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JOURNEY THROUGH HISTORY

MEMOIRS

WANDA STACHIEWICZ

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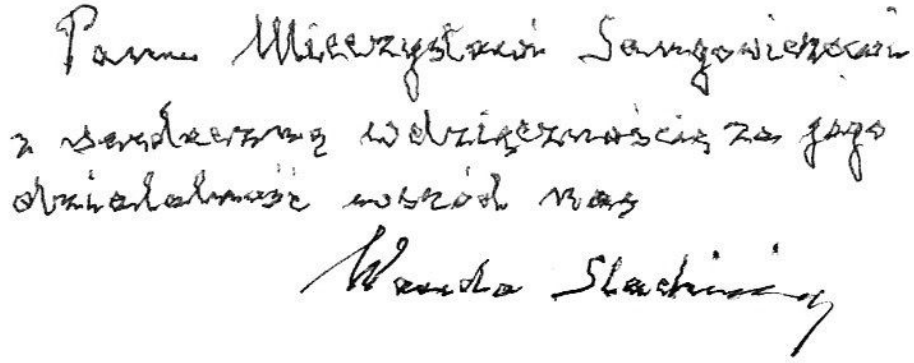
Memoirs



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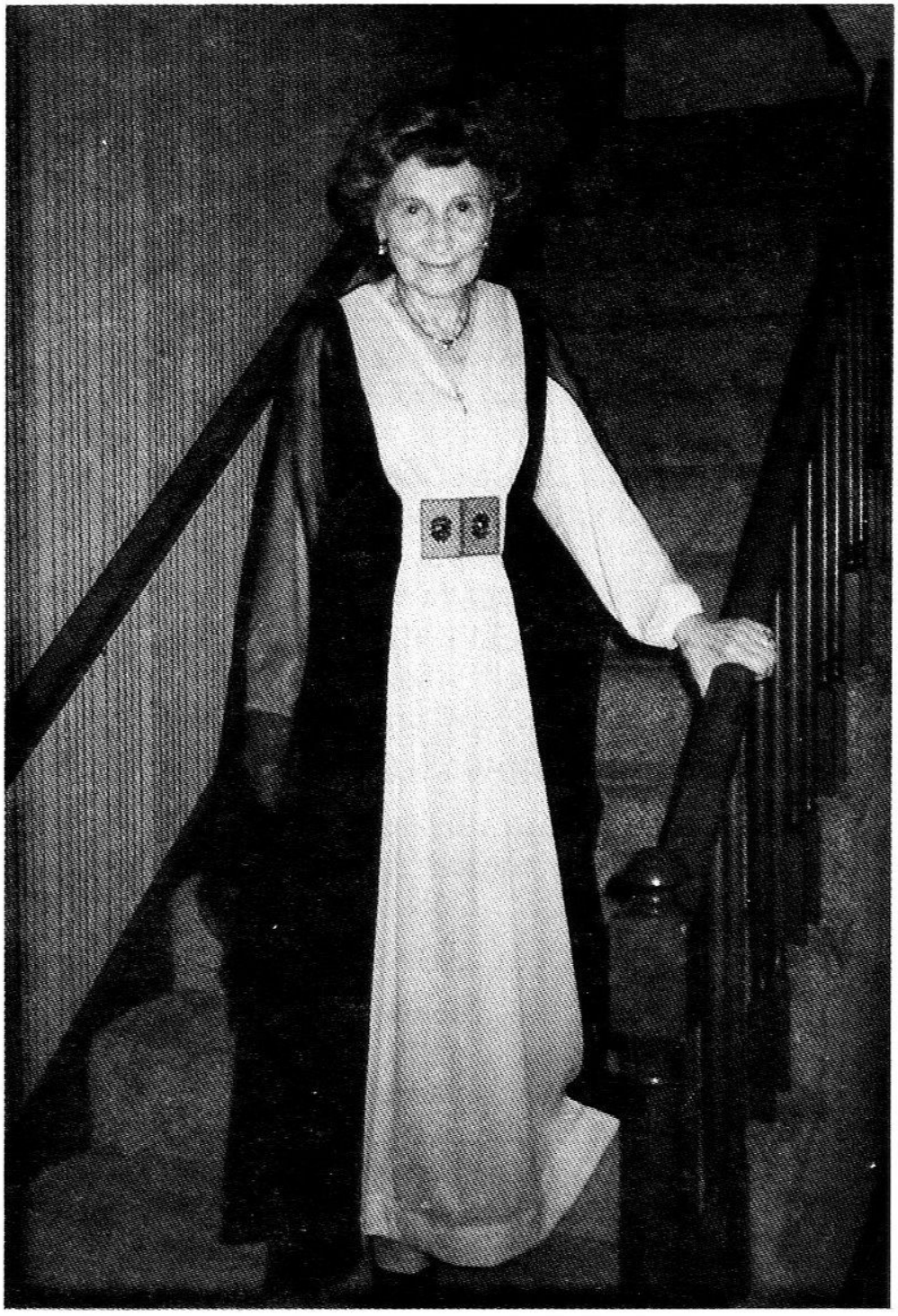
To the memory of my husband



The Author Wanda Stachiewicz in 1984

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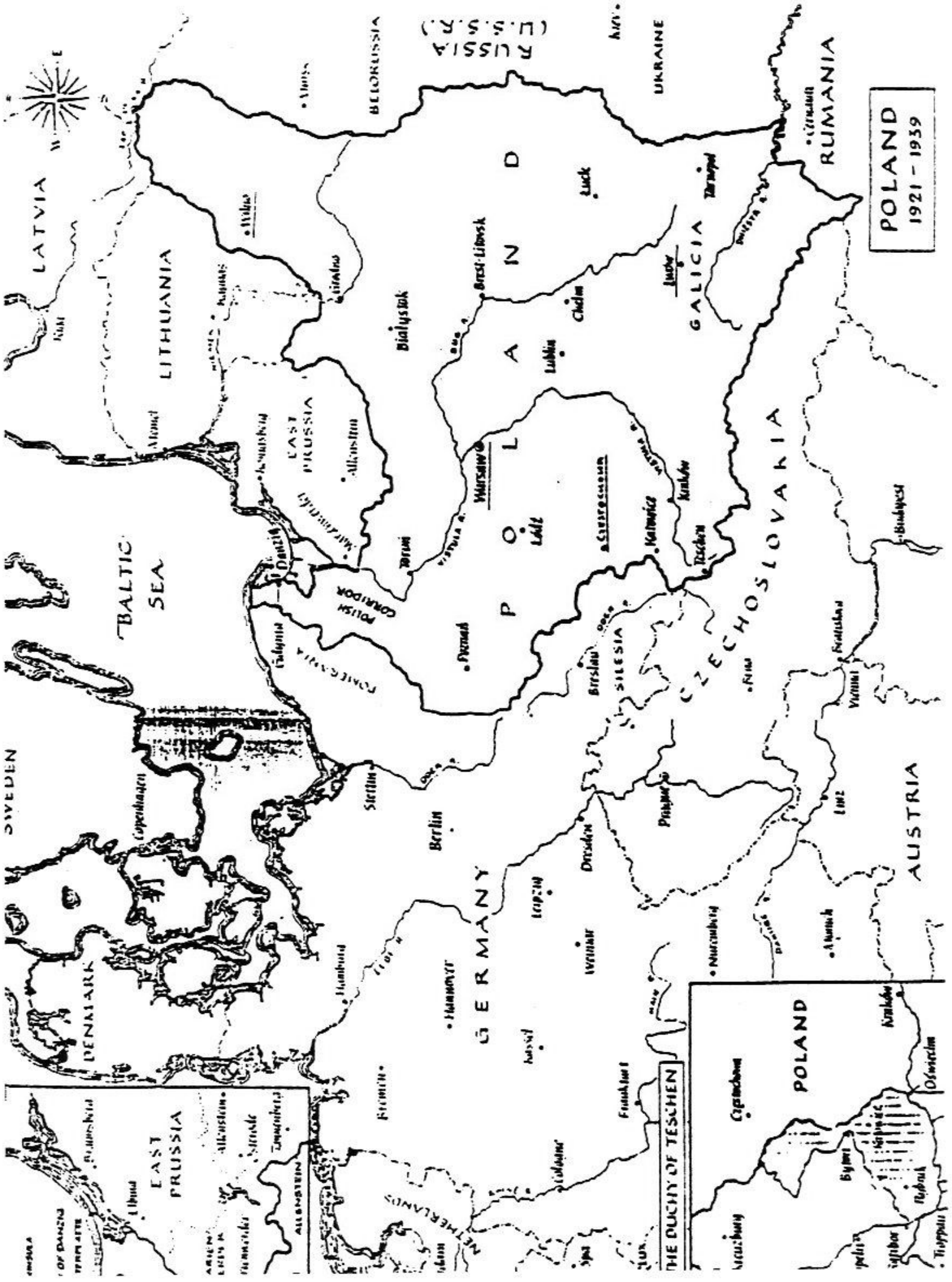
POLAND
1921 - 1939
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POLAND
EAST PRUSSIA

McGill University

David L. Johnston
Principal and Vice-Chancellor
F. Cyril James Building (514) 392-8347

January 11, 1985

Mrs. Wanda Stachiewicz
358 Toyon Avenue
Los Altos, California 94022
U.S.A.

Dear Mrs. Stachiewicz,

I received your letter with the preliminary copy of your Memoirs and I set them aside so that I could read them at leisure. I have now done so and I want to tell you that I read them entirely at one sitting into the wee small hours of the morning. To me, they were fascinating.

Your Memoirs constitute an exciting statement of courage, the irrepressible desire for freedom, the liberating force of education and artistic cultivation in life, the devastating set-back of political strife and war, and the essentially redeeming qualities of human compassion and concern for the individual and for civilisation. It is hard to imagine one person having lived through and overcome so many vicissitudes and changed circumstances in one life, but yours is an essentially triumphant and idealistic statement.

I know that you completed these Memoirs at the request of the Department of Multiculturalism which is seeking to identify and reinforce the many different traditions of Canadian life and to emphasise how the diversity of those traditions enriches life for all. I believe that you have magnificently fulfilled that mandate and that your Memoirs constitute a most exciting affirmation of this Canadian ideal, while at the same time reaffirming so eloquently the magnificent traditions of Polish civilisation.

With warmest regards and renewed congratulations, I am,

Yours sincerely,

D.L. Johnston

Postal address: 845 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, PQ, Canada H3A 2T5

PROLOGUE

The events described in the first part of the memoirs of Mrs. Wanda Stachiewicz (pronounced Vanda Stakievich) took place in Poland - a country often called" the rampart of Western civilization". Its ten centuries of turbulent history and its constant struggle against its powerful neighbours, Germany and Russia, have left a deep imprint on the character of its people. Unfortunately, neither Poland itself, nor its history and traditions, are well known to Westerners. Hence, a brief summary of major historical events, names and places may be of help to the reader.

Poland, in union with Lithuania and Ruthenia, was one of the largest states in Europe, from the 14th through 17th centuries, stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea. It was ruled by the hereditary kings of the Jagiellonian dynasty until the late 16th century. Subsequently, a unique system of elected kings was introduced, which lasted until the end of the 18th century.

Poland adopted Christianity in the 10th Century, embracing Western civilization and becoming its easternmost outpost.

Standing at the crossroads of East and West, between the aggressive Germanic tribes on one side, and the barbaric Russians on the other, Poland, from the beginning of its history, was forced to defend its territory against its neighbours.

Constant wars, coupled with internal dissension, weakened the country to the point where it could no longer defend itself.

In 1772, 1793, and 1795, three successive partitions of Poland among its neighbours - Russia, Austria, and Prussia (Germany) - took place, and Poland disappeared from the map of Europe.

The brutal occupation, particularly by the Russians, resulted in successive national uprising in 1830 and 1863, which were savagely put down by Russian troops. The author's parents were born in the period following the bloody uprising of 1863.

When the author was born, Poland did not exist as an independent country. Until the outbreak of World War I, the resistance continued underground, culminating in the formation, in 1914, in the part of Poland occupied by Austria, of

the Polish Legion, which was to become the nucleus of the future Polish Armed Forces. The Legion fought against the Russians under the leadership of Joseph Pilsudski, a man of unusual political foresight and a military genius. After Poland regained its independence in 1918, the Polish Army, under his command, singlehandedly defeated the Bolshevik armies at the gates of Warsaw in 1920, saving Europe from Communism.

During the partitions, the author's family lived in the zone occupied by Austria, in the city of Lwow (Lvov, pronounced Lvoov). This city had always belonged to Poland, and after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the defeat of the Soviet armies in 1920, it was formally returned to Poland by the Treaty of Riga in 1921. After World War II, however, it was given to the Russians by the Allied powers, at the Yalta Conference in 1945, and is now in the Soviet Union.

Mrs. Stachiewicz's mother came from a well-to-do family who had a sugar-beet plantation and land holdings in the part of the Ukraine which had belonged to Poland before the partitions. She describes vividly the happy childhood years she spent at her grandparents' country estate prior to World War I. Her father was a university professor of international renown, Rector of the University of Lwow. She married Colonel Waclaw (pronounced Vatzlav) Stachiewicz, an officer in Marshal Pilsudski's Polish Legion, who later became Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Army. This happy union lasted for over half a century, until the General's death in 1973. They had three children - twin boys, Bob and Jul (pronounced Yul), and a daughter Ewa, (pronounced Eva). Jul died tragically in 1976 at the age of 51, and Eva's unexpected death occurred only eight months later.

It was after these sad events that the author decided to write the story of her early life, which is presented in Part I of this volume.

The account of her escape from Europe during World War II was written in 1943, and published under the title "I Have Been There". An updated version is included as Part II of this volume. Her life in Canada after the war is described in Part III, which was completed in 1984.

Mrs. Stachiewicz is a respected member of the Polish community in Montreal. She was twice decorated by the Government of Poland: once before the war in recognition of her contributions to the community and the state; and again by the Polish Government-in-Exile, for her pioneering work in Canada, which resulted in the creation of the Canadian branch of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences, and the Polish Library in Montreal, of which she is a founder, a long-time director and head archivist.

These memoirs span the period of the greatest upheavals of modern history and provide the reader with a fascinating account of how the courage, steadfastness, and inner strength of one individual can triumph over the adversities of fate.

President
The Polish Institute of Arts
and Sciences in Canada

PART ONE

THE WORLD NOW GONE - LIFE IN POLAND

FOREWORD

In 1940, after a harrowing escape from war-torn Europe, I came with my three children to Canada.

Canada meant security and relief from the immediate anxieties of war, and I felt thankfulness to it for having saved my children from the horrors of war. Although urged by my Canadian friends to write the story of my experiences, I somehow was never able to do it. I was too intensely occupied in starting our new life, in finding employment, in just surviving and providing an education for my children. God only knows what a hard struggle it was. It took all of my time, my resources and my energy.

I once kept a diary in those golden happy years before the war - times which seem to be like another life. It was, of course, destroyed by the war, as were my other belongings and cherished mementos.

So now, towards the end of my life, I have decided, with the assistance of the Ministry of Multiculturalism, to put together my story, which is a blend of autobiography and history, since, because of my husband's position, I had a chance to observe first-hand history in the making, and to meet and talk with people who shaped the future of Europe during those fateful years. I also want to give the younger generation a glimpse of what life was like in Europe in those days, and what it was like to be suddenly transplanted from the Old Country to the New World, with its different culture and different outlook on life.

My life has been a long one, sometimes happy and often hard, since I was born with a sensitive heart and lived through turbulent, epoch-changing times. In retrospect, it seems very colourful: the nightmare of the two World Wars; the fabulous era of new technological marvels - the automobile, the airplane, motion pictures, radio, television, man on the moon, and computers, to mention only a few. In this story, I would like to convey the flavour and the colour of my life, which also in encompasses the flavour and colour of life in Poland and in Europe at that time.

I also want this memoir to be a "thank you" to my many Canadian friends, who made my life easier and more bearable when I arrived in Canada as a war refugee in 1940.

THE GREEN YEARS - FAMILY BACKGROUND

I was born at the turn of the century into a tightly knit family of intellectual distinction. I had only one brother, nearly nine years my senior, who was exuberant and brilliant.

What do I recall? How far back do I remember? My earliest memories are of when I was four or five years old. I do remember the *aura* of my childhood, though.

My family belonged to a segment of East European society which emerged during the late 19th century and was called the "intelligentsia". In Poland as in Russia, this was a particular group which embodied the virtues and the faults of both the bourgeoisie and the nobility. This new group probably a rose out of three inter-related social factors - increasing industrialization, combined with the shortage of professionals, and the impoverishment of the landed gentry. It was an extraordinary sociological phenomenon, because it became the ideological leadership of society.

My parents lived in the city of Lwow, in that part of southern Poland called Galicia. It was a mainly agricultural area, and after the partitioning of Poland in 1795 it belonged to Austria, which eventually granted it cultural freedom, but was not really concerned with its economic development or the welfare of its people, and exploited the country somewhat. Little by little, the sons of impoverished landowners left for the towns, where, due to the growth of industry, there was a great need for professionals. However, they retained their way of life and their customs, and this subculture spread to other classes of society, even to the workers, thus perpetuating the life style of the gentry.

The emerging intelligentsia also comprised some city families, the so-called "bourgeois".

This small group intermarried and eventually became a large segment of the Polish population - dynamic, patriotic and efficient. In late 19th century Russia, this group produced the first dissidents against the Tzarist regime - the Decembrists and others.

The authorities in 19th century Austria did not know how

to categorize this new class from the point of view of taxation. Until then, there had been three categories of taxpayers: the landed gentry, the few wealthy bourgeois, and the peasants. The emergence of the intelligentsia, which rapidly became very influential, created a fourth social class. Thus, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a new, more modern social structure emerged.

Upbringing in this upper middle class was very patriarchal and much stricter than today. Also, more care was given to very young children (since Ellen Kay in Sweden introduced the "era of the child" in 1901), and to youngsters, than at the time of Dickens's David Copperfield.

We were instilled with high moral values, which had priority over pleasure - love of country, honour, loyalty, high ambitions, and broad interest, together with good manners. Our Catholic faith was an integral part of life in Poland, and was a great source of moral strength, giving purpose and meaning to our lives.

Surrounded by loving care and deep family ties, I grew up under the influence of my dearly loved parents, grandparents, and innumerable aunts and cousins, as my mother was one of nine children!

My father was a scholar, a historian and professor of law* from a family of legal background. At an early age he achieved renown as a man of learning and in his thirties was awarded the prestigious Polish Scholarly prize, for his first great book, on the origins of Christianity in Poland and Ruthenia. His election to the Polish Academy of Learning was a great distinction and honour, usually reserved for older, more accomplished scholars.

It is difficult to imagine two people more different than my father and mother. He was a man of learning, completely immersed in history and law, the author of many famous books, which were translated into German, Italian and French. At

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* Professor Dr. Ladislas Abraham, Dean of the Faculty of Law, later Rector and Chancellor of the University of Lwow, member of the Polish Academy of Learning.

involved with people and human events. She was also exceedingly lively and fearless, completely devoted to her large family of brothers and sisters. Affection and total unselfishness united my parents, even though they came from different backgrounds. My mother's family lived in the country, on the eastern borders of Poland. This land was once part of the great Polish-Lithuanian-Ruthenian Commonwealth, taken over by the Russians at the end of the 18th century. When she married my father, he was dean of one of the best known Polish universities, in Lwow, then in Austria.

The transition from her quiet, traditional country life to the more sophisticated, learned world of her husband must have been quite an experience, and she handled it with intelligence and flair.

She had to adjust to the progressive ways of the city and the times, and to my father's beliefs, which were more liberal than the very conservative and patriarchal ones of her family.

My parents' spacious house on Dlugosza Street in Lwow was my city home. It adjoined the 17th century university building, with its botanical garden, in which I spent all my leisure time, first with a ball, and later with a book.

I remember my parents' guests, some of them distinguished scholars from various countries. They would bring me wonderful presents: delicate French porcelain dolls, handcarved miniature wood furniture from Vienna, and so on.(Fortunately, it was not yet the plastic toy era!). These gifts were created by artists, and they developed my artistic taste.

I was an extremely sensitive, reserved and reflective child, a "bookish" type. Sometimes I wished to become the character about whose life I was reading. I know I wanted my life to be meaningful and worth living, and I felt I had the inner drive to accomplish something with it.

I had the faults of my years, but I never wanted to be naughty or cause trouble. My family was a model of kindness. They all loved each other and I loved them in return. Although my the same time, he was a man of rare goodness, understanding and tolerance. He was easygoing and modest, and I inherited his dedication to study and learning.

My mother was pretty, convivial, very active, concerned and

mother was rather strict, not spoiling us or giving us too much attention, I do not remember ever having any of the feelings of resentment which are so common today, and are thought to be the source of future complexes.

Very early in my life, my mother introduced me to voluntary social work, which she performed with dedication. On Sundays, she would take me to an orphanage or a blind children's home to talk or read to the children. We always brought little gifts and some good dessert or fruit. I could feel the cheer and excitement of the children, and this made me happy.

Of course, I also recall childish misdeeds, especially some of the bad tricks I played on my governesses. A succession of them still remains in my memory after they replaced my dearly loved "niania". Some were nice and smiling, some unpleasant or strict. First there was a French one, then a German, and again a very pretty French girl, whose company my uncles enjoyed when she went with us to the countryside on vacation. When I was thirteen, the English teacher arrived. She was older, a Cambridge graduate who introduced me to English traditions and customs. As a gift she gave me a subscription to a very interesting magazine for young girls, *The Girls' Realm*, which helped me in my English studies. We developed a very friendly relationship, lasting until my marriage and departure for Paris.

What kinds of sports and games did we play in my young years? Ball games, "cerceaux" from France, croquet, boomerang and yo-yo were a novelty; tennis, of course; bowling; and a new arrival, roller-skating. In winter, we enjoyed ice skating and bobsleighing, but most of all we loved racing through the countryside in a horse-drawn sleigh, through deep snow, sometimes up to the front door. It looked like a setting from "Hansel and Gretel". We would stop at neighbouring manors for a short visit, entertainment, drinks or dancing, invite them to join us, and then continue. It was called "kulig", and we loved it.

My mother, 1867-1950

My father, 1860-1941

My father as Rector and Chancellor of Lwow University

Lwow - the "old" University

COUNTRY LIFE

When we were children, our life flowed in two different streams, as my mother used to take us each summer - and often for Christmas - on a long three-month vacation to her parents' country home, an 18-hour journey by train to the east of Lwow. We had to cross the Russian frontier. This area was once part of the Polish Commonwealth, but since the partitions it had belonged to Russia. First, we had to transfer at the border to very different railroad cars with bunk beds and wide-gauge tracks. Then there were porters clad in strange uniforms, speaking a different language, a different sound of bells announcing the departure, customs formalities, and so on. To a child, it was all very exciting. A different calendar was also in use in Russia. The Julian calendar established by Julius Caesar in 47 B.C. lagged thirteen days behind the rest of the Western world, which had changed in 1582 to the Gregorian calendar introduced by Pope Gregory XIII. So it was that we left Lwow on June 25, and arrived the next morning on June 13. The great manor house of my grandparents near distant Kiev, called White Plains, was like a second home to us.

An enormous carriage drawn by four horses awaited us, with the same old coachman and his assistant on the coachbox, smiling joyously. It was a two-hour ride through the Ukrainian steppes, through fields and meadows. We stopped from time to time to relax and pick flowers or wild strawberries.

I remember the excitement as we approached our estate. There was the watchman's guardhouse and a turret at the entrance, and a high iron fence around the huge park. The watchman would greet us with cheers and usually had some little surprise for us: a newborn deer, little white rabbits, a talking bird, a wild duck, or something similar. We drove through the long alley of venerable elms which led to the old house, buried in flowery bushes.

Our grandparents would be waiting for us on the doorstep. We were always overjoyed to be back. The relaxing atmosphere and all the joys of country life enchanted us. The meadows

were full of weaving cornfields with partridges and quail hidden in the corn. We liked to watch the wheat grow and ripen, and then towards the end of the season came the climax - the harvest. We were taken to the fields to see the giant threshing machine, the "lokomobile". Country boys and girls, clad in bright folkgarb, in hand-embroidered shirts, would skillfully lift sheaves of golden wheat and hand these to others on top of the huge machine, who in turn threw these into the thresher, laughing and joking. When the harvesting was completed and the fields stood bare, the yearly harvest festival took place. A long procession of harvest-workers, accompanied by music and song, would bring to the manor house the fruit of their toil. A girl would be chosen by common consent from among the best workers. She would wear a wreath or crown of wheat stalks, brightly adorned with flowers - a symbol of abundance which had been previously blessed in the village church. The presentation of the wreath to the landowner was the highlight of the ceremony. Good wishes were exchanged and typical songs were sung. A lavish reception with plenty of food and drink ended the festival.

The Ukraine was a very rich land, and there was plenty of food for everyone. The peasants were superb farmers, and because the soil was the most fertile in Europe, they were well-to-do people. I do not recall ever seeing any poverty there. We liked the Ukrainians very much, and they reciprocated.

My grandfather was a very friendly, outgoing person, and he was held in high regard in the neighbourhood. I remember many people calling on him for advice, and many visitors. Among them was one elderly gentleman with a long white beard, who excited our imaginations by narrating stories from his life.*

Once upon a time, he had a very ill little daughter, and he made a vow at her bedside that if she recovered he would go on foot to the Holy See in Rome - and he achieved it! It took him many months of walking, crossing rivers and bridges and tunnels and the Alps, but he accomplished it, and was receiv-

* Mr. Izio Chojecki

ed by the Pope. His little daughter was by then happily married. We listened wide eyed to his narrative, and he seemed to us to be a hero!

Recalling some Polish customs, I vividly remember my grandfather solemnly making an incision in the sign of the cross on a freshly baked loaf of bread brought to him before a meal. He used to say, when unexpected guests arrived, "God enters my home when a guest arrives", or "Guest in home, God in the home". I do not know which translation is better. Anyway, it expresses the exceptional Polish hospitality which, even now, at a time of food shortages, often amazes foreigners who visit Poland.

Many of these customs probably had their origin in ancient agricultural rites which were celebrated by the prehistoric peoples of Poland. Christianity encouraged the retention of old traditions that became connected with great Christian saints, such as the great feast of the Vigil of Saint John on June 23, which incidentally happens to be my names'-day, and St. John's Day on June 24 (St. Jean Baptiste in Quebec). In prehistoric times, this was a great feast in honour of the god of the sun and the "rites of summer" took place when the sun was at its highest. This custom was later adopted by Christianity. The Eve of St. John, according to old Slavonic beliefs, is a day fraught with miracles and magic, when strange things happen. Animals talk to each other, and certain plants take on magical properties. In the deep woods, the fern blooms only that one night, and the girl or boy who finds its flower will get the best husband or wife, and they will be happy throughout the rest of their lives. The rites include the kindling of bonfires and dances around them, races of illuminated boats on the river, and the catching of flowers thrown by a girl towards a boy of her choice. The name "Wanda" (Vanda) also has a legend associated with it. It was the name of a Slavonic princess who threw herself into the river Vistula and died, rather than marry an invading German Prince. Because of these exotic legends and the beliefs connected with them, the names'-day is celebrated in Poland in preference to the birthday, as one's "naming" is considered more important than one's physical

date of birth.

The large park which surrounded the manor was for us full of mysteries. The long alleys were lined with fine trees - oaks, maple, poplar and birch - with each alley bearing the name of a particular tree. My favourite was Chestnut Alley, where the falling chestnuts provided exciting opportunities for play for the children.

A large part of the park was allowed to grow wild. Some bushes were overgrown and very mysterious. This was our kingdom, which nobody explored but us. It was full of secret places where we could play hide-and-seek. We could also hide from the grownups, and from their "preaching" and eternal teaching of good manners. We felt happy and free in this kingdom of ours, where we could not be discovered.

Later, when we were teenagers, there were various sports available: tennis, croquet, cerceau, horseback riding, and a boat to sail on the big pond by the park. A very special excitement was provided by the stables full of thoroughbred horses. Our pockets were always full of sugar for them. At an early age we were taught to ride horseback and enjoyed it as only youngsters can.

Beyond the pond there was a steep hill, and on the hill stood a church. Once a fortified castle, it was built for defense against Tartars and Turks, and surrounded by a moat.

A short-cut led from the manor to the church over a very shaky hanging bridge.

Inside the manor there was one place I particularly liked: the library. On big tables lay enormous volumes of illustrated periodicals. Usually, there were also new editions of a French children's magazine with funny pictures, a forerunner of today's comics. Large French windows opened into a rose garden. Even today I can smell the fragrance of the flowers.

As autumn gave way to winter at the year's end, the Feast of the Dead was celebrated on November 2, All Souls' Day. Contrary to the practice of Hallowe'en in Canada and the United States, general merriment and the wearing of costumes were not part of the observance. In pagan times, it was believed that the dead come back on that day to visit their homes on

earth, and that they should be given food which has been prepared for them. Today, the entire family prays at the cemetery, at the graves of their loved ones, and little candles are lit and kept burning for a few days.

When I grew older, I loved to wander in solitude through the park and meditate on things I had learned in the city and about myself. I remember this as an important period of formation of my inner self. I believe that the psyche of an individual is formed very early in life and that once formed, it changes very little. I am certain that my parents' intellectual home in Lwow, and the relaxing, more practical days in close touch with nature at my grandparents' country home, greatly influenced my life, as did the different kinds of people I met there.

What was my religion? I think it was very simple and genuine. God was everywhere and close. Nature, all around me with its mysteries, was itself of divine origin.

My mother was very traditional, observing and celebrating all religious ceremonies. My father was different. He seemed to be in deep communion with God, but without any outward manifestations. I do not remember any special "teachings" or instructions at home - only the example. I thus developed a positive kind of faith, not depending very much on the outside, but set deep in my heart.

GROWING UP

My father taught me at an early age to love books. When I was a child, I would climb on his knee and listen to his fascinating stories. When I learned to read, I soon developed a passion for books. Through books we were taught the great virtues of love of our country, to the limits of sacrifice; of public spirit, loyalty, honour and family pride. These virtues, together with a serious approach to life, were instilled in us from childhood. In the decades after World War I, new notions emerged: the era of working women, the more important role of the working class in society, the zeal of working for our liberated and now independent country, and so on. Old and new became magically interwoven in the years of my youth, and we, the young ones, were of course assimilating all of these contradictory influences.

Occasionally there were also vacations abroad, which I remember well. Trieste, Abbazia, Grado on the Adriatic - all of these lovely resorts belonged then to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, as did Ragusa with its old Roman ruins, today in Yugoslavia and known by the name of Dubrovnik. There we enjoyed the usual delights of the seaside. The beaches were full of mussels, crabs, clams and beautiful shells. For two summers my parents rented a log cabin in the Polish Tatra Mountains. Mountain climbing, excursions, camping - all of it was thrilling.

In Lwow, I attended a famous private school. The Director was an outstanding woman who had to flee Warsaw (then under the Russians) because she was about to be arrested for teaching Polish history in a clandestine school. She was greatly respected in my city of Lwow, which at that time enjoyed a measure of cultural freedom under Austria.

I was doing well at school, earning high grades. This was accepted at home as a natural thing, and no special importance was attached to it. It was only after I received my degree with distinction (summa cum laude), at the conclusion of my university studies, that my family's great pride and happiness at my achievements were openly displayed.

My childhood illnesses deepened my love of reading. When I was convalescing my father would select good books from the university library and send them up by his old university messenger, the "beadle". We all liked him and my mother always treated him to a drink. I devoured those books! They shaped my outlook, giving me a romantic notion about human life which remained with me forever. I acquired a great facility in reading without taking any of the courses that are so popular today. I knew that my life would have to be linked with writing, which it was, and also with books. The latter was fulfilled when I had the opportunity many years later, in 1943, to organize the Polish Library at McGill University in Montreal, in which I am still active. Early in life I resolved to achieve "something" and I have tried hard to fulfill this ambition. I was brought up surrounded by the *objets d'art* which my father brought home from his trips abroad, and which my mother loved. She had a taste for fine things which I inherited. Arranging these pieces of art, she would teach me to appreciate their beauty, their details and proportions.

I often accompanied my parents on their trips to Austria, Norway, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Greece and most frequently to Italy, where on several occasions we spent the winter months, while my father conducted research in the Vatican Archives, which had been made accessible to historians by Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903).

In Italy he introduced me to the beauty of ancient and Italian art, and, as he was a meticulous scholar, I also had to learn about the different Italian schools of painting and the less important artists, and not merely admire the giants of the Renaissance: Leonardo, Michelangelo, Titian and Raphael.

We brought home hundreds of pictures and photographs, which at a later time I had to sort into the proper schools of art. This was excellent training in acquiring an aesthetic taste, as well as learning to appreciate art and its beauty.

WORLD WAR I 1914 - 1920

World War I marked the end of an epoch in Europe that had lasted since the Congress of Vienna (1815) which, after the Napoleonic Wars, confirmed a settlement between the big powers, the so-called BALANCE OF POWER.

It was favourable to the great, rich states like England, France, Germany and Russia, and brought them prosperity, but it was detrimental to small countries like Bohemia (the Czechs), Poland, and the Baltic countries, which, under this "balance", were held in an oppressive yoke.

The shot in Sarajevo, on June 28, 1914, which killed Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria, unleashed the great world war between the powers that had partitioned Poland in 1795 (Austria, Russia, Germany). The war that our nation was hoping would bring freedom to our country.

Each generation, during the 123 years of bondage, had fought in bloody uprisings against the Russian oppressor who occupied most of our lands. Likewise, in 1914, a new generation, under the leadership of Joseph Pilsudski, took up arms to fight for the independence of Poland. These were the "Legionnaires", and my future husband was one of them. The Polish Legion was organized in the part of Poland occupied by Austria. The Austrians knew that the Poles would fight the Russians and consented to the creation of the Legion.

For Poland, partitioned between two powers now at war, it was a tragedy. Poles would be drafted into the ranks of opposing armies and brother would have to fight brother. It happened in our family, too. Polish poets, mostly soldiers themselves, wrote deeply emotional poetry about this tragic plight: "Oh, brother! at my Polish heart your Russian bullet aim!"

The outbreak of hostilities caught my mother and myself on vacation at my grandparents' manor house in the eastern part of Russian occupied Poland. My brother in Lwow, which then belonged to Austria, was drafted into the German-Austrian Army. My father, who at that time was working in Rome at the Vatican Archives, managed only to reach Vien-

na, where he had to wait nearly a year before he could return to Lwow. Meanwhile, our city changed hands several times from the Russians to the Austrians, as the war rolled over our unfortunate country.

The manor house now belonged to my uncle, my grandparents having died a few years earlier, and was full of family members with children, who came mostly from Austrian Poland. To the Russians this meant we were subjects of a hostile power. In reprisal, the Tzarist regime deported my uncle, a Russian citizen at that time, deep into Russia, but for the sake of truth I must say that it was a very "mild" deportation compared to those practised later by the Communists. He was merely compelled to stay there and report to the police from time to time. Otherwise he was free.

Women and children were allowed to remain on the estate but were closely watched. A few of my cousins who lived in this part of Poland and were Russian subjects were drafted into the Russian army. The poet's verse "O brother, at my Polish heart your Russian bullet aim!" became a reality.

What do I recall of Russia under the Tzars? Estates and hamlets all around us seemed lost in the immense grassy plains called the Ukrainian steppes. The rather well-to-do Polish and Ukrainian farmers who lived all around were friendly to us. We heard of great famines when the weather ruined the crops in other parts of Russia. Being very poor planners, the Russians could not organize the necessary transportation to distribute food to those areas. But it never affected our vicinity, and I do not remember any really poor or starving people.

The manor was usually the first aid station for medical or financial help. Often the local people would bring their children, and one of my aunts would take care of the illnesses or accidents, calling for a faraway doctor when necessary. The laws and regulations were oppressive and had as their objective the prevention of national or political unrest, as many people were engaged in such activities. These laws had become particularly severe against the Poles after the last heroic uprising in 1863.

In the first years of World War I, when we stayed at "White

Plains", life went on as usual, except for the feelings of anxiety and insecurity. We did not realize that we were caught in a cataclysm of major proportions. We could continue our studies and the neighbouring tutors assisted us. The local priest taught us religion and Latin. From him I learned a very good command of that language and did much reading. News of the war was scarce and arrived late. There was no radio yet.

In 1917, we heard rumors of discontent in the Russian army, which was losing many battles, and of a revolt in St. Petersburg against Tzar Nicholas II, first cousin to King George of England and to Wilhelm II of Germany. I think Nicholas was a gentle and good man, but certainly not a great Tzar. His rule was perhaps less oppressive than that of the many so-called "great Tzars", but he had a deeply implanted conviction that his absolute power was given to him directly by God. He was the Tzar-Autocrat, Emperor over 130 million people and boundless lands, and he believed that the peasants loved him. I think that they did. They would grumble against the administration, but towards him they behaved as if he were a father. The change came as a result of Marxist doctrine and propaganda spread by the revolutionaries. The Tzar did not realize what was happening around him. He lived isolated from his people, and his courtiers informed him only in the way he would wish to be informed. Influenced by his wife, a German princess, he objected to any reforms, which by then were indispensable.

After the 1905 revolution, when the Social Democratic Labour Party achieved some partial reforms, and a quasi-parliament called the Duma was created, there were many opportunities to modify autocratic rule, to initiate some democratic reforms. But he stubbornly refused to do so. Meanwhile, in exile in Switzerland, a group of revolutionary extremists led by Lenin were plotting a revolution. They were called the Bolsheviks or "extremists". The word *bolshoi* means great or extreme. In 1917, the Germans smuggled this group into Russia, transporting them through Europe in a sealed train like "a bacillus of a plague", as they themselves said. Continous defeats in the war with the Central Powers resulted in

the first revolution in March 1917, and the Tzar was forced to abdicate.

A brilliant young lawyer named Kerensky (1881-1970) was the first socialist in the new provisional government, becoming Minister of Justice, then Premier, and finally President of the Duma. He aroused the people with his inflammatory speeches and became a bridge betwen the Soviets and the Duma. Kerensky, realizing the gravity of the Bolshevik threat, tried to save the Tzar, but with the world crumbling around him, Nicholas failed to understand what was happening until it was too late.

Events now moved very swiftly. On November 7, 1917, the Bolsheviks overthrew Kerensky, seized the government in a coup, and set up a cruel dictatorship of one-party rule. Before this happened, Kerensky attempted to move the Tzar from St. Petersburg, but the British would not cooperate in the proposed rescue attempt by sea. The Tzar was transported with his family to faraway Tobolsk, as the government thought that they would be safer there than elsewhere. His mother, the Dowager Empress Maria Fedorowna (born Princess of Denmark), an attractive, intelligent woman, went to the Crimea with her two daughters and escaped by boat across the Black Sea.

After the Bolshevik takeover, Kerensky himself fled to Paris. In 1940, he moved to the United States, where he later became Director of Studies on the Russian Revolution at the Hoover Institute at Stanford University, California.

When the front lines collapsed and the Russian revolution was in full swing in the autumn of 1917, we began to feel and see the ominous signs of approaching danger. Massacres began all around us. Soldiers and deserters ran wild and loose. It would take a volume to describe the hell on earth which I saw at close range. Looting, burning and killing!

Soon, numerous groups began to fight the Bolsheviks and each other: the White Russian units (Denikin), the Polish regiment (Jaworski), the Ukrainian detachment - a weird mixture of civil wars inside Russia. One day, the White Russian troops of Denikin or of General Wrangel would trickle in; the next

day the Bolsheviks would come back again and a barbarous slaughter would take place. When, in March 1918, the Bolsheviks gained a definite victory, a disorganized evacuation of anti-Bolshevik groups began. But before that, when rumours of murders of landowners and "bourgeois" in our immediate area became stronger and stronger, my family decided to leave the old family home and try to escape to faraway Austrian Poland.

Family heirlooms, my mother's and aunt's precious jewels which they had with them, my uncle's gold coins, antique silver sets, valuable family documents considered to be incriminating and dangerous if found by the Bolsheviks - all were buried under the huge oak trees in the park. We were saved at the last moment by a faithful servant, a Cossak butler, who led us away in peasant disguise by a back road through the woods which only he knew.

If stopped by the Communists, people were ordered to show their hands, and if they were white or soft, indicating that the owner belonged to the "upper class", they were imprisoned or shot as "enemies of the people". Yet among these miserable, confused people, there were some good individuals who helped us.

We made our way as well as we could, riding in freight cars and peasant wagons through the immense, frosty, savage lands of Russia. At one time we took refuge in the cellar of a convent. Another time we were hidden in a wooden shed by a group of Russian actors who called themselves Communists, but did not give us away! It was then after Christmas and bitterly cold.

When we finally reached Lwow on the Austrian side, crossing in secret the so-called "green frontier", we were practically barefoot, having bartered everything for food. We were sick, physically and emotionally exhausted, and generally in terrible shape. But we were finally home and reunited with my father! My brother was somewhere on the Austrian battle front.

The fighting still went on, and it weighed heavily on us. Towards the end of the war there was a great shortage of food

in Austria, and we often went to bed hungry. In November 1918, the fall of Austria, which occupied a great part of Poland, including my city of Lwow, precipitated the struggle for independence right in our city.

It was at this time that President Wilson of the United States, influenced by his friendship with Ignacy Paderewski, the world famous pianist and a great Polish patriot, announced his famous Fourteen Points, of which the thirteenth demanded Poland's rebirth and independence.

On November 11, 1918, Armistice Day, Poland's war hero, Joseph Pilsudski, freed from a German prison in Magdeburg, arrived in Warsaw, and the enthusiastic nation proclaimed him Chief of State and leader of Poland. On the same day, the newly formed government, with Pilsudski at its head, proclaimed Poland's independence!

The sovietized German army occupying Poland, once so powerful, disintegrated and was disarmed by the clandestine Polish Military Organization, which had been secretly organized and developed by Pilsudski over a period of several years.

The great day of liberation for which generations of Poles had prayed and fought became a reality. No one could understand the feelings of these people unless he lived through the euphoria of those days!

This was the moment which emotionally would never again be equalled in our lives! Through all our school years we were brought up to feel deeply that freedom was the ultimate goal of the Polish people, and now, at last freedom was ours again.

But the collapse of the Central Powers and the signing of the Armistice on November 11, 1918, did not mean the end of the war in Poland. For two more years we had to fight to preserve our newly won freedom. It was not until the autumn of 1920 that the newly created Polish Army under the command of Joseph Pilsudski finally stopped the Bolshevik invasion at the gates of Warsaw, in a desperate battle called by Lord D'Abernon the 18th decisive battle of history*. Poland

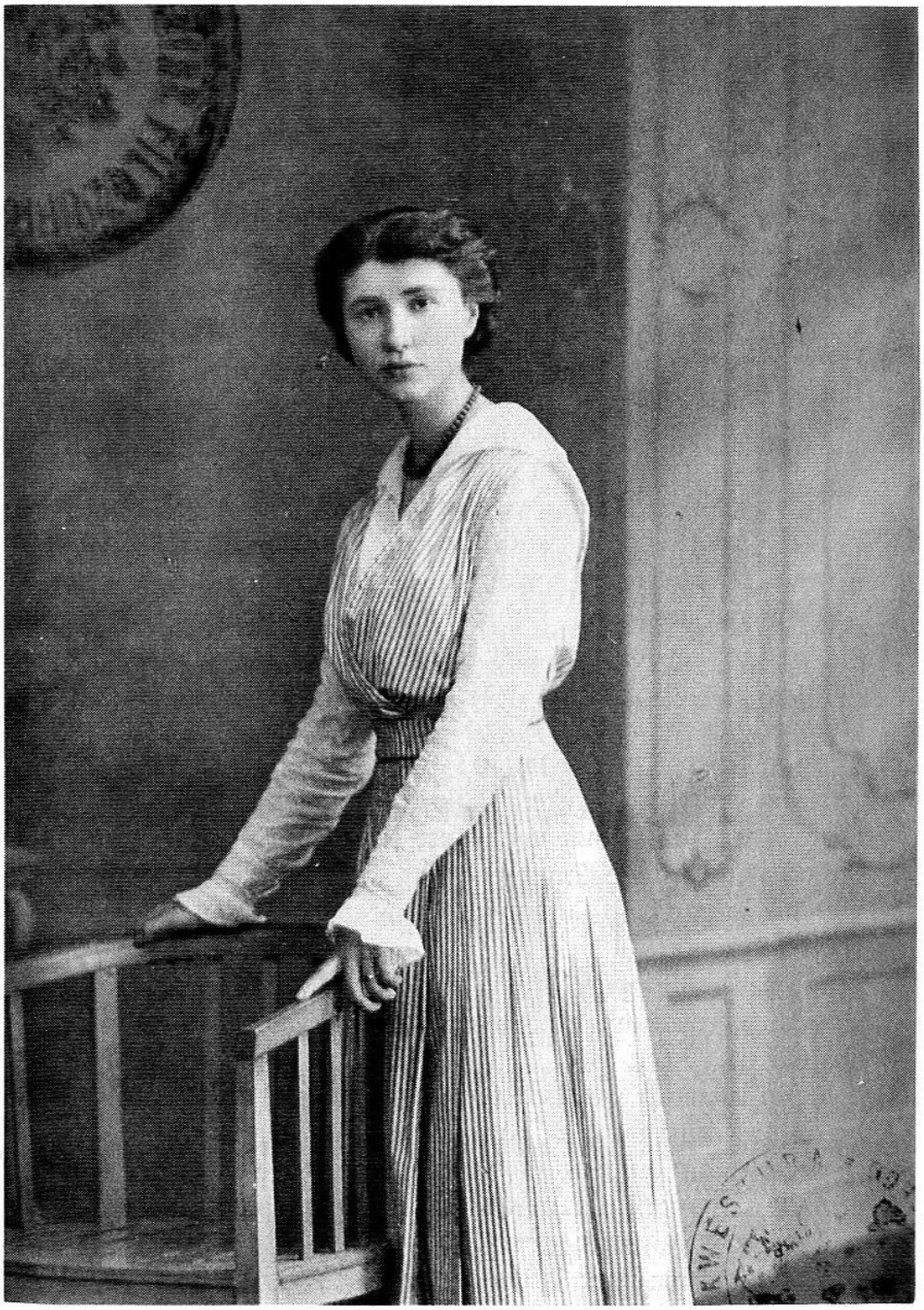
* Lord Edgar V. D'Abernon: "The eighteenth decisive battle of the world - Warsaw 1920", Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1931.

had single-handedly saved Europe from the menace of Communism, at the cost of tremendous casualties and the incalculable misery and suffering of its population.

It was in that unforgettable period of time that I experienced one of the greatest thrills of my life. My first airflight!

There were stationed in Lwow at that time several American pilots and crew members serving in the famous Kosciuszko Squadron. They were volunteers who came from the USA to Poland to help in the fight against the Bolsheviks. They befriended my brother who was serving in the Polish Army, and through him I met most of them.

I flew with Major Cedric Erroll Fauntleroy (later promoted to Colonel) of the US Air Force in a small two-seater plane. I was scared to death but fascinated and thrilled. Believe me, it was an experience I thought would never happen again, never, never!



Wanda at the University

ROMANTIC INTERLUDE

It was in this euphoric atmosphere that, a little later, I met my future husband, a young war hero of the valiant Pilsudski Legion. For the moment I was still wrapped up in my studies, working on my degree in the History of Civilization. The rebuilding and organization of the country were underway, and there was no sacrifice the people would not willingly accept to help their reborn state.

Together with the other students, we offered help in education, and organized lectures for the demobilized soldiers, so that no soldier should return home without a basic knowledge of Polish history and citizenship. We also set up soup kitchens and day care centres for orphans and the poor.

Since we were young, we also enjoyed social entertainment - small private parties and dances. It was so different from nowadays! There was a group of us: four girls and four boys, still in the military, "which made them so much more glamorous", who often met together. The modern American habit of "going steady" was then unknown. At parties we changed partners, waltzing to Strauss or trying newer dances like the foxtrot or the tango.

It was shortly thereafter, while on vacation in a Tatra mountain resort, that I met my future husband.
He was a dashing colonel who was spending a few days leave with his parents. His father was a lung specialist and the resort's chief physican.

We saw each other often, wandered together through the woods, and our romance was enhanced by the beauty of nature around us.

From the start we had common interests. We could both be on fire with an idea, and it was blissful to share it with someone who understood your feelings. He was a great lover of nature, the sort of man who felt something about everything, and I was a good listener.
We had known each other for only three weeks when we became engaged, and three weeks later, on September 21, 1921, we were married. The wedding had to take place so quickly

because my fiance had been assigned to the Ecole Superieure de Guerre in Paris. It was considered the best military college in Europe, and to be accepted there was a great distinction. He was to leave in October on a two-year program. The bishop of Lwow married us in our old parish church, an early Baroque historic landmark. I remember how seriously I entered my married life, and during those three weeks I lived as in a trance.

I did not meet many of my husband's family, and neither did he. They were dispersed by the turbulent period of history in which we lived. He very much loved his brilliant elder brother, Julian, one of Marshal Pilsudski's closest followers, and his dear wife and two sons, Miecz and Kazik.

There was in his family a very popular artist of renown, P. N. Stachiewicz (1858-1938).* He was a painter of the common man and was also very adept at portraits and folk painting. He created excellent portraits of typical peasant types, some of which were used to illustrate the monumental saga, "The Peasants", by Nobel laureate W. Reymont.

This talent must have run in the family, as my husband's sister Maryna Stachiewicz was also a painter. She had several exhibitions and painted my portrait, which was shown at the National Exhibition in Lwow in 1935.

I knew more about the family of my husband's mother, since I was her favourite daughter-in-law and she took pleasure in telling me the family history.

Hers was a patrician family with Austrian connections, and, curiously for the gentry, with a flair for business. At the begining of the industrial era, they owned a bank, ran a press concern, rose to prominence and were active in the cultural life of Krakow in the 18th and 19th centuries.**

After we were married, we stayed in Warsaw for two hectic weeks befoe leaving for Paris. We were both glad when we finally boarded a most comfortable sleeping car in the so-called "Blue Express" train. Thirty-six hours later we were in Paris!

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* See J. Korolewicz, *Memoirs* (Wspomnienia), (Warsaw: Ossolineum, 1958).

** M. Estreicher, *Life in 18th and 19th Century Krakow*, (Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literatury, 1968).

Joseph Pilsudski, Commander of the Polish Legions
1914-1917

PARIS 1921 – 1924

Paris was a kaleidoscope of enchantment and joy for us. Oh, the magic of the first autumn in Paris, our honeymoon city!

The sudden transfer from a war-ravaged country, slowly recovering from destruction and the wounds of war, with its post-war drabness, to the glittering Parisian life of the "roaring twenties", was bewitching.

The elegance and beauty of Paris, with its wide perspectives created by George Haussmann, who rebuilt the city during the Second Empire, circa 1850, and became famous for his daring plans which completely transformed the city; the silver ribbon of the river Seine; the tinged haze of the morning air - all cast a spell on us.

The military helped us to find a small pleasant apartment which, at this time, was almost unobtainable in a crowded, overpopulated Paris. It was near the Ecole Militaire and belonged to a French colonel who had been transferred to Alsace (on the Rhine), then newly recovered from the Germans. The apartment was located in the 15th Arrondissement, a middle class district which I read has since become an upper middle class, chic quarter - an "in" place to live, with the new United Nations offices built there after the Second World War.

Our windows looked onto the Champ de Mars, a beautiful park crowned by the Eiffel Tower and, at the end, the palace of the Trocadero. Around the Champ de Mars (once a field where military exercises took place), expensive houses seemed to stand aloof from the rest of the city. In the morning a mist would rise from the nearby Seine, where barges floated on the lilac water. When walking there, I sometimes thought it was all unreal.

Nearby, deep in the heart of the district, behind stone walls on a narrow "passage de Dantzig", a small colony of artists thrived around a funny building called "La Ruche" (the hive), designed at the turn of the century by the man who created the Eiffel Tower.

Madame Marie Curie, the holder of two Nobel prizes for

her work on radioactivity, was still alive (1867-1934), and we paid her a visit, introduced by mutual friends. She was a gentle, withdrawn woman, while her charming daughter Eva* seemed to be the soul of the house. Also, the son and daughter of our greatest romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1859), Wladyslaw Mickiewicz and Madame Marie Gorecka, were still entertaining selected members of the Polish colony, together with some French friends, at tea on Mondays. All of these were memorable events in our young lives.

We became great friends with the First Secretary of the Polish Embassy and his wife, Jules and Marie Lukasiewicz. This friendship lasted all our lives and extended to the younger generation. They were both very intelligent, interesting and active. Jules became Poland's ambassador to France in 1936 and held this post until the collapse of France in 1940.

We had to live on a very modest budget. If I recall correctly, we had only 2,000 francs a month, out of which we had to pay the rent of 500 francs. My father could not send me any money from Poland, since at that time French currency was strong, while in Poland inflation was raging, due to the devastation caused by the war, and to the flood of wilting German marks imposed on us during the occupation, which were still legal currency. The reborn country had first to get rid of this inherited currency, to stabilize its economy and to stop inflation. This was miraculously accomplished three years later in 1924, when a new currency - the traditional Polish zloty - was introduced; inflation was controlled; and incentives were offered to encourage savings by paying higher interest rates on bank deposits. Only then did our country begin its desperately needed economic recovery.

My husband's academic schedule included military trips all over France. These were followed by several days off duty to let the officers, many of them foreigners, become better acquainted with the country.

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* Eva Curie later married Mr. Labouisse, an American of French descent on the staff of the French Embassy in Washington.

I took these opportunities to join my husband at the end of the routine trips, and together we puttered around France.

Paris had still another fascination for women - the world of fashion. The famed "maisons de haute couture" were closed to the general public because of the secrecy of their designs. Luckily, they did special favours for the diplomatic corps, and with a friend from the embassy I received invitations to attend a fashion show at the venerable old house of Worth, and at the new house of Coco Chanel.

I still remember entering the imposing salon with its satin brocade draperies, flowers in Ming dynasty vases, sparkling chandeliers, and the stage on which gorgeous models showed the newest sophisticated frocks.

The two-and-a-half years of our stay in Paris passed very quickly, and when my husband completed his work at the Ecole Superieure de Guerre it was time to return home.

RETURN TO POLAND

We returned to Poland after nearly three years in Paris, full of life, "modernized", refreshed and in high spirits. While we were in Paris, my family had bought a small country estate where we could spend the summer months. Our old country home, the "White Plains" which we loved so well, was now in Soviet Russia, this entire area having been ceded to them by the Treaty of Riga (1921).

My husband was appointed professor at the Warsaw Military College, and soon after our return I was expecting a baby. It was very difficult to find an apartment in Warsaw at that time, as the city was crowded with people who had come to staff the new government offices, business companies, banks, and so on. After searching for a few weeks we were fortunate to find a small apartment in the centre of town.

On September 16, 1924, in Lwow, where I had gone to visit my parents, to our great joy our twin sons were born, two weeks ahead of schedule. The festive christening ceremony took place in my parents' home in October.

It was an old custom that at a christening the children were given the name of the saint of the day of their birth. (In Christendom, every day carries the name of a saint). This saint then became the child's patron. Although this custom was not observed in modern times, and any name could be given, it was reflected in the practice of observing the names'-day as well as the birthday, and the names'-day was considered more important.

There was also another old custom. In order to celebrate the birth of a child, the grandfather would throw a gold coin into the newborn baby's first bath. In pagan times this was probably an offering to the gods, but in our time, it was a reward for the nurse!

We lived in Warsaw for a few years, while my husband was teaching at the Military College.

From these years in Warsaw I remember my university connections and the courses I attended, as I always liked to learn, but above all I remember the care I gave to my sons. I also

My brother Roman, 1920

recollect lively cultural activities and the very exclusive tea parties given by Madame Alexandra Pilsudska, wife of Marshal Pilsudski, at the Belvedere Palace. The parties were usually held in the large bay-window salon overlooking the magnificent Public Park. It was a great honour to be invited. These parties were attended by ambassadors, other high-ranking diplomats, government officials and their wives, the Papal Nuncio and some community leaders. The atmosphere was congenial and informal. Towards the end of the party Marshal Pilsudski usually appeared. He was a man of captivating charm and informality and, in General de Gaulle's words, a man emanating a kind of magnetic force. Most of the population loved him and some idolized him for his boundless devotion to the country and his clear vision in governing it. He was the symbol of the fight for indepedence, and they felt secure under his protection. But of course he also had opponents, as always in politics. Yet when he died a few years later in 1935, all of Poland felt deserted and orphaned.

His funeral was a deeply emotional farewell. Thousands of people, weeping silently, lined the route of the funeral train which bore his casket from Warsaw to the ancient capital of the Polish kings at Wawel Castle in Krakow. The honour guard, composed of top army generals including my husband, carried his coffin to the Crypt in the cathedral of Wawel Castle, where Polish kings are entombed. In Communist Poland today his name is never mentioned by party or government officials, but for the people he has become a cherished symbol of an independent Poland. On his tomb fresh flowers appear every morning, placed by unknown hands.

Joseph Pilsudski (1867-1935), Marshal of Poland

THE BAROQUE JEWEL — THE CITY OF WILNO, 1928-1933

We lived in Warsaw until 1927, in a charming apartment at the Krasinski Garden, of which, during my visit to Poland in 1974, I found only part of the wall remaining. In 1928 my husband was assigned to the command of the First Infantry Division in Wilno (Vilno), a beautifully situated, small and quaint city in the north of Poland.

Wilno, on Lithuanian land, was from the time of the medieval union of Poland and Lithuania a centre from which Polish culture was to spread far to the East and North. It was a marvel of early Baroque style, set in a scenic, hilly landscape on the great river which Napoleon crossed on his way to Moscow. In the 16th and 17th centuries it was the capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

The University of Wilno, established at the end of the 16th century by the King of Poland, achieved great fame. Our greatest Polish romantic poet, Adam Mickiewicz, studied there, as did many illustrious scientists.

During the Napoleonic era, Napoleon stopped at Wilno during his march on Russia in 1812, calling on Polish volunteers to join the ranks of his army. Thousands joined this "god of war" and fought valiantly, hoping that he would restore freedom to Poland and free her from the Tzarist yoke. Alas, it did not happen. He admired the beauty of Wilno and especially St. Anne's Church, a rich Baroque jewel which he said he would like to transport to Paris in the palm of his hand.

Speaking of Polish architecture, we have to remember that in early times Poland was a heavily wooded country, covered with virgin forests, and therefore built its churches and landmarks in wood. These were mainly destroyed by fire. That is why today there remain only a few Romanesque structures, buried underneath royal castles or cathedrals.

An old 17th-18th century building, the former residence of a defunct Patz family, was assigned as our residence.

Its rooms were spacious, and the boys had a good time riding their bicycles in the huge parlour, which we decided not to use

in winter. The rooms, all heated by wood-burning stoves giving out much warmth, were built on a split level plan, with walls about a yard thick. I rather liked those deep window nooks.

The years flew by. My husband was preoccupied with his military duties, but we also took part in social life, and I was involved in community work.

Since it was a university city, several outstanding men of learning lived here, with whom we enjoyed establishing closer contacts. Soon we had a large circle of new friends.

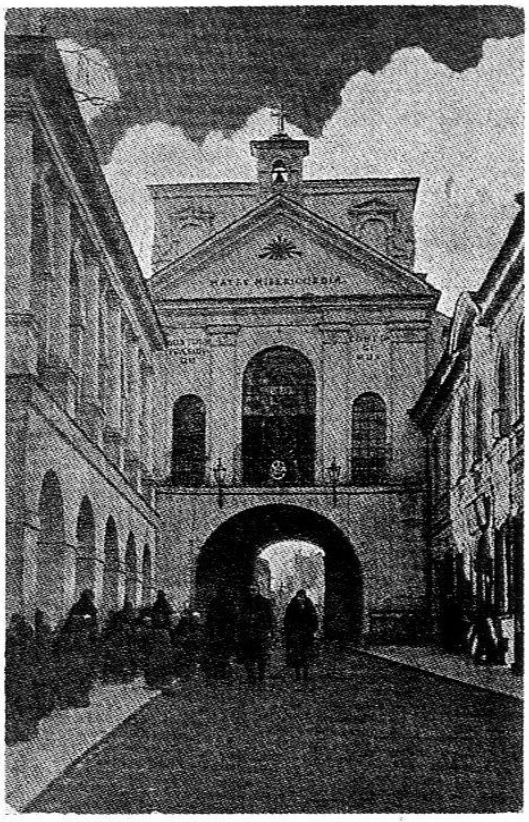
There was a group of gifted poets and artists living in Wilno at the time. Together with a few university professors' wives, we organized an "Aid to young talented students" committee. We tried to obtain government grants to send them abroad for studies. We also helped to make their works known by organizing "authors' poetry readings", concerts and the like. We tried hard to get theatres from other cities to present their plays and founded an inexpensive cafeteria for them, which was a novelty at that time.

The proof that we did the right thing and made a good choice among the young came much later. Here, in America and Canada, some of them contacted me - by now all well-established scholars, writers, or musicians. The most eminent of them is the poet Czeslaw Milosz, winner of the 1980 Nobel Prize for literature, professor of Slavic Literature at the University of California in Berkeley, and author of many excellent books and poems. In 1978-80 I listened to his occasional lectures at Stanford University in California.

He is the author of an excellent book entitled **The Captive Mind*** which he wrote in exile, having defected from Communist Poland. The book tells of his disillusion and dismay about how the human mind is moulded by the theories and practice of Dialectical Marxism into becoming captive.

Wilno was a city of peculiarities. It was the medieval Lithuanian capital, when that country was united with Poland by the marriage of a Lithuanian prince to the Polish Queen Jadwiga

* C. Milosz *The Captive Mind*, (Martin Sacker and Warburg Ltd., 1953).



Wilno - the shrine of Ostra Brama

Holy Mary of Ostra Brama

MATKA BOSKA
OSTROBRAMSKA

(Yadviga), who was of French blood from the royal family of Anjou. She brought Christianity to pagan Lithuania in the 14th century, and Polish culture permeated this land. She also founded the University of Krakow in 1364, where Copernicus studied. The Kingdom of Poland, known as a tolerant state, contained within its borders many ethnic groups, some of which were, at that time, persecuted elsewhere in Europe. There were Jews, Greeks, Armenians, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Lemkos and Gypsies in the old Poland. Large groups of Karaim of Turkish descent intermixed with the Khazars, nomads from Crimea and Kazakstan, who had settled in Wilno in the 14th century. Several thousands of them still live there, keeping their traditions and their kind of Moslem-Judaic church.

I wanted to visit their houses of prayer, but women were not allowed to enter. Living in a Christian country though, they arranged a place in the gallery on the first floor (like the choir organ in our church) where behind heavy draperies we could get a glimpse of the ceremonies. I saw everybody remove their shoes, prostrate themselves on the floor and pray loudly in strange tongues.

★ ★ ★

It was Wilno that we were blessed with the great happiness of becoming parents for a second time. On a snowy Christmas Eve in 1931, a long hoped for daughter was born to us, to bring more joy into our lives. It was a wonderful Christmas present.

THE HOLY SHRINE OF THE MADONNA CZESTOCHOWA 1934 -1935

From Wilno my husband was transferred to Czestochowa, a hallowed place in Western Poland, the site of the famous monastery of Jasna Gora (Bright Mountain). The monastery is the home of the miraculous image of the Black Madonna whose likeness, according to legend, was painted by St. Luke. In reality, the original must have been lost, and the present one is a good, 14th-century Italian copy which shows some Eastern influence. Nobody knows why the face of the Madonna is dark and scarred. Probably the paint has darkened with age and damage in war. Devotion to the Madonna is closely linked with Polish faith and national consciousness.

In 1655, a hopelessly outnumbered handful of Polish soldiers and monks successfully resisted an onslaught on the monastery by the invading armies of the king of Sweden. The victory was attributed to the intervention of the Holy Virgin. The following year, the Polish king, Jan Casimir, dedicated the country to Our Lady and vowed to work for justice among the people. He proclaimed Our Lady the Queen of Poland, and the shrine in the monastery of Jasna Gora bears this inscription.

The house in which we lived overlooked a long, wide alley, lined with linden trees which led to the shrine. We could watch the thousands of pilgrims who travelled on foot from far away, singing hymns. Some of these hymns, like the famous "O God, take care of Poland", are now forbidden under the Communist regime.

During the period when Poland was partitioned among her neighbours in the 19th century, shrines such as Jasna Gora in Czestochowa, or Ostra Brama in Wilno, provided a focus for the expression of suppressed patriotic feelings and inspired national resistance to the occupiers. The same is true today, and it is even more expressive, as every year students, workers, and country folk, in large numbers, take part in the pilgrimages.

On May 3rd, which was a national holiday in pre-war Poland, they come on foot from Warsaw carrying crosses and

Polish flags. They attend an outdoor mass and reaffirm their devotion to their faith and their country. In present-day Poland, the May 3rd celebration is forbidden by the Communist regime, and only the May First socialist holiday is observed. So on that day, the Poles, tens of thousands of young students, as well as people from all walks of life, arrive at the shrine of the Black Madonna of Czestochowa, having marched on foot for many days. Large groups of Italian, French, and lately American young people also join them. It is an impressive demonstration.

I always felt thankful to God for letting us have the opportunity to be a part of this wonderful experience. It is hard to put into words the feeling which overwhelms you when, at an early, six o'clock mass in the sanctuary, the miraculous image of the Madonna, usually covered, is slowly unveiled to the sounds of exquisite old music and the sobs and prayers of the people. You are overcome with emotion and tears flow freely.

We stayed in Czestochowa only one year, during which my husband was promoted to the rank of general, and then there came a great change in our life.

THE SAXON PALACE
WARSAW (1935 - 1939)

In June 1935, extensive military maneuvres were held in the region where my husband commanded the 7th Infantry Division. Many generals took part, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Army was present. He was apparently impressed with the conduct of the exercises and with my husband's performance and called on us at home. He was a very friendly and interesting man.

A few weeks later, my husband told me of his great promotion: "I was named to the post of Chief of General Staff in Warsaw, effective immediately," he said. And so we had to pack and move again, but for my husband this promotion was a great challenge, and proof of the great confidence the High Command had in his work. Obviously, I was pleased for his sake, although I foresaw that he would become completely engulfed in this important work of great responsibility.

The General Staff Headquarters were located in the centre of the historic section of Warsaw. The entire complex was built in the 17th century, in the Renaissance - early Baroque style, as a residence for one of the Polish kings of the Saxon family. Two large buidings were connected by a tall colonnade under which lay the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier (commemorating, among others, those killed in 1918 in the defense of Lwow). The offices faced the huge Pilsudski Square. Our apartments, located in the rear, looked out on a beautiful garden in the style of Versailles, adorned with replicas of Greek sculptures, water fountains and a summer theatre. After the end of the Polish Kingdom, the garden was converted into a public park full of roses and flowers, and to this day it is a favourite with the people of Warsaw.

After ten years of life in the provinces, the move to the metropolis known as "little Paris" was enjoyable and full of tempting opportunities. The best concerts, the International Chopin Competitions, superb theatres, excellent lectures and a very good university were all available. The prestigious Institute of Music invited me to teach the History and Theory

of Music. As I always liked to study, I enrolled in several courses, one on the "Scientific Organization of Work", the first of its kind in Warsaw, which later proved very helpful in my battle for survival as an emigrant with three children.

There were several new aspects to our new life - some overshadowed by the troubled world situation - some gratifying, such as the feeling of being in the centre of affairs amidst events that were shaping history. But since the political horizon, with Hitler's power rapidly growing, was gloomy, responsibility weighed heavily on my husband and totally occupied his mind and thoughts. I quickly learned that the way to live happily with a military man was to let him have his way and ask for nothing.

We were in the highest social stratum, meeting important people, many from foreign countries. One's behaviour was observed, criticized, and commented upon, and one ceased to be a private person. Since my husband was extremely busy, he reduced his participation in social life to a minimum. He attended only a few receptions, for very important foreign visitors who came to Warsaw for political and military talks. I had to accept many invitations and participate, for both of us, in all sorts of entertainments, usually escorted by his aide-de-camp. I attended innumerable cocktail parties, dinners, sports events, festivals and benefit affairs and often showed our historic landmarks to the wives of visiting dignitaries. I just do not know how I managed to fit it all in, since I also spent much time with my children.

I considered these engagements to be part of my duties as wife of the Chief of the General Staff, but I must admit that some were quite stimulating, particularly when I met important world politicians, such as the foreign ministers of France or Italy, with their wives. The Italian foreign minister, Galeazzo Ciano, and his wife, Edda, Mussolini's daughter, were a particularly interesting couple. I also met the stern German foreign minister, Von Ribbentrop, the jovial Hermann Goering, head of the German Airforce, and various heads of state: Emperor Haile Selassie, the autocratic ruler of Ethiopia since 1930 (exiled to England in 1935 by the Italian occupation and reinstated

Gen. Waclaw Stachiewicz
Chief of the General Staff 1935-1939

Wanda

in 1941), Miklos Horthy (1868-1957), Regent of Hungary from 1929 to 1944, and King Charles of Roumania, who was accompanied by his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Grigore Gafencu.

Hungary and Roumania were Poland's closest allies. The President of the Republic gave a splendid state reception at historic Krakow castle for Regent Horthy when he came to Poland to reaffirm the alliance. Some of the guests were dressed in old Polish national attire, and the peasants wore colourful regional folk costumes. It was truly the most glittering affair, held against the background of the exquisite Renaissance Wawel (Vavel) castle.

I was considered to be the first lady of the military staff. Since the wife of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army never participated in social life, because of her health, at formal state receptions I usually found myself seated next to one of the top visitors. I took advantage of these situations to find out what they really thought about our nation, and to learn about their country, its customs, way of life, and so on.

When we entertained, I did my best to perform my duties as hostess satisfactorily. At small parties, I tried to make people feel at home by avoiding formalities. When we had to give large receptions for the military attachés, or the diplomatic corps, I would also invite people from the artistic, literary and musical world, who would give a special accent to the party. I remember an actor, J. Osterva (experimental theatre), who possessed a magical charm and was a great attraction. Another, a young pianist named Witold Malcuzynski, winner of the International Chopin Competition, played Chopin at one of our dinner parties for the diplomatic corps. I introduced him to the ambassadors, hoping that he would receive an invitation to perform abroad. I succeeded, as the Swedish and the French Ambassadors invited him to come to their respective countries. Malcuzynski came to America after the war, and became a well-known concert pianist.

All these parties and receptions required many pretty dresses. However, I could not spend too much money on haute couture.

It may seem strange to an American that my husband,

holding such a high position, did not command a very high salary. One of the reasons was that our country was rising literally from dust and ashes after 150 years of brutal foreign occupation. Rebuilding the nation required enormous funds, and the lack of foreign loans made the situation very difficult. A few years before the war, civil servants and military personnel voluntarily taxed themselves an extra 10%, in order to establish a National Defense Fund.

We had lived through a terrible depression and rampant inflation at the end of World War I in 1918 — that of the German mark, the currency used in the part of Poland previously occupied by the Germans. You received your salary in small bills and had to carry it in suitcases. A pair of shoes which cost 30 million marks required a suitcase full of money, and salaries were no more than two or three suitcases!

In 1924, when Poland finally succeeded in overcoming this post-war crisis and introduced the new Polish currency (the historic zloty), banks exchanged one million marks for one zloty. This miraculous recovery was achieved only through enormous sacrifices by the people, which they endured willingly out of patriotism.

In 1936 we went to Paris again, this time on a very important mission. My husband accompanied the Polish Commander-in-Chief for final negotiations and the signing of the Franco-Polish military and economic agreement at Rambouillet, which would guarantee French assistance to Poland and strengthen the alliance between the two countries.

It was on this occasion, when my husband was a member of the Polish delegation, that we were invited by the President of the French Republic, Albert Lebrun, to the Palais de l'Elysee. The reception was set in great splendour, and I remember that I wore a very pretty sequined formal dress which looked like a shining "waterfall of little stars", according to a description that later appeared in the newspapers.

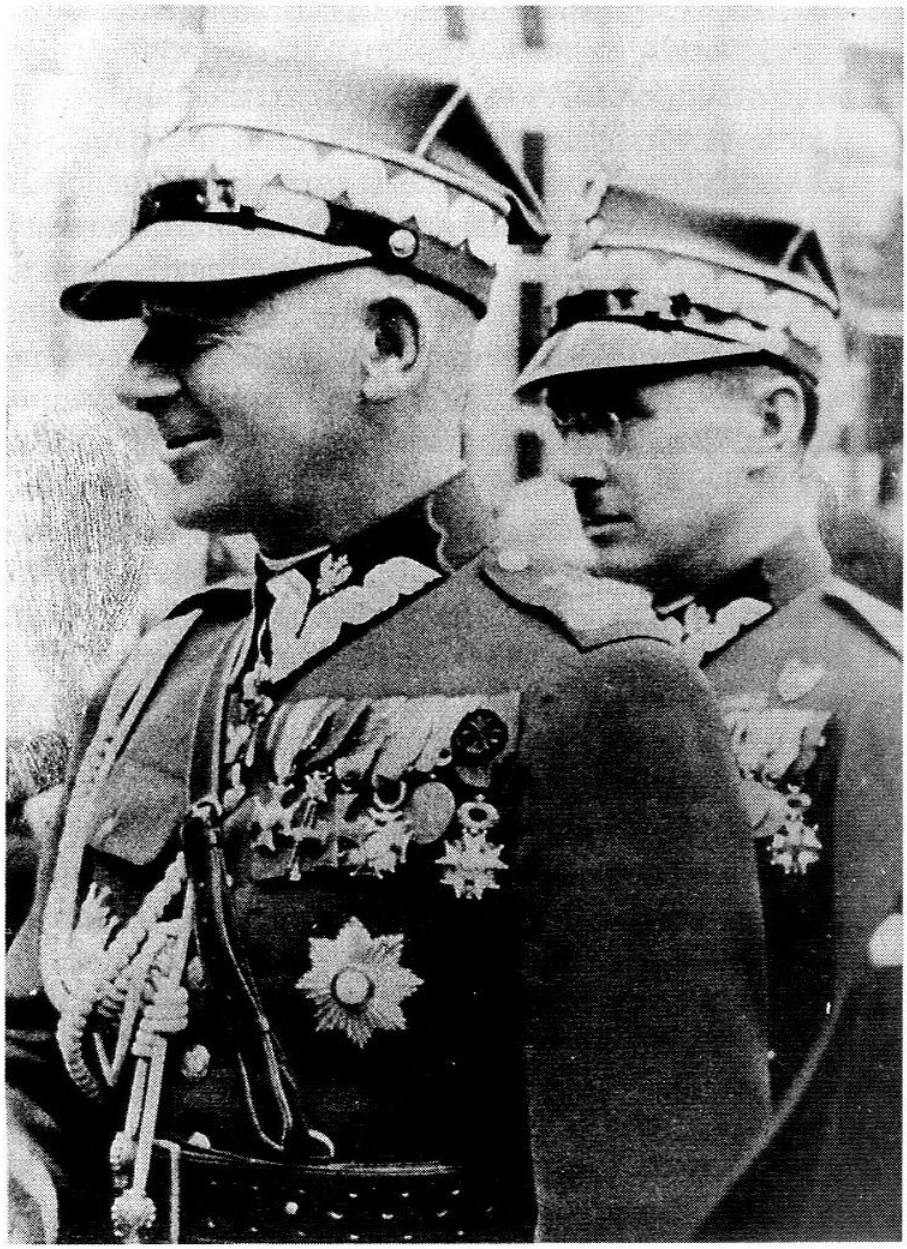
On the way back to Poland my husband decided to travel by car through Germany, to get some first-hand impressions of Germany under Hitler.

I went to Berlin by train and stayed there for several days

with the family of the Polish military attaché waiting for my husband. I was invited together with them to many parties and official receptions, and had a chance to meet most of the high-ranking officials of the Nazi party, including Hitler. The most memorable event of my stay in Berlin was a big rally during which Adolf Hitler made one of his famous speeches. Watching him one had the impression of seeing a fanatic who exerted an almost hypnotic effect on the crowd. Thousands of people, excited to the point of mass hysteria, were raising their arms and rhythmically shouting "Sieg Heil". It was obvious that this man was blindly accepted as leader, and that he had aroused the dormant impulses of the German soul.

Staring at this performance, I had a feeling of intense fear and foreboding. What would this lead to?

As the years went by - 1937, 1938, 1939 - the world atmosphere daily grew more tense and gloomy, a result of Hitler's threats to peace, and the deliberate refusal by the governments of the Western Powers to recognize this menace, and to act accordingly. Europe was moving to the edge of the abyss.



Marshal Rydz-Smigly, commander-in-chief of the Polish Army and his chief of Staff, general W. Stachiewicz

THE APPROACHING WAR

The approaching war was in the air. There were no more social parties except for fund raising and state receptions for Western ministers, military commanders, or politicians, who came to Poland for talks to confirm agreements which now included the newly signed military alliance with Great Britain. The Minister for Foreign Affairs entertained the civilian notables and Foreign Secretaries. We gave dinner parties for the military commanders, mostly from Great Britain and France. I remember General E. Clayton, General William E. Ironside, and the Chief of the British Mission to Poland, General Carton de Wiart, a particularly charming and cultured man. An old friend of Poland, the Chief of the French Military Mission, General L. Faury, was also among our guests.

For us Poles , our independence and freedom were at stake. The thought of war dominated our private and national lives. Our country had had only 20 years to recover from the devastation of the First World War, and to rebuild everything from scratch. Poland did not have enough money to match even remotely the tremendous German armaments expenditures, yet it was my husband's duty to prepare our army for war as best as possible within the available budget, so that we could oppose the full might of the German war machine, while waiting for the Allies to fulfil the terms of our alliance, and attack Germany from the west.

I always understood that dedication to one's duty and achievement were the most important things in a man's life. I believed that my husband's total commitment to his work had priority over everything else and I tried to relieve him of all family and social concerns. I tried to handle things as best I could and perform my obligations scrupulously, never showing displeasure, weariness, or the selfish "blues" to which every woman is subject.

Family life ceased to exist for us. I saw my husband for short moments, with no hour set for any meal. At night I waited with a cup of tea, sometimes until dawn. He did not belong to us anymore. He belonged to the country, and I considered

my role to be one of support to my husband, as we lived together through this national trauma.

In world politics, the eyes of every European Foreign Ministry had been focused since 1933 on Adolf Hitler's rise to power. As German diplomacy became bolder and bolder, with each passing day, Poland suspected that Germany would attempt to re-militarise the area which lay on the German-French border, west of the river Rhine, called "the Rhineland", and in which, under the Treaty of Versailles (1919) and the Pact of Locarno (1925), the Germans were forbidden to keep troops or build fortifications. Such a move would mean war with France, but again the Poles suspected that France would not move, although in 1936 her army could have easily crushed the Germans. To bolster the resolve of our French allies, at the moment when German troops entered the Rhineland in 1936, the French Ambassador in Warsaw was formally assured that Poland would fulfil the terms of the Franco-Polish Alliance, and join France in a war against Germany. This was the moment when France could have stopped Hitler. However, the Polish offer was not even communicated to the French High Command by the French government, and France backed down and stayed passive while Hitler sent his troops across the Rhine. Hitler's intuition proved to be correct: France did not want to fight. He became more and more aggressive, beginning to incorporate parts of other countries bit by bit, without meeting any reaction other than "diplomatic talk". The pattern strangely resembles the present situation, only with a different aggressor.

In the Soviet Union, during 1937-38, a bloody elimination of Stalin's real and imagined opponents took place, through the paranoid purge trials of old loyal communists and top army commanders, who were forced through torture to confess their "guilt", and were then executed.

The Germans started to organize an "anti-Communist front" and tried to induce Poland to join their "crusade". In February 1937, Hermann Goering, second only to Adolf Hitler, visited Warsaw and suggested collaboration in the anti-Comintern front. His words fell on deaf ears, as Poland wanted to stay

away from any involvement with either of her two rapacious neighbours.

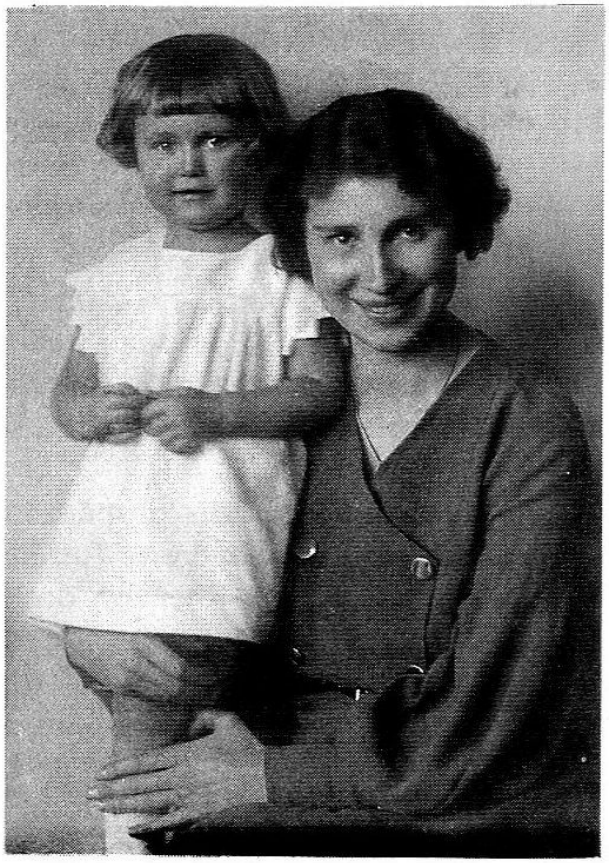
In February 1938, against the will of Chancellor Shuschnigg, Austria was invaded and annexed by Germany in the so-called voluntary Anschluss. Later, in 1942, I met in Montreal the widow of the previous Austrian Chancellor Dollfuss (1932-1934) who had been assassinated by the Nazis. Like myself, she was a refugee with her children. We became friends, and she told me much about the Austrian drama of those days and her husband's efforts to prevent the Nazi take-over.

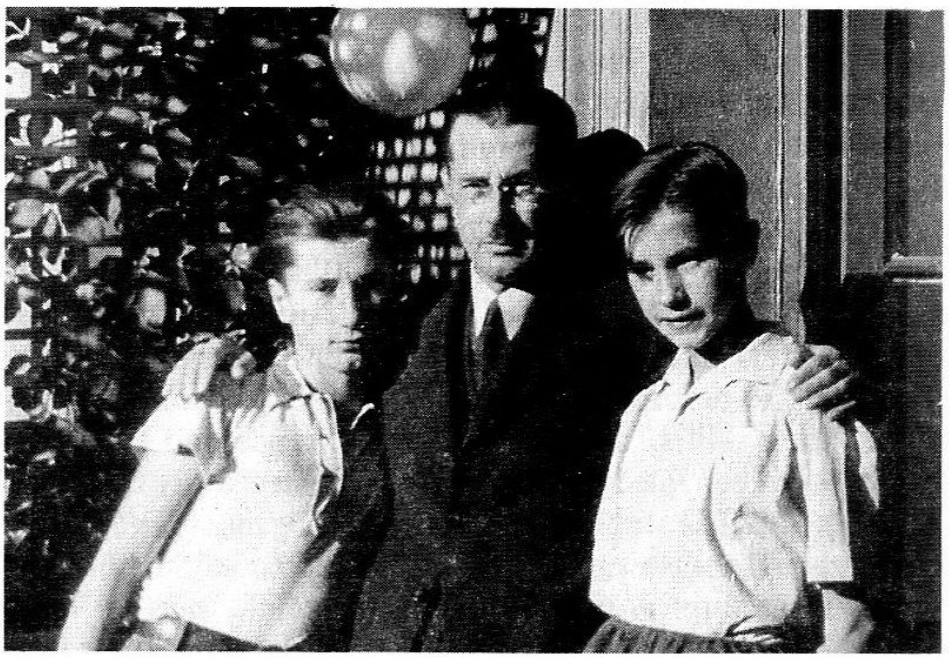
In September 1938, Czechoslovakia was dismembered and the Sudetenland was annexed by Germany. It was mostly inhabited by Germans but had belonged to Czechoslovakia since 1918. The Western Allies convened at Munich, and, without consulting the Czechs, agreed that Czechoslovakia had to hand the Sudetenland over to the Germans. Chamberlain returned to England claiming that he had achieved "peace in our time", because he believed the German promises that this was their "last demand".

Hitler became euphoric and unbalanced by his stunning successes. The mighty nations had been humbled and the weak had capitulated at once! One month later he announced his claims on Poland: the annexation of the Free City of Gdansk (Danzig), Poland's vital access to the sea; and an extra-territorial highway across the Polish district of Pomerania (referred to by the Germans as the "Corridor"). But Poland, unlike Czechoslovakia, would not give up its independence without a struggle. The Polish Foreign Minister, responding to Hitler's demands, reflected the mood of the country when he said, "...We in Poland do not recognize the concept of peace at any price... We shall defend every inch of our territory..." Poland decided to fight, although we knew that we were facing disaster, and expected terrifying trials. We believed that our allies, France and Great Britain, would honour their commitments, freely given to Poland. According to the statement of the American Ambassador, Anthony Drexel Biddle, Poland displayed remarkable calm in the face of the approaching war.

In the spring of 1939, Germany occupied the rest of

Wanda and Eva





Gen. W. Stachiewicz and sons: Bob and Jul
Last photo from Warsaw - Aug. 1939

Czechoslovakia and the Lithuanian port city of Memel.

Germany now unleashed in Europe and America a furious propaganda campaign against Poland. We were accused of persecuting the German minority in Poland, violating German territory, and trying to provoke war with Germany by resisting their "just" demands.

At the same time, an insidious campaign to intimidate France and England was begun, through well organized demonstrations of German military power, and the threat of retaliatory bombing of French and British cities, should these countries decide to help Poland.

To a certain extent, this propaganda war succeeded, as neither France nor England ever fulfilled their military commitments to Poland, even after they declared war on Germany.

I thank God that in those traumatic days, under the tremendous pressure of the "war of nerves" which preceded the outbreak of hostilities, I could discipline myself to provide for my family an atmosphere as calm and cheerful as possible. How difficult it was can be understood only by someone who has lived through those tragic days.

Meanwhile, secret negotiations between Germany and Russia were taking place, unknown to the world. On August 23, 1939, to the dismay of the entire world, the bombshell exploded. A Soviet-German "Non-Aggression Pact" was signed in Moscow. It also contained a "Secret Protocol", concerning the next partition of Poland between the two powers, which was not made public when the pact was announced. The Poles, although shocked by the pact, remained unified. They would fight the aggressor, ten times stronger than themselves, despite the fact that, as I said before, they expected terrible sufferings. They trusted their Allies, and believed that France and England would keep their pledge and quickly and decisively come to Poland's aid. The war would then become general and, even if defeated on their own soil, the Poles would continue to fight outside their country. We were prepared to fight together with our Allies, to the last soldier, and we believed that the combined Allied forces would prevail!

A frantic series of contradictory rumors now started to cir-

culate, bringing the "war of nerves" to a climax. False, provocative radio broadcasts from Germany were aired - rumors about the Germans coming! Today! Tomorrow...! Oh those days of agony! And then, suddenly, without the usual declaration of war, on September 1, 1939, at five o'clock in the morning, all hell broke loose. Preceded by an incessant bombardment from the air, the German army invaded Poland.

The war had started!

PART TWO

HEROIC TIMES - WORLD WAR II

BLITZKRIEG IN POLAND

It had been a wonderful, hot, dry summer in Poland before the war in 1939. The sun poured down its brilliance to make one forget the menacing threat of Germany. Warsaw, the capital of Poland, with nearly two million inhabitants, a very attractive, modern city, full of gaiety and wit, was now completely changed. Every week increased the tension.

Little by little men were being called to the colours, and when they went away, full of optimism, their wives were proud that their husbands were going to serve their beloved country. For a fact that soon becomes apparent to anyone who visits Poland is that every Pole, man or woman, young or old, is full of personal passionate love for his country, and devotion to the very ground upon which he lives.

The Polish woman has always cooperated with the man when her country was in need or danger. She has a splendid tradition of heroism and sacrifice, the woman as well as the girl. Throughout the year, we were preparing ourselves for war. The Women's Auxiliary Service, a widespread organization throughout Poland, redoubled its work, organizing courses. We received anti-gas as well as rifle training and various other kinds of instruction. Before the outbreak of war women were told to prepare their husband's or son's knapsacks in case they should be called up unexpectedly; and to prepare their own and their children's things, so as to be ready to leave abruptly in case of bombing.

Each family must have provisions for one month. Each child must have a label with his name and address stitched on his clothes - in case he was lost. I remember how depressing it was, when we sat in silence and sewed on those labels.

Everybody offered one day of work to dig shelters in the park. Each woman and girl, trained in anti-gas defense, had ten blocks to look after in case of bombing.

★ ★ ★

I had completed a Liaison Service course, and in July 1939,

I started my work in the General Headquarters, happy to be useful and to work near my husband.

I had sent my little daughter, the dearest recreation of her overworked father, to a small cottage just outside Warsaw so that he could see her sometimes. The cottage, hidden in the forest, seemed to me very safe in case of war, because I did not realize then what actual war would be like. Now I know. There is no safe area in modern warfare.

My twin boys, then 14, were active in a group of Boy Scouts.

On September 1, 1939, I was awakened by the shrilling of the telephone. I was told briefly that the Germans were attacking our country without any declaration of war. It was five o'clock in the morning. I was ordered instantly to my service. As soon as I arrived at my office, I was drawn into the whirl of work. From that moment we hardly had time to breathe.

Two hours later there was the first unheralded air raid on Warsaw. In a few hours the city was transformed into an armed fortress. Trucks and lorries carried troops to the front, anti-aircraft guns were set up everywhere. The entire population joined in the task of defence, digging shelters or in doing other similar work. Women were taking over the men's jobs.

I worked and lived in the basement of a large building especially built to withstand bombing from the air. It was hard to get used to staying all day and often longer, deep under the surface, without any fresh air.

When free, I would dash to my deserted home, once so happy and full of gaiety, to have a bath and change of clothes. I never had time nor thought to gather and pack my things, even my small treasures, my favourite books, pictures, and photographs. With a sad farewell glance I would take leave of them and rush back to my service. And then one day when I returned I found everything destroyed. Only the old trees stood deserted in the charming garden.

The air raids became more and more frequent, until there were intervals of only hour or even less between them.

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Poland was the first nation to resist Hitler's demands with honour. Like centuries ago, she had to defend herself once again against Germany. Her battlefields were soaked in the blood of her sons and daughters.

Fate gave us a hard sevice to perform at a difficult post in Europe: to be the rampart of Western civilization, the centre of culture and moral force against the barbarians from east and west. This forged in Poland an unbreakable spirit, and the conviction of her mission among the nations.

If you could know Poland and travel throughout the countryside, towns, and villages, you would perceive behind the healthy, sunny smiles of the people an underlying seriousness, traces of past centuries of struggle.

Begining the Second World War, Hitler unleashed on Poland 90 per cent of his ground forces, leaving on the French front only a few regular divisions and several reserve units. The Germans soon gained air superriority over us, in spite of the fact that our pilots fought with fanatical courage, and our troops with desperate heroism and unshakable determination, awaiting the promised offensive by France and England on the Western Front.

On Sunday, September 3, 1939, the radio announced that England had declared war on Germany. Enthusiastically cheering crowds gathered outside the British Embassy, paying no attention to the air raids, which kept on for days and nights. Mr. Kennard, the Ambassador of Great Britain, and the Polish Foreign Minister came out on the balcony together and made speeches applauded by the crowds. Hope was in our hearts.

A declaration of war by France followed a few hours later.

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It was only on the sixth day of the war that I found time at dawn to go to see my daughter. I arrived at the usually quiet place almost at the very moment the Germans were bombing the farm. Two buildings were already ablaze. I only had time to pick up my little child and cover her head with a scarf, so that she would not see the flames and the image would not

be impressed on her memory.

I rushed with her to the shelter, which had been dug in the garden a day before. It was a rather hard moment for me. As soon as daylight came, I sent my daughter off to my parents' house, and my sons to a Boy Scout group in the south of Poland, a sixteen-hour drive from Warsaw. And then I went back to my work.

★ ★ ★

The Blitzkrieg, never previously encountered in the history of war, was unleashed against us. A huge multitude of planes and tanks, followed by motorized troops, plunged into the Polish lines, never giving us breathing space, and advanced deep into our territory. The entire nation rose against the invader, but it was the war of brave hearts against a ceiling and walls of steel. Poland, wounded to death, fought alone against the full strength of Germany.

Warsaw was besieged, and for three weeks continued its heroic stand against the full blast of German attacks. Men, women and children fell in the streets. One after another the monuments of our glorious past were smashed: the old royal castle, churches, palaces, and other buildings. The squares, one month ago bright with flowers, became cemeteries.

Women, even girls and boys of tender age, were fighting with guns in their frail hands, side by side with the army, for the liberty of their country.

We saw them heroically throwing heavy sand over fire bombs, or digging graves in the squares. We saw them carrying wounded soldiers from burning or collapsing hospitals, bringing every available piece of linen, pillows and blankets to supply the badly-burned patients. We saw them distributing food in the streets, warning, helping, cheering up. There was no electricity, no water.

The entire world knows the story of the courage displayed and sacrifices made by the people of Warsaw, who fought side by side with the army, and the role of Starzynski, President of the City, who was the soul of the defence of Warsaw. Their

heroism earned them an indelible place in history.

Looking back, I sometimes wonder how we lived through the nightmare of those days. After a few hours of bewildering horror, you can get used to the dreadful, ear-splitting, inhuman sound of exploding bombs and the drone of motors. After a while they become so familiar, so unimpressing, that you would not even look up from your work, unless you were under a very heavy bombardment. People were drawn together by common danger and pain. It was no place for selfishness. It was the hour for feeling close to your neighbours, whose sorrow became your own. This unity was wonderful, precious, and comforting.

I don't know whether in times to come another generation will live through so many trials, each of them enriching the soul and the mind, as did my generation. To live under the menace of death is to learn the real meaning of life.

Time marched on.

★ ★ ★

One day I was ordered to carry a message to a military centre in the south of Poland. I was happy and proud to be trusted with this important mission, but at the same time I had to part with my husband. A sad feeling oppressed me. It was justified - I would not see him again for a long time.

I drove out of Warsaw during an interval between air raids. When we were well out of the city several German planes attacked us. Bombs fell on either side of us. Huge clouds of smoke covered the countryside. A fragment wounded my driver in his hand. We had no time to bind it up, as one plane, flying very low directly above us, machine-gunned our truck. I heard the sharp crackle of the gun and the frightful roar of the plane. I do know if the bullets came near me or not, but suddenly I felt something warm running down my cheek and neck. The shattered window glass had cut me, and my chauffeur was wounded in his other hand. As he could no longer use his hands, we changed places while still in motion, and I was obliged to drive the truck in spite of the fact that I am

a very poor driver. I was terrified that I would have an accident. I drove in zigzags, skidding all over the road, trying to get out of sight of the Germans. After an interminable time, we fortunately succeeded in escaping, and reached our destination.

When I was exhausted and longing for rest, I learned that the Germans were now advancing from the south, and the place where my boys were staying with the Scouts was exposed to danger. My throat tightened with anxiety. All my physical fatigue vanished. I decided to go at once, taking a leave of three days, to gather my children, and to take them to a safe place - my parent's house, where I had planned to send them, no longer being a safe refuge.

I hurried by day, ignoring the air raid warnings, and I drove at night without lights all the way. I passed the familiar town where I had spent my school years, now partly in flames. At several points, we were stopped and had to argue and ask and beg to be allowed to pass into the zone of operations. I was in uniform, which helped a lot. The way seemed endless to me. When at last I reached the place, I found to my horror that the entire village had been evacuated and the boys moved to an unspecified place.

I searched for them in the gruelling heat of the day and throughout the night. I shall never forget my relief when I finally found them among a company of soldiers, busy and merry, cleaning guns with them and, when the German artillery sounded, singing a joyous soldiers' song.

I tried to laugh with them. I think they never guessed what I had gone through during those days.

Now we had to collect my daughter from her grandparents. We arrived there at night to find the big old house of my youth lit up by the moon. The smell of the roses which climbed all over the walls was almost suffocating.

Everybody seemed to be asleep. I entered the side door of the library, my favourite room. The glittering, polished oak floor, the familiar pictures of Italian and French masters, the gilded backs of books in every language - all looked at me as usual and seemed to welcome me. I heard a noise. Emerging

from the shadows, my mother appeared, sorrowful but calm, foreseeing the misfortune and the nightmare of separation. For how long nobody knew.

The picture of my home and my mother, as I saw her a few hours later, for the last time, is imprinted on my memory, and is very characteristic of Poland. Tall and proud she stood framed in the doorway, as though grown into the house and soil, bidding us farewell with the sign of the cross. The journey was very difficult, the roads were overcrowded, the heat was unbearable, and we could scarcely move.

I saw women and old men and little children dropping from fatigue and hunger as they fled in terror from burning villages and oncoming armies. Once I bent over a woman on the road who was giving birth to a child, begrimed with dust and sweat.

On my way I passed small burning villages, and undefended towns swollen by refugees, where the raiders would come by day dropping poisoned chocolates for Polish children, poisoned cigarettes, or bombs.

I have seen defenceless children, a group of girls and boys playing football, machine-gunned by German planes. I have seen with my own eyes the fruit of hatred and evil.

It was Sunday morning, a beautiful bright day, when we approached my friend's manor house, close to the borders of Russia and Roumania, where I intended to leave my children and go back to my duty. All seemed so much more quiet and safe. We heard the loudspeaker telling about a successful battle, which should allow our armies to resist more effectively, while awaiting the offensive of France and England. In a small wooden country church the bells were ringing for Mass. Hope rose again in our hearts.

But two hours later I heard the terrible news. The Bolsheviks were attacking our country, treacherously, without any declaration of war, plunging a dagger into Poland's back.

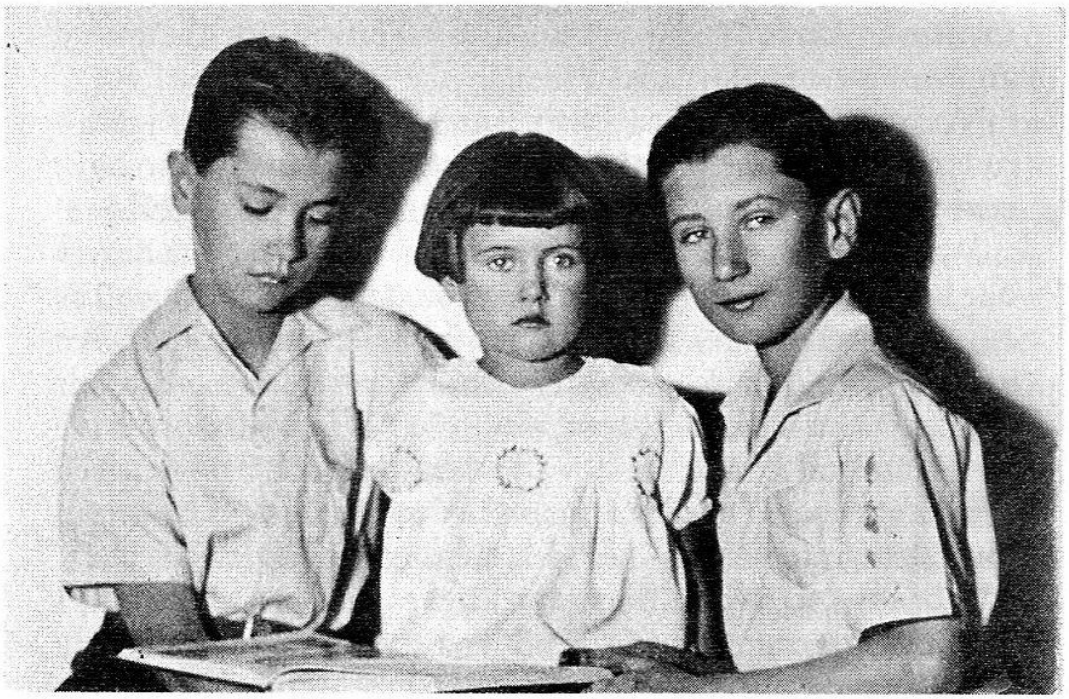
I sat in the garden for several hours, shattered by the horrible truth. Now I knew it was the death-blow. My country was defeated and my personal destiny meant very little to me. But I had three children, so I must go - but where? We were in a trap. I could not return home, and I could not get in touch

with my husband, who was somewhere with the army. I had to reach a decision alone. Looking back at my life, this was the only moment when I felt totally frustrated, and when I lost for an instant all my energy and vitality. We could not believe in our heart of hearts that the heroism of our army was in vain, that it was the end.

In the evening it had been rumoured that Russian troops, coming in countless thousands, were already in the neighbouring town. We sat late in the night scarcely talking to each other, uneasy and unhappy, at every sound expecting the enemy. Then, at daybreak they came - vulgar, noisy, giving off a special smell of boots, shouting loudly. They expelled my friends from their property, giving them one hour to pack and leave. All refugees were ordered to return to the place of their birth. I read the dreadful poster over and over again and could not bring myself to realize that each of my children and myself were born in a different place, so for us it would mean separation.

During that sleepless night I decided to leave my country. To realize what it meant to us, one must know the people of Poland, one must feel their inherent love of their soil. For the people and soil of Poland are part of each other.

And so, homeless and crushed, I crossed the Roumanian frontier by night, accompanied by my three children. Approaching the border lines in the forest, we bent over and kissed the dark ground. My sons took a clod of it for the gloomy exile. My little daughter, sleepy and tired, but happy in her unconsciousness, clasped in her arms her teddy bear, the last present from her father.



Bob Eva Jul

JOURNEY THROUGH EUROPE
Roumania - Yugoslavia
Italy - Switzerland - France

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And so the mournful refugee life began. It is not only the lack of everything material that makes it so hard. True, you are homeless, uprooted, often cold and hungry, but more than for food, you are hungry for warm affection, for the moral atmosphere of your country.

You are restless, inwardly torn and homesick. The slightest rudeness hurts. People of a happy and free country who have never had to live through this tragedy, be warm to a refugee!

We don't want to be a burden to you. We bring as a dowry our background, education, culture and traditions, as well as our own way of thinking, our different reactions, and our own ideas. We bring also our experience. We have seen with our own eyes the fruit of hatred and evil. And because we have seen it and suffered from it, we have understood only too well what it means. Our eyes are open. Maybe it would be useful to exchange these spiritual gifts among ourselves.

When we arrived in Bucharest, the capital of Roumania, I longed for rest and comfort, but could not afford the luxury of relaxing. I had to hold on.

A stream of refugees arrived, primarily our soldiers who, after having fought heroically to the end, crossed the frontier rather than surrender, hoping to reach France and continue the fight. I was full of anxiety about what had happened to my husband. I had his image deep in my memory from whem I saw him the last time. He looked haggard, with his face contracted and tired, thinner than ever - a heavy worry in his eyes. I knew what the defeat of Poland meant to him. I knew how much he had given to his country. I remembered well the last year before the war, how very hard he had driven himself, the nights he had not slept, the endless days of work and worry. Everything had been in vain. What was happeing now? One week later I got the message. He was in the internment camp

with soldiers and officers, and he wanted me to leave Roumania as soon as possible.

With a feeling of helplessness and injustice in my heart, I started to prepare for our journey.

After a lot of troubles and miseries, standing in line for hours and hours to exchange money, to get a residence permit or exit permit, I finally got the necessary passport, visas and tickets to cross most of Europe on the way to France. Paris was the goal of our journey. Paris, where I had lived for three joyous years of study and where I had experienced the happiness of my honeymoon. Paris, where I had friends who could help me, and whose beauty and mellow charm could be a comfort for my distressed soul.

We travelled through Yugoslavia, Italy and Switzerland. Reaching the French frontier through Switzerland, I was told that the capital was evacuated and no women or children were admitted. But I was already trained in overcoming adversities. And so I obtained permission from a chivalrous official who said: "At your risk, Madame, but don't expect any assistance in evacuation, when the bombing begins". At that time, France expected the German offensive to begin at any moment.

I was not frightened. We arrived in Paris and settled there for the winter. Before I could turn round, my small rooms became the meeting place for my French friends and for the refugees who were arriving a few at a time. Anyone who liked could bring newcomers. I think it was the unpretentiousness and the traditional Polish friendliness that they liked. I could not seat more than ten people - so the rest sat on the floor on cushions and we talked and talked, eating some nice Polish "babka", usually brought by one of the guests. We all needed human contact, to be closer to each other in this exile.

The children went to school, which was not easy to arrange as all schools were evacuated and only two were open. I spent many hours with my boys reading the finest works of French literature to make it easier for them at school, and I was also running a work-room for soldiers, which the wife of the American Ambassador, Mrs. Biddle, supported. My boys enjoyed the atmosphere of danger and excitement that reigned

in Paris for a short while.

Then, as time passed and nothing happened, the idleness demoralized the French people.

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During the winter of 1939, the Poles re-created their army in France. Polish men and boys escaped from Poland, braving the danger of being shot by German or Russian frontier guards, to join the Polish troops, and about 100,000 men went on to fight in the Battle of France. Our troops fought in the fiords of Norway, in Greece, and in Africa. Our navy and our airmen, wing to wing with their allies, faithful forever. But France did not profit by Polish experience.

At the end of May, when the French lines broke under the German offensive, I sent my children off and kept on working. The military situation grew more and more serious. On June 12, one of my friends rang me up: "Heavens, what are you doing staying in Paris? You must leave this evening!" It was easy to say, but hard to do. I had no car, and there was no possible way to get on the train. Yet I succeeded! When we were well out of town, the train came under fire from low flying airplanes. We stopped and were told to hide in the bushes. Bombs dropped but we were not harmed. I don't know what happened, but something damaged the engine. Now we were left to our own devices. Among the hurrying crowds, I climbed into a truck, jammed with soldiers, and when they changed direction, I jumped on an artillery ammunition supply wagon along the road, until I caught another train. I went to Arcachon, the lovely resort on the Atlantic Ocean, to fetch my daughter, and then I tried to join my boys in the summer Scout camp in the Pyrenees.

COLLAPSE OF FRANCE

In Bordeaux I saw the most depressing collapse of a country. Paris was wonderfully calm and dignified in comparison with Bordeaux, which was a madhouse. I saw fear, confusion, turmoil, crowds of refugees in cars filled with possessions, in trucks with no gasoline. Planes circled overhead, a few bombs fell somewhere far away, the artillery sounded. The road to the harbour was jammed with valuable cars, top heavy with packages, which later had to be abandoned on the shore. In the atmosphere of excitement, personal selfishness was evident and there was none of that spirit of common resistance and determination to fight to the end that had been so striking in Poland.

I began to grow uneasy about my boys away in the camp in the Pyrenees. At first I did not think it would be difficult to join them. Now, I realized how serious the situation was.

The trains were running very irregularly or not at all. There was no car, no truck to drive you anywhere. No telegram could be sent. I spent the day restlessly running all through the city to find some means of communication. A woman I met by chance, who had a car and a son in the same camp, promised to take us with her the next morning at seven o'clock.

When, after a sleepless night of bombing, I arrived at her home at six o'clock, I found her room empty. She had left without us. I lost much of my precious time. Bitter sadness overwhelmed me, as always when I had to face human selfishness. I walked heavily out of her house, and kept on thinking: I must keep cool, I must hold on, I **must** reach my sons in time.

I walked from one garage to another, asking people to drive me out. Everybody was so busy and excited, they did not even listen to me. After two hours of such running around, I heard the air-raid warning and saw the morning papers. On the front page big headlines leaped at my weary eyes. "Nobody will be permitted to leave Bordeaux! No more refugees on the roads." My heart sank. I stood silent, stiffly blinking, and then my head became dizzy. When I opened my eyes, I saw a young workman raising me up. "Come, have a cognac, young lady.

Don't be afraid, the bombs are falling far from us". The kind man thought that I fainted bacause I was afraid of the bombs!

I was ashamed of myself for allowing such a silly thing to happen. It was not the time for weakness. As I sat with him in the small cafe drinking brandy, my brain began to turn over plans again. All my efforts had been in vain. I was helpless, and my only hope was to ask the assistance of Mrs. Margaret Biddle, the wife of the U.S. Ambassador to France, the most warm-hearted, kind person I ever knew, with whom I was very friendly in Warsaw. I knew she would help me if I could get in touch with her. I was not disappointed. Late in the evening, she gave me a car to drive out of Bordeaux. I am sure she never realized how much she had done for me, and how deeply I remembered the kindness shown me when I was down and out. It meant far more to me than all the benefits of the world received when I was up. I will always have warm and thankful feelings for her.

It was night and pouring rain when I left in the car with my daughter. There was to be a train next morning. The little town was already struck with panic. The station waiting room was filled with people, soldiers sleeping everywhere on the floor. I asked for a refugee hut or canteen. It was crowded too, but the nice nurses were very comforting. They led us to a couch in the corner and tried to talk to us. But we fell asleep as they talked.

Next morning we climbed onto a very peculiar train. Two freight cars were serving the entire district in all directions. Passengers going south, as I was, had to get out at a siding and wait several hours until the train returned from serving the eastern and western regions. It took us 14 hours to cover 100 miles.

The train was crowded with sweaty men and discharged soldiers. I was the only woman with a child. It was stuffy and smoky, some slept in the corners, some were fervently discussing politics. One of the men, just released from prison for politics or murder, I don't know which, was shouting loudly, and others were agreeing with him. "The people of France and the Poles were guilty, too... Now is the hour for bloody

revenge. Better to be the butcher than the beef!" And truly, he looked like a butcher. The French temper was swelling, and it seemed to me I was attending a political meeting in the French Revolution and seeing Robespierre in person.

I am not easy to frighten, but I began to grow uneasy. Outside, the sky darkened and there were no lights in the train. The "blood-thirsty" man sat next to my daughter, as I drew her closer and closer to me. I tried to make us invisible, whispering to her not to speak Polish to me. She was sleepy, hungry, worn out. Now they were talking economics, discussing the scarcity of food that would shortly occur in France, having no coal, no corn, no sugar. As a foreigner, I was sure I would be the last to get anything if I stayed here. My mind was working. What should I do? Where should I go? Again I was at a loss. I was lost in my thoughts when an unfamiliar touch made me shiver. I looked dizzily and saw in the glimmering light of the cigarette the "blood-thirsty" man smiling at me, showing me the head of my little daughter, leaning on his arm, calmly asleep. "How sweet," he said, in a mild voice, "aren't you hungry, Madame?" No, I was not hungry, although we had hardly eaten since breakfast, but I made the quick decision to catch the shred of human sympathy, and asked him to help. I badly needed a car to drive me and my three children to the Atlantic sea shore. I would pay what I was asked.

"A car?" he burst out laughing, "a car, with the gasoline shortage, to drive you across the south of France now, when the Germans are on our tracks? You shall find the Germans already in Biarritz, Madame, as they are coming down along the coast to take all our harbours. You'd better stay with us. I will look after you!" But once decided, I was firm. My instinct told me to seek rescue on the sea. After a long argument - he had a daughter like mine, whom he had missed very much in prison - he promised to come or to send me a friend with a car, if at all possible. We took leave like friends. He did not suspect I was a stranger, and even complimented me on my Parisian French. And so, although it seemed unbelievable, it was true that the destiny of my children and my own were in the hands of this French rogue, whom I call-

ed the "blood-thirsty" man, and who had made me shiver a few hours earlier.

It was night when we left the train, with two more miles to walk. We sat in the cool night, pressed against one another on a bench, awaiting the dawn. As soon as daylight came, we walked on, desperately weary. Upon arrival at the camp, we found only a few boys remaining, preparing to escape over the Pyrenees to Spain at any moment. If I had come a few hours later I would not have found them. I will never forget the look of relief on my sons' faces. "We knew mother would come".

As far as I remember, I slept the whole day. When it grew dark, I began to be anxious about my rogue. Would he come? Had he deceived me? My intuition, which hardly ever betrays me, gave me confidence. At night, I heard a knock at the door. He was standing against the car, "Hurry up", he said harshly, "I am busy".

Driving across the south of France, I wondered what I would do next.

The Germans were coming, and there was very little hope of finding a boat going to England or to America. And even if we found one, I did not have enough money for the tickets. Wasn't I a fool spending my last francs on this car? The blue sea appeared, and my anxiety increased. The contrast between the serene calm of nature and the horrors of war was too striking. How unreal my former happy homelife seemed to me at that moment.

A loud shout from my boys drew my attention. "Look, mother, a train with Polish soldiers is crossing our road. Oh mother, let us follow them!" And so we did. They were remnants of the Polish troops, who, having fought fiercely until the end, withdrew with all their equipment, and were on their way to England.

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Providence took compassion on my distress and sent me salvation. The captain of the naval boat which was awaiting

them did not know what to do with us. He tried to discourage me, warning that there was only a 20 per cent chance of a safe crossing, as we would be heavily bombed.

To be bombed among our soldiers seemed to me a party in comparison to being left alone, abandoned on the French shore!

And so we boarded the ship, and after eight days at sea with practically no food we landed in England.

I was fortunate enough to succeed in saving my children, and a few months later to reach Canada, this peaceful, charming country where there was no hunger, cold, or bombing. I did not know it then, but Canada was to become my new homeland, where I would live the rest of my life. At the time, I had only one thought: to hand down to my children love of their country, Polish traditions, the strength and abnegation of their fathers, scorn of material gain in life, and aptitude for hard work and honest effort, which would harden their character and make them worthy and ready to rebuild a new, liberated Poland.

PART THREE

LIFE IN CANADA

ARRIVAL IN MONTREAL

The train pulled into the old Bonaventure Station in the centre of the city.* It was July 13, 1940, a hot, humid afternoon. We had travelled from England on a Polish ship, the M/S *Batory*, which was chartered to transport English children with a few mothers from London after the heavy bombing. As this was a Polish ship, eighteen wives and children of high-ranking Polish military personnel were included. Unknown to us, the ship contained priceless Polish treasures from the ancient Wawel (Vavel) castle in Krakow, and part of the Polish gold rescued from Warsaw before the city's capitulation.

All I can remember is the hustle and bustle, noise, running and shouting! A number of eager reporters and photographers surrounded us, looking for people in our group who could speak English. There were only two us who knew the language, so we agreed to give interviews.

The British citizens were met by a specially organized ad hoc committee of VIPs, formed ad hoc by the cream of Canadian business society. The Poles were met by a small group of people with our Consul General, who prepared for us temporary shelter for two weeks at the hospitable Sacred Heart Convent in Sault au Recollet, a suburb of Montreal. Its boarding school was empty in the summer, and the good nuns welcomed us graciously, offering compassion and kindness. Those two weeks in a beautiful setting of trees and gardens were restful, and a soothing relief.

We were allotted bedrooms on the third floor. I was so weak and exhausted that I could hardly climb the stairs. My dear sons took turns in bringing me my breakfast. The nuns were very impressed by their solicitude, and by their music. When the boys discovered that there was a grand piano in the large, empty reception room, they would play classical music for hours.

Many years later, some of the sisters told me that they still remembered my sons playing. I always remained in touch with

* The station no longer exists. The Bonaventure Hotel now stands on the site.

them.

The Sacred Heart nuns arranged for Eva and me to spend several days in a small village on a lake near Montreal, called St. Adele, located in the beautiful Laurentian mountains. I took a liking to it and to its simple, honest people, and in time it became like a family place for us. Later on in the war, it became a resort when the government and the army sent soldiers and pilots there on compulsory "relaxation" leave. Large hotels were built to accommodate vacationers. One of the hills, the Sommet Bleu, developed into a chic residential area, where my son Jul later built his house. Places of entertainment and shops also opened, but on the whole the picturesque hamlet retained its charm and privacy.

When I had somewhat recovered from the exhausting year of war and the journey, I tried to arrange a summer camp for the boys. The nuns told me that the best camp of all was Camp KINKORA near St. Adele, run by the Jesuit fathers. I went to their provincial house in Montreal and asked the superior to accept my boys, offering in return their help with camp chores, looking after the younger boys, and so on. Fortunately, they agreed. I then found a place for Eva and me to stay nearby for a few weeks, at the modest house of a farmer whom I had come to know.

The summer was coming to an end, and grim reality faced me. I had come to Canada without any financial resources. The little I had from the sale of a ring in Europe I had left with a friend, because I was told that during the war no one could take money out of England. But, embarking for Canada, I was certain that our basic needs would be taken care of in some way, as they were in England, where all refugees were provided with shelter and two poor meals a day, on the so-called "billeting" system. However, in Montreal, we were left on our own, after the lovely stay with the nuns of the Sacred Heart.

Difficult problems lay ahead of me: to find a place to live, a school for my sons and daughter, and work for myself. I felt lost in the New World, lonely and vulnerable. Although I knew so little of the practical side of life, I had to make all

the decisions on my own, and for that purpose I had to develop a new facet of my personality - to become tougher and less sensitive when faced with human indifference. Also, I had to forget about pride. I confess, it left me drained.

In spite of all the difficulties, I was determined to place my children in the best schools available. The Sacred Heart Convent promised to take Eva free of charge, in return for my giving piano lessons to their pupils. They also suggested that I approach the Jesuits' Loyola College for the boys.

I remembered from my childhood years that my father was a friend of an old priest, Monseignor K. Ledochowski, who was the General of the Jesuit order in Rome for many years. As a young girl visiting Rome with my father, I remembered we used to call on him. I wrote a letter to the Monseignor asking him to lend me support, but to organize all this I had to go to Montreal and leave our idyllic summer refuge! One of my new friends, Mr. Archambault, vacationing in the same resort during the weekends, offered me a lift. I recall that at the time real estate prices were terribly low and one could buy nearly all the available lots in St. Adele for $5 - $10,000. He soon became very wealthy. Mr. Archambault's ancestor, Jacques Archambault, who arrived in the Iroquois country around 1646 and settled in Montreal, was commissioned by the Sieur de Maisonneuve to dig the first well in Montreal, near Youville Square. This well was the one most used in the city for over 200 years. Theoretically, St. Adele was a one-hour drive from Montreal, but on Sundays it took three hours. There was only one narrow country road, as construction of the first highway had been interrupted by the war.

There was only one small bridge over the Riviere des Prairies ("river of the meadows") at St. Rose. The bridge was always a bottle-neck, and to cross it we had to wait for two hours. I arrived in Montreal at 1:00 a.m. without a place to stay. I asked Mr. Archambault to drop me off at the Y.W.C.A. When he left, I stood forlorn, ringing the bell for half an hour, until a woman opened the door and, for fifty cents, reluctantly let me into a common room full of coughing, snoring and sneezing women. I just could not bear it! I took my pillow and went

out in the corridor, opened a door, saw an armchair in an empty room and spent the night there.

The next morning I travelled to Loyola College, with its imposing building and grounds. There I pleaded with the fathers to accept my sons, tuition free. It all worked out after several trips to Loyola. The school year was about to begin. I was given a list of the clothing and equipment the boys had to bring to school, which left me perplexed. How on earth would I be able to obtain all this! I had no job yet and no money. It took another humiliating trip to the school to ask them to reduce the list of items and to accept payment in installments. What bothered me most was that the boys would feel inferior, not having what the others had. I had a serious talk with them at bed-time, in which I strongly emphasized that insufficient equipment was not very important, that they had far more important values, and that they should never, never feel inferior.

I also had to endure a heated argument with the Dean of Studies as to the grade they should be placed in. The boys had finished, with honours, the third year of the French Lycee in one of Paris's most prestigious schools. Being sure of their potential, I wanted them enrolled in the fourth year.

They certainly had a basic knowledge of the subjects, except for one thing: they hardly spoke English! The Dean did not want to consent, arguing that other boys in this situation were put one or two years lower. He could not believe that my sons would make it, but I finally persuaded him to agree to try. It meant so much in our situation that they should not lose one year. All of this was a terrible strain and effort. Now, thirty years later, when I come across women who complain of stress over small problems and petty displeasures, in a well-settled good life, the recollection of my struggle for survival comes to mind.

As I expected, the boys not only made it, but they excelled, to the amazement of their teachers. "We have never seen such enthusiasm and dedication to study among our students", attested the same Dean of Studies who had yielded to my request. "The refugees are an excellent influence, and it is real-

ly our students who have gained". It was a great reward for my efforts, and in reply I said that, after all they had gone through, they aimed high and worked hard, because they had a goal. The boys were still struggling to master the English language, but by the end of the school year they completed their courses with honours, and received excellent grades in the final examination for the entire Province of Quebec.

They also did well at sports, which was important for their reputation at Loyola. It created a sensation when, during their first winter in Canada, in 1941, they won first prize in a skiing competition for juniors, on borrowed skis and boots because I could not afford to buy them any. This added a special meaning to the event. Mention of this appeared in the Loyola monthly magazine.

I arranged for Eva to become a boarder at the Sacret Heart Convent on the outskirts of Montreal, reasoning that I would be freer to seek employment. But when I saw my little darling hiding her tears at the thought of separation from me, I quickly changed my mind and placed her in the "City House", the primary school of Sacred Heart, as a day-pupil. She would come home every afternoon and we would be together.

NINE BRAESIDE PLACE

I also had to find a place to live for Eva and me, and this looked hopeless. Fortunately, we met sympathetic friends who helped us. The ladies of the Committee on Refugees, who at first seemed to be taking care only of British refugees, became interested in this group of "exotic" strangers, after reading the interviews with us in the newspapers. Mrs. Norah McDowell, who was in charge of the entertainment committee, approached us, and invited us to one of the gatherings especially organized for refugees by the wealthy hosts in Westmount. So the opportunity presented itself, but it was up to us to be accepted. One of the ladies told me about a house on the top of Westmount in which we could live, but there was a catch. The owner was willing to let us have it (it was deserted after the death of his father, Mr. A. Ross) if we could obtain exemption from municipal taxes for him. The house was a mansion, and these taxes seemed, in 1941, to be enormous - $1200 yearly. As I was the only one in the group who spoke fairly good English, it fell to me to achieve this.

I had to appear at a meeting of the Executive Council of the City of Westmount to plead my case before the honourary mayor and twelve aldermen. This was a traumatic event for me, and I will never forget it. So much was at stake. I entered the large hall shaking like a leaf, and I had to gather all my inner strength to gain control over myself. I think it helped me to feel that I was pleading for a just cause on behalf of a group of people, mothers with children, exiled from their country and homeless. To my amazement, I succeeded! For the duration of the war we were given the big mansion at 9 Braeside Place, off Westmount Boulevard, in the most exclusive part of Montreal.

There were, of course, disadvantages connected with living in a wealthy district. There was only one bus running infrequently, as most of the residents used their cars, several to a family. The house was on a steep hill, and in winter it was a Himalayan climb. It was still more difficult to descend through slippery passage-ways and steps, and running to work,

I mostly had to "toboggan" without the sled! The grounds were enormous, and I did not realize that the up-keep would be so expensive. The old-fashioned stove devoured gas. But there was also unbelievable beauty, particularly when the icicle-laden trees in the large garden sparkled and glittered in the morning sun.

So we finally had a roof over our heads. The next urgent necessity was warm clothing for the winter. My sons, for instance, arrived in Montreal in their summer Boy Scout uniforms and did not have warm outfits. I appealed to the Committee and they helped us. They had a large section at the Windsor Hotel, full of clothing for English children, and they provided coats and jackets for our children as well.

I wonder if anyone has ever written the history of this wonderful Committee, the good they accomplished, the tears they dried and the compassion they offered. I wish to express my gratitude to them, in writing this short account of their activities.

The Canadian National Committee on Refugees was formed by enlightened men and women in 1938, when the Germans partitioned Czechoslovakia and began the persecution of the local population. Many Czechoslovak citizens, most of them Jews, fled to Canada and needed help. The committee was an unofficial organization of private citizens, and its work was financed entirely by voluntary contributions, mostly by leading businessmen. The distinguished Senator Cairine Wilson was the Chairman, and Mrs. Constance Hayward was the efficient and kind-hearted secretary. In 1940, Mr. William Birks was the honourary Chairman. I feel happy that I knew them, and maintained close ties with some of them for many years.

After Hitler's heavy bombing of London in 1940, the British decided to evacuate children from the city. Canada received and welcomed them with open arms, and the work of the Committee greatly intensified.

The British borrowed a Polish ship, the M/S *Batory*, to provide transportation from England, and they invited and included on the passenger list eighteen wives and children of members of the Polish armed forces.

The British children were received into the best Canadian and American families, showered with sympathy, attention and care. I was later told that little was ever heard from them after they went back home. Not a word of gratitude.

The most active members of this Committee, whom I will remember as long as I live, were Peggy Knatchbull-Hugessen and Norah MacDowell, whose husbands had won the Victoria Cross in the Great War of 1914-18. Norah, a wonderful organizer, warm-hearted Kathleen Wylde, Dorothy Cook, and Mrs. Coughlin were always ready to help.

We kept in touch after the war, and when I became widowed we renewed our acquaintance, which turned into friendship. Similarly with Reverend Mother Eleanor Whitehead from Sacred Heart, who guided little Eva and took care of the Polish children at the convent. I always wanted to give them a visible sign of our gratitude apart from my friendship. The opportunity came much later, when my husband returned from London and was in correspondence with the President of the Polish Republic-in-Exile, who was his friend. I requested that the two Canadian ladies be awarded a Polish decoration. My recommendation was accepted, and both Eleanor Whitehead and Norah MacDowell were awarded the Golden Cross of Merit, a very high honour indeed. In August 1978, they were decorated by the representative of the President of Poland in exile in a moving ceremony at the Polish Library in Montreal. Among more than fifty people who attended were many Sacred Heart religious and lay friends.

To add a nostalgic touch to the ceremony, I invited one of the original refugees, a very pretty woman, who at the time she came to Montreal had been expecting her first baby. Mrs. MacDowell took wonderful care of her and stayed with her late into the night at the hospital. Her son, who was born that night, now married, also came with his two-year-old daughter. It created a sensation!

Another guest was a former student of the Sacred Heart Convent, presently a McGill professor, Dr. Hanna Pappius.

My daughter Eva, also a former student at Sacred Heart and a Ph.D. in Biochemistry from McGill, could not be pre-

sent, as she was far away in India with her husband, who was a member of the British Embassy. In her remarks, Rev. Mother Whitehead brought up Eva's name with affection, as a model honour student at Sacre Coeur.

This meeting evoked many fond remembrances, and both ladies expressed their pride in their awards, in emotional speeches of thanks.

STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL

Cultural shock is an inevitable reality for anyone entering a foreign milieu. The higher their level of education and culture, the harder it is. I had enough stamina and was ready to accept any kind of job, but it was disheartening to hear everywhere the same refusal. It drained all my resources. In 1941-42, employment for an intellectual immigrant was almost non-existent. I walked my feet off day after day, but all in vain. The only job that was available was waiting on tables or dishwashing in the evenings, but I wasn't strong enough and I could not leave my little daughter alone. Through my helpful nuns, I gave a few private piano lessons to wealthy Canadian girls, but with the beginning of winter, I had to run in the rain and snow all over the winding streets of upper Westmount, where buses didn't run to reach the huge, isolated residences.

This did not last long. My health was always frail, and I was exhausted. I soon developed a severe cold which resulted in pneumonia. With the help of the Committee, I was sent to a hospital,* running a high fever. I felt so ill that the thought of a final parting with my children obsessed me. Weak and broken-hearted, I remember writing my last will. To whom could I turn for Eva's guardianship? I could only think to entrust my 16-year-old sons with the care of their little sister until their father's return.

I remember one particularly emotional incident. One Sunday, the boys and Eva came to visit me. The hospital was on the outskirts of Montreal, with no habitation around. It was a cold, bleak December day. When they left after a short stay, I dragged myself to the window to watch them a little longer.

As the three thin figures crossed the large white plain of snow, becoming smaller and smaller, finally disappearing in the dusk, a feeling of despair overcame me. I sank to the floor and prayed:"Oh, God, don't forsake me - extend your help-

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* Convalescent Hospital on Van Horne Avenue, whose director, Mrs. Tansey, was particularly kind and understanding.

ing hand and have pity". The prayer was answered, and I recovered and returned home to be with my lonely little girl. The usually reserved child displayed such touching joy and radiance, and we both clung delightedly to each other. The boys came the next day from the boarding school for our joyful reunion.

I then made a decision to find part-time work so I could be home when Eva returned from school. She eveiently needed my presence and tenderness.

Fortunately, the Polish Consul in Montreal succeeded in obtaining a small allowance for Polish refugees from the Polish Government-in-Exile, so we were not penniless. At first, the allowance was $80 a month for four people - not much, even then, but at least it provided some security. This happened because the Government of Canada issued a regulation that every refugee should be guaranteed a minimal allowance from his government so as not to become a burden to Canada.

The Polish Government-in-Exile in London provided these small allowances from the large fund of Polish gold which was so ingeniously and at such great risk spirited out of Poland after the German invasion.

The gold, entrusted to the British Government, was used during the war to carry on the operations of the Polish Armed Forces and of the Government-in-Exile.
After the war, it was heartlessly handed over to the new Soviet puppet regime in Poland, created by the Yalta agreement. This left the disbanded Polish Army, which had fought valiantly with the Allies for four years, without any means of financial support.

Throughout this first year I did various odd jobs, mostly for the convent, such as temporarily replacing a teacher who was ill, or helping in the library. I also began to work on charitable projects and served on Canadian cultural and civic committees.

In the Polish community, I was called the driving force behind the scenes which brought into existence the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences and, later, the Polish Library.

This resulted in my giving a series of lectures on Polish

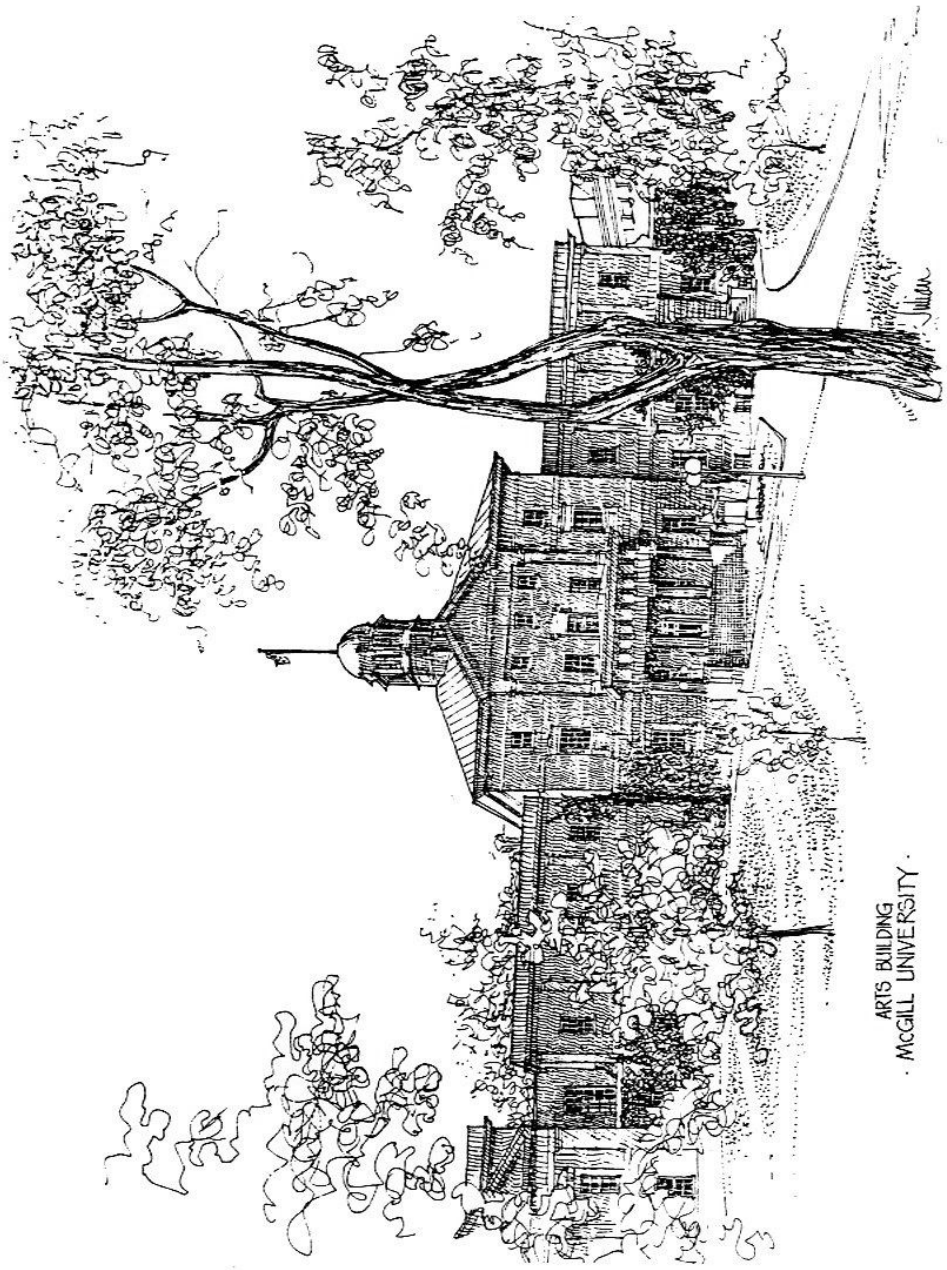
history at McGill University, illustrated with films, music and poetry recitals. Unfortunately, all this effort did not provide adequate income, and I was still in search of a regular job which would enable me to put the boys through McGill University.

Such an opportunity occurred in 1942 when the International Labour Office (an agency of the League of Nations in Geneva) moved from Switzerland to Canada for the duration of the war. McGill University offered it the facilities of the campus, empty because of the war. Having fluency in several languages, which was a prerequisite, I was employed in the Womens' Work Bureau. As I had asked for part-time employment, I could not expect much of a career, but the work was interesting and gave me great satisfaction, as well as an opportunity to prove myself. I had to collect documentation and write a paper on the mistreatment and undernourishment of children under German occupation.

Belonging to the staff of the I.L.O. gave me special privileges which I particularly appreciated. Life in this organization was very open and sincere. We often met at our superior's home for discussions. I was very proud when, at my first such gathering, as I was introduced to the staff, Dr. Thibert, my director, added a few words about pre-war Poland. He said that Poland was the second best, after New Zeland, of all the countries in which the government, for the benefit of the workers, implemented nearly all the recommendations of the International Labour Organization in the Social Security, Health and Welfare sectors. We were also invited to seminars and official parties.

In the spring of 1943, General de Gaulle visited Montreal, and I was invited with the other staff officials to a great reception at the Ritz Carlton Hotel. I was introduced to him, and talked with him freely. The Free French hero, a man of towering height, was publicly aloof. He impressed me mostly by his self-confidence and his firm belief that the Allies would defeat Hitler.

I liked another representative of the Free French very much, Professor Henri Laugier, who was assigned to Montreal and came several times from New York to brief the group of Free


ARTS BUILDING
· McGILL UNIVERSITY ·

French who were working at the I.L.O. His friendship with John Humphrey, McGill professor of law, dates from his time as a refugee in Montreal. After the war, Professor Laugier became Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, and in 1946 he urged John Humphrey to prepare the first draft of the Declaration of Human Rights for the United Nations - the Magna Carta of mankind.

John Humphrey, now a McGill professor emeritus, won the Canada Peace Award, for his tireless campaign for international human rights in 1980.

I was invited to those meetings because we Poles were fighting the Germans in France, alongside the French underground. In January 1943, a group of Polish "maquis" had to flee France, having been discovered by the Nazis. They arrived in Montreal, and I gave them shelter in our home at 9 Braeside Place.

In a way, it seemed as though our life was settled, to a certain extent. The children went to good schools and were doing well. I did not mind the amount of work: my job, the housekeeping, lecturing at McGill University, and managing our "hostel" for refugees. I was also invited to give talks and lead discussions at several Canadian clubs and associations, such as the Professional Women's Club, the Westmount Women's Club and community centres, on the war in Poland and Europe, on Hitler, and on my own experiences during the war.

Our neighbours, the residents of this exclusive and fashionable district called Westmount: Elvira Holden, Jane Pangman, Helen Drummond, Louisa Currie, Helen Stavert and Ann Molson, were very hospitable and friendly, especially towards those of us who spoke English. They invited me to their homes and accepted me into their inner circle. A few months later they asked me to join the exclusive club of twenty, the "One o'clock Club". We would meet once a month, hold discussions and talks at a luncheon provided in turn by the members. In this way I made many friends among a marvellous group of well-educated women. In the summer, they would invite me, with my daughter, to spend weekends

with them at their country homes. This gave me access to the intimate life of the finest people in Canada, and also added a bright touch to my life.

However, there was a heavy worry on my mind concerning the fate of my husband in North Africa and my parents in Lwow, which had been invaded by the Soviets. In what conditions did they live? Were they hungry? How safe were they? From Poland there came news of massive deportations by the Soviets of thousands of people deep into Asia. I tried to send them many food parcels through any agency which advertised delivery. As I learned later, they received only a few.

My husband was in Algeria under an assumed name, after escaping miraculously from Roumanian internment in January 1940. At any moment, the Germans might have discovered his identity, since the Vichy French government of General Petain collaborated with them. But faithful French and Polish friends of my husband's from the pre-war Intelligence Service, with the help of the Gaullist Free French, were planning his escape to the United States.

A passport under an assumed French name was prepared for him in France, but to obtain a United States visa for him, my personal appearance before the officials of the U.S. State Department was necessary. I did not know anything about all of this until early one morning at about five or six o'clock, when I was awakened by an enigmatic telephone call, and summoned immediately to New York. First, I had to see there the man who was entrusted with this operation. Ostensibly, he was a counsellor in the pro-Nazi Vichy Embassy in Washington, but he was in fact a patriotic Frenchman working for General de Gaulle. Together with a group of Free French in Algiers, he was working on a plan to rescue my husband, with the help of a few high-ranking Allied officers, without the knowledge of his Vichy superiors. It all sounded like a mystery story.

I had to meet the Frenchman clandestinely in an obscure coffee-house on the outskirts of New York, where I was to hold a lilac handkerchief. I was really a bit frightened! Our meeting had all the aura of a spy thriller. When I hesistantly entered the cafe, I met a handsome young gentleman, visibly

different from the other customers. He told me of the well-organized plan to spirit my husband out of Algeria and bring him to America, and asked me if I could obtain a visa for him on humanitarian grounds.

The next morning I left by train for Washington. An old friend from Warsaw, Colonel John Winslow, the military attaché in Warsaw in 1938-39, met me at the station and invited me to stay with them. He accompanied me to the Department of State, where we were received by the Deputy Secretary of State. My request was favourably considered, and I received the coveted visa. I was so happy and everything seemed so hopeful, yet in the end the entire plan failed. The French liaison officer who was carrying all the necessary documents to Algeria was crossing the ocean by ship. Near the coast of Africa, the ship was sunk by a German U-boat, and the papers never reached my husband.

I tried to communicate with him through various other channels. I wrote directly, I wrote through friends in the United States and through the Red Cross. I also wrote to my parents in Poland and to my brother in the prisoner-of-war camp in Germany. My heroic brother, a general in the army, was badly wounded in the defence of Warsaw. When the Germans entered the city, he was hiding in a hospital where Polish nurses concealed his identity. But once out in the street, he was recognized immediately by the Germans, arrested and deported to a prisoner-of-war camp.

Some of my letters reached my husband. The news that I and the children were safe in Canada was forwarded to him through the kindness of the former American Ambassador to Poland, Mr. Anthony Drexle Biddle. After the war, I received many of my own letters from the United States Post Office, which they had held throughout the war. One of our friends, Mr. Weinstein, a former official of the Polish Department of State, recovered through his colleague in Bucharest another bundle of my war letters to my husband, which were not delivered while he was in the internment camp.

FRIENDSHIP WITH KAY McLENNAN

In the spring of 1941 I was invited to spend the summer vacation with Miss Katharine McLennan at her estate in Petersfield, near the harbour of Sydney, Nova Scotia, and to bring my daughter, Eva, with me.

My first reaction was to politely refuse. I was simply scared and afraid of being separated from my sons, after the nightmarish experience in the French Pyrenees a year before. I also did not feel strong enough to face any kind of duties for a period of three months, which I expected I would be asked to perform in return for our visit. On the other hand, the thought that Eva would have a good, healthy summer vacation was tempting. While I was hesitating and weighing my decision, I was assured that we were invited as guests and would be most welcome, as later proved to be true. Katharine, who loved music, had heard from the Committee on Refugees that I was an amateur pianist and she insisted on my coming.

I finally consented to accept the invitation, and it was one of the best decisions I ever made. We not only saw a beautiful part of Canada, but we also met many lovely people, and found a true friend in Katharine, our hostess.

The journey was by train - north, and then east, one and a half days and one night of travel all around the peninsula to Sydney, where Katharine met us with the car. She was single, the daughter of a wealthy businessman who had been appointed Senator, was publisher of the *Sydney Daily Record*, and had recently died. Petersfield was their summer residence near the sea which she had inherited. It was an old, stately residence in a large park with a rose garden and a pergola of hanging roses. The family was of Scottish origin, and had emigrated to Canada in the 1870s and made a fortune. Her only brother was killed in Verdun, France, in the Great War of 1914. She had two married sisters: Margaret Kendall, married to the Governor of Nova Scotia, and Isabel (Mrs. John) Farley from Boston, whose husband was a well-known lawyer and Supreme Court justice. I became friends with both of them.

All through the summer many visitors came - both family

and friends: Professor D. McLennan from McGill University in Montreal, who later helped me place the boys at McGill, and Mr. Hugh McLennan, a writer who became famous after he published his excellent novel, **Two Solitudes**, on the French and English-speaking societies in Quebec, and the growing separation between the two groups. Other visitors were Mr. and Mrs. Farley, Katharine's sister and brother-in-law, and a journalist, Mr. Percy, an Englishman from the Intelligence Service in Ottawa. Mrs. Isabel Farley was extremely kind to me and invited me to visit her at their residence in Needham, Mass.(near Boston). I was unable to go, but in 1953, when my son Bob wanted a security clearance, not being a U.S. citizen, she and her husband, together with Colonel Winslow from the United States Army in Washington, our friend from Warsaw,* agreed to sponsor him. Mrs. Farley invited the F.B.I. officials to lunch at her home when they called, and gave Bob the best of references.

The most memorable group of visitors at Petersfield was the party of Princess Alice, granddaughter of Queen Victoria and great aunt of Queen Elizabeth. She was the wife of the Earl of Athlone, who was Governor-General of Canada from 1940 to 1946 - a representative of King George VI. Princess Alice arrived accompanied by two ladies-in-waiting, both very nice, and the exceedingly pleasant and intelligent Major Redfern, aide-de-camp to the governor. They were on their way to board a warship for England in Sydney, N.S., and stayed at Petersfield for three days. Protocol was observed on their arrival and departure, but otherwise the visit was quite informal.

I was introduced to the princess and had the opportunity to speak with her, and found her very kind and natural. Of course I tried to be inconspicuous, so I saw more of the three people who accompanied her. They were all particularly sweet to Eva and evidently took a liking to her. The princess herself congratulated me on my elegantly bred and charming daughter. I must confess that gave me great pleasure. Upon their depar-

*Col. Winslow was stationed in Warsaw as military attaché in 1939.

ture early in the morning they left me a very kind and courteous farewell letter.

During this vacation, we were also shown the neighourhood and surrounding countryside, which was rich in coal. Katharine drove us to Baddeck, the residence of the late Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone - a beautiful and scenic place. His old house was furnished with precious antiques and memorabilia in a museum style. The inventor's descendants welcomed us with great cordiality and showed us around, pointing out items of historic interest. While there, I met a young woman from New York who invited me to visit her, which I later did. It was to be my first visit to the U.S.A. and to New York, and left me enchanted.

The outcome of my life in Canada was to a certain extent determined by my friendship with Katharine McLennan. Kay was very active in the artistic, intellectual and social life in her milieu and in Canada in general. She was the patron of the Regional Library in Sydney, N.S., a member of the Literary Association and curator of the historical museum in Louisburg.

At that time, the site of the fortress of Louisburg was not yet renovated. Katharine was deeply interested in its history and fate and contributed financially to many improvements in the museum. With her own hands she made an excellent maquette of the historic fortress as it looked in the 18th century, which was exhibited in the old museum. We drove regularly to Louisburg where she guided tours of special visitors from outside the province, explaining in detail the background and history of the site.

Louisburg and its story introduced me to Canadian history which, I must admit, I did not know well enough. I learned some of it in Warsaw before the war, having met the wife of the Secretary to the President of the French Republic, Colonel Zaniewski, who was a French Canadian from Montreal.

I avidly read many books in English and French on Canadian history from Katharine's superb library. Through them I acquired an objective view and a wide spectrum of knowledge about Canada's three centuries of history. Katharine had been a Red Cross nurse in World War I in France, and spoke French

well. She introduced me to her friends in Nova Scotian society and, at my request, to the small Polish ethnic community of coal miners who worked and lived nearby. At her home lived a family of friends from London, England, the McCalls. I loved and became a close friend of Kathleen McCall, and my little daughter made friends with their children.

In 1956, after the tragic Hungarian uprising against Communism, many Hungarians came to Canada, the Mecca of freedom. One of the McCall girls, Marybel, married a nice Hungarian boy. Eva and I were invited to her formal wedding, which took place in the beautiful 17th century Wedding Chapel at the rear of the old Notre Dame Cathedral in Montreal. This chapel was destroyed by arson in the sixties. It was rebuilt in 1980, but in the modern style. It is now a product of our time which cannot compare with the style and splendour of the ancient chapel.

In Petersfield I was asked to give talks on my experiences to local associations. Katharine organized a garden party and invited a great many people to Petersfield for my first talk. I made many friends at that time. It was very stimulating. The revised text of my talk was later published by the *Sydney Record*.

As you can see, I greatly enjoyed my stay in Petersfield, but above all I cherished the friendship of Katharine and Greta Murray, offered to me so graciously and genuinely. Greta, who spent her vacation with Katharine, was twenty years my senior, a warm-hearted, well-educated person, daughter of a professor of philosophy who emigrated from Scotland to Canada to teach at McGill University, circa 1880. We became great friends. She never married and I think that her affection for me and Eva filled the void in her life. She surrounded us with deep love and showered us with tokens of her devotion. I returned her feelings wholeheartedly, and I hope we brought her warmth and companionship. Over the years our mutual affection grew into a deep, loving friendship. Greta was my anchor and my refuge whenever vicissitudes or injustice assailed me. I was in California when Greta died in 1961. It always hurts me that I could not have shown her more love and gratitude in the last

days of her life.

I greatly valued my friendship with Mr. John Todd from Boisbriand in Senneville and his charming wife Marguerite, a fine musician. They invited me to Senneville several times, and brought me the news from war-time England. Their daughter Brigid was a F.A.N.Y.* with the Women's Voluntary Services in England, and was attached to the Polish Forces as translator and driver. She later married a Polish Air Force captain, and their daughter, Janina Fialkowska, is a renowned young Canadian pianist of international reputation. Just recently Janina gave an enchanting recital at Pollack Hall at McGill University, which was broadcast over C.B.C. Radio. I have known her since she was a child, and have loved her fine playing.

Katharine McLennan also became my friend, but she lived far away. She was very interested in my cultural activities and especially in the Polish Library, which I began organizing at McGill University. She even gave us financial support. When the Quebec government discontinued its very small grant to the Library, she helped us for two years until we could find other support.

Katharine introduced me to her aunt in Montreal, Miss Isabella McLennan, a lovely person. I was often invited to her splendid mansion, which she later donated to McGill. She was the founder of McLennan Library at McGill University.

Through Katharine McLennan and Greta Murray I was introduced to Canadian society and somehow was accepted by it. Many of my new acquaintances invited me to their homes.

I especially remember Mrs. Reford, the society dowager, and I spent a wonderful evening at her home with some of her friends. The elderly lady was extremely kind to me. She showed me through her splendid house, which was rather like a museum, with wrought iron railings, inlaid floors, stained glass windows and paintings by well-known artists. Like Isabella McLennan, she donated her house to McGill University in her will.

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* F.A.N.Y. = First Aid Nursing Yeoman.

Through all these connections I met many important persons and heard them talking about McGill. The University was always mentioned in a special way, like a "magic word". And truly it was! Thinking of future studies for my sons, and of creating a Polish academic centre, I decided to give special attention to McGill and to explore the situation.

Since my arrival I had been involved in many activities within my own Polish group. We soon felt the need of an organization where more experienced or more efficient people would help the less enterprising. Health care was the principal need, but also housing, clothing, and so on. Being the first group of women to reach these shores as war refugees, we established in 1940 the Polish Women's War Refugee Association. The purpose was mutual help. With the generosity of the Canadian community we soon had two Refugee Hostels organized, which housed those who could not afford their own apartments.

One was at 9 Braeside Place in Westmount, the other on Drummond Street donated by the Drummond family, with whom we became very friendly.

As a women's organization of strong community-minded personalities, the Polish Women's War Refugee Association joined the Canadian National Council of Women and took part in their activities. We organized a get-together and a tea party at our premises, which proved very successful and helped to establish closer contacts between us.

After the war, with the arrival of demobilized men who wanted to join an organization, our association dropped the word "women" and changed its name to the Polish Association. It is still active today, as are the Aid to Polish Children Committee and the Federation of Polish Women based in Toronto, affiliated with the Canadian Council of Women.

The main Polish association, the Canadian Polish Congress, which represents all the associations in the country, was established in October 1944, and is doing remarkably beneficial work for the community and for new immigrants.

LIFE IN MONTREAL

When we returned to Montreal the busy life went on, filled with work and caring for the children, who did splendidly at school. Since Eva had spoken French from early childhood, I placed her in the French class at the Sacred Heart Convent. The nuns praised her for her application to studies and gentle manners. The children were the joy of my life, but I had many problems with the management of the big "refugee home" which I voluntarily undertook, after fighting so hard for its appropriation. It was a Godsent gift, as it gave shelter to eighteen women and children from 1942, as well as to some men. These were Polish underground fighters who had fled France after Hitler's takeover, and arrived in overpopulated Montreal.

The house was a three-storey mansion with a finished basement where we organized bunkbeds for the Polish "maquis" men. What a chore it was to clean up this enormous room and dispose of its contents! There was no help to be hired as all the men were at war.

This huge mansion also had its drawbacks. The plumbing and heating system was antiquated and devoured tons of coal, which was ever increasing in price. The temperature inside never rose above 64 degrees. I had to bring in coal in early autumn to be able to get it to the top of the hill before the winter snows arrived. I never had the money to pay the large bill, but had to collect it from the other occupants. This was no easy task, especially as the residents of our "Polish Home" came from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Mowing the lawn on more than half an acre of hilly grounds and snow removal in the winter were also a great problem. The name "Braeside Place" is derived from the Scottish "brae", meaning "hill". The owner often checked to see if the grounds were well looked after and maintained!

Although we had organized a committee, the decision on whom to accept as a resident fell mostly to me, because it was such a touchy thing. I did not shun responsibility and often had to bear the blame. For instance, there was a problem whether or not to accept men since the house was originally

given to women with children. It had to be discussed with the proprietor, and this required time and nerves. We decided to accept men only in exceptional cases. I also wanted to maintain a decent standard of living and a friendly atmosphere in order to avoid quarrels and trouble.

I recall one particularly hard decision when the house was still only a "women's" house. The Association of Polish Engineers pressed us to accept a fairly young man after his release from a psychiatric hospital, arguing that he was cured. I pitied him, but was afraid to take the responsibility of accepting him into a house full of women and children. It was nerve-wracking for me to refuse, and I am certain some people blamed me for this decision. He would certainly have needed supervision, and we could not manage to give it to him. I was working at McGill, and no one else would have volunteered

Until the end of the war, the management of the mansion caused me a lot of problems, harassment, and disillusionment, but it was my responsibility, since I had secured this place for the Polish refugees. Under one roof, and with only one kitchen, it was not easy to maintain harmony among eighteen people of different backgrounds. I was called upon to settle quarrels, and often the residents turned against me. Yet, I had the consolation that I did something useful for many people. A great moral support in these vexations was the short stay in our house of my cousin, Leszek (Leshek) Socha, with his wife and baby. He helped me as much as he could. It was many years later that I spent several winters with these dear cousins in their present home in Florida.

THE FOUNDING OF THE POLISH INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES IN CANADA (1943)

From the moment I came to Canada, I nurtured in my mind the idea of organizing a cultural centre for Polish intellectuals where they could meet and work with Canadian scholars and introduce them to Polish culture.

The Poles have made significant contributions to the world of learning and art. The names of Copernicus, Marie Sklodowska-Curie, Casimir Funk, the discoverer of vitamins, Joseph Conrad, Frederic Chopin, and in recent years, the poet C. Milosz, winner of the 1980 Nobel Prize for literature, and the composer K. Penderecki, are known throughout the world. Also, the experimental theatre of Grotowski and the startling and wonderful films of Wajda, *The Man of Marble* and *The Man of Steel*, have attracted universal attention and praise.

Teaching courses on Poland at McGill and talking to audiences, I realized how little we were known. Up to that time, Canadians had dealt mostly with the poorest, uneducated Poles who had emigrated from partitioned Poland, where life under foreign domination was extremely difficult and economic conditions were pitiful. These immigrants earned a good reputation before the war as honest, hardworking people, but could not fully represent the country's image.

Several books on Poland have recently been published: by a noted historian, Professor Norman Davies of England, by S. Steven, and by James Mitchener. This is their opinion: the characteristics of the Polish nation are the result of Poland having been for centuries the battlefield of all forces of history. Poles are a unique people. One who has not shared their experiences cannot understand them. Patriotism permeates every Pole, and provided the motivation during the 130 years of foreign occupation that prevented the Poles from being swallowed up by the partitioning powers.

Poles are immensely devoted to their country, to freedom, and to human rights. If their country is in danger, the usually quarrelsome people unite, and stand like a rock against the aggressor.

In present-day Poland this spirit has flared up again, and led to the rise of the "Solidarity" movement, which although brutally crushed by the imposition of martial law on December 13, 1981 and outlawed by the Communist regime, is still alive and at work. Polish culture belongs to the great European cultures. It is little known to outsiders because of the language barrier.

The creation of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada constitutes a special chapter in my Canadian life. I was very deeply and emotionally involved and took a very active part in its organization and continuing activities.

The sudden German onslaught on Poland in September 1939, without a declaration of war, occurred when the Polish academic year at the universities was about to begin. The teaching staff were suddenly cut off from their duties, classrooms and laboratories, and dispersed all over the world by the winds of war. The wave of World War II exiles, later called by historians "the heroic emigration", included many intellectuals and artists.

A group of scholars, members of the prestigious Academy of Krakow, who found themselves in America, led by Prof. Oscar Halecki (pron. Haletski) of Fordham University, a historian of international repute, established a Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in New York in October 1942. Prof. Halecki commuted to Montreal to teach at the University of Montreal. I contacted him to discuss the idea of creating a branch of the Institute in Montreal and to secure his cooperation.

I was helped by our Consul-General, Dr. T.Brzezinski, and I also had the suppport of several McGill professors whom I knew through the McLennans and the Murrays of Petersfield. Little by little, the establishment of the Polish Institute became a reality.

Our endeavour was sponsored by Dr. Wilder Penfield, the famous Canadian scientist and director of the Neurological Institute at McGill, himself a pre-war member of the distinguished Academy of Learning in Krakow. The Canadian Branch of the Polish Institute was officially established at

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McGill in the spring of 1943. Dr. Penfield was joined by the Royal Society of Canada in welcoming the Polish group, and several members of the Society also became members of the Polish Institute.

The inaugural ceremony of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada was held at Moyse Hall, McGill University, in October 1943. Dr. F. Cyril James, Principal of McGill University, and Mgr. Olivier Maurault, Rector of the University of Montreal, accepted the honorary co-presidency of the new trilingual institution. Dr. J. Pawlikowski became the first Director.

Dr. W. Penfield and Dr. Cyril James secured the unanimous approval of the University Board of Governors to locate the Institute at McGill and to grant it university privileges. Rooms were assigned in the Arts Building across from the Principal's office.

Thus began the long, happy and cooperative relationship between the Polish Institute and McGill University, which continues to this day. To Dr. F. Cyril James goes the credit of having correctly perceived the unique and dynamic character of the Polish Institute, and the role the Institute could play in enriching the study of world cultures. There was no similar Institute at McGill at the time.

Dean Noel Fieldhouse expressed interest in including a course on Poland in the program of the Department of Continuing Education. It was presented by myself, and was illustrated with slides and films on Poland, and included poetry readings. The lectures proved to be very popular. The Montreal High School and Loyola College asked that their grade 12-13 students be allowed to attend.

With the help and encouragement of the University authorities and especially of Dr. F. C. James, who often took an active part in the events organized by the Polish Institute, the Institute became a special centre at McGill. It was a unique organization. Operated entirely on a voluntary basis by its professional members, who themselves had to struggle for their own existence, it relied solely on their good will and support.

There were never adequate funds, and the few small grants, not exceeding a few thousand dollars a year, which were occasionally obtained from government or city sources were never sufficient for its needs. The Polish community contributed as much as it could. Yet, in time, the Institute developed into a centre of true information on Poland and Polish culture, a centre where Polish scholars and intellectuals displaced by the war could meet with their Canadian counterparts.

The Institute organized lectures, often sponsored jointly by McGill's Departments of History, Literature,* Political Science, and so on. It also organized several Art Exhibitions, of which two were particularly large and interesting. One was held in the Museum of Fine Arts on Sherbrooke St. on the subject of modern Polish painting; and the other at the McGill University museum was entitled "Polish Painting Collections in Canada".

Other exhibitions of paintings by individual artists were shown in various McGill halls. Of particular interest was one of the work of Rafal Malczewski, an artist well known in Canada and abroad, who specialized in landscapes.

The Canadian National Railway engaged him to paint the landscapes of Canada and financed his travel across the country. This resulted in a beautiful exhibition, "Vision of Canada", which the Polish Institute presented to the public.

Other exhibitions organized by the Institute were those of Mary Schneider, a Toronto artist, and other artists from Europe and elsewhere. The Polish Institute also organized several literary contests at McGill, a number of concerts, book fairs and so on.

Prof. B. Zaborski of McGill University, Prof. V. Szyrynski, of the University of Ottawa, and Prof. T. Poznanski of Laval University were the consecutive directors of the Institute, each contributing greatly to its development.

In 1944, the Polish Institute announced the first essay contest for Canadian students on a subject relating to Poland. En-

* With artistic poetry readings by renowned actresses Rosanna Todd, from the Old Vic in London, and Hanna Poznanska.

Alma Mater Jagellonica

The Sixth Centennial of the University of Cracow, Poland

Contributions by:
DR. WILLIAM J. ROSE,
MRS. WANDA STACHIEWICZ

1493 woodcut of Cracow, then capital of Poland.

Sponsored by the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America, Canadian Branch.

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tries could be submitted in one of three languages: English, French or Polish. The contest proved to be very popular. The first prize was won by Brian R. MacDonald, who later became successful and well known in Canada and England as an educator and director in performing arts. Second prize went to Jean-Raymond Denault, later active in French-Canadian radio.

In 1964, on the 600th anniversary of the founding of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow in 1364, the Institute published a book which I wrote together with Prof. William Rose, a great friend of Poland. It contained his memoirs of Krakow University, and my essay on the history of that distinguished institution.

The Institute was headed in those days by Professor Tadeusz Romer of McGill University's French Department. He became director in 1963 and remained at the helm for fifteen years. Through his leadership, dedication, and ability to deal with people, he contributed greatly to the life and development of the Polish Institute. We worked very well together. His death was a great loss.

In 1973, celebrating the 500th anniversary of the birth of Copernicus, the great Polish astronomer, the Institute published in English and Polish a historical monograph written by myself on his life and work, entitled *Copernicus and the Changing World*. It sold ten thousand copies within a month.

In 1975 the Polish Institute organized an International Congress of scholars of Polish origin at McGill University in which many Canadian, American and European scholars participated. It was managed by Dr. T. Brzezinski. The three-day meeting at McGill was a big success. The Principal of McGill, Dr. R.E. Bell, participated and hosted the members at a delightful special reception.

I remember Mrs. Dorothy McMurray, assistant to the Principal. In her capacity as executrix of Dr. James's suggestions she was helpful and contributed to the development of our activities.

We are still friends today. After retirement, Mrs. McMurray wrote a book entitled **Four Principals of McGill**

1929-1963,* in which she described her many years of work at McGill University. She wrote: "I saw four consecutive directors, four completely different personalities attempt this difficult, at times heart-breaking job of running the University".

At my request, the Polish Institute recommended to the Polish Government-in-Exile in London that Mrs. McMurray be awarded a high Polish decoration. The request was approved, and she received the Golden Cross of Merit.

The crowning achievement of the Polish Institute was the founding of the Polish Library at McGill. Manned entirely by a professional staff of volunteeers (three Ph.D.s; two M.A.s. and one Library Science graduate), supported mainly by small donations from the Polish community and located in a house provided by McGill, the Library has grown steadily over the years thanks to the dedication and sacrifices of its staff. Above all, the Library owes a debt of deep gratitude to Dr. Olga Krzyczkowska for her 35 years of highly professional and devoted work.

Today, the Polish Library is recognized as a professionally-run, specialized academic library pertaining to Poland and East Central Europe. It contains over 30,000 catalogued volumes in three languages, English, French and Polish. It has a large file of periodicals, a small graphic arts collection of distinguished pre-war artists, some manuscripts and rare documents, and a last will bequest of antique furniture. The catalogue of the Library is included in the National Library in Ottawa, through which it serves all of Canada. The well-organized Reference Department serves scholars, researchers and students, as well as the general public.

Since 1982 the Library has been receiving a modest annual grant from the Quebec government, and small occasional grants for special projects from the federal Ministry of Multiculturalism. It is barely sufficient to pay the salary of one professional.

The Polish Library develops and enriches its book collec-

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* Published by the Graduate Society of McGill University, 1974.

tions due to the friendship and donations of several distinguished publishers around the world, who provided Library with copies of their publications and book collections at no cost.*

The association between the Polish Institute and Library, and McGill University, has been a long and happy one. It has been our good fortune that the successors of Dr. F.Cyril James, all men of wide horizons, continued their friendship and support of the Polish Institute. In many ways they created a propitious milieu, in which the Polish Institute could grow and contribute to Canadian multicultural life at McGill University. Dr. Robert Bell proved to be a true friend.

Dr. Rocke Robertson provided the Institute and Library with much better and larger quarters, at our present location (3479 Peel Street), for which he won our affection and deep gratitude.

In 1979, Professor David Lloyd Johnston, Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Western Ontario, was appointed Principal and Vice-Chancellor of McGill University. A brilliant administrator and scholar, he was the youngest head ever, of a major Canadian university. He also presided over the 25th anniversary of the Institute. McGill, this venerable "Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning", can be proud of its choice of leaders.

The Institute maintains close relations with Polish cultural institutions and libraries throughout the world, and with other East-Central European ethnic groups in Canada, as our countries are all in a similar political situation, suffering under the

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* The library owes a great debt of gratitude for constant support to: Mr. Georges Giedroyc of the Institut Litteraire in Paris - editor of the renowned monthly periodical **Kultura** and to Dr. Karolina Lanckoronska of the Institutum Historicum Polonicum in Rome; to the Polish Cultural Foundation; Dr. Z. Jagodzinski, Polish Library of London; J. Pilsudski Institute of London and New York; Dr. Richard Staar of the Hoover Institution; bibliographer Mr. J. Kowalik, Szwede Slavic Books in Palo Alto, California, As well as periodicals and dailies in Canada, U.S.A. and Europe.

totalitarianism of Moscow. We all greatly appreciate and support the Canadian government policy of pluralism. It is a wise policy. It gives new immigrants the vital feeling of freedom and permits them to adapt to their new environment without forcing them to abandon their cherished cultural and national traditions. It stimulates them and helps them take a more active part in their work and in community life.

Many of these newcomers bring with them special, sometimes very valuable skills and talents, which when properly developed can make a substantial contribution to the Canadian economy, trade and commerce.

Those refugees who have been driven fron their homes by persecution exhibit a greater strength of character, possess a greater power to endure, and have a deeper appreciation of democratic values, and in general a more mature outlook on life. History shows that the country that welomes them benefits in time from these gifts, as they enrich the national amalgam.

Canada, with its vastness and enormous resources, can easily absorb more people. During the years I have lived in Canada, I have witnessed the spectacular development and growth of the country. When I arrived, Canada had only 11 million inhabitants, today there are 26 million! In 1940, most of the better things were imported - today Canadian industries produce excellent, sophisticated consumer goods.

Canada has a great future, and the ethnic minorities which form almost one-third of its population will play a significant role in her development.

MY SONS ENTER MCGILL UNIVERSITY

When the boys finished high school, the next step was to put them through McGill University. I had it all figured out. Although my Canadian friends advised me to let the boys work in some factory, as they were now 16, and in this way relieve me of some financial worry, I would not hear of it. I asked for an interview with the principal of McGill University, Dr. F.C. James. I presented my case that I was determined to give my sons the best education, and nothing would deter me from it. I asked him for a unversity loan and offered the services of the two boys for whatever might be needed at the university. I was backed by McGill Professor Dermot McLennan, a relative of my friend from Petersfield - an exceptionally kind and enlightened man. We both attained our aim! The boys were accepted at the Douglas Hall Residence.Douglas Hall was, in my opinion, a luxurious place. The suites consisted of three bedrooms, a living lounge, and a perfectly equipped kitchenette. Bob and Jul would have to help at serving meals. Other Canadian boys did it too, but were paid for the work, so it was not singling my sons out. I felt a great relief when the problem of their studies was resolved, and they easily passed their entrance examinations.

Unfortunately there are always vicissitudes. Jul contracted scarlet fever and Bob measles, which entailed more anxiety, hospitals, contagious wards, and so on. Worry, worry! That was what our life consisted of in those difficult years. Like warm sunshine, little Eva always waited for me at home, peaceful and loving, very good at her studies and quietly efficient. She took care not only of her own things, but also of mine. She washed our clothes by hand and pressed them. There were no washing machines then, everything had to be done by hand, and she was only eight years old.

The nuns praised Eva for her earnest study, stressing her good behaviour, lovely manners and graceful poise. The boys were beyond their age. I never had any trouble with them - on the contrary, only praise their behaviour. They worked hard and aimed high, and by tutoring their fellow students they earn-

ed vacation and pocket money.

I was blessed with my children and only regretted that their father could not see them. I tried to establish communication with him in Algiers and experimented in various ways. I wrote directly, through friends in the United States and Spain, and through travelling underground acquaintances, at least once or twice a week. I knew what joy and comfort it would bring to him. He told me years later how he would walk expectantly to the post office, mostly in vain, but when there was a letter, he would hold it close to his heart and walk quickly away, delaying the moment of opening it until he was far from the noise and turmoil of the city, and surrounded by the beauty of nature. I think his exceptional love of nature was a secret blessing for him. It soothed him and helped him to overcome his distress and loneliness. I was terribly worried about him. Like any European man of his time, he was completely impractical in down-to-earth living. He had never had to take care of himself before, and he now had no money. Unfortunately, only a few of my letters ever reached him.

Life fell into a pattern. I was working, the children were studying and going to camps in the summer.

I remember Eva was not too happy to go without me, but the first time she went, I arranged for her to go to a private camp run by a person she knew in St. Adele, who had a daughter her age. They often played together when we spent our free time in St. Adele. The camp was on a lake in the beautiful Laurentians, and I think that she liked it. Greta Murray twice invited Eva and me for a few weeks at Metis Beach, an elegant resort where I was introduced by Greta to various groups in the English-Canadian community.

These very nice older ladies later invited me to their homes and parties in Montreal, and in this way I became friendly with quite a wide circle of Canadian society. My social position was much enhanced by an extremely favourable testimonial from Colonel and Mrs. Winslow of Washington, who arrived in Montreal as guests of Mrs. Reford, a dowager of this society.

Col. Winslow had been United States military attaché in Warsaw in 1938-39. In this capacity he worked closely with

my husband, and they knew us well. Greta reported to me that they spoke very highly about us and about the work my husband did before the war.

WALKING AROUND WESTMOUNT

Exploring the city was the bright side to my busy life in Montreal! Living there and having made friends with many fine Canadians, I grew into Canadian society and became very attached to Montreal and its environment.

With time it became my home. Home is where people care for you, and this is the way I felt about Montreal and Westmount. I was certainly accepted and I loved it. Montreal has something special and it gets into your system. In my leisure time, I would climb through the back of my garden to the Lookout and the "Bird Sanctuary" on the top of the mountain. There, I wandered around, or sat with a book and listened to the sounds of nature.

I also greatly enjoyed exploring old Montreal, as I was always very interested in the historical background of the places where I lived. My faithful friend Greta Murray introduced me to Westmount history.

The borough of Westmount, founded in 1887, developed at the beginning of the 20th century. It was composed largely of beautiful large estates, farms and orchards. There was a great deal of space for walking, sports and children's playgrounds.

At a time when there was no television or radio and few moving pictures, adults and children had to use more of their imagination and be more creative during leisure time.

Since I lived there, nearly on the top, at Braeside Place, we used to walk all over the hilly streets, and Greta would point out to me the changes which had occurred since the days of her childhood and youth at the turn of the century, when Westmount was born.

For instance: where the tall tower of the University of Montreal now rises on the horizon, there was once a fashionable skating rink far on the outskirts of the city, where girls and boys liked to meet, skate and flirt. Where the Molson and Bronfman mansions now stand, there was a horse-riding rink, and an archery or croquet lawn.

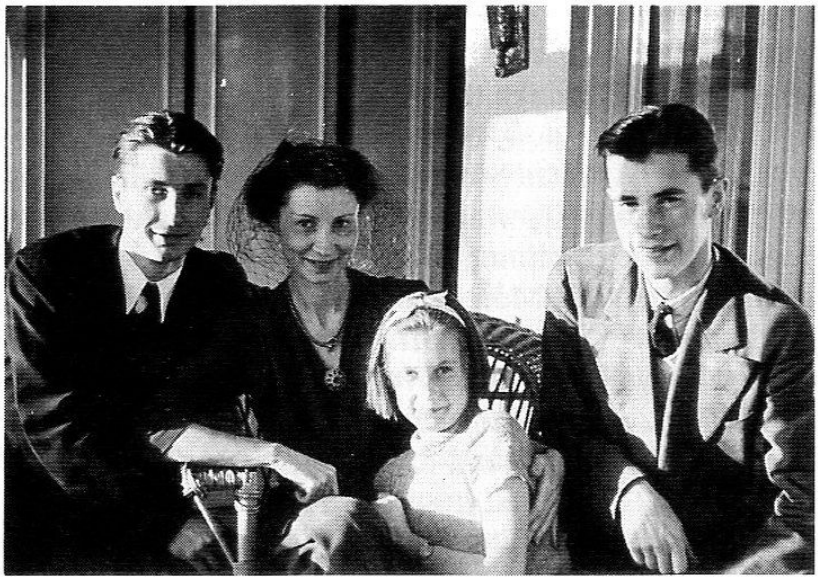
As for old Montreal, Mathilde (Til), Bob's wife, presented

me with a precious old book by G. M. Davidson, **The Travellers' Guide Through the Provinces of Canada**, published by M. Davis & S. Wood, New York, 1837, seventh edition. Greta gave me **Illustrated Montreal**, 1892-3, Montreal, published by John McConniff, which contained artistic sketches and engravings of the beginning of the city, founded by Sieur de Maisonneuve in 1642. Montreal took its name from the lofty mountain about two and a half miles distant from the harbour. A stone wall once encircled the city. It was demolished towards the end of the 19th century. In 1834, the upper town contained the Cathedral and the Congregation of the Order of Notre Dame. The oldest hospital - Hotel Dieu - was founded in 1644 by the nuns. The first school was opened by Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys in a stable donated by Paul de Maisonneuve in 1658. The College, on beautiful grounds, held about 300 students at the turn of the 19th century. Tuition was eighty dollars a year. The PARADE was a lovely public ground where the troops drilled, later called Fletcher's Field. In 1833, the city had 40,000 inhabitants.

However, I always felt that I did not know enough of Canadian history, French and English, and walking on McGill College Street and St.Catherine, I would enter various bookshops and browse through the shelves. When I got settled, I visited the excellent Westmount library and borrowed books on Canadian history recommended by Miss Jenkins, the chief librarian. In the course of my frequent visits to the library we became very friendly, and I derived real pleasure from her company.

I was also offered membership in the Women's University Club, headed by Virginia Cameron, and in the Museum of Fine Arts. I went to the Museum's imposing reception at which I was introduced to a great many people connected with art: Mr. and Mrs. McConnell, Mrs. Casgrain, and Mrs. Monk, a respected lawyer whom I especially remember, as I met her again later in the Women's Voluntary Services, founded during the war by Miss J. Hutchison.

I was also invited, with my friend Wanda Poznanska, to the Societe des Etudes et des Conferences by its president Rita Gariepy, wife of Dr. Louis H. Gariepy, both of whom became



our friends. This summer I met their teenage grandson, Benoit, at the house of our neighbour in St. Adele, the charming Madame Villeneuve, an accomplished singer.

From personal inclination, I joined the Montreal musical world. In 1948, the highly creative movement called the **Jeunesses Musicales** was founded by Giles Lefebvre, who devoted twenty-five years of his life to directing it, and Father Joseph Lemieux, who organized a group called Les Compagnons de l'art. In spirit and objectives, this group was the immediate inspiration of the Jeunesses Musicales du Canada. Madame Lorette Boisvert was one of the founders, in 1948, of the Quebec Festival de la Jeunesse, the forerunner of all musical festivals here. But the force behind the movement was Mme. Anais Rousseau of Trois Rivieres. During the concerts of the Jeunesses Musicales, I heard wonderful violin music played by Henryk Szeryng, my compatriot, an artist who rendered important service to the Jeunesses as he encouraged youth in the love of music and in the pursuit of a musical career. He also donated the proceeds from his concerts for the benefit of the Jeunesses.

The growth of this musical society was explosive. Soon the Orford Art Centre became its concert hall, and many young artists could attain high musical standards.

Another group of music lovers met at the Sunday concerts of the Ladies Morning Musical Club, which sponsored young, as yet unknown, but good artists.

I was asked to join the Little Symphonie, which, I think, was newly organized, and played exquisite chamber music, profitting from the presence in Montreal of many noted European war refugee artists. It played in modest surroundings, reached through a back-yard at Cote des Neiges and Guy Street. The place has since been demolished to make way for a street joining Cote des Neiges and St. Matthew.

While working at the Museum of Fine Arts, I took part in the guided walking tours, which prompted me to explore the city further.

At one of the parties given by the Committee on Refugees, I was introduced to the venerable Miss Alice Lighthall, presi-

dent of many historical and artistic associations, and a charming old lady. She invited me to a meeting of the Historical Society in the Chateau Ramezay, once the residence of the French Governor General (in 1770), where I met many members of the intellectual artistic society, both English and French.

I became so involved in the history of Montreal that it hurt me personally when an old landmark was slated for demolition. I was very upset in 1972 when the "battle" raged over the historic Hurtubise house at the corner of Victoria Avenue and Cote St. Antoine Road, where the imprints made by Indian arrows and shells were still visible on the walls.

I was also unhappy when the St. Sulpice turrets at Sherbrooke Street and Guy, the oldest Montreal relic of the great Sulpician Order Farm, were threatened with demolition. Luckily, wisdom prevailed over money and they were saved! A trust called **The Canadian Heritage of Quebec** was created to preserve and restore historical buildings and monuments.

THE BOYS GO TO WAR

In 1943, Bob and Jul decided to volunteer for the Polish Army in England. I tried to delay them as long as possible - they were only 18, and military service didn't start until age 20, but I could not do much as I also felt this was their duty. When their second university term was over in early May, they enlisted and went to Windsor, Ontario, for training. They had to depart for England in July. Before they left, my dear Greta gave them a wonderful present - a two-week vacation at Metis Beach, where Eva and I were staying with her.

They enjoyed it tremendously, since there were many young people there, and a country club. Jul left a diary of this vacation, which I read with tears in my eyes last year, when I came across it. Also, there was a letter from the battlefront to Greta, written by him.

In July came the day of their departure for the war. They arrived from the training camp in Windsor, and we had our last two days together. Eva and I accompanied them to the assigned place of departure. A long train waited on a siding, where the boys had to assemble, far from the station and the public. There was much confusion, excitement, haste and noise. My boys were in good spirits, proud and looking manly in their uniforms - merry as any youngster would be going on a great adventure in his life. I tried to conceal my sad feelings and smiled, but when the train started moving, my heart was heavy.

Next came the waiting for their letters, and hoping they were well. They couldn't say much because of the censorship, and also because they didn't want to worry me if anything want wrong. Now I know how hard it was for them. The first month on duty, Bob contracted a severe ear infection while standing guard for hours in the rain without shelter. He spent several weeks in hospital.

In November 1942, the American forces landed in Algeria. This wonderful event lifted my spirits and made me happy, as it liberated my husband from the German threat. He was finally free after more than two years of perilous internment in Algeria. But because of war-time conditions, scarcity of

transportation, and much red tape, he did not reach London to rejoin the Polish Army in England until Christmas of the following year, travelling by ship through Gibraltar and Lisbon. It was an immense relief from my constant worry, knowing that he would be close to the boys, who were then stationed in Scotland.

Listening to every newscast, I knew early in 1944 that the liberation of Europe would soon begin, and that my sons would take part in it. In my imagination I saw my boys crossing the choppy Channel in rough weather, slashing winds, wading deep in water towards the wall of rocks on the French coast. The Polish First Armoured Division in which they served was part of the Canadian Army Corps under General Henry Duncan Crerar (1888-1965), who was the Commander of the entire Canadian Army in England. The division fought alongside the British, Americans, Free French, Canadians and so on.

Then, on June 6, 1944, came D-Day - the Allied landing in Normandy. Even today, nearly forty years later, this memorable day never passes unnoticed by me. I always feel my throat tighten, remembering it. It hurts me that most people don't give a thought to it anymore. My sons took part in it and so many young men from many Allied countries sacrificed their lives to preserve for those who survived the heritage of freedom and liberty. The spirit of heroism and sacrifice which motivated these men on the beaches of Normandy is a timeless inspiration for generations to come.

Once, I had an unexpectedly comforting experience when, after leaving the doctor's office on June 6, I dropped into the pharmacy. The old man serving me said slowly: "D-Day". We exchanged a glance and felt a similar heartbeat.

The Allied landing in Normandy marked the beginning of the final phase of the war. On July 20, 1944, a group of German Army officers made an attempt to kill Hitler. Despite heavy security, Colonel Klaus von Staufenberg smuggled a bomb into a general staff meeting attended by Hitler, at the supreme headquarters of the German Army in East Prussia. The bomb demolished the room, but Hitler survived. Following the attempt, thousands of people, including Staufenberg,

were arrested, tortured and executed by the Gestapo. On the Eastern Front the Russians were advancing steadily, and in the West continuous bombing by Allied air forces was turning Germany into rubble. The morale of the German army and people began to deteriorate.

In Normandy, the Americans had broken out of the beachhead and were now advancing rapidly despite the heavy fighting. On August 10, 1944, Bob was wounded near Falaise in Normandy. During the attack on enemy positions, his tank was hit by German artillery. His tank commander was killed, and Bob was wounded. He was the radio operator and, despite his wound and heavy enemy fire, he remained at his post, reported the position of the destroyed tank and the death of the commander, and summoned reinforcements. Only then did he allow others to attend to his wounds. For his bravery and exceptional presence of mind, he was awarded the Military Cross of Valour.

I received the news in Montreal from the Ministry of War in Ottawa, with the wording "seriously wounded". It was the day the world ended. You can imagine what I went through. Happily, the next day brought a long telegram from my husband telling me that the wound in the head was not as bad as was first thought, and that Bob had been flown to a good hospital in England. He was given a penicillin injection right after he was found in the tank and removed from action. This saved his life. After recovery, he was assigned to the Cadet Officer Training Centre in Yorkshire.

Meanwhile, Jul was still at the front, moving through Belgium and Holland, pursuing the Germans. At long last, I received several excited letters from him describing their triumphal march through Belgium. The Polish soldiers were welcomed with enthusiasm, cheered and showered with flowers by pretty girls, greeted with wine and offered hospitality, food and lodgings by the delirious population! Then the fighting died down for a while as the Germans withdrew across the Rhine.

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In April 1943, the advancing German Army discovered, near the village of Katyn in Russia, a mass grave containing the bodies of more than 4,000 Polish officers taken prisoner by the Russians in 1939. Each had his hands bound behind his back and had been killed by a single pistol shot in the back of the head. The Polish Government asked the Red Cross to investigate. In response, the Soviets broke off diplomatic relations with Poland. There was never any doubt that this crime was committed by the Soviets, but it was not until after the war that an official inquiry by the United States Congress forever demonstrated the guilt of the Soviet leaders.

The war dragged on endlessly. In November 1944, the weather in Europe was appalling, with never-ending rain, cold and humidity. Jul became exhausted, as they usually slept in the mud under their tanks and permanently wore wet clothing. When they advanced through Holland they were shelled or shot at by German snipers almost continuously. He did not write to me about it, but my mother's heart sensed it from his well-written and descriptive letters.

Only after Jul's death did Bob give me his war diary, which confirmed my feelings. In one of the postwar letters he said, "the one great thing about a just war is the rewarding feeling of having achieved something worthwhile. Also when the excitement of the adventure fades away, it is the closeness you feel towards your comrades as you go together through thick and thin and against hell itself. There is something that marks you out disinctively and binds you to the members of your group and to the memories of what you went through together". He would say later: "War is a horrible thing, yet in some strange way it was perhaps the best part of my life".

On November 11, 1944, Jul was severely wounded in the back of his head. He had eighteen pieces of shrapnel in his skull. Thank God penicilin was already discovered and the British took good care of the wounded. He was hurriedly flown to England, and operated on several times to extract as many fragments as possible. Yet some could not be removed, and who knows - they may have been the cause of his untimely death in 1976. It is so hard to write about it.

The following pages show some sketches he drew at the front showing tanks at war - and his letter to Greta Murray which I mentioned earlier. It was written after the breakthrough in Normandy where Bob was wounded, when the Canadian and Polish forces, under the command of General Henry Duncan Crerar (1888-1965), were pursuing the Germans through Belgium and the Netherlands into Germany.

At the same time, in August 1944 in Poland, the underground Home Army attempted to liberate the city of Warsaw from the German yoke. They hoped that the advancing Russian army, which stood across the Vistula River at the gates of the city, and exhorted the Poles to fight by shouting propaganda over loud-speakers, would help. The insurrection broke out on August 1, 1944. Together with the underground army, boys and girls of tender age, practically unarmed, fought an enemy a hundred times stronger. There is not one family in Poland which did not lose a daughter or a son in this heroic struggle.

From across the river the Red Army watched the Poles fight their desperate battle. The Soviets refused permission for Allied planes, attempting to drop supplies to the Polish forces, to land behind their lines. When the holocaust was finally over, and all of Warsaw destroyed, only then did the Red Army move to attack the Germans.

My sons were fighting on the Western front, unable to help their compatriots in Warsaw, who were dying by the thousands every day, for 63 long days.

In December 1944, the Germans staged their final offensive of the war, attacking from the Ardennes towards Antwerp. This advance was stopped by the heroic stand of the U.S. troops at Bastogne. In deep snow and freezing weather, with no air-support (due to fog), they withstood continuing enemy attacks for several weeks, until help arrived.

By the spring of 1945, Allied troops were deep inside Germany, advancing on Berlin. However, politics again prevailed. At the insistence of the Russians, Allied troops were ordered to pull back and wait on the river Elbe, while the Russians were allowed to take Berlin. Stalin was now accomplishing all

his political objectives and moving deep into Europe.

In Poland, the leaders of the underground Home Army were invited by the Soviet government to a meeting. Despite assurances for their safety, they were all arrested and imprisoned. Ten years later, the wife of the commander of the Home Army was notified by Soviet authorities that her husband had died of a "heart attack" in a Russian prison, one year after he was arrested!

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In Montreal, there were repercussions from the war, and some food restrictions. Rationing cards were introduced for meat, sugar, tea, coffee, cigarettes, and butter. They were sufficient for us, but not for sending parcels to the boys at the front, or to my brother in a German prisoner-of-war camp. He needed them badly, as even the camp in Murnau where the generals were held was on the point of starvation. We couldn't get any canned meat, chocolate, sugar, cigarettes or oranges, which were the items they requested.

You can imagine my amazement when an unusual event happened one summer's day. I had gone to visit Eva at the summer camp where she was staying. In the neighbourhood there was also a large camp for German prisoners-of-war. Enormous trucks brought them food. While I was there, one of the trucks broke open and all the contents spilled on the road. The most coveted items - cigarettes and oranges by the thousands, large chocolate bars, dates, figs and prunes - were rolling right to our feet! At last, this one time, my boys and brothers received generous parcels! But I must say I was frustrated at seeing how well the Canadians were feeding enemy prisoners, when their own population did not have enough fresh fruit, vegetables or other items. Worst of all, we had to use all our ingenuity and contacts, spending hours to assemble such a food parcel for an Allied prisoner-of-war, or for our fighting soldiers.

THE END OF THE WAR

I had better not try to put into words the feelings of relief, joy, and euphoria! And then came the waiting for my dear ones to return to Montreal. But for us, it was not the return to Poland which we hoped for and for which my husband and my boys had fought. Our fate was to settle for good in Canada.

Jul returned first in late August 1946, and immediately enrolled at McGill, which was to become his university and life career. He was so happy. He would say: "Canada is a great country, I am so happy to be back here!"

The mansion in which we were then living was put up for sale and we had to move. Most of the women's husbands came back and took care of them, and some families left for the United States. I had to find a place to live for us, which was not easy as the city was bustling with people and returning veterans. Rent controls were imposed and no house or apartment was available. My husband sent me a small amount of money which he received as back salary from the Polish Government-in-Exile. The money had been witheld for years while he was interned in Africa. I wanted to buy a house and started looking, but did not realize that my great handicap was that no agent or owner believed that I was able to make the down-payment. I saw good inexpensive houses snatched away before my eyes, although I made offers. An average three bedroom cottage in the middle of Westmount cost from six to ten thousand dollars. Finally, with a small downpayment and the help of a mortgage from McGill University, I bought a property on Roslyn Avenue. But I had to secure my husband's signature on all the papers.

The McGill trustees did this for me, but since he was in England at the time, the cost was $450 in cash, which was an astronomical sum for me. At the time, women had no rights whatsoever in Canada. The Napoleonic Code still ruled in Quebec!

I figured out before buying the house that I would turn it into a rooming-house (eleven rooms), which would pay all the expenses, mortgage, interest, and so on. And so it worked out.

It also turned out to be a good investment. Seven years later we sold it at a profit and bought a smaller house. With a small salary that I earned from a part-time job (when my husband returned), we were able to live comfortably. I realized that part-time jobs could not lead towards a career, but the Polish Library required much of my time, and it meant so much to me, that I was willing to make the sacrifice.

Jul helped me greatly with the move to Roslyn Avenue. I do not think I could have done it without him. It was not only the moving, but locating enough furniture and arranging the garden so it would be attractive for the prospective tenants. It was a rather spectacular house, built by an architect, spacious and elegant. But the business of renting was horrible. Rent control was a nuisance. When my husband and son were about to return home, I gave notice to a tenant who knew beforehand that she would have to leave in such an event. She took me to court - a hard, nerve-wracking experience, but fortunately I won.

In 1946-47, my dear first cousin, Kristina Romer, and her family of seven, wrote to me asking for sponsorship, so that they could come from Europe, where they had spent four years of the war. At the time it was quite difficult to be admitted to Canada. It entailed much red tape, petitions, signatures, proof of employment, and so on. Luckily, I possessed the main prerequisite, namely a large, respectable house which could hold them all. Yet, my efforts took more than a year. I even had to go to Ottawa to press my case personally, before I received permission.

However, they would have to wait for ship transport from England. One day in the summer, I received a phone call at St. Adele from Ottawa. I would have to pay the air passage for the family because, if delayed, regulations would not let Kristina travel, since she was in the last months of pregnancy. I had to make a decision on the spot. My head whirled - how on earth would I be able to pay such a lot of money? I answered "yes", but only for her, not for seven persons!

However, to my great joy, they arrived by plane all together in September, with my dear Aunt Aline, Kristina's mother,

and their four small children. This happened because policies had been changed by the Immigration Office, and now they flew refugees from Germany, instead of bringing them by ship.

The Romer family stayed with me on Roslyn Avenue for a month. Kristina's husband soon found work with the Foundation Co. and worked for them for the next 35 years! After their son Teddy was born, at the end of September, they left for St. Adele. Through friends I rented a tiny house for them, where a kind land-lady promised to help with the hard chores, such as lighting the stove in the winter and shovelling snow.

St. Adele became the cradle of the family in exile in Canada. The Romers still live there, now in their own lovely home surrounded by a garden full of flowers. Every summer I spend some vacation time with them at their invitation and feel truly welcome.

From the beginning of our life in Canada during the war, St. Adele has been my favourite place, where I feel I have some sort of roots. It was there that I had to register during the war in 1940, when general registration was imposed on everyone, Canadian or foreigner. Before that no registration or any kind of identification card was necessary, and people say that there were no taxes either.

It was in St. Adele that, strolling in the fields, I spotted an old farmhouse and an elderly farmer making butter in a wooden churn, beating it in the old-fashioned way. Freshly made from sweet cream, it was delicious. We became friends, and I often listened to the stories of old Quebec he narrated. When I returned a year later, I did not find him or the old farmhouse or the little Indian hut which sold artifacts made by the Indians. It had all been destroyed to make room for a gas station. There was also a small, old, wooden church, which no longer exists, having been replaced by a large, artistically decorated parish church.

In my memory the old church will remain forever. It was there that I spent time in tears, insecure as to the future after our arrival in 1940, homeless and desolate. Usually when I came to the church it was deserted and about to be closed as it had grown quite dark. I remember walking slowly down one of

the aisles, towards the statue of the Madonna, where a solitary little lamp struggled with the darkness within, very weary, imploring the Mother of God to grant some peace to my anguished heart.

After Kristina and her family arrived, more family came from England and Scotland. My very dear Aunt Helena, my mother's sister, whom I had loved dearly from childhood, arrived with her son Leszek, and her lovely, vivacious daughter Hania. They had both been guardian angels to my sons when they were stationed in Scotland during the war. When the boys visited them on weekends on a pass, she and Hania would feed them enough for a whole week and extend to them their loving care. The boys felt they had a home where affection and their favourite Polish dishes awaited them. This was important in the harsh military life they were leading at that time.

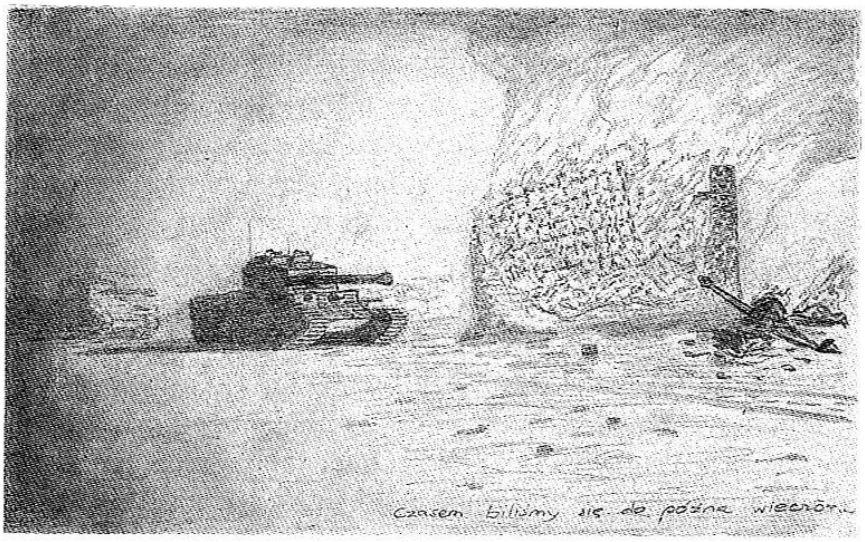
I am Hania's godmother, and since her childhood we have loved each other dearly. She has two pretty, talented married daughters, Eva and Chris. They are all part of our close family circle and close to my heart.

★ ★ ★

Our son Bob returned from England in autumn 1947, having earned a degree in engineering at Bristol University. In a few weeks, he found employment and started working. I will never forget my feelings when Bob brought me a precious present, a fur wrap bought with money from his first pay cheque. His name in Polish is Bogdan, which means "gift of God", and he truly was one! Throughout all our years of hardship since we had left Poland, he was a source of comfort and support to me. He still lived with us for a while, which made me happy. During evening hours he worked at his Master's degree, which he received at McGill in 1952. He also did his share of voluntary service, acting as secretary of the Polish Engineers' Association in Canada.

The association, which is still prospering, recently celebrated its 40th anniversary. It was founded in 1942, when over 600 Polish engineers and technicians, former army men, arrived from Europe. They came mostly from France, where they had

fought with the underground Free French forces. Our envoy, Victor Podoski, negotiated an agreement between Canada and the Polish Government-in-Exile to obtain Canadian visas for them. Canada benefitted by the admission of these men. They soon held positions of responsibility in the Canadian war industry, particularly in the development of aviation. They also became professors at the Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal and at other institutions of higher learning. Among them were Dr. Stykolt, W. Czerwinski, A. Mokrzycki, E. Kosko, J. Zurakowski, to mention only a few.



Battle of Chambois
Hand drawing by Julius Stachiewicz

Germans Slay Wounded Poles

A LURID story of furious battle is told by Pte. Julius Stachiewicz, a former student in engineering at McGill University, who was a trooper in the Polish Armored Division which played a prominent part in the famous battle of Chambois.

Writing for the McGill News, graduates' quarterly, from a hospital bed in Birmingham, England, where he is recovering from severe wounds, Trooper Stachiewicz tells of the brutality of German prisoners.

"While every soldier of ours was engaged in the heavy fighting, the German prisoners snatched the chance to murder a dozen of our wounded, including a chaplain who tried to defend them," he said. "Though beaten and routed, they were still the same inhuman gang, so well known in Poland and other occupied countries. But this time they paid heavily for it, and at the hands of the very people they had tried so hard to annihilate.

"Eager for revenge, we fought frantically, losing all notion of time. I was groggy, but one thought dominated my blurred mind—to hold out. The fearful tension stimulated my energy and my spirits. Never had I felt so strongly that I was a Pole, coming from good warrior stock, and that I came here to fight on alien soil as a volunteer for the liberation of my distant beloved country. I certainly felt that I would not give up, whatever happened. I would fight, like all of us, despite everything."

The story, which in its most vivid account, dealt with the onset of German tanks and the furious fighting to stem the Nazi tide of attack, had its appropriate ending.

"At dawn," Trooper Stachiewitz wrote, "we heard with joy our C.O. telling us over the radio that our efforts had been crowned with success, that our gallantry had turned the tide of battle. The German fury was broken! In defending Chambois we had borne the major brunt of it. The Battle Chambois has become the crowning highlight among the many Polish deeds of valor. A few days later, we were again speeding towards Germany."

MY HUSBAND'S RETURN

I waited anxiously for my husband to return. He was still in London, working with others on a detailed history of the war in Poland, for the Historical Department of the General Staff.

At last, at Christmas in 1948, after nine years of separation, he arrived. I went with Eva to meet him at the station. My heart sank when I saw him. He was composed but looked so haggard, and his face reflected what he had suffered. This was a man to whom country and service to country meant everything, and who had had to give up any hope for Poland's independence, and of ever returning to Poland.

He was hurt to the core of his being by the disastrous treaty of Yalta of February 1945, as were all Poles. The treaty was concluded by Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin, without the knowledge, participation or consent of the countries concerned.

Poland, the first and most faithful ally of the Western powers, with its strong Western civilization and culture, was delivered to the tender mercies of a ruthless Communist dictatorship, hated by the people. Such was the reward for choosing to fight with the West against Hitler.

When a great victory parade was held in London, Poland was not represented. On June 5, 1946, the following letter appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*, signed by ten members of the British Parliament:

"Sir - Polish dead lay in hundreds on Monte Cassino in 1944. The Poles fought at Tobruk, Falaise and Arnhem. Units of the Polish Navy took part in most of the major actions at sea from September 1939 to V-E, Polish fighter pilots shot down 772 German planes between July 1940 and VE Day. The Polish Underground Army was the biggest and best organized of any of the occupied countries.*

The Polish Army and Navy who fought under British command have not been invited to take part in the Victory March on Saturday, June 8. Insult has been added to injury by asking the Polish Provisional Government, a non-elected Govern-

* Victory in Europe Day

ment to whom the men in the Polish armed forces outside Poland owe no allegiance, to send a contingent "representative of the Polish Fighting Services".

In view of the above it is not surprising that the Polish Air Force, which was to have been represented by one officer and 25 men, has refused an invitation to take part in the march.

Ethiopians will be there, Mexicans will be there, the Fiji Medical Corps, the Libyan Police, and the Seychelles Pioneer Corps will be there - and rightly too.

But the Poles will not be there.

Have we lost not only our sense of perspective, but our sense of gratitude as well? We fear so".

The withdrawal of diplomatic recognition from the legitimate Polish Government-in-Exile in London, and the extension of it to the hastily formed puppet Communist regime in Warsaw, left more than 350,000 military personnel of the Polish Army in England and Italy, often with twenty or more years of service, without any means of support. This was the fateof my husband who, having served for thirty-five years, found himself suddenly without employment or pension, totally unprepared for civilian life. Finding work at 53 years of age was not really possible then, as young returning veterans claimed all available positions.

The United States Ambassador to Poland, Arthur Bliss Lane, wrote a book on Poland's fate after the war, entitled **I Saw Poland Betrayed** (New York: Bobbs-Merril Co, 1948). In it, he frankly described the tragic fate of my country as it was absorbed after Yalta into the Soviet orbit, with the consent of Britain and the U.S.A., and against the will of its people.

The ghost of Yalta reappeared at the inaugural Assembly of the United Nations in San Francisco, in October 1945. Fifty nations were present, even small Third World countries which did not help the Allies during the war, but Poland was absent. Poland, the first nation to stand against Hitler, who had one-quarter of her population murdered by the Nazis and the Soviets, and who had fought loyally at the side of the Allies for six long years, was not invited because the legitimate Polish

Government-in-Exile was no longer recognized by the Allies, and the Soviet-controlled puppet regime had not yet been formed.

An eloquent protest against this treatment of a country which had fought against Hitler longer than any other, was lodged by the world-famous Polish pianist, Artur Rubinstein, who was present at the opening ceremony, invited to give a recital at the end of deliberations. When the orchestra had finished playing the anthems of the fifty nations, Rubinstein, who was sitting in the audience, rose, calmly walked to the piano, and announced that he would play the omitted Polish national anthem! And he played it with passion!

The aftermath of the treaty of Yalta is with us even today, as the enslaved nations behind the Iron Curtain chafe against their Communist rulers. No real peace in the world is possible, as long as freedom is denied to those who seek it and are willing to die for it, and as long as the abnormal division of Europe remains.

All these bitter thoughts were whirling in my head when I saw my husband. To make reality bearable, although I was crying on the inside, I smiled on the outside! For all these long years, he had been deprived of his country as well as his family life and love. We had to make up for all this misery somehow. I hoped Eva would melt his heart and return him to life, and we succeeded to the extent that this was possible.

Knowing how he loved nature, we spent a summer with my cousin Leszek (Leshek) on his beautiful farm. It really was a wonderful place which my husband, a nature-lover, enjoyed tremendously. It was a very large gentleman's estate, relatively unspoiled by civilization, which still retained the wilderness of the remote country, with magnificent trees, lakes, a stream flowing through the grounds, marbled with water-lily pads, plants of all sorts, and a sanctuary for birds.

With Leszek, my husband spent many days boating on the stream, and often, when the evening shadows spread, he would imperceptibly observe the deer coming near. It gave him so much joy and a feeling of wonder in touching unspoiled nature at its source, and I was happy for him.

Leszek's wife, a warm-hearted, caring person, made our visit most enjoyable. Unfortunately my husband's heart, weakened by war experiences, failed, and one night he suffered a severe heart attack. Leszek drove us immediately to the nearest hospital, in a nearby resort, which proved to be very good. The doctor was excellent and very sympathetic. Bob arrived from California the next day, and we both nursed my husband back to health. Bob's long presence was the greatest gift and sign of love he could give us. He spent all day at his father's bedside. When my husband felt better, we rented a small apartment for several weeks, until he was able to travel. It was late August, and the end of the season made this possible. We returned to Montreal and my husband recuperated well.

As time went by, the social ties with my Canadian friends loosened, although we always retained affection for each other. We invited the people who were most friendly to me when I was alone. The Knatchbull-Hugessens (the Senator had the Victoria Cross from the First World War); professors from McGill: Dr. Cyril James, Dr. Fieldhouse and Dermot McLennan; and of course my dear Greta Murray and Kathleen McCall.

Irene and Cyril James and the Morgans also invited us to their homes. But my husband was really exhausted by the war and its aftermath, and beginning new relationships was too hard for him. So our active social life slowed down.

The Polish Institute invited my husband to join and to lecture, as he had once been a professor at the College of Military Science in Warsaw. His lectures were on the history of World War II, and the political history of the twentieth century. They were well attended and proved especially instructive for our young generation who came to Canada as children, as well as to those who had had no opportunity to take such courses before.

Outside academic circles, my husband also wanted to get in touch with other Poles, particularily those who were part of the economic emigration at the turn of the century, the so-called "old Polonia", who were scattered in the eastern and southern parts of the city.

After visiting several of the "Polonia" associations, my husband joined the White Eagle Association. It was the first large Polish association, established in 1902 by the workers to provide a meeting-place for those lonely men who arrived in Canada before the First World War, leaving their families behind and intending to bring them over when they were settled.

THE POLISH IMMIGRATION TO CANADA

The immigration of Poles to Canada took place in a series of waves connected with the historical, political and economic conditions in Poland.

The first influx, from 1752 to 1890, comprised highly skilled, well-educated individuals, who were driven from their homeland by political events, primarily the partitions of Poland, the Kosciuszko insurrection, and the bloody uprisings against the Russians.

There is a marriage contract signed in 1752 by a wealthy furrier, Dominic Barcz, from Gdansk, who married a French-Canadian girl, Therese Filiau-Dubois, in Montreal. Their grandson, Pierre Dominic, was very active in Canadian political life. He was elected to Parliament in 1809 from Chambly. In Canada, he spelled his name Debartsch.

Doctor Auguste-France Globenski (1754-1830), of the Globenski family of Quebec, came to Canada in 1776 as surgeon in a mercenary regiment engaged by the British. After the war in 1783, he married a French-Canadian girl, Francoise Brousseau, and when she refused to leave Canada, he established himself in the Province of Quebec, and practised medicine in St. Eustache. He also owned a pharmacy. He was successful and respected in the community.

The disastrous century of rebellions and uprisings by every generation in Poland against the ruthless oppression of Russia prompted a new flow of immigrants. These were often highly educated people of every profession. Each was often a leader in affairs at home, but had to live through harrowing personal experiences. The great uprising of 1830 was cruelly crushed by the Russians, despite a heroic and desperate struggle which lasted over a year. Men trying to evade persecution and deportation to Siberia desperately sought freedom, peace, and human rights in exile.

The elite of Polish poets (A. Mickiewicz), composers (F. Chopin), and writers, exported Polish culture. This was the GREAT EMIGRATION of 1831 which left its mark in France, where Polish letters and art flourished in Paris.

A few of them came to Canada, Kierzkowski and Gzowski among others. Casimir Gzowski (1813-1898) arrived in Canada after spending several years in the U.S.A. as an enterprising young engineer. Because of his talent, vision, and readiness to work, he was soon in government service as supervisor of roads and waterways, building bridges and railways, planning parks, and so on.

At the end of the eighties, he rose to the head of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineering. Being also a public-minded citizen and a man of vision, he became an active participant in many important activities, and is now acknowledged as one of the co-builders of the Canada we know today. In 1874, he was mentioned in reports to London, and in 1890 he was knighted by Queen Victoria, becoming Sir Casimir Gzowski.

One of his major achievements was the International Bridge at the juncture of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, across the Niagara. This distinguished Polish Canadian is a shining example of how an able man who fought for his old homeland can serve his adopted country well, for the betterment of all.

To add variety, a totally different, artistic and sophisticated class of immigrants was also attracted to the shores of this hemisphere. Little is known of the fantastic expediton of three famous Poles to California and British Columbia. They were the brilliant dramatic actress Helena Modjewska, with her husband Count Chlapowski, and the great writer and Nobel Prize winner Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846-1916), best known in the West as the author of the novel, *Quo Vadis*, which was later made into an internationally acclaimed movie.

They boarded a ship in New York in 1877, and sailed more than 13,000 miles around the tip of South America to rearch San Francisco in northern California. The Panama Canal, one of the greatest engineering achievements, was not yet built. They bought a big ranch in California and intended to work on it themselves, living in friendship in the style of Jean Jacques Rousseau, as imitated by Marie Antoinette in 18th century France.

The dream was soon over. It was sheer "Fantasy Island", as none of them had ever done any manual work before. Lack

of success forced them to resume their careers.

The great tragedienne, Modjeska, (1840-1908), a woman of great beauty and artistic power, decided to pursue her stage career in San Francisco. She took extensive English courses and from her first performance in A. Dumas's "La Dame aux Camelias", she charmed the audiences. Her dramatic talent fluorished despite the language imperfection. She played Shakespearean dramas and in no time she became the idol of San Francisco.

This success launched her international career and took her to New York and all over Europe. Her son, Ralph Modjeski (1861-1940), was a well-known builder of bridges in America.

The great writer, Henryk Sienkiewicz, returned home and continued his career with the brilliant *Letters from America*. He won the Nobel prize in 1904 for *Quo Vadis*, a powerful drama of the times of the Roman emperor Nero (Christians persecuted by Pagans). Towards the end of his life, Sienkiewicz lived in Switzerland. I met him as a schoolgirl when he was visiting Poland and came to dinner at my parents' home. He liked youngsters, gave me a long look, put his hand on my head and was very pleasant to me.

ECONOMIC EMIGRATION

The first Slavic settlement on Canadian soil was the village of Wilno near Barry's Bay, Ontario. It was offered by the Canadian government to some thirty peasant families who arrived in 1859, attracted by government agents to build the Renfrew County road. They were a Kashoubian group from that part of northern Poland bordering the Baltic Sea, then under Prussian domination. They came under the leadership of a priest, Father Dembski, who was from the city of Wilno, hence the name of their settlement to commemorate his Polish birthplace. Today, there is still a large Polish-Kashoubian settlement in Barry's Bay. The settlers liked the similarities of the countryside to that of their home-land, which is a beautiful rolling, hilly region with a multitude of lakes and forests, called the "Kashoubian Switzerland". A Polish Boy Scout Jamboree is still held in the beautiful area of Bary's Bay every year.

Between 1890 and 1900 the U.S.A. and Canada accepted people capable of manual labour and many immigrants arrived at that time. From desperate parts of Eastern Europe, mostly dominated by Russia (such as partitioned Poland), in search of freedom and better living conditions for their children, came a stream of people, penniless, but honest, loyal and hard working.

There was no general policy on East Central European immigration. Private business groups paid agents to recruit labourers, the government tried to attract them by advertisements, and in 1896 the MacDonald government offered its immigration officers rewards for each immigrant recruited.

When the Prairies had to be developed into cultivated land, peasants and farmers were needed. Also, somebody had to build the roads, clear the forests and organize new farmsteads. The government directed immigrants to the West. Arriving in Winnipeg or Regina, they often had to wait for days or weeks to be sent to their Prairie lots. They lived through great hardships in pioneering conditions, where the main problem was survival.

To become adjusted to a new environment, both the host

country and the immigrant must undergo great changes. For best results, the immigrants must feel accepted.

Yet, they had different habits, and they did not speak the language. Isolated, having left their families behind, they withdrew within their own groups, organized around the churches, and formed mutual aid organizations.

The record shows that many of them brought skills and knowledge of crafts which were infinitely more precious than any fortunes or cash balances in the bank. Through their work and their endurance, they contributed mightily to the prosperity and strength of their adopted land. They worked hard, lived mostly in appalling conditions, and endured great sufferings, but in time they earned enough money and were relatively prosperous by the time we arrived. They owned their association houses, and had built their churches and brought their families from Europe.

The Polish Ethnic Group in Canada (in round figures)

Year:	1901	1911	1951	1981
Total:	6,100	33,652	220,000	350,000 or more

The Second World War brought enormous changes. Canada's growth and her rapid industrialization created a need for foreign engineers, technicians and other technically educated persons. Thanks to the initiative of the Polish Ambassador in Ottawa, Mr. Victor Podoski, an agreement was negotiated with the Canadian government to admit several hundred highly educated Polish engineeers and technical personnel in 1942-43. They were soon absorbed into industry and played important roles, especially in aviation.

After the pandemonium of the Second World War, a great number of Poles found themselves without a country to return to. The fighting units, an army of over 300,000 men, were demobilized without any pension. The older men mostly settled in England, the younger ones sought their fortunes all over the world. This compulsory emigration was called "the heroic emigration". Canada opened its doors to a great many of these soldiers, offering them the right to settle in Canada in return

for two years' obligatory contract work on farms and in the forests. Displaced girls from German labour camps were brought in as domestic help. The soldiers arrived in 1946 in two groups of several thousand men and were lodged in unused army barracks near Montreal. I helped as a voluntary interpreter between the soldiers and Canadian farmers who came from all over Canada wanting to employ them. After two years, the soldiers were free to find the employment of their choice. They later established efficient and active branches of ex-combatant associations in every country where they settled. Rev. Father L. Krolikowski was in charge of some seventy children who had been deported from Poland to Asian Russia at the beginning of World War II, separated from their parents. Mostly orphaned during the ordeal, they were saved by the International Red Cross and in 1944 taken to Teheran, India and Africa. The Polish Sisters of the Resurrection took care of them in Canada. Today they are all happily married and well settled in this blessed country.

Again, as a hundred years ago, when Polish culture was suppressed at home, it crossed frontiers and established itself abroad. Because Poland was governed by the men of the Kremlin, as a result of the Yalta agreement, many of her sons were determined to stay out of the country. Canada was one of the first countries to accept them. It is amazing how well they have adapted themselves to life in the New World.

Our best poets created their works abroad. In the U.S.A.: K. Wierzynski, J. Lechon, and C. Milosz (1980 Nobel Prize winner). In Canada: J. Iwaniuk, B. Czaykowski, A. Busza, F. S. Miesa, and, in Montreal, the brave Royal Air Force pilot, B. Pomian Piatkowski, and our friend Alice Parizeau.

Mary Schneider, who for twenty years operated her school of painting near Toronto, brought up an entire generation of young Canadian painters. The City of Toronto landscapes and landmarks which today decorate the City Hall reception rooms are her work.

Composer Christopher Penderecki, who has received many honours, was asked to compose a symphony to be performed at the anniversary celebrations of the United Nations.

After the imposition of martial law in Poland, in 1981, and the outlawing of the vibrant Solidarity trade union movement, a large new group of people left Poland and were added to the diversified population of this country. Canada again generously opened its doors to the refugees. We hope that these new citizens of Canada, while cherishing their native land, will serve Canada as well as they served their homeland, and that their Polish heritage will enrich the culture of the Canadian mosaic.

The study of ethnicity and multiculturalism requires serious, non-static research, as constant changes occur in immigration problems. It also requires substantial behavioural research. I only touch on it here to give an overall picture of the situation which confronted us when we arrived in Canada.

THE WHITE EAGLE ASSOCIATION IN MONTREAL

In the history of Polish social movements in Canada, the three oldest lay associations are: the St. Joseph Association in Kitchener, Ont., established in 1886; the White Eagle Association in Montreal, organized in 1902; and the Brotherhood of the Holy Spirit in Winnipeg, also established in 1902.

It is interesting to note that although the main settlements were in Ontario and the West, in the province of Quebec there are quite a number of places bearing Polish names, apparently a reminder of scattered settlers in remote districts.*

The White Eagle Association was established when two groups merged: the Society of Sons of Poland and the H. Sienkiewicz Association. The association had mutual aid as one of its objectives and served as a meeting-place for many lonely men who had left their families behind.

When my husband joined the White Eagle Association, Frank Szeliga, a man of rare trustworthiness, was president. He was a middle-aged, self-employed window-washer. Working hard for 30 years, he had acquired relative prosperity. Every week my husband travelled quite far to reach their meeting-place. The trip took at least an hour on three different street-cars. He participated in the deliberations and discussions that took place during the meetings.

Being a military commander, my husband had an intuitive perception of the enlisted men and a marvellous way of dealing with people. He knew how to interest them and encourage them in the right direction. These meetings soon became very popular, and at the next elections, members of the "White Eagle" elected my husband Honourary President, and life-time member of the society.

We also had an opportunity to invite Frank Szeliga to visit with us for a drink one day, when he had to work in our neighbourhood. He came up and we had a nice chat together. In turn, Frank invited us to dinner in their home, which he was proud to show us. We met his wife, a nice warm-hearted

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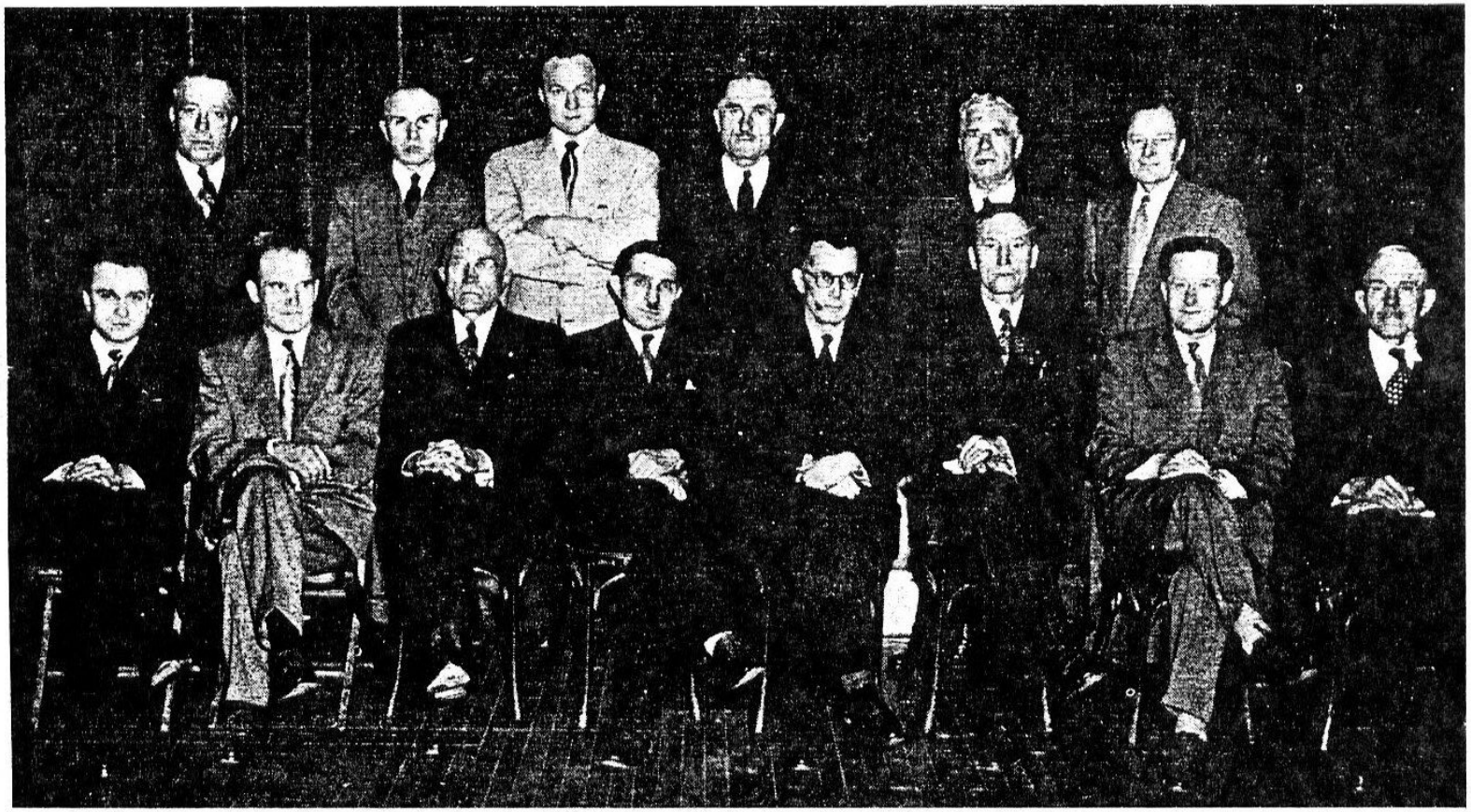
* T. Poznanski - Laval University "Statistical data."

homemaker and an excellent cook, and his two children. The daughter played the piano for us. She was pursuing studies to become a music teacher. The younger boy was bright and helpful. It was truly a very pleasant evening at the Szeligas. They were very hospitable people, and it was impressive to see how much a hardy, caring family can achieve within one generation!



The Board of the White Eagle Association
Gen. W. Stachiewicz, Honorary President (centre)

OUR "CHILDREN" LEAVE HOME

Bob moved to Vancouver in 1950, and this was a heartbreak for me. He had been offered a good position with a Canadian branch of an American electronics firm, and decided to accept it. Soon after, he moved to California with Lenkurt Electric Co. in San Carlos.

My other son Jul was named lecturer at McGill University in 1952, and in 1954 he married the cherming Halina Rozwadowska. Their daughter Anna was my beloved first grandchild. She died of leukemia in 1963. It was a trauma. During her eight years of life, I developed a very affectionate, close relationship with the child and we loved each other dearly.

Jul lived with his family in St. Adele, Que., a small village 50 miles from Montreal, because the rent there was much lower, and he and his wife had a dream, like any young couple, to have a house of their own. For several years Jul commuted every day to teach at McGill, and returned late and tired. But finally the dream became reality, and they acquired a lot on a scenic hill over St. Adele, in a new development of the sixties, the "Sommet Bleu".

He designed the house himself, hired local men, and personally supervised the construction, inspecting it twice a day, before leaving for Montreal, and after his return. Within three months, the residence with a superb view, was ready for his family of four children and a grandmother. This is an example of the opportunities Canada presents, and what can be accomplished by people of modest means if they are efficient, capable and very hard working.

In 1955, Bob married Mathilde (Til) Norvell in California. The American ancestry of my new daughter-in-law dates back to the first European settlers, who settled in the 17th century on plantations in Virginia. She also displays all the positive characteristics of this notable ancestry. Their wedding took place on Bob's names'-day, which was also the feast of St. Joseph, the patron of happy marriages.

We were sad that we could not be with them at this great moment in their lives, but the cost of travel was too much.

Bob

Til Norvel

Halina Rozwadowska

Jul

They soon delighted us with the news that they would be moving closer to us, to Rochester, New York, and we would be able to meet our new daughter-in-law. I went to visit them in Rochester before their son Tom was born, and I must say that it was a happy experience. I liked Mathilde very much and enjoyed being with her. I hope she did, too. I liked everything she showed me in Rochester. We dined in a nice club and listened to an orchestral concert, sitting on the lawn in the park. The smell of roses in full bloom was refreshing and delightful, and my new daughter-in-law was so pretty and sweet. I treasure the memories of this visit. A month later, their son Tom was born, our love and pride. Jul and I went to the christening, since we were asked to be the baby's godparents.

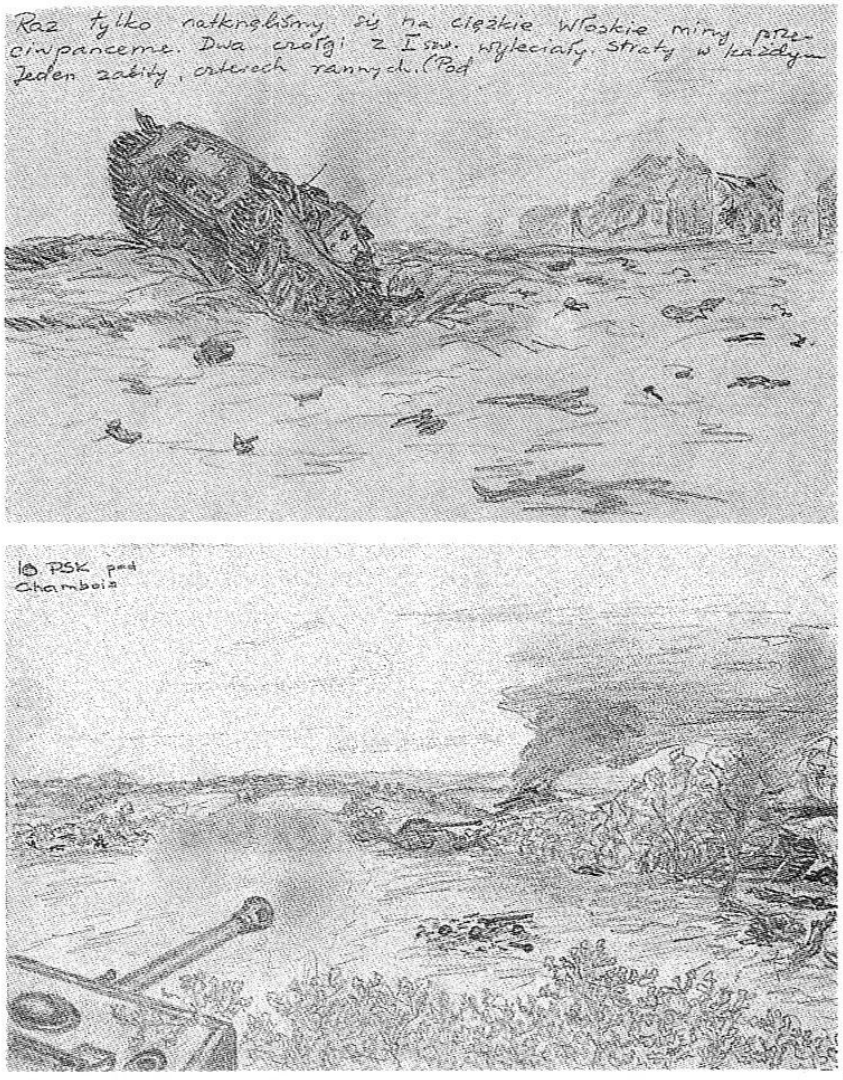
Bob and Til living in Rochester, close to us, was too good to be true for long. They soon moved to California, near San Francisco, where he was offered a better position.

In 1954, our daughter Eva went to Europe for the summer. We moved from our house at 432 Roslyn Avenue in Westmount to a smaller one which my husband liked very much, at 83 Chesterfield Avenue, where we lived until my husband's death. There was a lovely garden in the back, surrounded by neighbouring gardens which made it seem very large, and a small patio for relaxation. I worked part time in the afternoons at the Musem of Fine Arts, at the same time organizing and supervising the Polish Library at McGill Universtity. Eva finished her studies at McGill, received a scholarship from the French government, and went to Paris for one year of research work at the Pasteur Institute. She lived in Canada House, the Canadian students' residence, and enjoyed it. After her return, she continued working on her doctoral thesis at McGill. She obtained a Ph.D. in Biochemistry, and her graduation on the beautiful, spacious McGill campus was a great joy to us.

On July 10, 1963, Eva married Christopher Horton in England. He was a high official in the British Council. I went to their wedding in Aylesbury, near London, where Chris's parents lived, but we thought that for my husband it would be too exhausting a trip. The old residence, the church, the quaint place where I gave the reception, followed by a party

in the home of Chris's parents, were all typically English and I would say medieval in flavour. Eva was very happy.

After they left on a honeymoon trip to Greece, I flew to Paris before returning to Montreal. Paris, revisited after so many years, was exciting and beautiful. All my memories came alive! We had lived in Paris as a young couple for several years in the "Golden Tweties". The rapidly moving events and the stimulating spiritual climate of this enchanting era, which to some extent influenced our lives, were resurrected in my mind. For a few weeks I lived again under the spell of Paris. I returned home refreshed and sparkling with new energy.



Battle of Chambois - Hand drawings by Julius Stachiewicz

THE VISIT OF MY BROTHER FROM POLAND

On New Year's Eve, 1956, my brother Roman arrived from Warsaw. It was the first time the Communist regime had allowed anyone to go abroad, as a result of the so-called "quiet revolution" in October 1956. The country boiled with discontent. In June, workers' riots exploded, demanding "bread and freedom". Alarmed, Krushchev flew to Warsaw, but in view of the inflamed situation, had to consent to changes in the party and to the return to power of W. Gomulka, who had been imprisoned for five years during Stalin's rule. Gomulka became First Secretary of the Party, the principal position of power in Communist countries, and a short period of liberalization followed. My brother took advantage of it at once, and came to visit us after seventeen years of separation.

He was a man of unbelievable charm, distinguished and handsome, and had a vivid, buoyant personality. He also had a golden heart. He brought us some of the family heirlooms that my mother had managed to save, a precious tapestry over a hundred years old, a family portrait, and two splendid, time-honoured bottles of a traditional Polish drink made from honey. When the customs officials wanted to confiscate one bottle, he vehemently objected, saying with indignation, but also with humour: "How do you think I can come to my family after seventeen years empty-handed?" They laughed, and let him keep it.

He told me things about our family which I did not know because of the censorship in Poland. My father had died in 1941 as an indirect result of the trauma he suffered during a brutal night raid on his home by the Soviet police. One of my dear younger cousins, a frail girl who loved muisc, was imprisoned for distributing underground leaflets, and shot by the Germans. Lwow, the city of our youth and our home, was now officially in Russia, following the inglorious 1945 treaty of Yalta.

At the end of the war my mother was still in Lwow, as were several of her friends, widows of university professors. Lwow had changed hands at the beginning of the German-Russian

My brother Roman

war in 1941, when the victorious Germans occupied the city. The Poles suffered the consequences. One night the Germans broke into many homes of the intelligentsia, took university professors and their teen-age sons from their homes, and ruthlessly shot them all.

After the war my brother, a general in the pre-war Polish Army, released from a prisoner-of-war camp in Germany, returned to Poland as a private citizen, to take care of our mother and her friends, the widowed women.

My mother was in a wheel-chair, her lovely house and garden had been taken away from her by the Soviets, as the houses of the other widows had been. My brother organized their departure from Lwow, but there were many great difficulties in arranging the transportation, permits and so on. With much trouble he secured a freight railway wagon and brought some eighteen persons, including my mother, out of Lwow. With great effort he succeeded in relocating all the widows in western Poland, which was not an easy thing, as conditions were still unsettled and bureaucracy reigned supreme. My mother lived a few more years, and died quietly in her sleep in 1950.

We showed Roman all of Montreal, and it was strange to see how great an impression the wealth and affluence of Canada made on him. He was startled by the supermarket. He could not believe that nowadays one could buy anything one wanted. Also, he had never seen food half prepared or a meal that could be produced in a few minutes. The profusion of consumer goods, clothing and so on was unthinkable in Warsaw, where people lived a dreary life, spending hours standing in line to obtain the few essentials necessary for survival. He stared at the lines of automobiles near every factory or plant, cars which belonged to the workers, while workers in Poland lived in poverty. He stayed with us for six weeks, enjoying and appreciating each day.

Our son Bob and his wife were with us for their Christmas visit when my brother arrived. He was so happy to see Bob, and I was pleased that Mathilde could meet him. The day after his arrival, Bob and Til and their infant son, Tom, left by car to return to Rochester. This was the happiest New Year that we had had in many years.

THE ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT SIXTIES

The 1960s were politically turbulent on campuses in the U.S., and to a lesser extent in Canada as well. I greatly admired the way the Principal and Vice-Chancellor of McGill, Dr. Rocke Robertson, handled university affairs during those riotous years. He showed great strength of character, patience and wisdom, in democratically resolving the events of the Stanley Gray affair. Gray's arrogance in violently disrupting the meeting of the Board of Governors obtained the deserved rebuke from two impartial judges, and the prestige of McGill University was strengthened.

In the Province of Quebec we witnessed the cultural awakening of the French people and the rise of Quebec nationalism. Great progress marked the change in workers' conditions. The union movement expanded, and workers' unions were organized.

Recently, the Esdras Mainville prize (one of the great sons of Quebec who played a major role in developing economic and social thought and national philosophy in Quebec) was awarded to a country priest, the brilliant teacher Rev. Jacques Grandmaison of St. Jerome, for his philosophical teachings and writings.

In St. Jerome we have a good friend, Father Rene Gagnon, who takes a great interest in Poland and keeps us informed about Canadian community life.

★ ★ ★

In 1968, the new Prime Minister, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, vaulted to power on a wave of "Trudeaumania". I remember when my niece and nephew, age 16 and 21, who lived with us at the time, decorated our house with big Trudeau posters and lived in a constant state of excitement. A man of fine intellect, Pierre Elliott Trudeau remained in office until 1984, except for a brief interlude in 1979. He repatriated the new Constitution to Canada in April 1982, bringing home the British North America Act of 1867, and including the Charter

of Human Rights. But his greatest achievement has been to keep the country together, in spite of the surge of nationalism in Quebec and the dramatic events of the seventies.

He has recently resigned from office, after sixteen years of distinguished service to his country. In autumn 1984, the Conservative Party came to power, in a dramatic election victory. Canadians expect a prosperous future under the leadership of the new Prime Minister, the able Brian Mulroney.

Canada is the only country I know which has implemented a positive policy of multiculturalism since 1971. This is the best way to absorb and integrate immigrants. The idea of pluralism, where some customs, character traits and cultural values of the ethnic groups are maintained and encouraged, not only enriches the young country but also helps in the creation of a Canadian identity. I very much hope that this wise policy of the government proves beneficial to the country in producing loyal, patriotic new citizens.

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The Polish Institute and Library, with which I was constantly involved, grew and expanded its activities during those years. The Multiculturalism Program helped the Institute fulfil some of its objectives by providing financial aid. First, two small grants were received for book binding. Mr. Scott, a representative of the Ministry, came to the Library when the project was underway. A large number of the books had just been returned from binding, and several cartons were going out. There was a mound of books on the table. He seemed satisfied with what he saw.

Then, another grant was received for the organization of the art collection, which resulted in a travelling exhibition of the history of the Polish Institute and Library. The exhibition visited Toronto, Calgary and Hamilton, and was twice shown at the McLennan Library in Montreal, once in 1980, and the second time during the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Polish Institute, in 1983.

More recently, the Polish Institute received a small grant

for the reorganization of its archives, and for a major analysis project, namely to prepare abstracts in three languages (English, French and Polish) of recently published articles relating to East-Central Europe, from non-indexed European reviews and magazines.

In connection with this project, Mrs. Judy Young from the Ministry of State for Multiculturalism visited the Polish Library and spent a few hours with me examining our work and discussing the project. It was a most stimulating encounter, resulting in the Polish Institute receiving a larger grant, paid in two instalments over two years. The project is still in progress, and a report for the first year has been sent to the Ministry. Over 2,000 abstracts were made with the help of the project director, who donated her time and services free of charge.

The most recent grant received was for the organization of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Polish Institute. It was a most welcome grant, and also a sign of approval for the work of our Institute, which tries hard to improve the quality of cultural life in the Polish community, thus contributing to the common Canadian-Polish culture.

The report of the 40th anniversary celebration was published in pamphlet form and sent to the Multiculturalism office in Ottawa.

★★★

In 1964, Eva and Chris were posted for four years to Rome, and we went to stay with them for three months. It was an unending thrill for me to return to Rome, which I knew so well, to enjoy once again the beauties of Italy, and to listen to the echoes of old Rome, where ancient stones speak of their past, and from whence came almost all of our art, law and civilization. This classical environment restores the spirit and works on people in mysterious ways. I was under the spell of it. Christopher drove us all over Italy as far as Naples and Pompei. It was absolutely wonderful! Unfortunately, my husband overexerted his heart wandering through Rome in the heat. This happened towards the end of our stay while we were

visiting the newly excavated Casa d'Oro (House of Gold) of Emperor Nero. We had to stop and take it easy. He recovered soon. On our way home we visited Paris, the wonder city, where a new attraction to visitors had been recently introduced: the Sons et Lumieres - Sound and Light shows.

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In 1971, my son Jul was named Chairman of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at McGill University. He was extremely popular, much loved and respected by the teaching staff, as well as by the students, for his excellence in teaching. He gave much of his time, care and attention to them. He and his wife, pretty Halina, led an active social life, giving enjoyable parties in their lovely country home at Sommet Bleu in St. Adele, inviting his colleagues from McGill University and Polish friends and delighting them with specialities of Polish cuisine.

Day followed day, and our lives seemed to be settled to some extent, except for my husband's heart condition, which sent him to the hospital several times. But he was in good spirits. Since we had moved from Roslyn Avenue, we still lived in Westmount, at 83 Chesterfield Avenue. The lovely garden of the old cottage ended on the horizon with an alley of splendid tall poplars. We loved watching and listened to them. Swaying in the wind, they would move gracefully and their leaves would murmur. The house was somewhat secluded from the noise and rush of the city. In the summer we spent sunset and evening hours sitting on the porch, talking.

My husband was writing the history of the 1939 campaign in Poland. I was in charge of the Polish Library and working in the Polish Institute. I also did some writing. As the 500th anniversary of Copernicus's birthday (1473) was approaching, I was asked by the Polish Institute to write a monograph on Copernicus, entitled *Copernicus and the Changing World*. Ten thousand copies were sold very fast, and it took two more editions to fill the orders from the Planetariums in Montreal and Toronto and other institutions. Laval University Press published it in French and sold a large number of copies to schools and so on. Today, ten years later, the Institute is still receiving orders for this monograph. Later I was invited by the *Polish Review* to write about Copernicus in Polish. I wrote a long essay, made up of fourteen sections, completely different from the English monograph in style and approach. The editor liked them very much - they were in a "lighter style" and very "readable", he said. He published them later as a small book. The writing of those monographs took nearly two years of my time!

We had now lived twenty years on Chesterfield Avenue, the longest time we had ever lived in a single place, in our married life. During the years I have lived in Montreal, the city changed enormously, and its rapid growth has been fascinating to watch. I still remember when the present C.N.R. station was built, while Bonaventure Station was replaced by the

modern Bonaventure Hotel and Plaza.

In 1940, the highest building in Montreal was the Sun Life Building, dominating the vast Dominion Square. Nearby stood the impressive Roman Catholic cathedral on Dorchester St. Its dome was a replica of Saint Peter's dome in Rome. The cathedral required open space for perspective. It was unfortunate that the high-rise Laurentian Hotel was built right after the war and dwarfed the imposing cathedral.

At the end of the war, the city had constructed many inexpensive houses for returning veterans. We saw the large rural areas adjoining Westmount to the west (like the Benny farm in Notre Dame de Grace) become large housing developments. Also to the north of the city, Ville St. Laurent was extended, and the big district of Park Extension arose. The entire city extended its limits substantially. Downtown, the presence of McGill campus, its buildings, tress and lawns enriched the city's landscape.

The government had passed a law granting veterans free university studies, and many seized the opportunity. The university constructed many new buildings to accommodate the swelling number of student veterans right after the war. Also, war veterans of older age were offered employment at McGill as maintenance personnel. They were exceptionally reliable and trustworthy. It was a pleasure to work with them. In our department, they took a liking to me, and helped me in every way, carrying books for me, adjusting shelves, moving furniture, transporting cartons of books, and so on. The Polish Institute had no money to employ technical personnel, so I did all the voluntary professional and physical work involved.

The rapid growth of Montreal during the '50s and '60s was spectacular. I saw the Fraser Institute and Library, founded in 1878 by Hugh Fraser, demolished in 1957, in order to widen University Street and to facilitate the construction of Place Ville Marie, a bold project which became the modern, underground shopping centre, and one of Montreal's enchanting places.

The old businessmen's St. James' Club, founded in 1857 and one of the first of its kind, was also a victim of the Place

Ville Marie development in 1960. Central Station, in the heart of the city, is now connected by underground passages that link the buildings for several blocks in all directions. Place Ville Marie, a large trade complex, became a magnificient shopping arcade when the builders decided to adorn its pedestrian tunnels with boutiques. These are extremely popular with the public, especially during the icy winters.

There is no other city in North America like Montreal! A city on the surface visible to all, and the other city hidden underground, where you can walk and shop, go to movies, theatres, or bars during stormy weather, when the city above is buried in snow.

The Queen Elizabeth Hotel and the big Bonaventure Plaza are also connected with Central Station and Place Ville Marie. The hidden city is bordered on the north and south by Metro stations. From them you can also get to Place des Arts, Montreal's cultural centre.

The growth of the city reached its peak before the great international exhibition, EXPO'67. The proliferation of galleries, shops and restaurants, the cleaning, tidying and remodelling of the old districts revitalized the city, which rose as if from a long sleep. I describe Expo'67 in the next chapter.

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One of our proudest moments during the sixties was the culmination of the Apollo space program, resulting in man's first landing on the moon on July 16, 1969. Our dear sons had presented us with a large Zenith television set, and we stayed glued to it watching with excitement the exploration of the universe. The names of John Glenn, Allan Sheppard, Walter Shirra and Neil Armstrong became so familiar and well-remembered.

EXPO'67

The great international exhibition in Montreal in 1967 was a most important event for the city as well as for all of Canada. It generated terrific excitement among the population and provided a stimulus to progress. An ex-diplomat, Pierre Dupuis, became Commissioner General of EXPO, and his executive assistant was my niece, Christine Romer. Robert Shaw, ex-President of Foundation Co., an extremely able man, became Deputy Commissioner.

The Mayor of Montreal, Jean Drapeau, was a man of great vision and talent, and had the ambition to transform Montreal into one of the great cities of the world. He achieved his goal with this gigantic project. Now, when Mayor Drapeau celebrates thirty years in office, he is honoured for giving Montreal a world-wide reputation. For EXPO, Montreal had to be rebuilt. Demolition and renovation projects were underway all over the city. The slums disappeared, and Old Montreal was rediscovered and recreated in its old-time style, with much artistic care. High-rise buildings and sky-scrapers mushroomed all over the city, completely changing its skyline. New hotels and parks arose. Many attractive places of entertainment and dining rooms appeared, where waiters and waitresses dressed in authentic costumes from Normandy served old French dishes.

Above all, the badly needed underground transportation system, the admirable aesthetic METRO, was constructed, using the new Parisian trains on pneumatic wheels.

Cultural facilities sprang up, reflecting the vigour of the city and its newly found pride in becoming an international arts centre. Place des Arts became the first stunning monument to the arts. It contains a splendid concert hall and artistic auditorium, two smaller theatres, a lovely circular foyer and halls adorned with modern paintings and murals.

Millions of visitors from all over the world poured into the city. It was an enormous success. Montreal had become a vibrant, cosmopolitan city.

The Mayor of Montreal is also remembered for his dignified

reply to Charles de Gaulle after the General's impulsive exclamation concerning Quebec. The Mayor reminded him that France wasn't around to help at the time of the English Conquest, and that for 200 years the French-Canadians had protected themselves without French assistance!

We were excited to have the world brought to our door-step. For $20 we bought the elegant "passports" which gave us unlimited admission, and we visited many times the exhibitions and the lovely grounds, situated on the specially built artifical island. We spent days and evenings there, enjoying the cool air from the river and admiring the bountiful flowers. There were many European and exotic boutiques where one could buy things unseen in Montreal. It was not expensive. We both derived a great amount of enjoyment from this grand achievement.

We had many guests, friends from all over, as well as Bob's friends from California. They were all very nice people, thrilled by the fair, the city and the warm welcome they received.

EXPO'67 proved to be an enormous success and a great achievement on an international scale. It has put Montreal on the map of the world.

CALIFORNIA

In the fall of 1967, our children arranged another wonderful surprise for us. They rented the house for six months in Los Altos Hills in California (a most beautiful part of Los Altos). We came to live there near them. Our daughter Eva and her husband Chris had just moved to Mexico City from Rome, and in the spring of 1968 they came to spend one month of their three month vacation with us in Los Altos. This was a blessing and one more love gift from Bob and Mathilde who arranged it. Eva was always her father's "little girl" - the same one he once left in Warsaw in 1939.

We had the oportunity to become closer to our grandchildren. I especially remember Tom, nearly 12 years old, playing "host" to us in a lovely, affectionate way, when Bob brought us from the airport. My granddaughter, Elisabeth, proudly showed me her school exhibit and her project about the Missions in California. It was an excellent paper and she explained the model so well that I learned much from it. Joanna, age seven, was engaged in "mathematics with fingers" with grandfather, and there was lots of teasing and laughing about it. Little Christina, about nine months old, was occasionally left with us in her playpen. She used to lie down quietly on the mattress and fall asleep after her afernoon bottle. In December, she made her first few steps alone on our patio.

Bob often came home for lunch from his office and always engaged his father in long conversations, which made my husband very happy. Not only because he had his son with him, but also because Bob showed so much interest in his life and experiences and in everything he told him about the history of the war.

After his father's death, in addition to his professional work as vice-president of an electronics company, he undertook the time-consuming and difficult task of editing his father's papers. He considered it very important that the truth about the war in Poland in 1939, which was so badly distorted by the Soviet and even the Western press, be properly presented and documented. Since my husband was the Chief of the General

Staff of the Polish Army from 1935 until the fall of Poland, his papers were of particular historical importance, as written by one of the principal "dramatis personae" of this era.

For over three years Bob worked on this project. He sacrificed his leisure time and many nights to accomplish the task. With great skill and knowledge of the subject he edited scores of manuscripts, notes and documents, some of them hardly legible, or written on scraps of paper during the war and afterwards.

They were published in two volumes in 1976 and 1979 by the prestigious "Kultura" publishing company in Paris. They were sold out and out of print in no time. Smuggled to Poland because of the many revelations they contained, they were copied by the underground press and widely circulated. These books are now used by historians in Poland for historical documentation of the Polish-German war in 1939. They had excellent reviews in England, France and America, and in Poland several magazines reprinted selected parts of both volumes. At the end of my life it makes me happy and proud of my son.

We enjoyed the company of our family and the beauty of California. We walked for hours amidst scented eucalyptus, magnolia and mimosa groves, admiring every flower, every tree, every stone, enjoying the ease of California life. The fierce Pacific Ocean sounding a haunting lure, the chirping of birds, the smiling casual countryside in bloom - all cast a magic spell. It is God's country, a fairy-land for the living!

We returned to Montreal feeling very grateful to our children for all their trouble in arranging such a wonderful stay for us. It was a happy event when our son-in-law Chris was stationed in Mexico for four years, since it was relatively near, and Eva could visit with us more often than from Italy. Quite often, when Chris was away on some inspection or business trip, she would come to Montreal, and this made us very happy. Chris was asked to serve as Counsellor for Cultural Affairs in the British Embassy in Mexico City, in addition to his duties in the British Council. Soon the Ambassador became fond of Chris and Eva, and appreciated Chris's work in the Embassy

very much. He asked Chris to leave the British Council and join the Embassy staff. Eva advised her husband against the move, because he was well along in his career in the British Council, and liked what he was doing.

The British Ambassador and his wife often came to the Hortons for dinner or tea. Later, in the letter of condolence which they wrote to me after Eva's death, they told me how highly they thought of her. "Her personality created in her home a refined setting of elegance and warmth", and in the society of celebrities in which they circulated she had made many friends. Chris confided to his father that he would not have made such rapid progress in his career without Eva's help.

When in Los Altos, Eva and Chris invited Til and Bob to come to Mexico City in the autumn, for the 1968 Olympic Games. They accepted and loved their visit. A particular highlight of their trip was when the two couples drove from Mexico City to Acapulco, stopping along the way in the interesting cities of Tasco and Guadalajara. Only once more would they be together before Eva's death. In the fall of 1975, Bob and Til travelled for a month in Egypt, and then went to Paris and London, on a combined business and vacation trip. They spent a week in London with Eva and Chris. "It was a wonderful visit", Til said, "and the four of us became very close friends".

OUR GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

Fifty years together and not for one day did we become bored with each other. Not many people can accomplish that. Writing about it now, all of our life comes back in a flash - a strange mixture of dreams and reality with the problems inherent in every life. Love, mutual trust and devotion to our children - that was the essence of our inner life. Memories and feelings are still there, subtle, intact, indestructible.

My husband loved nature and wild-life, and knew how to talk about it and arouse interest in it, by narrating exciting stories. He was very communicative, but even without words we were compatible. We both liked the same things.

I was always impressed by his knowledge and intelligence. Some of his convictions have become part of mine - and likewise with him. Our differences were, to some extent, our assets. His love of the beauty of God's creation was reflected in his warm, vivid personality. He was a man of hidden spiritual power and great charm. Women adored him. While I had an innate, more optimistic and balanced personality, he had an underlying wistfulness, but at the same time a great sense of humour.

In military life, my husband commanded respect, but everyone liked him. He was strict but just. He had a common touch with his subordinates and his colleagues. He was friendly, easy to talk to, but commanded great authority. It was his "humanness" which made him this way.

So we enjoyed a long and happy life together, and I think the secret was that we were both "givers", not "takers". I understood my husband's commitment to his work and his putting the interest of his country above self-interest.

I gave up my own career by choice, believing that my first duty was to try to be of help to the man I chose, and to bring up our children so that they would become fine individuals and worthy citizens of their country.

We endured the tragedy of war and the catastrophe thereafter. Even then, I tried to support the man I loved, and I helped him in whatever way I could. I did not crumble during the rough days. He was grateful for this and often told

me later how the calm atmosphere at home before the outbreak of war had helped him. I would have sacrificed everything to make him happy.

My greatest reward was when, after fifty-two years of life together, my husband, on his death-bed, said to the priest, in a trembling voice, "The best thing I ever did in my life was to marry my wife".

On our 50th wedding anniversary, my husband came to me with a clipping of a poem which he had seen in a magazine, entitled "To My Valentine". I loved it. Living through so much together has cemented our union.

Bob and Til came from California for our Golden Anniversary. Eva came from Mexico just before leaving for India, and Jul was there with his family. With all our children around us we celebrated quietly and affectionately in the family circle.

Someone asked me years before if I would change anything in my former life. After reflecting, my answer was no. True, I had gone through a lot of suffering and hardship, through which I learned much, and it made me strong, but I also experienced much happiness and emotion which enriched our life together.

These were the last "golden " days in our lives. Since Eva and Chris left for India, unhappiness started. Eva came twice from India, which she said was spectacular and mysterious, but very hard to take. She did not fit into the culture and the climate was appalling, except for the few months of winter. Soon her health deteriorated.

She had five or six servants, which she said was a nuisance, but customary for embassy personnel. The contrast between the surrounding poverty outside the embassy, and the life within, was dismaying. She liked her house and garden and the chipmunks she adopted and fed with an eye-dropper, when she found them orphaned under a tree. When they grew up, they would return, after she let them go free. She also liked the trips to spectacular Kashmir, and brought all of us lovely presents from there: souvenirs, tapestries and robes made by hand of the finest wool thread, very artistically embroidered. She was always very thoughtful in choosing her presents. I remember that when she arrived the first time from Mexico,

she had a whole small suitcase full of gifts for everyone. There was much loving thought and effort involved in choosing just the right gift for each person.

Eva was with us during August and part of September 1973. We stood on the steps together when she left to return to India and her father said, "I do not think I will see her again". This happened to be true. Later that month I drove him to the hospital, and he never returned home. Eva told me later that it was terribly painful not to be able to return for his funeral. "I loved papa so much" she said, "and he could not be at my wedding nor could I be at his funeral". I consoled her, telling her how much happiness she had given him all his life, and particularly this last month, on her visit with us, just a few weeks before his death.

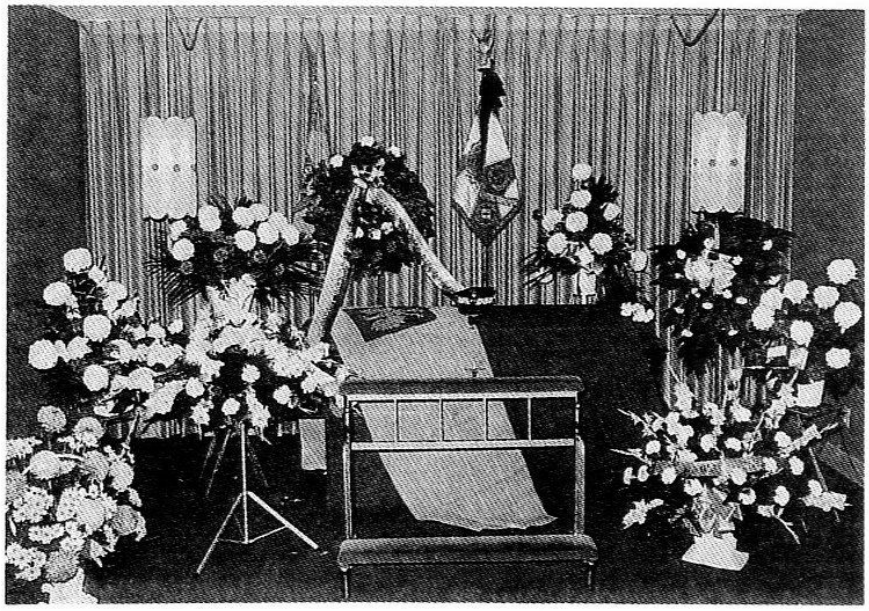
Bob came from California, as in 1953 after his father's first heart attack, and stayed with me at his father's bed-side, but this time, it was the end. Jul had installed a record player in his hospital room and played Beethoven's Seventh Symphony so that his father could sleep to the sound of his favourite music.

At 4:00 a.m. on November 12, 1973, the doctor called, asked me if I was alone, and when I said yes, he gave me the mournful news. His words were like physical blows from which I instinctively recoiled, "...Oh, no !..." My voice sounded hollow, and I felt dead inside. It was as if life itself had stopped. Nothing has ever been the same since.

Our sons organized an impressive Requiem Mass for their father. They themselves prepared an artistic arrangement of the church flowers, the Polish flag over the casket, military decorations, prayers he especially liked, and music he loved. Bob carried his ashes to the grave in St. Adele, where he was buried amidst the beauty of nature, in a mountainous country cemetery.

Bob took me back with him to California, and I cling to him and his family with all the affection that is left in me.

I have a very dear and close relationship with Bob's wife and children, who are exceptionally good to me, which touches me deeply. I understand their approach to life, and I try to be in touch with the ways of the young.



Papa's casket

Memorial plaque in the Church of the Holy Cross in Warsaw

Then came the nightmare of Jul's tragic death. He was attending a Dean's Conference in Banff in the Canadian Rockies. Before the meeting, which was to start at nine o'clock, he climbed a mountain with his camera at sunrise. He never returned and was found unconscious on the slopes.

I enclose a few pages which show my son's scholarly achievements. He died tragically in 1976. His contributions to the Canadian scientific community were acknowledged in 1978 when the Canadian Society for Mechanical Engineering created the Canadian Heat Transfer Medal, which bears his name, and awarded the first one to him posthumously.

McGill honoured his memory by accepting the recommendation of the faculty of the Department of Mechanical Engineering to dedicate a "Prof. J.W. Stachiewicz Faculty Lounge" in the Engineering Building, and to place his portrait in it.

Family and friends have also established a Prof. J. W. Stachiewicz Memorial Prize, which is awarded each year to a student in the Department of Mechanical Engineering who demonstrates unusual dedication and effort in his work.

Eva came from London for his funeral in June 1976, and was quietly efficient as always, substituting for me all the way. Eight months later, suddenly, she was no more.

To lose a child does something irreparable to you. It is part of you that is gone. You have no tears, you are stunned and numb. In my head, my whirling thoughts pounded in my brain, and slowly I started praying. We call it death, but to them it is life beyond. We have to establish a new, spiritual relationship. Some inside power lifted my spirit and I felt their presence. I could perform the necessary mechanics of living which followed these tragic moments.

In St. Adele, my beloved ones repose under the loving care of Kristina Romer, my closest cousin. She is close to us in spirit, and she loves us. Her presence and her compassion are a great support in these last sad years. Kristina is a noble, poetic soul. Her charm and warm, rare goodness endear her to everyone who crosses her path. Her husband Red helps me with advice and does many things for me which I could never do myself. He also carved an artistic casket for Eva's ashes and looks after

The Canadian Society for Chemical Engineering and The Canadian Society for Mechanical Engineering

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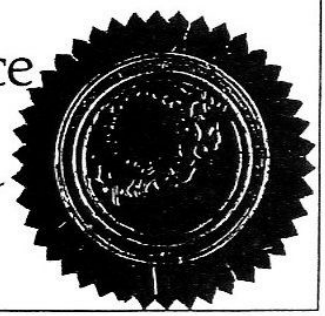

the flowers in the cemetery.

Their family is a living example of how much can be accomplished when one has a goal in life and works hard with dedication to achieve it. They arrived in 1948 from a displaced persons' camp in Germany, a family of eight, five children without funds or connections or knowledge of the language - a grim prognosis. Red, who held a Masters' degree in Civil Engineering, looked frantically for work. After a rigorous interview, he was lucky, and got a job with the Foundation Co. of Canada, being sent to Iroquois Falls in the far north at a minimal salary. He started at the bottom of the ladder, but he soon established his place in the company, and moved up to become the chief estimator and manager of various projects for power plants: the St. Lawrence Seaway; Asbestos Hill; artistic development; New Line; nuclear power; Candu reactors; to name a few. When Expo'67 needed an overall estimate of professional work, he handled projects in the ten Provinces of Canada. On his retirement, he was praised by the company and honoured as a Life Member of the Ordre des Ingenieurs du Quebec.

Meanwhile, in St. Adele Kristina had to cope alone with six children and all the household duties. Her creativity and efficiency at home helped greatly to pull them through the lean years.

Before their arrrival, I pleaded with the Sacred Heart Convent to accept their daughters on special terms, although the war was now over. Later, each of the youngsters stayed with us at Chesterfield Avenue while attending college, which endeared them to us. I love all of them dearly, each in a special way, and they reward me generously with their help and attention, showing me their love now that I am old and alone.

All of them have become very successful in their chosen careers. The oldest, brilliant Christina, went through different assignments, starting at EXPO as personal assistant to the President of the Exhibition, then working in Paris for several years. Presently, she is managing director for the famous fashion designer, Yves St. Laurent of Paris, opening boutiques for him all over Canada. She is married to Scott Griffin, a wealthy Canadian businessman. They have a five-year-old

daughter, born in California while they were mountain climbing on a bird-watching expedition.

Her younger sister, Maya, is a practising doctor of psychiatry, mother of four, and married to a successful lawyer, Peter Blaikie, Q.C., who has embarked on a political career, becoming President of the Conservative Party in Canada.

The youngest daughter, Marika, is a very efficient real estate broker. The three sons are also doing well. They are very practical and sports-minded. George is manager of a computer business, and in winter, ski director for the Laurentians. Ted, an artistic photographer, recently opened an elegant studio, "La Maison d'Images", in Montreal, and has sold many of his exhibits. The youngest, Mark, has scientific preferences and is pursuing postgraduate studies in biology.

During the past few years, I have spent several winter months with my cousin Leszek and his loving wife, at their home in Florida. They have always welcomed me graciously, and their love and warmth comfort me. Leszek is a colourful "character", very personable, and a social charmer. From early youth, he was a restless young man. I would say that he had the "call of the wild" and lived under its spell. Yet, he reluctantly accepted the will of his strict father, and earned a degree from a prestigious technical school, equivalent to the American M.I.T. A week after graduation he enlisted with a friend as a deck-hand on a ship going to Brazil, in the style of Joseph Conrad. He spent the next two years in the forbidding interior of Brazil, in Parana and Rio la Plata, living with the natives in the jungle.

After the war, in which he took part, he settled here, with his wife and daughter, worked for several years as an engineer, and started his own business, in which his wife greatly helped him to prosper. After earning enough money, they bought a magnificient gentleman's farm called Pleasant View, near a lake.

After retirement, they moved to Florida. He has travelled around the world and can entertain endlessly about his fascinating experiences. His library is full of interesting books on adventure, on exploration and the spirit of men who live by it.

MY GRANDCHILDREN

God has blessed me with eight grandchildren, of whom only six are still alive.

Jul and Halina had four daughters. The oldest, Anna, my first grandchild, whom I loved very dearly, died of leukemia at the age of eight. Despite the many years that have passed, she always has a special place in my memory. Barbara, graduated in foreign languages from McGill, married, and presented us with an adorable great-grandson. Renata earned a Master's degree in Library Science, also from McGill. Now married, she is employed by the Library of the Town of Mount Royal. Her work is often mentioned in the TMR press. The youngest, Bettina, was a lovely nature-loving girl, efficient and enterprising. She would have achieved great things in her life, but she was taken from us one terrible evening in November 1985, when she was struck by a car driven by a young boy. It is too difficult for me to write about this tragedy. She will always live in my heart.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his chosen" (Ps. 116).

Bob and Mathilde's four children are also my pride and joy. The oldest, Tom, graduated in Computer Science and now has his own company. Elisabeth earned an M.B.A. degree, married, and is now an executive in a bank. Joanna has achieved the goal of her life: to be a teacher. She is now completing a Master's degree in Special Education and teaches in a private school. She is very happy in her work. Kristina has just entered the university and she enjoys her new-found freedom! Although she takes her studies seriously and is an excellent student, she enjoys a variety of sports and has many friends.

When I come to visit my son and daughter-in-law in the winter, the whole family showers me with affection and love.

POLAND REVISITED

After Stalin's death, Krushchev's denunciation of Stalin's crimes, and the "quiet revolution" of workers in Poland in 1956, the situation improved a little and one could, from time to time, obtain a visa to travel to Poland.

In the summer of 1974, I went to Poland with my daughter Eva. Visiting your country after thirty-five years is a trying experience, and it was really gratifying and rewarding to me to see how deeply Eva was impressed, discovering, with my help, her country, which she did not remember. She told me that this trip enabled her to find her roots and filled her with pride in her heritage. Walking through 14th century Krakow, a jewel of a city where each stone has a story to tell of times of glory gone by; where Gothic art competes with the brilliant Renaissance, she absorbed the spirit of the nation. It made us both happy. Eva said she would like to bring her English husband to Poland, to show him her native land.

After our visit to Krakow, we went to Warsaw. On the way from the airport, I saw a new Warsaw, a modern city like any other big city in the West, with unusually wide streets and avenues constructed over the rubble of destroyed homes - a city I did not know. Only when we reached the old town was I at home, and my heart started pounding.

Revisiting Warsaw was a very emotional event for me, as I had lived there for many happy and eventful years. My dear brother and his wife still lived there. He married his pretty pre-war sweetheart on his return from the war.

After crushing the uprising by the Polish Home Army in 1944, the Germans placed dynamite throughout the city and especially under palaces or buildings that were dear to the hearts and minds of the Polish nation. They ordered the population to leave the city on foot and proceeded to destroy what remained of it. It was only when the city lay in total ruins that the Russian army, which for three months had stood across the river watching the destruction and refusing to help, moved in.

The complete rebuilding of Warsaw is almost a miracle. It

was accomplished by the strong will and sacrifices of the entire nation. The restoration of the "Old Warsaw" section of the city was made possible by many hours of work contributed freely by special craftsmen, and by the artistry of those who re-created the architecture on the basis of preserved documents and old pictures. Old Warsaw was rebuilt in the old style, and around it arose a new Warsaw, spacious and modern, but very much changed.

I tried to find some traces of my past life and above all of the houses in which I had lived and the places I remembered. The old Saxon Palace housing the General Staff of the Army in which we had lived from 1935-39 did not exist anymore. Only the public park behind it bore witness to its former grandeur and beauty.

I spent a day wandering through the city to find the remnants of our first house where we lived in 1928, a modest cottage adjoining a public park. Tired, I had nearly given up when, pushing away the brush, I saw a fragment of an old stone fence behind which our little sons used to play in a sandpile.

I returned to Poland several times in the seventies. I spent one summer with my brother, a former general of the pre-war Polish Army, on the coast of the Baltic Sea, where "Solidarity" was later born. And, in 1976, I returned to bury him. He was so much loved and respected by his former subordinates and by the people that his funeral became a national manifestation, partly to emphasize the fact that he was an officer of the pre-war Polish Army which was cherished by the people.

At the celebration of the solemn Requiem Mass in Warsaw Cathedral, the venerated Primate of Poland, Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski (Vishinski) delivered a marvellous eulogy.

Followed by thousands of mourners, my brother's casket was carried through the city to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. This was the honour accorded by the nation to one of its heroes. Representatives of the Communist government of Poland did not take part.

The Poland of the 1970s, when the idea of "Solidarity" was germinating, was a nation of high spirits, deep feelings, packed churches, with flowers everywhere. The feeling of freedom

was in the air. An intense underground effort was being expressed in writing, and printing, and in teaching the youngsters true history, and so on.

It was evident that a great upheaval was coming. This erupted in full force in 1980, when once again the people of Poland challenged their oppressors.

INDEPENDENT LABOUR UNION "SOLIDARITY"

In 1980, the entire world witnessed an unprecedented and significant phenomenon in Poland - the birth within the Communist empire of the independent labour union "Solidarity". Since the seventies, the people of Poland have struggled to achieve some degree of freedom from exploitation, poverty and the atmosphere of falsehood and lies in which they have had to live. The movement swept through Poland like wildfire, uniting nearly ten million members, a third of the entire population. Many Communist party members joined Solidarity! It was led by a bold electrician from a shipyard in Gdansk-Lech Walesa (pron. Vawensa). One of the awards recently given to Walesa states: "Few sought freedom for their people with as much wisdom and integrity".*

Unfortunately, not many people in the Western world realize the tremendous impact of Solidarity upon both the Communist and non-Communist world. The greatness of Solidarity as a social movement lies in the field of social psychology. Soviet propaganda has always proclaimed that Communism creates a "workers' paradise", and that the Communist regime results in a true "dictatorship of the proletariat".

In two short years, the workers of Poland have exposed to the world the true face of Communism and the falsity of its propaganda. For the first time in history it was the workers in a Communist-dominated country who had the courage to oppose the government and the Party and to demand reforms. It was the workers who forced the government to sign agreements, later ratified by the Polish Parliament, and upheld by the Supreme Court, which granted Solidarity autonomy and most of its demands. It demoralized the ruling Communist Party and forced it to pay attention to the grievances of the people. The great leader of this trade union, Lech Walesa, accomplished all this legally, within the framework of the constitution, without violence, and through negotiations.

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* Shelby Davis Award, Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington D.C., November 1982.

But the Kremlin could not remain idle in the face of this vivid example of the bankruptcy of the Communist system. On December 13, 1981, in this "workers' paradise", the government acted against the workers. The entire world was shocked by the brutal imposition of martial law in Poland. The puppet regime had to resort to such vile action to save itself and to crush the trade union "SOLIDARITY".

The leaders of Solidarity, including Lech Walesa, were taken at night from their homes, arrested and held without charge for over a year. Blood flowed in the mines of Silesia, where Communist ZOMO units fired upon defenceless miners. All legally binding agreements with Solidarity were unilaterally abrogated, and the union was "outlawed". All that the workers had accomplished peacefully, legally, and without violence, was overthrown in bloodshed and illegal acts, under the smokescreen of martial law. The Communist regime was destroying its own workers, while Communist doctrine proclaimed the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat".

In the West, and especially in the U.S.A., Communist sources spread the belief that Solidarity had gone too far in its demands for more freedom and forced the government to act. This is not true. Overwhelming evidence exists that the suppression of Solidarity was planned as early as six months before December 13. Lists of those to be arrested were prepared in early autumn. December was selected because severe winter weather would make demonstrations more difficult and would make it easier for the state militia to control the crowds, through the use of water-cannon, tear-gas, and so on.

Canadian trade unions generally supported Solidarity. In several instances they joined the Polish groups with placards in demonstrations, but political and trade considerations, together with much misunderstanding of what was really happening, muted the official reaction.

Solidarity ceased to exist, but only on the surface. The attempt of the Polish nation to gain a measure of freedom, through legal means, was crushed. But Solidarity lives and functions underground.

Following the tragedy of Solidarity, we experienced in

Canada an influx of new immigrants from Poland. The Canadian government adopted a very generous program to sponsor several thousand of them and provide for their settlement in Canada.

The Polish Institute Library became a popular centre for the new immigrants. It gives them a feeling of home, provides them with good reading material and, by way of lectures and meetings with Canadians, helps them adjust to new conditions of life and to integrate into the Canadian community. In doing this, the Polish Institute and Library performs a kind of pioneering task. One would be amazed to notice that many of these newcomers, home-sick for their country, feel at ease, if not happy. The government's support gives them security, and they enjoy freedom wholeheartedly. They say: "I can sleep at night, nobody will knock at my door to take me away!"

THE "POLISH" POPE JOHN PAUL II

On October 14, 1978, the Polish community in Canada reacted enthusiastcally to the news that the Cardinal Archbishop of Krakow had been elected Pope, after 450 years of Italian Pontiffs. The significance of this event and its ramifications for the future of the Church are enormous.

Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, who assumed the name of John Paul II, is a brilliant man. His personality reflects a superior intellect and a profound spirituality.

Today, five years after his election, the entire world acclaims his moral authority, and his pontificate is a major source of moderation and inspiration in a divided world. The load of work he has assumed is enormous, greater than any Pope has ever performed. Outside the routine day, he spends every Sunday afternoon in one of Rome's parish churches. After mass, he meets with parishioners, youth groups, choir members, parish councillors and plain people, with whom he chats informally.

The Italian country folk cherish him. The little man in the street and the blue-collar workers in the Vatican love him, and would do anything for him. They say: "This is a man who underestands us. He talks to us like equals". All who meet him live under his spell.

Cardinal Karol Wojtyla visited Montreal in 1969. He took part in many activities organized in his honour by Canadians and by the local Polish community. He was then a young-looking athletic man of great charm. His presence in Montreal also touched my life.

He visited the Polish Institute at McGill, showed great interest in how the institution was working, and expressed the wish to be shown through the Library, while all the time asking questions, patiently listening to answers and discussing problems. This informal and constructive way of handling his visit was extremely stimulating to our entire staff.

I will always cherish the memory of this visit, because of one particular incident. When looking through the books, the Cardinal singled out two large, artistically bound volumes

which contained a commemorative joint work honouring my late father, a historian and author of many books on the origins of the church in Poland and Ruthenia. The Cardinal took the volumes from the shelves and wrote an inspiring dedication on them to the memory of "the great scholar" - my father. I met with Cardinal Wojtyla several times and talked with him.

When I was in Krakow in 1975, I called on the Archbishop's secretary, Msgr. Dziwisz, and Cardinal Wojtyla received me the same evening, after working hours. It was a long, informal visit, and I spent nearly two hours conversing with him. I learned about one of his main concerns: he believes that recognition of and respect for the dignity of man would heal the ills of the present world and bring peace closer.

It grew late, the gates of the residence were closed, and in a very informal way the Cardinal asked me where I was staying in Krakow. Hearing my answer, he said: "I will let you out through my garden exit, it touches on your street", and he called his young assistant priest to accompany me.

I met him again at Harvard University, where I travelled in 1976 to attend the lectures on philosophy which he was delivering at the invitation of the university.

When we arrived at the lecture hall, expecting to see the small number of people who would be interested in attending such a highly specialized lecture, we found to our delight that the large auditorium was packed with students, professors, teaching staff from other faculties, and the general public. The Cardinal, accompanied by university officials, entered and acted in a very informal way. He delivered the lecture in good English. Those present said his accent had a special charm. The audience reacted with enthusiasm to the inspiring way in which he conveyed his thoughts and stressed the eternal quest for the spiritual dimensions of life.

This happened shortly after the death of my son Jul, and the Cardinal spontaneously came to me and expressed his sympathy. Then he said: "You probably wish that there could be a notice of your son's death in the Polish press. On my return to Krakow I will see the editor of the *Weekly Review* (the only Catholic paper which has a permit to publish), and a notice

will appear".

Only people familiar with censorship behind the Iron Curtain could understand what this oral message meant to me. To be able to put a regular paid obituary in the daily press requires an official permit, and, for me, this would have been impossible. The Cardinal kept his word.

Two years later, in October 1978, this man of vast experience from a faraway land was elected Pope, and assumed the name of John Paul II. Three years later the world was shocked by the attempt on his life. According to the Italian court, the Bulgarian Intelligence Service, which is directed by the Soviet Secret Police (KGB) was involved. Obviously, this Pope who commands no troops represents a threat to the Soviets, and the objective was to eliminate his influence in the world.

The electrifying leadership of John Paul II revitalized the Eastern Churches, suppressed under Soviet domination. With his encouragement the churches of Lithuania, Latvia and the Ukraine were strengthened and began to gain ground. Understandably, this was threatening the whole Western part of the Soviet empire.

The world was also astounded by the way John Paul II reacted to the attempt and towards his would-be assassin. He personally went to visit the man in prison and granted him forgiveness.

In September 1984, John Paul II came again to Canada. I conceived the daring idea of soliciting the Pope's presence at an inter-university meeting at McGill University, at the invitation of the Polish Institute. I was told to apply first to the Montreal Church hierarchy - alas, this was not possible, because the Pope's visit was too short.

However, when his itinerary was published, I noticed that he would drive to St. Joseph's Oratory along Peel Street, where the Polish Institute is located, and I decided to act through personal channels! I wrote a hasty letter to the Pope's personal secretary, Msgr. S. Dziwisz, which was delivered to the Archbishop's residence the night they arrived, asking him to bring to the attention of the Pope that on the steps of the head office of the Polish Institute, decorated with flags, the entire

Board would be gathered, awaiting his passage and benediction. And it worked!

John Paul II turned and blessed us and our work! It was like a magnetic touch, which had a mystic hold on us. We were all deeply moved and solemn at that moment. We deeply believe in the leadership of John Paul II, because of his spiritual qualities. His visit to Canada gave a great moral uplift to the population and left an indelible imprint on the nation. This was reflected in the growing excitement with which the media acted in presenting it to the public.

THE 40th ANNIVERSARY OF THE POLISH INSTITUTE

On May 3rd, 1983, the Polish Institute celebrated its 40th anniversary. Dr. Robert Bell and Dr. David Johnston both took an active part in the celebration. Their remarks and their friendly attitude indicate that they acknowledge and appreciate the contribution of the Polish Institute to McGill University. Dr. Johnston graciously agreed to sponsor the celebration and gave a luncheon at the Faculty Club for the Board of the Institute, McGill faculty, and guests.

Professor C. Milosz, the 1980 Nobel Prize winner for literature from the University of California, Berkeley, cordially accepted our invitation to be the guest speaker at the celebration. Welcoming Mr. Milosz and the Board of the Institute at the luncheon, Dr. Johnston delivered the following remarks:

> Mr. Milosz, Mrs. Stachiewicz, distinguished guests:
>
> A university by its nature embraces all cultures. McGill and Polish culture and traditions have had a long and fruitful relationship.
>
> I will not now discuss all the distinguished Poles who served this university, and who contributed their energy and ability to its scholarly endeavours and who trained generations of McGill graduates, save to note that they have been greatly appreciated by the McGill community. The founding of the Polish Institute opened a new and significant period of Poland's presence at McGill and this is what I have come to discuss and to celebrate.
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> In 1943, a group of Polish exiles from Nazi oppression decided to establish an institute for Polish culture, first in New York, then in Montreal at McGill. Of this group, I see around the table Mrs. Stachiewicz, whose tireless effort is still a major moving force at the Institute and Mr. Brzezinski - diplomat, lawyer and man of culture, whose son, a McGill graduate, was to be such an important figure both academically and politically in the West.
>
> Most of the founders then considered themselves temporary exiles. The Institute was to preserve Polish culture

for a brief period of war and most of its activists fully expected to return to a democratic Poland within relatively few years.

This did not happen. I shall not now analyze the political events in Poland from 1944 on, save to say this. A few Polish exiles did return home; most chose to remain in the West and to espouse the West's concept of individual freedom, which such Poles as Kosciuszko had helped shape in earlier days. The Institute was transformed from a relatively temporary phenomenon into a permanent organization.

One of its most extraordinary achievements was the creation of a Polish Library. All people connected with universities have an idea of the cost and the difficulty of putting together a respectable collection of books.

The Polish Institute was always short of funds as such organizations tend to be. Yet zeal can at times overcome shortage of money, and the Institute's volunteers succeeded against all odds in creating a Polish Library unique in Canada, which McGill is proud to house and to use.

The Library was important but was by no means the only project. Meetings, lectures, concerts, cultural evenings were organized to promote Polish culture at McGill, in Quebec and in Canada. Most of these succeeded, and enriched both Polish culture and that of English and French Canada.

McGill was at all times the host of the Institute. Under the patronage of my predecessors, Dr. James, Dr. Robertson and Dr. Bell, the Institute became an integral part of McGill. The governments of Quebec and Canada also recognized the value of the Institute and helped financially and morally. For this both the Institute and McGill are grateful.

I have just learned that today, May 3rd, is the Polish National Day, the anniversary of the first democratic constitution in Poland and in Europe, voted on May 3rd 1791, before the French Constitution of July.

Poland is now much in the news. Its traditional role as the fighter for freedom has been reinforced in all our minds, and the gallantry, the romanticism, the courage which we associated with Poland have been proved again to be qualities implicit in Poland's traditions. What better way to celebrate the Institute's 40th anniversary than to host one of the men who best symbolizes Poland's culture to the world - Mr. Czeslaw Milosz, winner of the 1980 Nobel Prize for literature. I understand that this is your first visit to McGill and I welcome you on behalf of our entire academic community.

McGill is especially related to the English and French cultures which surround it. You, too, have shared it then, and your connections with French and English are well known and recognized. Of how many new English poets can we say that they wrote poems about Swift and Shakespeare? How many have been such frequent sojourners in the United States and France?

On this welcoming note, I shall end. This is a festive occasion for McGill, one which Dr. Frost as McGill's historian will not fail to record. We celebrate forty years of a major and important institute, forty years of the active presence of Polish culture among us. We welcome a great man to our university. Of all of this, McGill is proud. We look forward to the next forty years of the Institute's work.

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POSTSCRIPT

Looking back on my life, I can distinctly see a thread of logic and continuity. Perhaps it is the creative spirit of life itself which has kept me going till now and enabled me to live through these last years. Man is a very complicated being. It always amazes me that I am what I am! I am a world of my own, I exist in my uniqueness as a distinctive individual person, and so does everybody else. Doesn't it border on a miracle?

I still feel the stream of life flowing through me. I feel I am a link in the chain which started millions of years ago. I can still think clearly, and I thank God every day and night for keeping my mind sound and alert. I think that it is not the passage of time that ages you as much as the way you cope with it.

I have lived a very rich and full life. I have met many remarkable people, world leaders, fascinating personalities. I have witnessed the advent of a profusion of scientific discoveries and new ideas: man on the moon, the inventions of radio, television and jet aircraft, and the revolution brought about by communications satellites, computers, and genetic engineering.

The distance I have covered culturally in my lifetime often astonishes and sometimes frightens me. I have lived abroad a great deal of my adult life, and had the opportunity to measure our way of life against that of others. I have had to integrate into another culture in the New World. I remain attached to Europe, but I see the good side of this continent. It brings new elements of freshness, inventiveness and dynamism; it is also daring and creative. Humans are its greatest resource, more valuable than oil, coal, or gold. People from every part of the world brought their talent, skills, knowledge and pioneering spirit here. They all believed in something larger than their former lives - it was like an ascending arch.

The integration into a new culture was not easy for me. You belong to the culture in which you are born and in which you

are raised. You can try to deviate from it, but cannot renounce it, because it becomes the basic element of your ego, its most intimate set of values grown deep into yourself.

Poland's culture is a fusion of Mediterranean and Latin culture, with some elements of old Slavic beliefs, enriched by the heterogeneous elements of the various nations inhabiting its Eastern borders, among them Armenians, Ukrainians, Hutzules, Carpathian mountaineers, Wallachians (old Roumanians) and Germans. It forms a common bond with the interhuman culture.

It is hard to explain the subtleties of the soul and spirit of the Slavic intellectual or artist. Along with the classical characteristics of endurance, heroism (also, too strong an individualism) and loyalty, all shades of longing and sorrow permeate his psychology. Poles are deeply committed to the serious problems of personal and above all national life. Do not expect them to have fun easily or to laugh when more carefree people laugh.

I think my son Bob is an example of this broad, pluralistic heritage. Although he left his country as a boy of fourteen, he is attached to his roots.

I lived through two cataclysmic wars which have forever changed the world and the lives of all people. I have seen the old world die and a new world emerge. I never retired. The newness and the changes fascinate me. I am always ready to learn.

War forced me to leave my country and settle in Canada. I will never forget my native land, and since I cannot return there, I will always be grateful and faithful to Canada for having given me and my children an opportunity to work and live in freedom and peace.

Mrs. Wanda Stachiewicz founder and long time director of the Polish Library at McGill University and her staff

The Polish Library, Montreal 1968

I wish to make a grateful acknowledgement to my son Bogdan for his valuable advice and help in taking care of the technical details of this work. To him I am indebted more than words can say. To the Herbert Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, California, and in particular to Dr. Richard Staar and Dr. W. Zalewski, who kindly put at my disposal the collection and documents relating to the period. Also to Mr. J. Kladko and Mrs. H. Kukk for their kind assistance. To the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada for many years of hard work together in harmonious cooperation, trust and friendship, and to journalist Mrs. Anna Lubicz Luba M.A., member of the Institute, for her devoted help.

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The views expressed in this work are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Government of Canada.

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