy reissued in 1933. This may have been a document giving her permission to travel to Czechoslovakia to visit her sister, Elizaveta, although that visit seems to have occurred before the Iron Curtain in 1928.

The certificate documents the baptism of Katerina Farimskaya (Peter's mother) in 1882. It lists her parents and is the only recorded reference to her grandparents of Kronstadt, St. Petersburg.

Issued to her mother, Olga Gregorievna Farimskaya, it states that her parents, Gregory (sic) Iradionovich Farimski and Tatiana Gregorievna (sic), were citizens of Kronstadt, St. Petersburg, Russia. That makes them Peter's great grandparents, whom he never met.



Another document, the German police certification, dated 19 June 1947, states that Ekaterina has no criminal record and is of good moral character. It is interesting that Ekaterina is identified here as a Greek citizen, born with the surname "Farimski" (sic).



A German document certifying that Katerina Stavrakis had no arrests and was of good moral character. Issued in 1947 in connection with the visa application to Canada.

Greece was allied with Nazi Germany, so it was probably safer for Ekaterina to take her husband's citizenship. This also followed custom, as Greeks maintained citizenship through the male line for centuries.

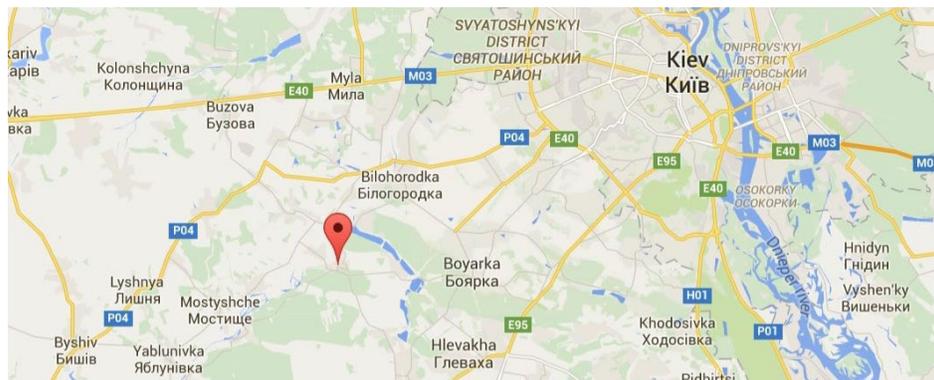


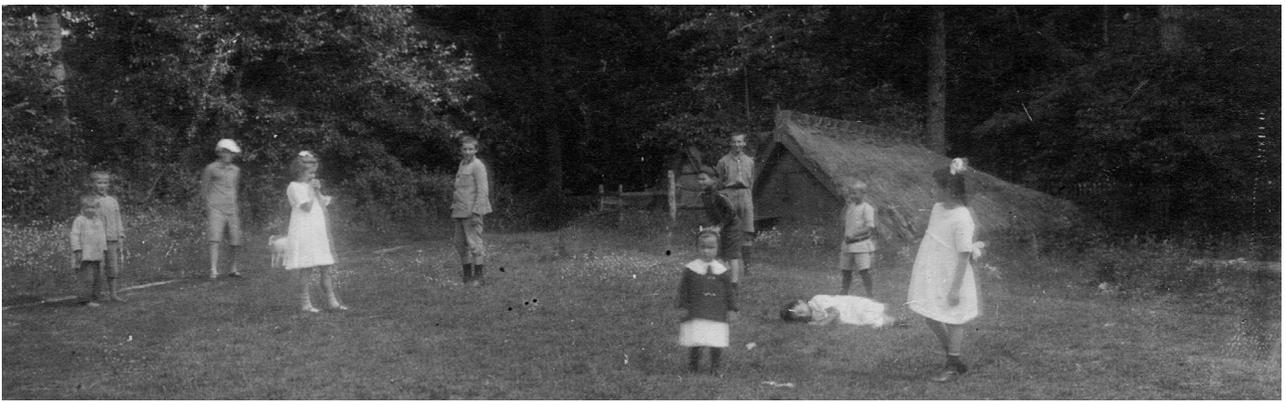
Probably taken around 1900 at a country estate. Ekaterina is second from left on the steps. On the chairs, left to right, are possibly Anna or Elizaveta, Vasily (with the cane), Olga (the younger), and Olga (the matriarch), and the man on the far right is unknown but could be the eldest son. Behind Olga the younger, stands her husband (or suitor) Vladimir Stavraki. The portly man behind Ekaterina on the very top looks a bit like Stilian Stavraki, although he is partly balding which Stilian was not. The others remain unidentified.

Our grandmother grew up in relative wealth and comfort. She was not well-educated and had little interest in books and ideas, and servants took care of her daily needs, so she did not learn to cook, clean, keep house, or tend to domestic affairs. She was also uninterested and incapable of taking on domestic duties, so after her marriage, her husband Stilian hired servants, which after the revolution became a rare privilege and eventually made the family a target of jealousy and complaints.

Growing up, however, the family was well taken care of and had the luxury of a summer estate, or *dacha*, at Zhornovka. Peter knew of the estate, but by the time of his birth it had been nationalized.

Google map showing the present day location of Zhornovka. The exact location of the *dacha* is unknown (Google Earth)





Before the Revolution, the Lashkevich family had a summer estate or *dacha* at Zhornovka, 42 miles southwest of Kiev, where these photos were taken around 1910.

Many wealthy and distinguished families preferred this location for their summer homes because it did not require crossing the river and was covered with lush forests. Peter thought he recognized his cousin Volodya Lashkevich in one, his sister Olga, and possibly Nina, although it is difficult to see details.



Alexander Lashkevich, the oldest son and heir of Vasily Lashkevich and Olga Farimskaya and uncle to Peter Stavrakis. He was granted legitimacy by the tsar's conciliar but fell victim to the Bolsheviks after the Revolution, escaping to Yugoslavia where he had estates.

What became of his wife is unknown. They had one son, Vladimir, born in 1901, who joined his father in Yugoslavia and sailed to the US in 1923, where he met his cousin, Peter Stavrakis, for the first time.



## Alexander Lashkevich, the Heir

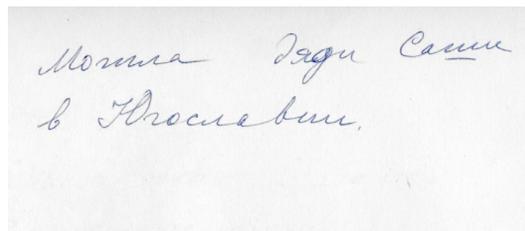
Alexander, the oldest son of Vasily and Olga, was born in 1867, and being the eldest male, inherited the lands and title. He had a son, Vladimir Lashkevich, born 10 August 1901. No other children were ever listed or are shown in any photograph, and we never heard mention of any other siblings. On various internet sites the date of Vladimir's birth date is given as wildly different years, but we feel the accurate date is that which appears on the ship's manifest and is consistent with his social security record.

Alexander's wife may have been named "Elizaveta" (according to Lyena Bernotas' recollection). We do not know anything about her. During or after the Revolution, Alexander moved to Yugoslavia where it appears he owned at least one estate and died at one of them in 1947.

Sometime before 1923, probably after the defeat of the White Army, his son Volodya joined his father in Yugoslavia, but in 1923 he sailed to the US from Subetitz, Yugoslavia (referred to as "Serbia" on the ship's manifest), settling in New York where he remained in the US until his death in Florida on 19 August 1995. According to the records at the Ellis Island Foundation, he was 22 years old when he arrived in New York alone.

Peter met his cousin for the first time in the US twenty eight years later, in 1950, when our family also arrived in New York on the *Nea Hellas*. Even so far from Revolution and war, Vladimir never felt completely safe and changed his name to Alexander Lash, taking his father's first name (which was his patronymic) as his first name and shortening the last name. Americans called him "Alec" and Lyena Bernotas knew him by that name. We knew him as "Volodya."

He was a tall, gracious man with elegant manners, always dressed with an ascot and an aristocratic bearing. He was well-spoken and very calm, pleasant and polite, and quietly confident. However, his skills and education were limited to those of children of the old aristocracy. He had trouble finding a professional job in the US and ended up driving an armored car until retirement.



Alexander Lashkevich died in Yugoslavia in 1947. His son probably described his life there to our father, Peter Stavrakis, but he never talked about it.

He adapted relatively well to the US, although one always felt somewhat out of place in this casual new world. It was as if he was living only part of a life, although he never complained and appeared content with his lot.

In the US, he married a woman called Eleanor (according to Lyena's vague recollection), but they divorced before our family arrived in the US.

Our father met his cousin for the first time in 1950 when Volodya came to meet us either at the pier in Hoboken or at the Wenlo estate where we first stayed as low-income laborers. He was 16 years older than Peter and had left Ukraine before Peter was old enough to remember him. Still, he wasted no time in meeting his younger cousin and was anxious to establish family ties. From then on for the next few years Volodya was a regular and welcome guest at our home, and when we moved from Wenlo to Wilmington and then to Elkton, Maryland, Volodya continued to visit regularly. In the summers he came to our *dacha*, or beach house, on the Elk River. If or when he talked about the past, we were too young to pay much attention, for he came from a world we had nothing to do with as children. It appeared to us more like a series of stories that were too exotic to be believed.



Alexander Lashkevich's son and heir, Vladimir Lashkevich, taken in Wilmington DE, in 1952 at the Stavrakis home on Broom Street. In the US he changed his name to Alexander Lash for fear that he might be repatriated to the Soviet Union as so many other refugees had been. Most were shot upon their return, especially those of the upper classes as Volodya had been. He was a lot older than Peter, and the cousins met for the first time only in the US. The family always called him "Volodya," however, which was the nickname for his given name.

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EXACT MATCHES 1

Place mouse over the ⓘ in order to view additional information for the record.

NAME	ARRIVED	LAST PLACE OF RESIDENCE / BIRTH PLACE	SHIP NAME	ACTION
Lashekevitch, Vladimir	1923	Subetitz, Yougoslavia	Berengaria	

Document from the Ellis Island Foundation showing Volodya Lashkevich's record of arrival into the US in 1923 from Subetitz, Yugoslavia, on the *Berengaria*.

Family name.	Given name.	Yrs.	Mar.	Married	occupation.	Rel.	Read what language (or, if examples differ, on what ground)	Wife.	or subject.	Country.	
Perelowaig	Israel	45	✓	M	Washic	yes	Russian	yes	Russian	Hebrew	Russia
Perelowaig	Olga	38	✓	F	Wife	yes	Russian	yes	Russian	Hebrew	Russia
Perelowaig	Dydia	3	✓	F	child	no	no	no	Russian	Hebrew	Russia
Rebinkov	Berna?	31	✓	M	Student	yes	Russian	yes	Russian	Hebrew	Ustria
Bogdanoff	Leon	25	✓	M	Student	yes	Russian	yes	Russian	Hebrew	Yugoslavia
Lashekevitch	Vladimir	22	✓	M	Student	yes	Russian-German	yes	Russian	Russian	Yugoslavia
Zotaff	Serge	53	✓	M	Colonel	yes	Russian-German	yes	Russian	Russian	Yugoslavia
Zvolokimoff	Stefan	40	✓	M	Engineer	yes	Polish-German	yes	Russian	Russian	Yugoslavia

Another Ellis Island Foundation document showing the *Berengaria* manifest giving Volodya's date of birth and information. In the US, Volodya still feared being hunted down by the Soviets and changed his name from Vladimir Alexandrovich Lashkevich to Alexander Lash. He was called "Alec" by his second US-born wife, Trudy.

Once our family got to the US and settled in Wilmington, DE, family and friends from the past started to visit in an attempt to recreate the old ties. Most ties eventually dissolved, but a few remained.

Here Volodya stands behind our apartment house on Broom Street. Left to right are Natasha Kravtchenko, stepdaughter of our maternal grandmother's brother; her mother, Genya Britchkina (sister-in-law of our maternal grandmother); and Thalia Langadas, daughter-in-law of our friend Anna Nikonorovna in Athens, who loaned my mother the camera with which she took the photos in Greece.



I (Olga) remember going to his New York apartment because a relative named Anna had come to visit him from the Soviet Union in the 1950s. Her relationship remains unclear, but she was also related to our father. She was a pleasant, lively woman of about 50 years of age (to me, as a child, she seemed to be a member of the older generation), of stocky build, and with brown hair done up in a bun at the nape of her neck.

In 1953 after our father, Peter, got his license to practice medicine in Maryland, we moved to Elkton, where we rented a lower apartment in a duplex owned by a widow who lived upstairs with her daughter.

Volodya continued to visit us for a number of years, and he brought his ladyfriend, Trudy, with him sometimes. This photo was taken when he spent some time living with us while Peter treated him for some ailment. Trudy came every weekend from their home in NY, where she worked as a secretary. After he recovered, they married and remained together the rest of their long lives.

This photo was taken in our living room on Main Street. The author's brother, Steven, is sleeping behind Volodya. Steven's bed was probably given to Volodya. Eventually, Olga and Kathy had a room in the back. Helen's parents also had their own room. Peter was not yet born. We lived here until 1957, when we moved to Newark, DE.



We met Anna in Volodya's apartment in New York, which came as a shock and contrasted sharply with his personal bearing. It was a crowded, tiny space, cut out of a larger building. The kitchen, a small, dingy makeshift counter stuck under the sloping ceiling of a stairwell, was equipped only with a hot plate and possibly a sink. It was obviously not made for cooking and looked more like a Soviet *komunalka* than a US apartment.

One summer day he arrived with his partner, Trudy, at our beach house within record time, announcing that he had used the New Jersey Turnpike, and it cut the travel time from New York City to Maryland down to two or three hours. (The turnpike opened in 1952, and we purchased the cottage in late 1953 or 1954.)

At some point between 1953 and 1957, he stayed with us for an extended period of time at our lower duplex on East Main Street while recuperating from some surgery organized by our father. Trudy, who worked as a secretary during the week, came down from New York every weekend and was very attentive to him. When he recovered, they married. Thereafter, we saw little of them because relations between our mother and Trudy were strained. Eventually, they stopped coming to visit all together.

When they retired, Trudy and Volodya moved to Florida and lived near Shura and his wife, Milya Stavrakis, until their deaths. Trudy died first of breast cancer, sometime before 1990. After learning she was terminally ill, she traveled around the US alone, visiting family members to say farewell. She stopped also in California to visit our cousin Irene, Shura Stavrakis's daughter, but she did not visit us.

I (Olga) always looked forward to the Lash's visits and those of Shura and Milya who used to come to our house on weekends, unannounced and always in time for Sunday dinner. I became close friends with my cousin Irene Stavrakis, who was, in reality, the only relative of my generation I knew. It was a jolly time when they arrived. Conversation was loud, lively, and in Russian. There was drinking and laughter, and our father Peter was always extremely happy to see his cousins.

Our mother, Helen, on the other hand, hated having family visitors. Her experiences living with Shura and Milya in Athens had left her ill-disposed toward them. Goaded by her emotionally unstable parents, she felt they were taking advantage of her and our family at a time when we barely had enough to make ends meet. Shura was very tight with money, but he always brought a little chicken for the Sunday dinners, which my mother felt was much less than enough.

Yet she provided all the hospitality that good manners and tradition dictated but resented doing so, later complaining that she had to leave the table hungry because there was not enough chicken to go around. Peter and we, the children, always enjoyed our relatives' visits. Olga, in particular, keenly felt the lack of family and cherished the few family ties that still remained.



We are not certain that this is Anna but we know it is one of the Farimski girls and by elimination concluded that it is she. We are not completely certain about the birth order of the older children, but by examining the photos and the ages of the children it appears she is the second child.



Anna was the second child of Vasily and Olga and the mother of two children, Tatiana and Vasily. Tatiana's story is told in Chapter 3.

## Anna Farimskaya Dobrolyubova

Anna was born around 1870, the second child of Vasily and Olga. The exact dates of her birth and death are unknown, but it was said that she was still alive and living in Kiev at the beginning of the Revolution. After that she disappears from memory. She had married Vasily Vasilievich Dobrolyubov, who also belonged to landholding nobility and an intellectual family of prominent poets. They had two children, Tanya (Tatiana, whose story is recounted below) and Vasily.

Around 1916, Tanya (Tatiana Dobrolyubova) married Vladimir Storozhenko, the scion of another prominent landholding and intellectual family. The wedding was attended by relatives from several noble families (see wedding photograph). The marriage was no doubt considered a good match, linking two socially and economically upper-class families. Unfortunately, the social status of the wedding did not ensure the length of the marriage.

She divorced Vladimir in 1917, around the time their son was born. She then immediately went off with another man, abandoning her infant son to the care of her aging mother-in-law. That liaison did not last long either, and she married a rough drunkard who died or disappeared by the start of the war. However, she had two more children by him. If Anna had hopes and dreams for her family, what the Revolution did not destroy, her daughter's life choices shattered the rest. The story of Tatiana and her children is found below in Chapter 3.

Anna's son, Vasily, Tatiana's brother, is seen in that photo, but nothing is known of his fate. He is identified as #31 on her wedding photo.



Anna's children, Tatiana and Vasily Dobrolyubov. Her story is given in this manuscript. We know nothing of her brother's fate, although he is identified as present at her wedding and is identified as #31.

## Elizaveta Farimskaya Stein

Judging by the birth dates of her siblings, Elizaveta was the second daughter and third child born to Vasily and Olga, sometime around 1873. She married Dmitry (Mitya) Stein, who was of German Czech origin.

Around 1928, the Soviet Union imprisoned all its citizens behind what came to be known as the Iron Curtain. Until that time, those who could prove “foreign” citizenship were permitted to emigrate to whatever country would grant them citizenship. The Steins were granted permission to leave the Soviet Union and emigrate to Czechoslovakia, where they settled in Nuremberg, Germany, about 450 miles west of Prague.

Sometime before travel outside the country was banned, our grandmother, Ekaterina, visited her sister, taking her daughter Nina with her. A photo of the reunion is shown below. It was taken in Karlsbad, a famous warm-water spa, heated by underground volcanic deposits and famous for its healthful properties.



Elizaveta was most likely the third child by birth order. She married Dmitry (Mitya) Stein, who was Czech, and they got permission to leave the Soviet Union after the Revolution.



Elizaveta was the second daughter and third child (if we have placed the children in the correct order) of Vasily and Olga Lashkevich. She married Dmitry Stein, a Czech citizen, and they were given permission to leave the Soviet Union before the country closed its borders.

She had two children, Dmitry and Vsevolod. Dmitry also had two children, but Vsevolod tragically disappeared while a teen when swimming in a river. (photo from Lyena Bernotas's family)



One of the Farimski girls. They were famous for their thick and long hair, growing it into braids that reached the floor. This is not Olga or Katya, so it seems to be Anna.

Postcard of the famous lodge and spa in Myslivna in 1910, Karlovy Vary Region, Karlsbad, Cafe Jägerhaus, Czech Republic. This appears to be the place where Ekaterina met with her sister in the early 1920s. (Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons)



Elizaveta and Stein had two boys: Vsevolod and Dimitry (Mitya). Lyena Bernotas knew the younger, Mitya, and his children and visited them when they were young. We do not know when Elizaveta and Stein died.

Their second son, Vsevolod, disappeared in Prague when he was young (possibly in his teens). It appeared he was “kidnapped” or drowned while swimming in the Vltava (“Moldau” in German) River in Prague. One day he went to join other boys at the river and never returned. His body was never found. Elizaveta suspected that he was killed for political reasons, although we do not know what those could have been.

Mitya (Jr.), born around 1910, was an engineer. He died suddenly at the age of 58 or 59, leaving two children, a boy also named Dmitry (III) and a girl who may have been named Marie. Lyena Bernotas knew the children in Kornhöstad and thought perhaps their mother’s name was also Marie.

Photo taken around 1927 in Karlsbad (also spelled “Carlsbad”), Czechoslovakia. Left to right: Elizaveta Farimskaya Stein, Katerina Farimskaya Stavrakis (Baba Katya), Stein, and Nina Stavrakis Bernotas (at age 17 or younger). The sign behind them says “Hotel Restaurant Café Jägerhaus” (literally: “Hunting Lodge” and the name of a famous restaurant).

Karlovy Vary, now called “Myslivna” lies in the Karlovy Vary region, 70 miles west of Prague, and still remains a popular spa city in the Czech Republic. It is known for its warm springs, heated by ancient volcanic activity.



Children of Dmitry Stein (II) and his wife (Marie?). He was the son of Dmitry (Mitya) Stein (I) and Elizaveta Farimskaya. The boy was also called Dmitry Stein (III), and the daughter may also have been named Marie, although this is uncertain. This photo was taken probably around 1951 or 1955 in Kornhöfstad. It was provided by Lyena Bernotas, whose mother Nina is in the photo taken at Karlsbad.

According to Lyena, Marie (the girl in the photo) was around 18–20 years old in 1959, and she was about two years younger than her brother. That puts young Mitya 3rd's birth around 1945.

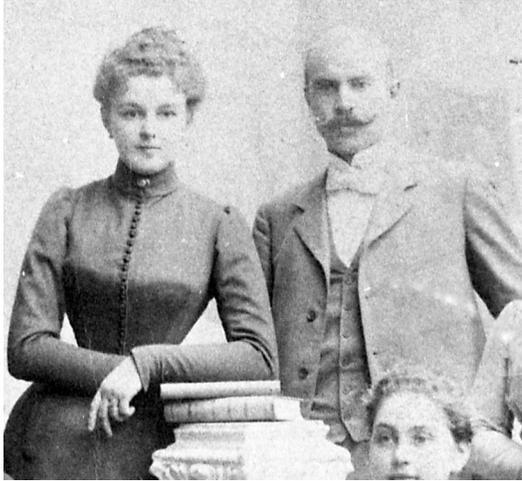
To recap the relationships, Mitya, the 2nd, and his ill-fated brother, Vsevolod Stein, were Peter's first cousins. Mitya, the 3rd, and his sister, Marie (the younger) were "nephew" and "niece" of Peter Stavrakis, although in the Anglo kinship system, they would be cousins once or twice removed.

### **Vsevolod Lashkevich**

Vsevolod, the second son, and probably the fourth child in the birth order, remains a mystery. He was likely born between 1875 and 1879 and disappeared from family memory after Tanya's wedding. It is presumed he died during the Revolution because no one ever heard from him or of him again. In family oral history, he was later confused with his nephew, Vladimir Lashkevich (Alec "Volodya" Lash). The nicknames for both their names are similar, which may have led to the confusion. When Peter's cousin, Volodya Lash, took his father's name Alexander (Alec) and changed his last name to Lash in the US, somehow family memory attributed the nickname "Volodya" to Vsevolod and he disappeared from memory.

Through these photos and especially Tanya's wedding picture, Vsevolod (#18 in the wedding photo) has come back into the light, if only as a name and a face.

He is no doubt the young man depicted on the family portrait (cut out and enlarged above). The pretty young woman standing to his left (cinched by a ferocious corset) is probably his wife or fiancé, and she may be one of the Lashkevich women listed on the wedding photo. Volodya (Alec) Lash would have been about 15 at the time of the wedding and is not present in the photos.



Vsevolod is #18 on the wedding photo, and there he is wearing the uniform. Thus he was in the tsar's service and probably joined the White Army during the Revolution. After that he disappears.

We know nothing of Vsevolod, and in fact, he was totally lost to us for years. This man in the photo in Lyena's collection had remained unnamed. But a study of Tanya's wedding photo and some other small references led us to conclude that this was a second male child of Vasily and Olga Lashkevich.

We don't know the name of the woman, but since the photo is all couples, this must have been his wife. We know he was not the oldest child nor one of the two youngest, so we have put him fourth in the birth order of the children. In the photo of Tanya's wedding, he is standing in the back in his military uniform.

Presumably, he served in the White Army during the Revolution but was either killed or disappeared. No references of him after that time have been found.



Olga Vasilievna Farimskaya, Tyota Lyola, maternal aunt of Peter Stavakis, sister of Ekaterina Farimskaya, Peter's mother. Olga had two sons, one of whom had no children and the other who had one daughter, two grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. They live in the US.

Olga Farimskaya was the second-youngest daughter of Vasily Lashkevich and Olga Farimskaya, born in 1880. She was always an active, slender woman with a genteel manner. After marriage to Vladimir Stavraki, she lived in Odessa and emigrated with him to Athens around 1932.

When he died, she lived with her younger son, Shura, but in 1946 the family sailed for the US. She went to live with her older son, Yura, in Canada, where she was eventually reunited with her sister Ekaterina, who also settled there with her daughter, Nina Bernotas.

### Olga Farimskaya Stavraki

Olga married Vladimir Stavraki, brother of Stilian, Ekaterina's husband and the authors' grandfather. Like his brother, Vladimir was a physician, and the family did surprisingly well for the first fifteen years following the Revolution. They eventually moved to Odessa, the native city of the Stavraki family, and became active in the Greek community.



Ekaterina Farimskaya (our grandmother) on the left and her sister, Olga Farimskaya, on the right. Ekaterina was the youngest of all the Lashkevich-Farimski children, born in 1881, and her sister was one year older.

The two sisters married two Greek brothers, Stilian and Vladimir Stavraki, both physicians. Widowed fairly young, they both left Ukraine during or before WWII, and eventually reunited in London, Ontario, Canada, around 1948 where they lived with their children near each other until the end of their lives.

There, Vladimir taught at the medical school and ran a thriving and successful medical practice accumulating a fine collection of expensive furniture, silver table settings, paintings, and other valuables that they later took to Athens when they left Ukraine.

They had two sons, Yura (George born in 1905) and Shura (Alexander born 1909). Their story is given in more detail in Part 1. Around 1926–28, Yura received a medical scholarship to McGill University in Canada and left the country, eventually marrying a Canadian and remaining there for the rest of his life.



Left to right: Shura, Vladimir, Yura, and Olga Stavradi. This may be the last photo of the whole family together, and from the despair on their faces, it was probably during a difficult time, perhaps even as Yura was leaving for Canada. Seated in front are Vladimir and Olga and on the left behind is Shura, with Yura on the right.

In the early 1930s in Odessa, persecution of Greeks began, and Vladimir decided to take his family to live in Athens. At that time he could still obtain Greek citizenship, and around 1932, the family emigrated. It was only a few years later that their Greek family friend from Kiev, Stilian Ivanovich Kozmanov, was arrested and shot.

When Vladimir got his Greek citizenship in the new Soviet Union, apparently our grandfather (his brother Stilian) had also tried, but by that time it was said the Soviets had closed off the consular office that granted citizenship papers, so our family remained in Kiev, leaving only in 1943 during WWII. This was not something well-remembered, but Helen recalled that Vladimir had indeed gotten Greek citizenship in Odessa and that his brother Stilian had tried at about the same time but was unable to do so.

In Athens, Vladimir's family settled in Kallithea with the rest of their son's in-laws, also from Odessa, and Vladimir maintained his medical practice, treating many of the same patients whom he had cared for in the Ukrainian Greek community. Sometime not long after 1932 but before 1936, Vladimir died of a heart attack. His family remained in Athens until 1946 when they got their visas for the US and sailed west. In the US, Olga, Vladimir's widow, went to Canada to live with her oldest son, Yura. Eventually, she was also reunited there with her younger sister,

Bottom row: Vladimir Stavraki, his niece Olga Stavraki (daughter of his brother Stilian), and Olga Farimskaya Stavraki. Standing behind them is Vladimir's older sister, Ekaterina Stavraki, and her daughter we know only by the last name of Shulgina. This was taken not long before Vladimir's family left for Athens and may have been a farewell.



our grandmother, Katya, who arrived from Germany with her daughter Nina, a new husband, and granddaughter Lyena.

We knew that Tyota Lyola (Olga Farimskaya) had been living in Athens when we arrived, but we did not know that she had come not only with her younger son, Shura (Alexander) but also with her husband. We knew little about that family, even though Shura's wife's niece, Elly Triandafyllidou, lived with their family in Philadelphia and was close to our mother. Somehow Vladimir's story had fallen through the cracks. This is not surprising, for the official records in Odessa reported that Vladimir Stavraki actually died there in 1932. It was probably dangerous to say otherwise. Thus it came as a surprise in 2014 while visiting Elly and her sister in Athens, to learn that Vladimir was actually alive and well in 1932 and arrived in Greece with the whole Odessa clan of 16 family members.

According to Elly, Vladimir died a few years later, but she did not know the exact date. She said that he was a cardiologist, and in Athens, continued to treat the same patients he had cared for at home. According to her, he died of a heart attack.

In 1936 their son Yura visited his mother in Athens, sailing just after receiving his Canadian citizenship. In all likelihood, his father was no longer alive at the time.

In November of 1946, almost a year after our arrival in Athens, Vladimir's surviving family members (his wife, Olga, their son Shura, and his wife and daughter) sailed for the US. His mother, Olga Farimskaya, went to live in Canada with her older son, and there she remained the rest of her life. She was eventually joined by her sister, Ekaterina, who arrived around 1948 with her daughter Nina, granddaughter Lyena, and Nina's new Lithuanian husband, Vladis Bernotas.

In London, Ontario, they managed to rebuild a family enclave, which I (Olga) and my brother, Steven, visited sometime around 1961. Tyota Lyola came once to Newark, DE, to visit our family with her sister Ekaterina. She was a tiny, slender woman while her sister was heavy-set and portly.

## Ekaterina Farimskaya Stavraki

Ekaterina and Stilian Stavraki settled in Kiev after marriage, where he taught at the medical school and maintained a very popular practice from his home. He is credited with having developed the first otolaryngology program in the city, introduced X-ray technology to Kiev, and mastered a variety of delicate treatments for life threatening ear infections in the time before antibiotics became available.

The couple had three children, Olga, Nina, and Peter, and led a life considered relatively prosperous for the time and circumstances. The two girls, Olga and Nina, were born in 1907 and 1909, respectively, but it was a particular joy for Ekaterina to give birth to a son, Peter, in 1917, for Greeks particularly valued male children. Peter was, therefore, coddled and cosseted by all the members of the family and grew up with a feeling of security and warmth. He was indulged by his father, who acquired all that Peter desired when it became available, although Peter was not a youth who had much need for material goods. He did, however, enjoy a camera, a kayak, and a bicycle, all of which were out of reach for most children.



Ekaterina Gregoriovna Farimskaya (also known as Ekaterina Vasilievna Lashkevich and Ekaterina Stavraki), our paternal grandmother.



Olga on the left and Ekaterina on the right, around 1900. Olga was one year older than Ekaterina, our grandmother.

This is the only photo we have of Ekaterina with her husband, Stilian, and it was scanned by Nina's grandson, Loic, as we don't have a hard copy in our album. Stilian is already ill, having suffered his first serious heart attack at age 55, after which he lost weight. Never an exuberant person, he always maintained a serious countenance, but here he actually looks dejected.



Peter and his mother in Crimea with Yalta and Ayu-Dag or Medved (bear) in the background. Peter had a warm relationship with his mother, even though he always said she did not involve herself in housework or in motherhood. Keenly aware of his wife's shortcomings, Stilian hired nannies for Peter, and most of his early memories figure his mother in the background.

→  
Ekaterina Gregorievna Farimskaya,  
or Katherine Stavraki (in later years).



During WWII Ekaterina fled to Germany with her daughter, Nina, and granddaughter, Lyena. This photo was taken in Germany. Lyena was about 15 or 16 when she left for Canada, so it was taken before they left. None of them look very happy.

Nina's second husband, Zamryi, had been killed in the first Nazi assault on the Soviet Union. In Germany they lived from hand to mouth until around 1947 or 1948 when they emigrated to Canada and joined Ekaterina's nephew Yura.



Possibly taken in Canada, both photos are at the same location. At the end of the war they moved to London, Ontario, to join Olga Farimskaya, who was now living with her son Yura. He had left around 1928 to study medicine and had married a French Canadian.

In the Late 1930s things changed in the Soviet Union as the Great Terror began, and it affected the family. Stilian felt the pressure of the executions, especially hitting close to home, and his health started to decline rapidly. He died in January 1938 of heart failure. Without his protective presence, the family was left defenseless. The authorities ransacked the house and confiscated all the family valuables, although the paintings ended up in local museums. Not long after, came the start of WWII, and from 1941 to 1943 the German occupation created a new set of problems that eventually eclipsed even Stalin's terror.

Toward the end of 1943 the Red Army had taken the initiative from the Germans and successfully began pushing westward, retaking the home territory. But Stalin gave no slack to prisoners of war or to occupied peoples; once territory was retaken, the reprisals against the local population were brutal and severe. As the Red Army approached the East Bank of the Dnieper, the Stavrakis children, along with hundreds of thousands of others, decided to take their chances in the west. Almost at the last moment, Peter and Nina took their families west and their sister, Olga, went southeastward.

The children divided up all the older family members so that Peter and Helen took Helen's parents and grandmother. Nina took her daughter and mother and headed for Germany. After the war, just as they were about to leave for Canada, she met and married her third husband, Vladis Bernotas. They went to Canada, where they joined their cousin Yura in London, Ontario. There they recreated a small family community and the two Farimski sisters, Olga and Ekaterina, were reunited.

Nina's paperwork to go to Canada was done by Yura's wife, Madeleine. When they were ready to depart, Vladis Bernotas appeared in Nina's life, and she married him, which meant that Madeleine now had to redo all the documents with the new names and include Vladis.

It was later learned that Vladis, a Lithuanian Nazi, had been a guard at (probably) Dachau, and as the war ended, he was afraid for his life. He escaped to where the immigrants were and found Nina, ready to depart for Canada. He attached himself to her, and they married.

However, years later, it turned out that he already had a wife, and his two daughters had tracked him down in Canada and had appeared on their doorstep. There were also unsubstantiated stories of his rough manner and his mistreatment of Nina's daughter and other family members, but Nina stayed with him to the end of her life.

Ekaterina came to visit her son a few times in Delaware, usually travelling with her sister, Olga. She wanted to come and live with Peter, but our mother, Helen, absolutely refused. She did not get along with her in-laws (by her own admission) and pointed out that Canada had health insurance for his mother, which the US did not at the time.

Peter's sister Olga and her family fled southeastward and then settled in Moscow, where their descendants remain.



Some document photo taken at the end of the war.

## CHAPTER 3

### Tatiana Dobrolyubova and Her Son Andryusha

The story of Tatiana (Tanya) Dobrolyubova, Peter's beautiful cousin, has special significance because Tatiana's son Andrei (Andryusha) was Peter's best friend and soulmate until his early death at 23 in the Nazi attack against the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941. Peter never forgot his nephew and he missed him all his life.

Peter's cousin Tatiana Dobrolyubova Storozhenko pictured here holding her first child, Andryusha, who was Peter's best friend and soulmate until his early death in 1941. Tanya was the daughter of the Lashkevich-Farimski, second child, Anna, who married Dobrolyubov. She was known as a great beauty, although Peter always said she was stupid and with a selfish nature.



Until recently we knew little of his life and almost nothing about his mother after his birth. In fact, it had always been assumed she had died or disappeared sometime after 1918. To our surprise it turned out that she in fact led a long life, producing two more children, one grandchild and one presumably still-living great grandchild!

The first part of the story, which matched what Peter remembered, came from an unexpected source in 2014. That year, Kathy went to Kiev to dig up more family information in the archives and

unexpectedly came upon a scholar who was able to access Andryusha's whole KGB interrogation report. In it, he told the story of his life. Even under torture, duress, and pressure to lie, Andryusha remained forthright, and the details match the bits of information that Peter knew and still remembered. It is summarized here and reproduced in its entirety in Appendix 3.

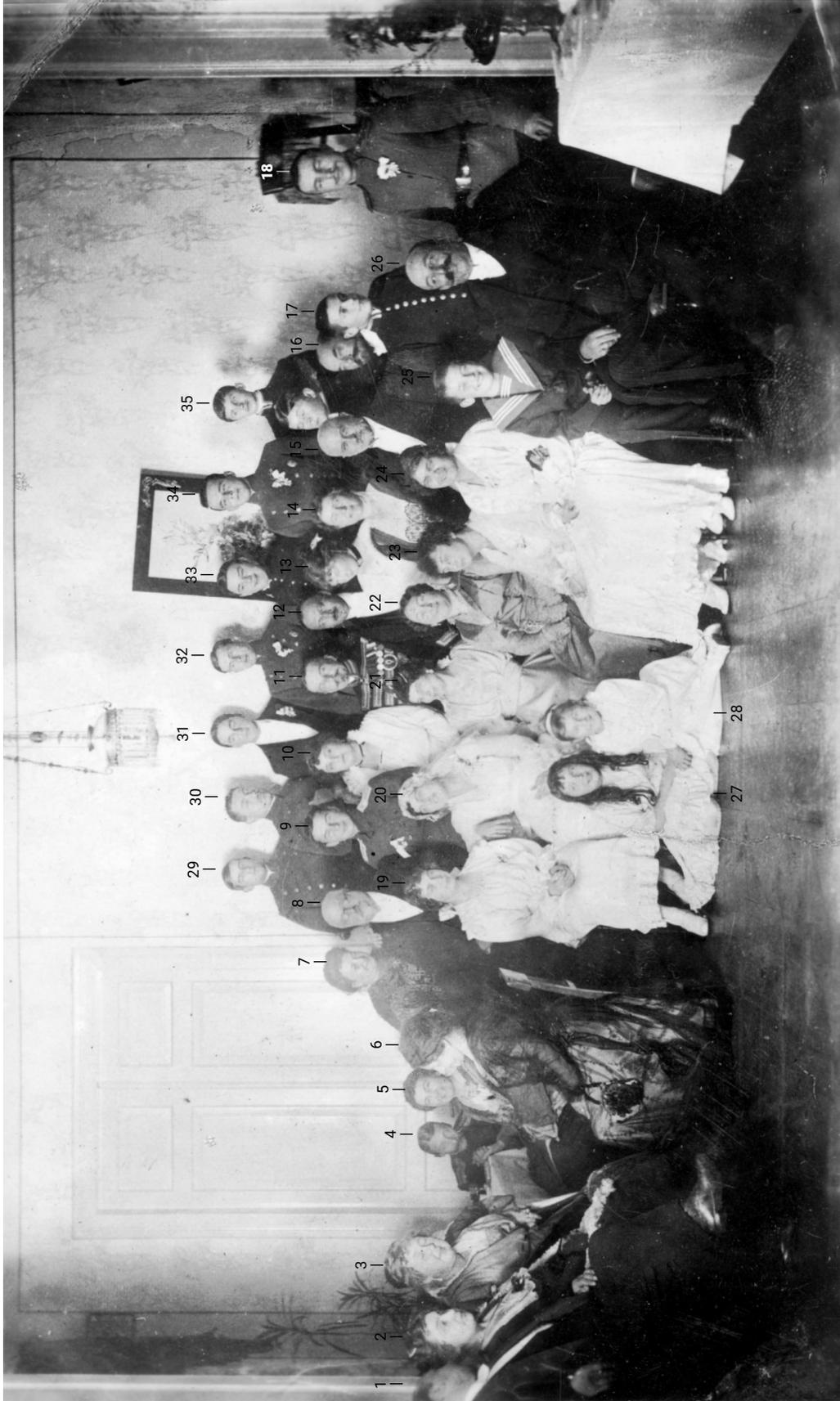
This report also offers a new glimpse into Tanya's life after the divorce in 1917 and provides previously unknown information about Andryusha's father. Her later children and her movements during and after WWII were filled in later by our cousin Lyena Bernotas Diacon, who had been contacted by Tanya's descendants and came to know them quite well. Unfortunately, she lost contact with the last descendant some years ago.

Tanya Dobrolyubova was born to Anna Farimskaya, Peter's maternal aunt, and Vasily Vasilievich Dobrolyubov around 1898. She had a younger brother, Vasily, but his history is lost to us, although he is pictured on the wedding photo as #31 wearing a uniform of one of the tsar's military units. We know nothing of his fate after the wedding but surmise that he joined the White army and was probably killed.

Both her parents came from landowning, upper-class families. She was celebrated as a great beauty, and around 1916 made what was considered a brilliant marriage with the scion of a distinguished noble and learned family, Vladimir Andreevich Storozhenko (#9 on the wedding photo).

This photo, which at first looked to us as nothing more than a gathering of unknown ancients, upon closer scrutiny, turned out to be a key to unraveling many family relationships before and during the Revolution. Some were unknown to us and others had been totally forgotten. We discovered uncles and aunts in the photograph, who had led lives no less precious than our own, who had totally disappeared from collective memory, and this new information made it possible to bring them back into the light.

In a stroke of inspiration the groom had the good sense to number and label each guest on the back so that we could identify the individuals match them up to other stories we knew and weave together some of the known histories we already had in our possession. Even in the best of circumstances, people remember short incidents and stories, generally out of context and mostly in relation to themselves or to other important events. To place these into a historical and social framework is challenging, and this methodically-written record proved to be a decisive tool toward this end.



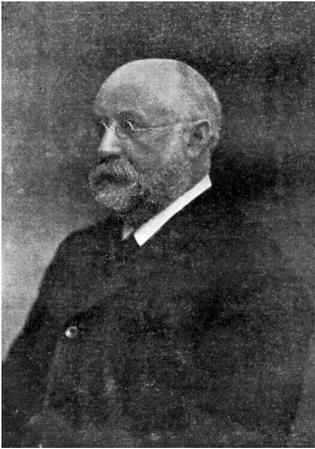
Wedding photo of Tanya Dobrolyubova and Vladimir Storozhenko ca. 1916. This photo is particularly poignant as it is perhaps one of the last glittering family events on the eve of the Revolution, when their world disintegrated and their families with it. The groom (#33) labeled all the guests on the back of the photo. Many well-known names of landowners and scholars can be recognized.

- 1. ? доктор**  
? doctor (the groom isn't sure, but probably it is Stilian Stavraki)
- 2. Е. В. Ставраки**  
E.V. Stavraki Ekaterina Vasilievna Stavraki
- 3. Т. А. Ляшкевич**  
T.A. Lashkevich
- 4. Турковский**  
Turkovskiy
- 5. М. Турковская**  
M. Turkovskaya
- 6. забыл**  
forgot
- 7. Надежда Николаевна Донц (Донцова?)**  
Nadezhda Nikolayevna Dontsova
- 8. А. В. Стороженко**  
A.V. Storozhenko  
Andrei Vasilievich Storozhenko (groom's dad and famous historian)
- 9. Я (The Groom labeled "I")**  
Vladimir Andreevich Storozhenko
- 10. Елена Георгиевна Ильяшенко**  
Elena Georgievna Il'shenko (different spelling than Ilyashenko, but could be just a misspelling)
- 11. Влад. Патрикеевич ?) Ильяшенко**  
Vladimir Patrikeevich Ilyashenko
- 12. Шавердов**  
Shaverdov
- 13. Наташа Ляшкевич**  
Natasha Lashkevich
- 14. Елиз(авета) Ник(олаевна) Савицкая**  
Elizaveta Nikolaevna Savitskaya (related to the Storozhenko family)
- 15. Н. В. Стороженко**  
N.V. Storozhenko (Nikolai Vladimirovich Storozhenko, the groom's paternal uncle, notable historian)
- 16. изобр. Садовский(й)**  
Sadovskiy (This seems to be the well known inventor from that period, Alexander Ivanovich Sadovskiy)
- 17. В. В. Ильяшенко**  
V.V. Ilyashenko
- 18. Всев(олод) Васильев**  
Vsevolod Vasiliev (This is the Lashkevich younger son who disappeared during the Revolution)
- FIRST ROW**
- 19. Елена Влад(имировна)**  
Elena Vladimirovna Ilyashenko
- 20. Таня Добролюбова**  
Tatiana Dobrolyubova (Bride)
- 21. Мария Патр(икеевна) Стороженко**  
Maria Patrikeevna (nee Ilyashenko) Storozhenko (mother of the groom and the grandmother with whom Tatiana's son, Andryusha, lived in Kiev after the Revolution)
- 22. А. В. Добролюбова**  
A.V. Dobrolyubova (probably Anna Vasilievna Dobrolyubova (nee Farimskaya), mother of the bride; older sister of Katerina Farimskaya Stavraki)
- 23. Ольга Матеровская**  
Olga Materovskaya
- 24. Лариса Козинцева**  
Larisa Kozintseva
- 25. Алекс(ей или Александр) Влад(имирович) Ильяшенко**  
Alexey Vladimirovich Ilyashenko (possibly "Alexander" but most probably named after the Tsar's son, based on his clothing)
- 26. Влад(имир) В. Добролюбов**  
Vladimir Vasilievich Dobrolyubov (Godfather of Peter Stavrakis)
- 27. В. Турковская**  
V. Turkovskaya
- 28. Лена Ляшкевич**  
Lena Lashkevich  
(Unknown relation of the bride's grandfather, Vasily, or wife of one of his sons, Alexander or Svevolod)
- 29. Конст(антин) Бельговский**  
Konstantin Bel'govskiy
- 30. Евг(ений) Васильев**  
Evgeniy Vasiliev
- 31. В. В. Добролюбов**  
Vasily Vasilievich Dobrolyubov (brother of the bride)
- 32. Ник(олай Мих(айлович) Муравьев**  
Nikolay Mikhailovich Muravyov (or Muravyev)
- 33. Андрей А Стороженко**  
Andrei Andreevich Storozhenko (brother of the groom)
- 34. Яков Андр(еевич) Стороженко**  
Yakov Andreevich Storozhenko (brother of the groom who ended up a US citizen, lived in New York, and corresponded with our grandmother, Anna Sochansky)
- 35. Скоробогач-Бобуцкий**  
Skorobogach-Bobutski (he has a question mark next to the name)

## Vladimir Andreevich Storozhenko, the Groom

The groom, Vladimir Andreevich Storozhenko, was born on 22 May 1896, the oldest of three boys (Note: the date is given as 1897 in Andryusha's testimony during his arrest). Vladimir Andreevich graduated in 1914 from Kiev 1st Gymnasium with two silver medals, and despite his relatively short academic career, he managed to write several highly regarded histories of Ukraine that remain relevant today. He had two brothers, Yakov (#34) and Andrei (#33, a physician).

In the 1950s Yakov (#34), the groom's middle brother, appeared in New York and corresponded with Peter's mother-in-law, our grandmother, Anna Sochanskaya. According to a letter found among Peter and Helen's personal things, it seems that Jacov came to the US, settling in New York, sometime just after 1950 and lent Anna (Peter's mother-in-law) a drafting kit and a book. The letter indicates that she planned to study and get some kind of degree. Apparently, she returned the kit, but he complained that the book was missing, although in the letter she assures him that the book was returned with the tools.



Vladimir's parents, Andrei Vladimirovich Storozhenko (born 1857 and lived to at least 1926, #8) and Maria P. Ilyashenko (#21), both came from upper-class, landed families. His grandfather, Vladimirovich Andreevich Storozhenko, had served as chamberlain to Tsar Alexander II in the mid-19th century. His picture can be found in Appendix 2, where he is wearing a Hussar uniform. Needless to say, the family were strong supporters of both tsar and church.

Andrei Vladimirovich Storozhenko, father of the groom, #8 in the wedding photo. As the Revolution started he escaped to Poland, where he published a historical article in 1926 under an assumed name. After that nothing was heard from him. He had left his wife, Maria Patrikeevna, behind in Kiev, and she ended up living in poverty in an unheated room, raising their grandson Andryusha, and depending upon her youngest son, Andrei, and other relatives for food. (Photo credit: Russian Wikipedia)



Nicolai Vladimirovich Storozhenko, the groom's father's brother, #15 in the wedding photo. He was the director of the Alexander Gymnasium in Kiev when the Revolution started and when the slaughter of cadets took place in the yard, an account written up in the book *The White Guard*, by Bulgakov. Helen's three uncles had been summoned to that gathering but had remained in hiding and witnessed the attack (see Part 3). (Photo credit: Russian Wikipedia)

The Storozhenko family owned several estates around Periatin in the Poltava region and a home in Kiev on the Pechersk (Moscow St.). The family had the confusing habit of naming their first-born males after grandfathers so that every other generation had the same name and patronymic. Thus, Vladimir Andreevich Storozhenko was son of Andrei Vladimirovich, and he of Vladimir Andreevich, and so on. It sounds like something out of a play by Gogol. When they needed a second name, they used Nicolai. Archival data asserts that they descended from a Cossack Hetman, and there is a whole archive in Kiev dedicated to the family which is partially available online. They also had a coat of arms.

Both the groom's father and uncle were accomplished historians as well. The father, Andrei, published numerous works on Ukrainian history and was a vehement opponent of Ukrainian nationalism. In 1919, when various groups of nationalists fought the Bolsheviks and tsarists for control of the country, he fled to Poland via Odessa leaving his wife Maria Ilyashenko behind in Kiev, destitute and alone.

In Poland he apparently published an academic paper under a slightly altered name in 1926. He used the pseudonym "A. Tsariniy" (А. Царинный) which ostensibly affirms his support for the tsar. After that nothing more was heard of him until twenty years later, during his grandson's interrogation in prison. When asked for the whereabouts of his father, he answered that he "is in Yugoslavia with my grandfather, where he has lands."

It may be a mistake or just fiction added in by the interrogator, however, by then Andrei (the grandfather) would have been 81 years of age. It's possible he was still alive, but not likely. We know the Lashkevich heir, Alexander, and his son ended up in Yugoslavia, and perhaps under duress Andryusha confused the individuals.

The groom's uncle, Nicolai Storozhenko (#15), was headmaster of the Alexander Gymnasium, a school for sons of the nobility in Kiev, where a famous massacre took place during the Revolution. In an odd twist of fate, that massacre also touched the lives of our mother's (Helen Sochanskaya's) family and determined the fate of her three uncles Nicolai, Ivan, and Sergey Britchkin and determined their lives henceforth. Being tsarist supporters the Britchkin boys were summoned to the Alexander Gymnasium, but sensing danger, they hid in the bushes from where they witnessed the butchery. They went home, packed up, and left Kiev forever (see Part 3). One of the young cadets who managed to escape was the well-known writer M. Bulgakov, who later recounted that event in the novel, *The White Guard*. Kiev was, in those days, a very small world.



Vladimir Andreevich Storozhenko, father of Nicolai and grandfather of Andryusha. He served as a Hussar and as an under chamberlain in the tsar's household. (See Appendix 2 for more details) (Photo credit: Russian Wikipedia)



Tanya in Russian dress

## Tanya's Story

Peter Stavrakis described his cousin Tanya as “a very beautiful woman,” although “not beautiful on the inside.” He never forgave her for abandoning her son Andryusha. The photo of Tanya in an elaborate, traditional Russian ethnic dress indicates that although the family lived in and around Kiev, they maintained Russian cultural ties.

On 22 August 1917 (OS), when Peter was only six months old, Tanya gave birth to a son, Andrei Vladimirovich Storozhenko, known as Andryusha. The two boys grew up together and became close friends and soulmates throughout Andryusha's short and difficult life. In spite of the hardship, however, he maintained a positive attitude, prepared for an educated future as a geologist, and wrote letters with humor.

Andryusha was abandoned by both his parents in infancy and left in the care of his paternal grandmother, Maria Patrikeevna Ilyashenko. The story of his parents as reported in his KGB testimony, is surprisingly accurate. According to this testimony, Andryusha's father, Vladimir Storozhenko, left the country in 1917, called to service in the White Army (KGB report).

His mother divorced his father in 1917 and remarried immediately to a fitness trainer named Leonid Kashinsky. She was working in a ceramic factory at the time. Then she divorced the trainer and married Shkuratov, with whom she was still living as of 1938 when Andryusha was jailed. Peter remembered Shkuratov who had taken him hunting as a boy. For some reason Peter suspected the man of being a KGB informer.

He said that Shkuratov may have been involved in some organization Peter referred to as the *Oprichniki*, a violent precursor of the secret police instituted by Ivan the Terrible in 1565 and disbanded seven years later because they took their campaign of terror and bloodshed too far, even for the tsar. It seems Peter was using the term figuratively to refer to an arm of the KGB. Helen (our mother) recalled that Shkuratov had a drinking problem, which was not uncommon in those days. She said he died of TB, and when they cleared out his home, they found a stash of vodka.

Tanya's story is continued by her daughter, Irina, as recounted years later when she came to visit our cousin Lyena in Geneva. In 2014 Lyena remembered that Irina had died “not long ago,” so presumably the visit occurred before 2010 or possibly earlier. She seemed to be living in Kishinev, Moldova, at the time. She recounted that Tanya had two children by Shkuratov: Vladimir, whose birth date is unknown, and Irina, born in 1923. Around 1942 during the Nazi occupation of Kiev, Irina had a child, Maryanna, by an Austrian officer stationed in the city. When the war

ended, Tanya, Irina, Vladimir (Tanya's son), and Maryanna (Irina's infant daughter) went to Austria. Things did not work out well there, and the family returned home to Kiev. Perhaps the officer was already married or had died.

Tanya had a knack for making unfortunate life choices. After the war, while they were still in the west, Stalin started issuing "warm" invitations (as our mother phrased it) to refugees, enticing them back home with promises of the good life. Tanya and her children returned optimistically around 1950 but were immediately slapped into a re-education camp, where they remained for the next ten years. It is curious that all four of them remained and moved from place to place together.

Either in the camp or before, Tanya's son Vladimir suffered from an illness or accident and lost both his legs, forcing him to drag his body along the ground. In the camp, Irina managed to become a chemist, but Tanya was unable to learn a profession or trade. After their release from the camp around or before 1960, Irina ended up in Kishinev, Moldavia.

We don't know the exact sequence of events, but at some point, Irina gave her daughter, Maryanna, to a family in Kishinev (today called Chişinău) in Moldova, who adopted her and gave her the last name of Florea, a fairly common Moldavian name. It is possible that Irina gave the child up while in Austria or in the re-education camp and that once she was freed, she went to reunite with her, which is why she went to Moldova.

When she grew up, Maryanna partnered with or married a Jew who had ties to Israel, and they went to live in Israel possibly around 2003 or earlier. They had a daughter, Julia, born roughly in the early seventies or eighties. Julia ended up living in Germany, where Lyena Bernotas visited her. She also came to spend time with Lyena in Switzerland, the last time staying in her home for over a month. Lyena recalled she was around 18 years of age at that time. After that they lost touch.

Irina died in Kishinev "recently" (according to Lyena Bernotas in 2016), more precise dating is not available at this time. Tanya lived long enough to be released from the re-education camp around 1960, and after that we lose track of her.

## Andryusha's Story

As far as our family was concerned, the determining aspect of Tanya's life was her abandonment of her son Andryusha shortly after his birth. He grew up with his gentle, forsaken, and inept paternal grandmother, not far from where Peter lived and the two boys maintained a close friendship until Andryusha's death in 1941 at the beginning of WWII.

In 1938 during the great purge, Andryusha was arrested, tortured, and interrogated for over nine months. The transcripts have only recently become available, and Kathy was able to get a copy from which we have excerpted the account of his life in his own words.



Andrei (Andryusha) Vladimirovich Storozhenko (22 August 1917–June 1941), son of Tatiana Dobrolyubova and Vladimir Storozhenko, nephew to Peter Stavrakis and his closest and dearest friend throughout his youth.

“...my mother left me with my grandmother and had nothing to do with us after that. She was totally disinterested in me. She never came once to visit while I was living with my grandmother.”

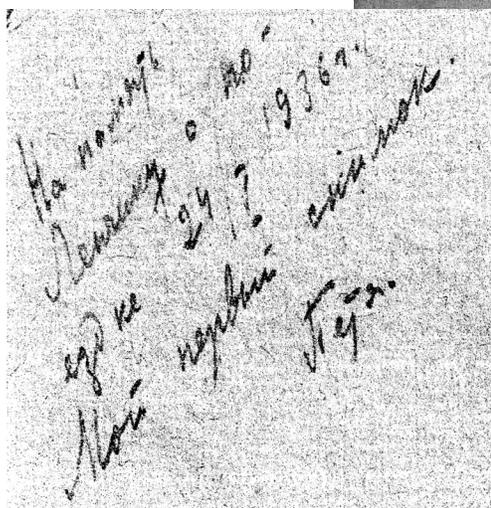
His father had abandoned him earlier.

*My father is Vladimir Andreevich...comes from a Pomeschik family. In 1917 he was called up with the tsar's army in the time of the October Revolution because he was an officer in it. He escaped to China.*

*In 1921 my father returned to the USSR and entered work for Kiev telegraph as a radio telegrapher. Because my grandfather left for Yugoslavia in 1921 and there they had large estate, my father also left in 1922 to join his father in Yugoslavia, and he is still living there.*

The child grew up in a tiny, cold room in abject poverty. Peter visited Andryusha and Maria in their room and was appalled at the conditions. He remembered Maria sitting despondent wrapped in shawls and blankets. Having been raised as a noblewoman, she had no training or aptitude for housekeeping, cooking, or basic survival. In her upper-class world, males provided for their families, hired servants, cooks, gardeners, and laundresses, and the women managed this labor force without themselves having to get their hands dirty. Upper-class women were educated but not given practical skills. After the defeat of the White Army, many upper-class males never returned, leaving their women to fend for themselves. They were soon evicted from their homes, without assets or other means of support. They had always been dependents, but then they became beggars.

Photo of Andryusha in a dugout canoe on Truhanov island during the spring floods caused by the spring floods caused by the snow melt). The boys loved to explore the river, listen to the spring ice cracking, and go boating.



Back of the photo; Andryusha is in a dugout canoe. The inscriptions reads: "For Lenchik, to remember our trip on 24/5/1936. My first snapshot. Signed Petya." Lenchik is an endearing youthful form of "Lena" and refers to Lena Sochansky, whom he married in 1938.



School picture with Peter Stavrakis on the left and his best friend and soulmate, Andrei Storozhenko, on the right and one over, front row. Peter was tutored at home until about age 14 and then enrolled in school, apparently together with Andryusha. This was a school picture taken around 1930 Kiev, Ukraine.

The close up of the school pictures shows the extraordinary similarity between the two boys, even in their dress. Andryusha was a bit smaller than Peter and received hand-me-downs from his Aunt Katya. They often ate the midday meal with their family. Around 1930, Kiev, Ukraine.

Grandmother Maria had no income, but her youngest son, Andrei Andreevich (Andryusha's uncle), sent them money occasionally. He worked as a physician in the Kaganovicheski Rayon of Kiev Oblast. Andryusha's father also helped out occasionally (at great risk) by sending money and packages from abroad (source: KGB testimony).

Peter said that Andryusha took his midday meal at their house while studying geology in university, which was just up the street from the Stavraki residence. He remarked, "One good meal a day means a lot when you have nothing." His mother also gave Andryusha clothes and probably sent food to Maria when she could.

Olga and Ekaterina were as hopelessly inept and no more capable of cooking and housework than Andryusha's grandmother, but they had servants, even during the Soviet era. What saved them was that their husbands had not been upper-class landowners but doctors, a profession in high demand during that turbulent period and after the Revolution.

The men both continued working and received some protection from persecution, at least in the early years. They were permitted to charge for services and so had money and food. When grateful patients did not have cash, the doctors happily accepted gifts of eggs or butter, which were particularly welcome during times of shortage and famines. Until the purges started in the early 1930s, they were economically much better off than those around them.

Andryusha and his grandmother lived in fear — their quarters periodically searched by the secret police as a specific form of intimidation. Periodically, they made threatening, unannounced visits at night, searching the one little room as if expecting to find bombs and subversive literature. In reality, nothing much could have been hidden in a cold, tiny room by a penniless, old woman. Nevertheless, the police kept up a relentless campaign against the purported enemy of the Revolution.

Several times Maria was hauled her off to jail for questioning about Andryusha's father, Vladimir, who had fled to Poland at the start of the war. Each time, of course, she did not know if she would return. One could be incarcerated, as happened years later to Andryusha, sent off to a faraway prison labor camp, or just set free again, and no one in the family could ever find out what happened to their loved one. In his interrogation testimony in prison (in 1938), Andryusha said that his grandmother was arrested for anti-Soviet propaganda in 1927 and again in 1934. Luckily, she returned home each time.

Despite the fearmongering, searches, and constant threat of imprisonment and torture, Andryusha remained optimistic and had a positive attitude in life. He had a sharp sense of humor, which can be seen in the two letters, that have been printed and translated in Appendix 4.

In the KGB report he says he went to live with his uncle, his father's younger brother, who was a physician, from 1920 to 1936 in the Kaganovich Rayon of Kiev Oblast. This is probably not totally accurate, however, because according to Peter he continued to live with his grandmother while he was very young. He

said his uncle supported him with a stipend until he went to university in 1936, during which time he got only partial material help from his uncle. Between 1936 and the fall of 1937, his grandmother was living with his uncle, and during this time they received several packages from his father.

The early Soviet Union needed foreign currency, so money orders from outside were welcomed by the state. But the government kept changing its policies; the announcements often came suddenly, and their effects extended retroactively. As the officials' paranoia and fear increased, so did the number of forbidden activities. Eventually, communication with the outside world became a crime. This came to include all "past" communication as well, which was also a convenient way to incriminate and convict anyone they wished.

One could be executed for past communication because the secret police could easily spin it into anti-Soviet plotting. Thus, Maria's letters and packages from her son in Yugoslavia, while perfectly legal and even desirable in the early period, became serious criminal activity punishable by death by about 1932. One time Peter recalled asking Maria about her son, and she said he could not write to her because it was politically dangerous. By then it probably was.

Andryusha's pitiful contact with his father finally brought him to disaster. On 9 March 1938, at the height of the purges known as the Great Terror, the dreaded black van came for Andryusha in the middle of the night and took him away (See Peter's story of jail). No one knew where he was taken, but it was learned that he was imprisoned in the notorious Lukyanovka prison in Kiev.

With a warrant duly signed by a judge with all the legalities in order, the thugs searched his apartment. There they found his passport and two kinds of ammunition shells (20 caliber and 12 caliber; as weak as 4 kg of explosive powder), all of which they confiscated. No gun was found. *(Note: In the KGB report from 1938 in Odessa in which a hospital worker by the name of Stavrakis was arrested for anti-Soviet activities, oddly enough the secret police also found a passport, two calibers of shells and a couple kilos of explosive powder. It is as if these "subversives" had some way to use shells without guns! The powder was obviously a nice added touch.)*

In prison he suffered regular beatings, torture, and repeated interrogation in an attempt to get him to sign a confession of anti-Soviet activity, which he refused. Toward the end of 1938, he finally signed. The beatings stopped.

For months after his arrest, no one heard of him and no one knew where he had been taken. Was he dead or alive? Sent off to a work camp in the east? Then, on 25 September 1938, Peter received a handwritten summons to present himself at the prison at midnight for an interrogation. His recounting of that event follows below.

The issue of Andryusha's contact with his father came up in both Peter's and Maria's interrogations. When asked, both replied truthfully that he did receive letters and money from his father abroad, which was used for basic survival. Peter said that Andryusha had also received money "for boots and a jacket," which he bought at a Torgsin store.

A coupon of the Torgsin government store, where only foreign exchange was accepted. The store operated only between 1931 and 1936, and after that it became retroactively a crime to have received money from abroad.



The Torgsin stores operated in the Soviet government between 1931 and 1936 and were set up specifically to get foreign currency, as their own was worthless. During that period they were legal, and their use was encouraged, so it would have actually been considered patriotic to acquire money from abroad and spend it in a Torgsin. But then the policy changed, and suddenly it became a crime to receive money from abroad. The foreign exchange stores disappeared, and anyone who had used those stores could be punished. The use of those stores could also be considered as proof that one was planning anti-government subversion. From the report, it is clear that his captors were simply looking for anything they could find to pronounce him guilty of “anti-Soviet agitation.”

When the purges began, the police had arrest quotas to meet. These were in the thousands and difficult to meet, for they had to be documented with the proper procedure and paperwork. Even though they were secret, and the charges were trumped up — each arrest followed a specific procedure, so officials were scrambling to meet quotes. Those who did not meet them were executed, much like the Ukrainian KGB operative Yhezov (See Timothy Snyder; *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*, 2010.)

Peter was not the only one interrogated in an attempt to implicate Andryusha. The report also includes a summary of the interrogation of Maria and their friend Mikhail (Misha) Voinsvensky. It should be noted that at the time, people brought in for interrogation often cracked under the terrible pressure and denounced others; in fact, that was the point of these exercises — to incriminate people and get confessions, convictions, executions to meet those quotas. However, though the interrogators kept pushing and threatening, none of his friends or relatives ever implicated him in any anti-Soviet activity, even under the most frightening questioning and threats of torture. As a Ukrainian scholar who helped retrieve the documents remarked, “He had a loyal circle of friends.”

***Interrogation Report (supplementary)***

*of accused (Stavrakis), Andrey Vladimirovich  
September 23, 1938*

Question: *Tell me about life of your mother, Tatyana Shkuratova.*

Answer: *My mother, Tatyana Vladimirovna Shuratova, was a kind of rather careless and submissive woman, born in doctor's family. She lived with [my] father [till 1917], but then divorced and remarried immediately to a fitness trainer Leonid Kashinsky. Currently she is married to her 3rd husband – Mr. Shkuratov, with whom she currently lives.*

*She was not engaged in our upbringing, and even was not interested in it. When she learned that I live with my grandmother – Maria Patrikeevna – she never came to visit me.*

*(signed)*

Question: *The investigating authorities have information about hostile counter-revolutionary activities of your grandmother, Maria Patrikeevna. I suggest that you give us your truthful testimony about that.*

Answer: *Yes, I know that my grandmother Maria Patrikeevna was arrested by GPU / NKVD in 1927 and later in 1937 for anti-Soviet propaganda. She lived with me, and since we had no income to live on, her son/ my uncle Andrey Andreyevich [unintelligible], who worked in Kaganovich District of Kiev Region helped us from time to time. My father also helped us sending things and money.*

*This report is written from my words correctly, I read it, and hereby undersign*

*Accused (signed)*

*The report is compiled by (signed)*

*[unintelligible] (signed)*

*Department IV [unintelligible]*

In early 1939 Andryusha was mysteriously set free. No one knows exactly why, and no reason was ever given. One day he simply appeared at Peter's house, and the two boys went to Peter's room where they tried to figure out the details. There are two possible explanations, however. The first is that with the approach of war with Nazi Germany, the government decided to preserve the young men who would be needed to fight. Second, around that time, Stalin turned on the people whom he had earlier directed to carry out the purges. For example, that is when Yezhov and everyone under him were arrested and shot.

Essentially, the purgers themselves were purged. Or, as Helen Stavrakis put it succinctly, "The sharks ate each other!" So, it is possible that Andryusha was released because of a power change. Perhaps the man who interrogated Peter, one Kovalyuk, was himself removed and came to a bad end. If that were the case, then anyone who followed in his footsteps would have been very careful to deny involvement in any projects he had started.

Andryusha's freedom, however, was short lived. When the Soviet Union was dragged into WWII, he was immediately drafted into the Red Army and sent to the German front. On 22 June 1941, the Germans launched Operation Barbarossa, a notoriously famous surprise attack on the totally unequipped and unprepared Soviet forces, and our ill-fated Andryusha fell on that first day of battle and was never heard from again. Where he was laid to rest, or even if he had been properly buried, remains unknown. Peter missed his friend all his life. He commented that "If he were alive, I would have been the first person he would have contacted." Andryusha was 23 years old.



Blagoveshenskaya Church, where Andryusha was baptized before its destruction. Kiev, Ukraine. Unknown Photographer.



Blagoveshenskaya Church after destruction in 1935, Kiev, Ukraine. Unknown photographer. In his push for elimination of religion, Stalin blew up a number of historic and magnificent churches all over the old empire. Andryusha's church suffered this fate as well.

## CHAPTER 4

### Peter's Account of His Interrogation

On 25 September 1938, Peter received a handwritten note on a scrap of paper demanding that he present himself for questioning to Lukyanovka Prison that day at midnight. His recounting of that event follows below in his own words as written in a letter to me (Kathy) in 1996.



Portrait of Peter around the time when he had to go for an interrogation to Lukyanovka Prison regarding his nephew and friend, Andryusha.

• This will be a description of an event in my life many  
• years ago, in the year 1938, involving one memorable hour  
• I spent with my friend and nephew, Andrew (son of my  
• cousin) in Lukyanovka, the largest jail in Kiev. Andrew was only  
• six months younger than I was and was my best friend beyond any  
• doubt. He was probably killed in the first German assault on the USSR, at  
• the beginning of this major stupidity which we now call World War II. I will  
• say a few words about the end of his short life before talking of his earlier  
• arrest by the MVD (KGB).

• In 1941, Andrew was placed near the  
• Polish border where two big powers,  
• Russia and Germany, had been  
• stationed across from each other for  
• several weeks. June 22, 1941, was a  
• memorable date for millions of people.  
• On that day, at 5 a.m., the Germans  
• launched devastating artillery fire,  
• and the Russians, who were asleep  
• and completely unprepared, were hit  
• hard. (This was typical for Russians!)  
• Andrew was there, and no one has  
• heard from him since that day. There  
• was never any official account of dead  
• or wounded soldiers in the Russian army.

• The last time I spoke with him was one week before the beginning of the  
• war on 15 June 1941. He came home on leave for a few days and assured me  
• that he would “defend Communist Mother Russia” only to the extent he was  
• forced to by his commanders. I know he is dead, because if he had survived,  
• I would be the first person he would want to see.

• That was his end, now the beginning. Andrew was born in 1917. His mother,  
• Tatiana (Tanya) was an exceptionally beautiful woman from a rich Russian  
• family. Her husband also belonged to the Russian upper-class *pomeschiki*  
• and was an officer in the White Army (the tsar’s) during the revolution. With



Lukyanovka Prison as shown on a postcard around 1900. It looks pretty much the same today, except that the city has grown up all around it. (Photo credit: Wikipedia)

the advance of the Reds, he retreated west with other White Army officers and finally remained somewhere in Yugoslavia. Andrew remained in Kiev and never saw his father. He was raised by his mother and grandmother to be an honest, intelligent, pleasant young man, which was especially remarkable considering their circumstances. The women were not used to work or trained for it, and they had no money, often no food, and no clothes.

I was brought up in much better conditions – exceptional, I would say. My father was a professor in the medical university and had a large private practice. This permitted him not to starve or freeze when many others did. My mother frequently gave my clothes to Andrew, since we were about the same size. During the most difficult years, he came to our home almost daily to eat. One good meal a day means a lot when there is nothing else.

Andrew's life was clouded by repressions against him carried out by the famous Russian Secret Police (GPU at that time—MVD now). Usually it worked like this: A sharp ring of the doorbell in the early morning hours (one-two a.m.) This was aimed for psychological effect: you are sleeping quietly in your bed and suddenly awakened by a jarring doorbell or hard knock at the door. When you opened the door, you would see two or three men with a threatening appearance.

One of the men would state bluntly that they are members of the GPU and came to find signs or evidence of anti-government activity or of conspiracy against the Young Soviet Republic by people with ties to the West (meaning Andrew's father in Yugoslavia). The little boy and the two terrified women would be speechless, trying to prepare themselves mentally for any eventuality. They knew that within minutes the men would start searching the house, turning it upside down. The search was always thorough and included all the possible places where gold, foreign currency, or a weapon, may be hidden. Once, Andrew told me, they even emptied a bucket of soapy water. Usually, they found no gold currency or weapons, and they left the two women and the little boy in peace for at least a while.

But no one could know how it would end, who would be left home and who would have to leave with the men. And once a member of your family was abducted by them, one would never know where he would be or if he would ever return. The questions kept burning like a hot coal: "Will he stay alive? Will I ever see him again?"

My friend was honored by many such visits. However, in the years 1937–38, they became especially frequent and the men more brutal.

At the time of this story in 1938, Andrew was a student in the university. He was 20 and not a little boy anymore. One time the regular "early morning visit" took place and everything went according to routine until the end.



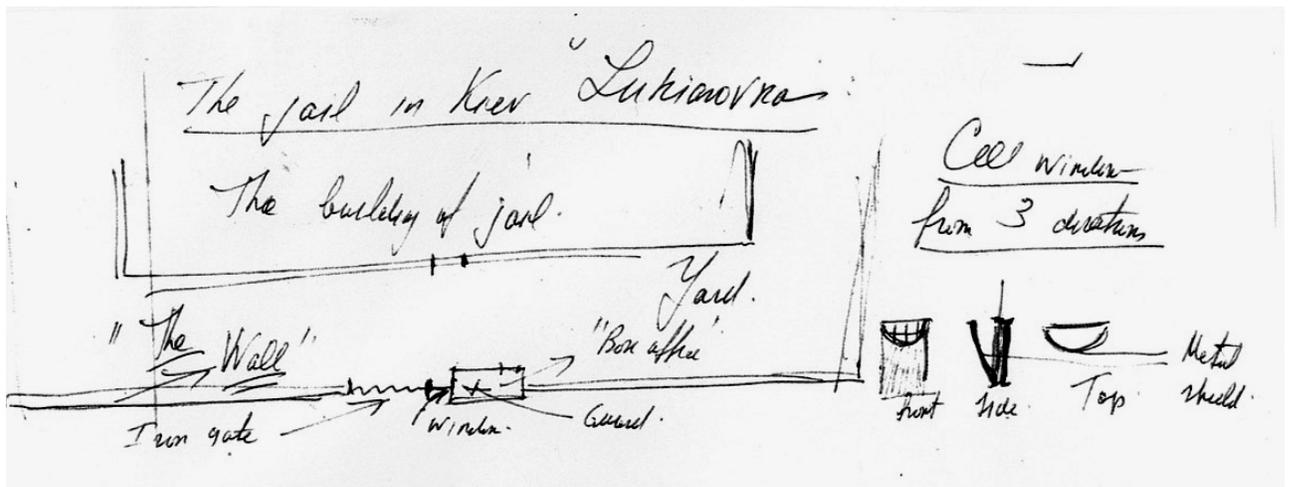
Living quarters inside Lukyanovka prison. (Photo credit: Radio Free Europe Ukrainepost)

• Andrew was ordered to get ready within five minutes and leave with the  
 • men. I found out from his grandmother the next day. She was heartbroken  
 • and cried for a long time.

• There was no way to find out where he was or the reason for his arrest, and  
 • certainly not when, if ever, he was coming home. Days, weeks, months  
 • passed with no news. One day I returned from medical school late in the  
 • afternoon, and my wife and mother met me at the door. You could see at  
 • once that something was wrong. Silently they passed me a small note  
 • written in pencil. It said only that I am requested to be at the main jail house  
 • in Kiev (Lukyanovka) at midnight for an interview. It was signed "Inspector  
 • Kovalyuk, investigator."

• At midnight I was at the main gate with my wife.

Peter's diagram of the outer courtyard, the guard gate, and the entrance to the prison as it still remains to this day.



A few words about the famous Lukyanovka Jail. At the time of this story it housed, by an unofficial estimate, about 12,000 Russian people from all walks of life: physicians, agronomers/agricultural workers, engineers, biologists, army officers, as well as workers or peasants. The building was large, about six stories, and located in the middle of a big yard surrounded by a huge concrete wall. There was a heavy metal gate in the middle, and to the right side of this gate, there was a small booth with a window and an armed guard behind it, like a theatre box office window, except it was covered in black steel.

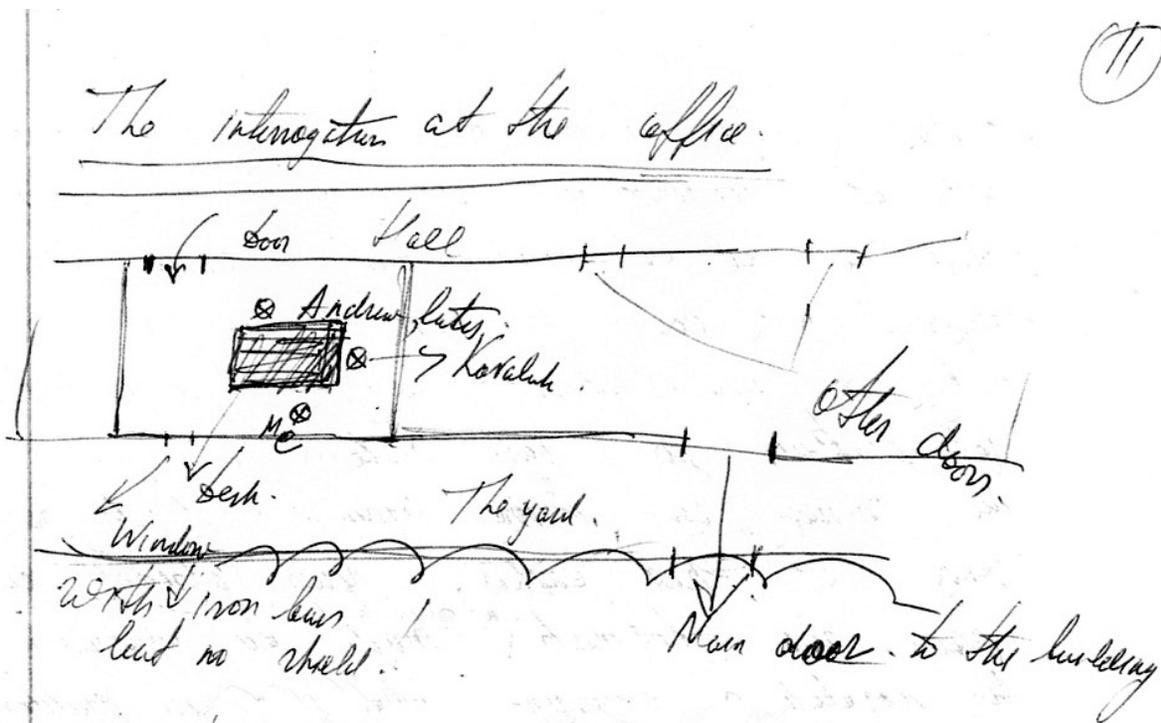
I arrived at the "box office window" and handed my note through the window. The effect was like magic. The guard immediately brought me to the huge gate, and we entered the yard. There was nobody and nothing in it. The place was empty and silent. The dark building before us had many windows, all protected by a heavy metal grill and many also had a heavy metal shield which covered the window except for the upper part. One could guess that these windows belonged to the cells with prisoners, and the shields were meant to allow some daylight into the room while preventing any communication with the outside world.

I was conducted inside the building through a long hall, into a small office and seated beside a large table. We didn't meet one soul during the trip through the gate, yard, hall, and into the office. The guard told me to wait there for the man named Kovalyuk and left me alone. Several files of papers were lying on the other side of the table. I wondered why I was left alone with the papers and finally concluded that I was probably being watched to see if I would look through them. I did not touch them. In about 5-10 minutes my man arrived. He was young, in his late thirties, with short hair. And his face...Well, usually people say that in frightening situations like this they always remember a face. I am different. I will be 62 next week, and in my life I have seen many people. The ones who were kind, intelligent, understanding, I remember best and can describe years later. But faces like that of Kovalyuk, I can't remember.

The events which followed, however, I will never forget. The office was small and empty. There was nothing on the walls. Close to the wall near the entrance door was a large table or desk with three chairs. I was seated opposite the door. On my right sat Kovalyuk and the chair closest to the door was empty.

Kovalyuk leafed slowly through the thick files lying close to him, turned his face to me, and asked if I knew Andrew. This was the first I had heard anything of Andrew in six months.

My reply was, "I know him very well. He is my best friend."



Peter's diagram of the inner interrogation room where he was taken and questioned.

• The next question followed rapidly, "This is very fortunate because we need some information about him." And after a short pause, "Do you know he is under arrest?"

• "I am aware of that," I replied.

• I will describe the following scene as closely to the facts as I can, given that 41 years separate me from that time and place.

• Kovalyuk: "Would you be so kind as to tell us if you know anything about your friend that would indicate his anti-government attitude or activities?"

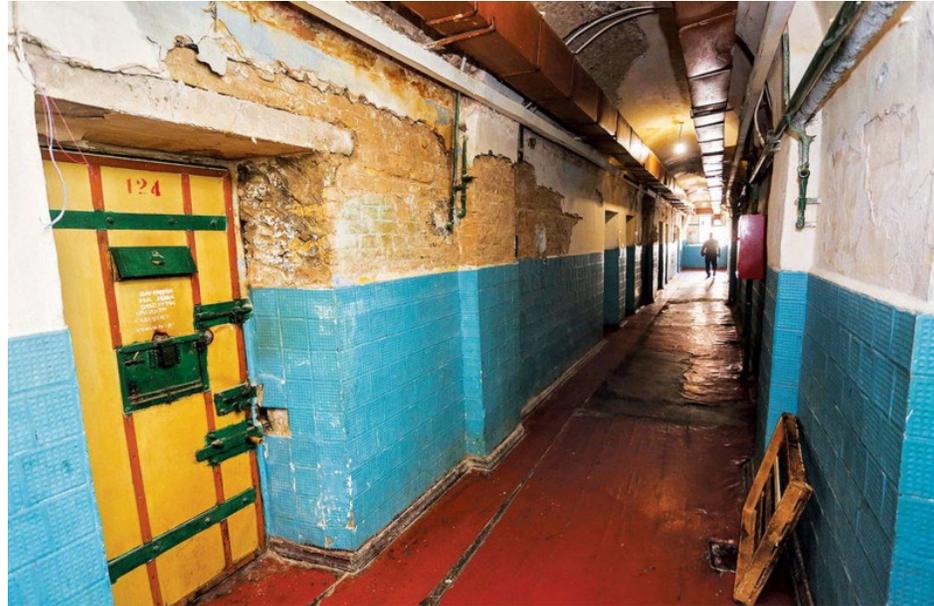
• I said I didn't.

• Kovalyuk: (Still entirely polite) "Maybe you did not understand me well. It does not need to be an overtly hostile action or conspiracy. It could be some remark of a minor nature or some statement which would not be flattering to our State?"

• My answer was firm. "I do not know of that either. I never saw or heard Andrew make such statements."

• Mr. Kovalyuk's appearance changed very suddenly. He leaned his chair backwards so that it remained balanced on its rear legs and placed his hands firmly on the desk to maintain balance and probably to emphasize his strength. Then he looked at me sternly and said in a loud voice, "Do you suppose then that the government of the USSR consists of some kind of a band of criminals who would arrest innocent people?"

Lukyanovka prison inside, a hallway that Peter could have passed through and where Andryusha spent nine months under torture. (Photo credit: Kievpost.com)



•  
• I had no choice in answering this time, “No, I do not.”  
•  
• Following this outburst, he asked a few more questions. None of them made  
• much sense to me. At one point he asked me if Andrew had correspondence  
• with his father in exile. I answered yes, and this turned out to be my one  
• minor mistake. My friend had tried to convince them that he never wrote to  
• or received letters from his father, but I didn’t know that.  
•  
• After about half an hour of discussion my man told me suddenly that  
• further interrogation would require Andrew’s presence. He rang a bell and  
• an armed guard appeared, a big pistol at his belt, and stood silently as he  
• was ordered to bring Andrew in. The guard disappeared in an instant, and a  
• few minutes later returned with my friend. I was shocked by the condition  
• Andrew was in. His face was yellowish and pale, he had lost a lot of weight,  
• and he appeared weak and short of breath. (The shortness of breath had a  
• special reason: prisoners were usually forced to run when moved from their  
• cells). He looked bewildered when he entered and said only, “Hello, Peter.”  
•  
• Andrew was seated opposite me, and the interrogation continued. It  
• brought only one “fruit” for the investigator: the discrepancy regarding the  
• correspondence with Andrew’s father. About an hour after my arrival, the  
• interview was abruptly terminated. The prisoner was returned to his cell,  
• and to my surprise, I was permitted to go home. For three more months, no  
• one heard anything of Andrew. Then one early afternoon the phone rang  
• at home, and Andrew asked if he could see me at once. About ten minutes  
• later he walked into my room. He looked much better, though he was still  
• markedly pale and drawn. He had been released from jail about one hour  
• ago and came to see me first, before going home.  
•

•  
•  
• He asked me to check all the doors and windows carefully before starting  
• the account of his nine-month ordeal. For several months, he heard nothing  
• and spent his time in a cell which was probably built for 4–6 prisoners and  
• now housed about 40 men. The window was obstructed by a metal shield  
• through which one could see only a sliver of sky. No fresh air could get  
• through, as it was permanently closed. The only source of “fresh air” was  
• a crack below the door leading to the hall and the inmates took turns near  
• this crack enjoying “whiffs of fresh air” for a short time. The food consisted  
• of soups and a small amount of bread twice a day. Occasionally a fresh  
• onion head appeared in the soup, which probably prevented scurvy.  
•



Lukyanovka Prison inside.  
Its oldest block known as  
“Katenka.”

•  
•  
• There were people of various professions, and at times they exchanged  
• views on their situation and their uncertain future. One agronomist assured  
• Andrew that a pig would never survive more than three days in the condi-  
• tions in which they were currently living. After several months of waiting,  
• Andrew was finally called for “interrogation.” A paper listing all his crimes  
• against the USSR was read to him. It was five pages long! It included clan-  
• destine work at home and criminal connections with the West through his  
• emigrated father. Andrew refused to sign his “confession.”  
•

•  
•  
• The events that followed were a routine procedure for that time. He was  
• brutally beaten and returned to his cell. More “interrogations,” more refusals  
• to sign, more beatings followed. As a result of the last beating, Andrew was  
• unable to walk back to his cell, and he was carried in. Finally, he gave up  
• and signed the paper. The beatings stopped, and usually the sentencing  
•



# Appendices

## APPENDIX 1

### **Other Farimskaya Sisters (unidentified photos)**



Unknown child from the Farimski or Stavrakis family.

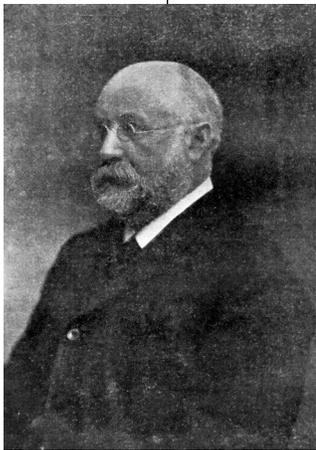
## APPENDIX 2 Storozhenko Ancestors



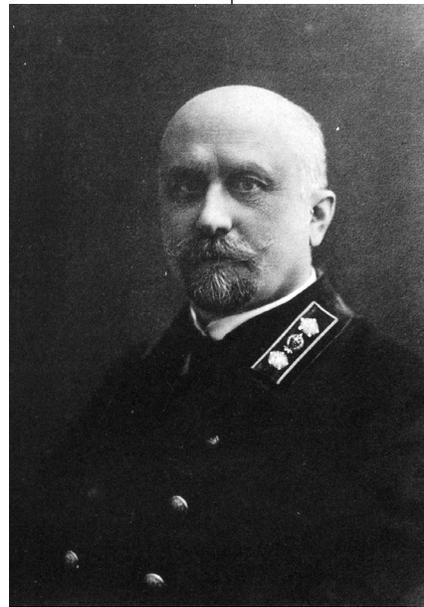
The Storozhenko family archive, presumably in Kiev.



Vladimir Andreevich Storozhenko (1820–1895), father of Andrei Vladimirovich, from the Storozhenko Family Archive. He held the title “Kammer-junker,” which is the rank just below Chamberlain (K-5 and K-6 as defined in the official Table of Ranks), literally translated as “young gentleman of the bedchamber in the tsar’s service.



Andrei Vladimirovich Storozhenko, (1857–1926) from Russian Wikipedia. He was the grandfather of Andryusha (Andrei V. S.). His wife was Maria Ilyashenko. On the wedding picture of Tanya’s and Vladimir’s wedding — above — Andrei is #8 standing to the left of his son, the groom, Vladimir Andreevich Storozhenko, father of Andryusha.



Nicolai Vladimirovich Storozhenko, brother of Andrei, uncle of the groom in the wedding picture (#15), great uncle of Andryusha, also a historian. (Photo credit: Russian Wikipedia)

APPENDIX 3

**Andryusha's KGB Record**

On 9 March 1938, he was arrested.

The interrogation is from November 4, 1938.

Tanya from KGB files

V

Вопрос Сидорову распра-  
вал материальными средствами  
Контрреволюционной деятельности  
Раисы Бадюхи Марии Пятриковны  
предсказано быть продолжителем  
Отвечает: Знаю, что моя бабушка  
Мария Пятриковна арестовывалась  
Органами Г. П. У. НКВД в 1927 году  
и в 1934 г. за антисоветскую пропаганду.  
Жила она при мне, а так как  
средств на существование у нас не  
было то наш повар Уфедя мой дядя  
и сын Андрей Андреевич Рогов  
работавшими в Харьковском районе  
России вместе с моим отцом по  
моей посылкам и денежным переводам.  
Троцкий записан с матерью  
в то время как предположительно  
в том районе вместе с  
Александром Сидоровым  
Промышленность завода Зависим

### **23 September 1938**

Later, she married Shkuratov with whom she is still living in 1938. She was not involved or interested in my upbringing. Even she did not interest herself in the fact that I live with my grandmother Patreekeva. My mother has not come one time to visit me.

They accuse the grandmother of contra-Revolution activity.

He says he his grandmother was arrested for anti-Soviet propaganda in 1927 and 1934. She was grandmother with me and we had no income so we lived off the occasional help from my uncle her son Andrei Andreivich. He was a doctor and he lived and worked in the Gaganovicheski Rayon of Kiev Oblast. And my father helped with packages and money transfers.

### **KGB form: 25 April 1938**

Before interrogation this is the accusation form:

He is student,

Born in Kiev

Social Class: he answers that he is from Patomstvini Dvoran Hereditary Gentry

Another form: Accusation

He was involved in anti soviet work which was benefitting a foreign power. He was accused of spying.

The numbers of the statute he was accused of breaking: 1954 6 and 54-10 criminal code of Ukrainian CCCp (recorded 3/1/39) (that is the spying accusation)

### **7 March, 1938**

He was first accused of 54 – 10-11. He lived on Raiterskaya 12/1. The accusation is that he was part of some organization that was anti revolutionary.

The verdict in this form is that he must be kept under guard in the Kiev prison and not set free.

### **September 1938 another form**

They ask about his family

His mother is working is working in a Kobelnaya factory. And his father is living Yugoslakia.

According to Valery – none of the other witnesses accused him of anti revolutionary activity.

### **9 March 1938**

This is a search document. They searched his apartment and this may be the date he was arrested. They took his passport and he had two kinds of shells; 20 caliber and 12 caliber shells. They confiscated shells and passport. Apparently no gun, but 4 kg of powder.

They repeat he had 23 shells and 4 kg of explosive.

### **Another form 21 September 1938**

What they accuse him of the following:

Say he is the son of an officer of the White Army.

His father was a member ROVS

That he had regular contact with his father

And as a student he was involved in anti-Soviet organizing and propaganda  
Established in 1924 with is Baron Rango's army

They don't have enough evidence and they will keep him another month while they collect more evidence against him on these accusations. This is the second time they extend his time in prison.

He is underguard in Kiev prison from 8 March 1938 but actually 9th March.

### **4 December 1938**

He was interrogated 5 times. He was arraigned on 25 April 1932

They sent his file in to the NKV of the whole SSR and the commission returned it for more investigation. So they extend his imprisonment until 5 January 1939. This is the third extension.

They sent his file to the SSRR NKV in November and it was apparently returned in 1938.

Interrogation about his family

Where do you relatives lives.

I come from landed gentry. My father is — name — born in 1897. He comes from a Pomeschik family. In 1917 he was called with the Tsars army in the time of the October Revolution because he was an officer in it. He escaped to China.

In 1921 my father returned to the USSR and entered work for Kiev telegraph as a radio telegrapher.

Because my grandfather left for Yugoslavia in 1921 and had there they had large estate my father also left in 1922 to join his father in Yugoslavia and he is still living there.

My mother lives in Kiev and works ceramic or tile factory.

From 1920 to 1936 he was living and being taken care of by my uncle. They lived in his father. His uncle is working right now as doctor in Gaganovich Rayon of Kiev Oblast.

1936 got a stipend for university and became independent and got partial material help from his uncle.

Until then until he was arrested he was a student Kiev State University in the geology faculty.

He says he has not contact with relatives abroad.

He lists his friends:

Peter Stavrakis – lives on Lenin #34  
others

He is accused and denies being involved in Anti Soviet activity

### **Pop's interrogation took place on 25 September 1938**

Packages received from his father to Andryusha — 1936 to fall of 1937 his grandmother went to live with his uncle. During that time he received 3 packages from his father. He says that is all his contact.

Somewhere he says he received money from his father and grandfather.

Until 1936 his grandmother received packages and in 1937 his grandmother was gone and he received

Grandmother went to live with Andrei in 1937 and he got two packages in his own name from his father. Before that all the packages were in his grandmother's name.

He says he did not exchange written correspondence. They say the grandmother said he was corresponding with the grandmother. He denied it and he testifies that he did not receive money. They ask if grandma was writing to her son and he said yes. She did write to his father but he did not.

They accuse him of wanting to leave and go to Yugoslavia. He said no. They say his friends say he said that. He says he said about going abroad but as a youth or kid. Pop also is asked that question and answers it the same way. They talked of traveling abroad when they were kids.



## Letter from Andryusha to Peter and Helen After 1938

*Hello, dear Petya and Lena!*

*Now I can almost undisturbedly describe everything. Since the last letter you received from me, so many events happened that I will be able to tell you all the details only when I come back to Kiev.*

*First, our foreman went to Kiev and there he was drafted to the army for 45 days. My boss, as I already told you, is drunk almost all the time, and practically all geological part of the job was on me. After foreman departure, our authorities, knowing the situation, suggested me to become a chief of geological party, and therefore to arrive to Kiev immediately to be assigned officially. I was fiercely resisting and as a result was managed to reject it. So, I am still a junior geologist, a poor student-trainee.*

*Before this issue was finally resolved, I practically have been in charge of all aspects of the work: settling scandals with workers, responding to menacing telegrams from Kiev, squeezing money from the bank, and so on, and so on. Besides all that,*

- Page 2 -

*I had to handle my direct duties, i.e. geological survey.*

*That is pretty much all news in regard to my work, however if it was the only problem then it still would be possible to bear it.*

*Now, please listen about a different issue. I will tell you about all the related details when I'm back to Kiev, since it's more complicated than the first one.*

*I met a woman, mother of two kids, married to her husband, and I was reckless enough to fall in love with her (please don't smile, since it is more serious than might seem). She was ready to give up everything she had and to become my wife. I was so fascinated by her that I completely lost my head and almost agreed to that, but the mind finally prevailed, so we both came to the conclusion that this is not possible.*

*I hope that you can understand me. Please don't discuss it in your letters and don't chat about it between you.*

*Without regard to all this, I was lucky to get a 4-buckets' size barrel and prepared cherry liquor in it – so now I got a luxury to drink it by little throughout all the winter.*

*It's a pity, Petya, that I cannot see how you look after the state exams, but I am very glad that everything ended successfully.*

*What have you decided about your possible trip to Crimea, that you told me about last spring? I think it would be a very good option to relax a little bit.*

*I still continue to send money to Grandma – there's a possibility to buy something over there.*

*After all my adventures I lost weight a little bit, but it's OK – in a couple of days everything will get back to normal (that woman has to go to Kiev soon), so within next month and a half I am going to recover.*

*I hope that despite the fact that you are now a doctor, we still remain best friends.*

*Andrey*

*P.S. Keep in mind Petya, that during the summer Lena should gain 5-6 kilograms of weight.*

*Hello, dear Petenka! You look like a slimmed, emaciated, poetically pale-faced, grass-widower.*

*According to my estimate, you still have two exams to pass, and that's it. I wonder, how it will go, hopefully as successfully as the previous ones. I can only imagine how hard it is for you now – [ unintelligible ] (ink is over, but an inkbottle is in Kiev) wonderful weather, the moon is shining, beautiful girls walking down the street (sorry, I forgot that you cannot even look at them), but you have to cram how many shitholes should have this or that toilet room.*

*You are obviously inspired by the thought, that when you finish this tediousness then you'll be able to enjoy all earthly goods, and what's the most delightful – hopes.*

*Probably, you are surprised that I launched into a discourse on abstract topics, and you might think that I hit the lyrics from idleness, but it's not true.*

*I rush for days as a madman with my backpack, hammer, bag,*

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*and compass on ravines, crushing stones, describe every square meter of exposure in details, mapping outputs of layers, and so on. It's very hard, especially because Glazkin is still in Kiev, probably drinking heavily and unable to come back.*

*Besides strictly geological job, I have to deal with many different institutions to get all sorts of materials, ammonal, and so on. What makes it somewhat simpler is that our foreman has a bicycle, which he allows me to use without limitations. So far he is a relatively nice person, however we'll see what happens later.*

*I forgot to tell you about one more activity that takes a lot of my time – photography. The pictures are mostly taken by the foreman, and I am responsible for developing and printing. Doing that myself I am going to have the highest quality pictures imaginable, although I have to use matches for light. Due to that I have less sleeping than usual.*

*So far, we have no clear schedule for work and rest, so basically the whole day is busy. Thanks to that I feel myself sometimes as a 60-years-old man, sometimes as a newborn baby, however even if it was different, there's nothing here what would be worth paying attention to. A collector woman, who lives next hut and helps me to develop films sometimes, does not impress me at all, while local girls show too much respect to me, calling me "mister engineer" and addressing me by my patronymic name. Well, I have to think over how to solve this problem. There are also my colleagues' wives here, however, as I already mentioned, there's no urgent need in this yet.*

*I have to spend a lot of money so far, although milk costs just one ruble per liter here.*

*My room is very nice-looking: three windows with a river view, a table, a bed and a bench. There's a huge iconostasis on a wall directly opposite the large portrait of Lenin.*

*Well, perhaps I was too carried away by lengthy descriptions, while it's time for you to study, and for me – to sleep.*

*Please pass my best regards to Lena, [ unintelligible ] and E.V.*

*I wonder how the things are going with your litigation.*

*You can respond to this address: Antonovo village, Odessa region, Gaivoron district, Geological Field Party, attention: A.V. Storozhenko.*

*I already made friends with the postman and he promised to deliver letters to me even with only the last name indicated.*

*If you meet The Tall please pass my regards to him too. Bye,*

*Andrey*

