

# Never Far From Eagle Tail Hill

A brief history of the Romanian pioneers  
who settled in east-central Alberta  
at the turn of the twentieth century.



A TYPICAL ROMANIAN PIONEER HOME

MICHAEL G. TOMA

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## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .....	iv
Dedication .....	v
Preface .....	vi
Introduction .....	vii
Their Arrival .....	viii
Family Histories .....	1
Community Institutions .....	103
Customs and Traditions .....	124
A Bit of Romanian .....	139
Aşa A Fost (Thus it was) .....	147
Conclusion .....	166
Sources of Information .....	167

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M. G. Toma



## Dedication

This book is dedicated to all those hardy pioneers who came from Brian Bukovina area, more than eighty-five years ago and settled in the vicinity of Eagle Tail Hill, about eighty miles north-east of Edmonton. The majority of these settlers were Romanians who brought with them their language, religion and culture to their new and adopted country. Like so many other homesteaders, they endured untold hardships and numerous frustrations, but managed to build homes, to break and cultivate the virgin soil and to raise large families. Although nearly all the original pioneers are now deceased, the author hopes that their memory will live on through their descendants and through this publication.

Constantine Tkachuk!

## PREFACE

In Western Canada there are more than fifty ethnic groups contributing to its cultural mosaic. Although many of these communities have published articles and books detailing their beliefs and activities, little has been written concerning the Romanians. It was this realization that prompted Mike Toma to write this book.

Mike was born to Romanian parents in Boian, Alberta. Living the customs and traditions through his heritage and investing countless hours researching material, qualify him as an author worthy of this project. Mihai (Michael) was the seventh child of Maria and George T. Toma. He completed public school at Boian and proceeded to Willingdon High School completing Grade XII in 1934. Following his father's advice he enrolled in the Edmonton Normal School in 1935 and graduated the next spring with a First Class Teacher's Certificate. After five years of teaching he returned to the University of Alberta graduating four years later with B.A. and B. Ed. degrees. This enabled

him to teach in rural and urban schools. Upon retirement he began collecting information for this publication.

NEVER FAR FROM EAGLE TAIL HILL portrays to some extent the social, economic and religious life of the Romanian families who homesteaded in the Boian area at the turn of the twentieth century. The accumulation of information for this book necessitated hours of research, since most of the descendants of the original pioneers moved away. Nearly all the names of the first homesteaders are included herein.

The author hopes that his work will resurrect many fond memories in his readers and in addition provide some insight and information to those interested in the history of the Romanian community in east-central Alberta.

Valeriu Apan  
Musicologist

## Introduction

Nearly all the Romanian families who settled in the vicinity of Eagle Tail Hill north and east of present day Willingdon, came from the province of Bukovina which at that time formed part of the powerful Austro-Hungarian Empire ruled by the Hapsburgs. After World War I, the boundaries shifted and Bukovina along with Bessarabia were incorporated into Romania. However, following World War II, northern Bukovina became part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, while Bessarabia formed the greater part of the Republic of Moldavia.

At the turn of the twentieth century the population of Bukovina numbered about 800,000 people of which 31% were Romanians. Boian itself was totally Romanian but the neighboring villages of Rarancha, Sadagura, Chahor, Mahala, Molodija and Toporoutz also had many Romanian families. The population was

increasing annually but the land supply was limited and had already been divided and re-divided from generation to generation. A point had been reached where it was impossible to sub-divide further. Seventy-five per cent of the peasants owned less than an acre of land. Others had none. To earn a living or supplement their income from the land, many worked for the boyars (landowners) for low wages. Some borrowed money at very high interest rates, sometimes at rates as high as fifty to one hundred per cent. How could such loans ever be repaid? With no industrialization of any kind there were no jobs for the youth. When the young men were of military age they were compelled to do military service. To escape such a future and at the same time enjoy a more adventurous life many Romanian families decided to emigrate to Canada.

## Their Arrival in Alberta

"La Canada! La Canada!" (to Canada) answered Metro, a young lad of nine, when asked where the family was going. He and his mother were filling some buckets with water at the village well in Boian, Bukovina, in March 1899. Metro had heard his people talking about a far away land called Canada. His parents had decided to leave their home and emigrate. Preparations were well underway for departure.

The land and railroad agents from Canada had done their work well. They had visited Cernauți and had painted glowing pictures of the New World. Word had filtered down to the villages including Boian. The inhabitants began discussing the disadvantages and advantages of making such a major move. Some said that "Cîine umble cu colaci pe coadă. Și nuceli așa sînt de mare că poți și le arunci în pod cu furca". (The dogs run around with bread rings on their tails. The walnuts are so large that you can pitch them into the hayloft by the forkful). The advantages outweighed the disadvantages and many decided to emigrate.

The first Romanian settlers in east-central Alberta were Ichim Yurko, his wife Iftinca, their four-year-old daughter Ioana and Elie Ravliuk. They arrived in Alberta in 1898 and spent the first winter in a bordei (covered dug-out) near present day Andrew. It was a miserable lonely time, made more so by the death of the Yurko's only child. Ioana and Ravliuk wrote home and encouraged others to come.

The first group, consisting of about a dozen families, arrived the following year in March. Two months later the Tomas arrived with a larger group including

Metro's family and disembarked in Strathcona, the end of the railroad. Petre who had come earlier was there to meet them and began scolding the new arrivals.

"Why did you come?" he asked. "There is nothing but bush, water and wilderness here. How do you expect to keep alive?"

Another man told him bluntly, "Keep your mouth shut. Your father-in-law is here, too!"

"What!" exclaimed Petre, "the old bushy-haired one came too!"

Two of the women began crying. A few of the more cool-headed men calmed the disturbance and the entire group made its way to the immigration hall.

These pioneers had taken along with them what they could and what they thought they would need. They had transported boxes, bags and trunks. Of course they were all dressed in their native garb and took what other articles of clothing they owned. The women had blankets, tapestries, bolts of cloth, vegetable and flower seeds. The more resourceful ones had dried potato peels and stored them in bags. This lowly vegetable was to prove a godsend when planted in the virgin Alberta soil. The men brought sickles, scythes, axes and the few carpenters among them had their complete sets of tools. One of them had even brought a small wooden plough. Few, if any, had money and no one spoke English. But they had courage, most were young and were doggedly determined to succeed in this new environment. The story of their successes and failures is told in the following chapter.

# Family Histories

## Axani, Floria and Domnica

Floria Axani was born on March 14, 1885 in the village of Mahala, the eldest of five children in the Tanas and Anița Axani family. As a child he attended the village school and completed grade six. For a few years he worked for the boyars (landlords) but the exciting news about land in Canada convinced him to leave his home at eighteen years of age and emigrate to Canada.

Once in the New World he worked in the eastern provinces but eventually he arrived in southern Alberta where he worked in the mines with friends from back home. Labor was unbearable drudgery in hazardous and unsanitary conditions. Floria often worked on his knees with pick and shovel in cramped quarters where it was cold and wet. For this he was

to pay dearly later on. When he reached middle age he suffered at times excruciating pains so great that he spent one summer in bed unable to get up and enjoy the outdoors. To cure himself or at least to alleviate his suffering, Floria visited doctors but in the end he resorted to old-fashioned home remedies. Nothing actually helped him because he was chronically ill till the day he died.

To return to his mining days, Floria worked till he accumulated enough money to start another career. He quit mining, journeyed north to Boian and settled on a homestead. There he built a small house, then began the big task of clearing the land of trees and rocks.

In 1913 Floria married Domnica Yurko, daughter of Nazarie and Acsenia Yurko. His bride was born in



**The Axani Family**

Family picture: (taken in 1951)

Back row: L. to rt.  
Constantine, George, Metro,  
Arthur, John, Ted, Steve.  
Seated left to rt.: Mike,  
Anne, Eleanor, Floria and  
Domnica, Nestor, Sarah,  
Bill.



Boian, Bucovina in 1895 and was only four years old when she came to Canada with her parents. The young newlyweds settled in their new home and began farming together.

Like other pioneers they bought a pair of oxen to break the prairie and later purchased horses. At this time Floria would walk to Edmonton to purchase necessary items and return on foot, spending a week on the trail.

When Floria had a fine team of horses and a wagon, their mode of travel had improved. However, one day Floria and Domnica were on their way home and the young driver was showing off a bit and the wagon overturned in a ditch causing Domnica to break her wrist.

The family grew in numbers and with the outbreak of W.W.II, three of the Axani boys enlisted and the younger ones had to help on the farm. Although there was more help, Floria's rheumatism grew unbearable, so he sought relief in trying any new remedy that came on the market. He tried lotions, potions, salves and liniments. Once he put on a salve that caused a horrible rash to appear on his skin. This, too, did not help much! He even travelled to Edmonton where he was given "blood letting" to be followed by a good Turkish bath.

At another time Floria purchased a pet leech which he kept in a jar with water. At regular intervals he would take his leech, put it on his legs to extract some of the "bad blood" and relieve him of pain. When this was over he resorted to herbs, onions, garlic, and mud plasters. Unfortunately, other than temporary relief, the pain remained.

More progress on the farm! Horse power was replaced by tractor power when a Twin City 1530 tractor was purchased. Other necessary implements were also bought. The older boys could not be kept away from using this machinery. It was more interesting and faster than driving horses.

For music in the family, the Axanis had a Victrola gramophone that served them well for years but in 1940 Floria invested in a radio. What excitement in the

home – music, news, programs of all kinds for a hungry audience!

The Axanis liked to visit and enjoyed entertaining. They had weddings, hrams, (local church patron saint's day), baptismal parties, anniversary parties and sometimes any excuse ended up in a party. These feasts sometimes lasted two days.

One event in Floria's life must be related. He and Tom Kokotailo were close friends but by 1944 neither one had a brother in Canada so they decided to become "blood brothers". A good deal of planning went into this affair with the joyful day finally arriving. The day began with a short religious service during which time each had to pledge certain vows. Then they retired to the Axani residence where a large feast was held followed by singing, story telling and dancing. To the end of their lives these two men greeted each other as brothers whenever they met.

In later years the most memorable occasions in the Axani household were at Christmas particularly, and Easter. On these occasions the sons and daughters and their families would arrive at the farm. With what joy Floria and Domnica would welcome them all! There was food and beverages, singing, exchanging of news and playing games for younger members. This practice was carried on for many years even after Floria's and Domnica's health began to deteriorate.

Floria died on November 29, 1968 at age 83 and Domnica died shortly after on February 10, 1969 at age 74. They are both buried in St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox church graveyard at Boian, 3 miles from the homeplace but half-way around the world from their birthplace in Romania.

Mike, the eldest was born in 1913. After completing grade eight he helped his father on the farm. To increase his knowledge of farm machinery, he attended a trade school in Edmonton. At twenty-two, he married Mary Darda of Ispas and began farming together. In the fall he would also operate a threshing machine and in the winter he operated a lumber mill. In 1979 Mike passed away. His wife Mary continues to live on the farm.



Mike Axani by his saw mill.

Bill, also continued farming after leaving school. He married Katie Hantiuk and the young couple farmed for a few years. They then moved to Edmonton where Bill got a job at Superior Sash and Supply, where he worked till 1980 when he retired. Bill and Katie raised a family of two girls and three boys.

Sarah, the eldest daughter, became mama's helper at a very young age. Once she completed public school she stayed home to help. In 1936 she married Metro Moroz and they farmed for thirty-nine years. They had four children, two boys and two girls. Metro passed away in 1971 and Sarah moved to Two Hills. Later she married Paul Kisilevich and they both enjoy a happy retirement.

John Axani also worked on the farm, after completing public school. When World War II broke out he joined the army and served in various areas, later

transferring to the airforce where he learned basic electronics. While stationed in Nova Scotia he met and married Irene Cross. At the end of the war he returned and eventually settled at Bonnyville where he owns and operates an electronics business. John and Irene have six boys and one girl.

Ted followed in his siblings' footsteps, completing public school then working on the farm. In 1942 he joined the R.C.A.F. and served till March 1946. In Montreal he married Eunice O'Connor and the couple was blessed with three sons. This marriage ended in divorce. He worked for S. Kresge Co. for thirty-three years. Then he retired in Calgary where he and his wife Laura reside. Ted spends his free time painting and golfing.

Stephen was the middle child. He completed public school, worked on the farm and in 1943 joined the

R.C.A.F. When discharged in 1946 he decided to go into woodworking. He formed his own company Superior Sash and Supply in 1952 and operated it successfully till 1977. Steve married Doreen Safronovich and together they raised a family of three, Monica, Ramona and Eugene.

Anne, the second daughter, also attended the local school. While still a teenager she did most of the housework as her mother was frequently ill. In 1948 she married Nick Gorda of Desjarlais and they made their home on the Gorda place. They had a family of five, two girls and three boys, including a set of twins. Nick and Anne have now retired in Willingdon where Anne enjoys gardening and housework.

After completing public school at Boian, George went on to Willingdon High School. There he completed Grade XII successfully and then went out working. He worked at various jobs but ended up at 7 C.F.S.D. Lancaster Park near Edmonton where he still works. In 1954 he married Hazel Zaptichny of Chipman. They have a son Barry and a daughter Bonnie.

Con finished grade nine at Boian and farmed with his dad for a time. In 1954 he married Marion Fedorak and moved to Bonnyville. For a time he worked with his brothers at the Tropicana Club in Grand Centre. In 1966 he opened his own upholstering business which he operated till his death in 1984. Con and Marion raised a family of five boys and two girls.

When Metro completed school at Boian he worked on the farm then became a trucker. He married Shirley N. Hutscal. The couple moved to Edmonton and Metro secured a job at Superior Sash and Supply where he still works. This couple has three daughters.

Art Axani attended Boian School then proceeded to high school at Willingdon. Once he graduated he went to Bonnyville where he apprenticed in electronics and electricity in his brother John's shop. In 1960 he married Rosemarie Nettleton and shortly after joined the civil service at the Cold Lake airbase. In time he became a professional Aircraft Crash Rescue fire-fighter. In that capacity he served in various places in

Western Canada working his way up, finally ending up in Edmonton as an Emergency Service Officer. Art and Rosemarie have a son Richard and a daughter Rhonda.

Nestor, the youngest son, attended the Boian school and then went to Willingdon. On leaving school he remained on the farm where he still resides.

Eleanor, the thirteenth child, but not at all unlucky, completed Willingdon High School and shortly after married George Lutzak of Hairy Hill. They farm in the area and have two sons.

Art Axani

### **Bandur, Pete and Sanfira**

Petre Bandur was born in Boian, Bucovina in 1872. In 1897 he married Sanfira Sandulak, daughter of Simeon and Vasilca Sandulak. In 1902 they came to Canada and settled about 2½ miles south of Boian Marea School. Ten children were born of this marriage.

Annie, the oldest, married Thomas David. They settled at Gold Creek in the Hamlin area, and raised a family of three boys and four girls; Pete, Nick, Eugene, Mary, Sadie, Pearl and Helen.

The second daughter Maria died during the flu epidemic. Vasilca married Nick Musurichan and they had one daughter Katie.

Nicholas married Mary P. Hauca. They have 2 boys and 3 girls. Peter died at a young age. Surviving are Shirley, Susie, Diane and Johnny.

Jenny married Elie Hutzcal. They had two children, Johnny and Margaret.

Pearl (Pachița) married Pete Serbu. They had a son Peter and two girls Pat and Marion.

Vera married Paul Musurichan. They farmed for many years at Suceava about four miles south of Andrew. They raised a family of seven children, Mary, Eugene, Lawrence, Charlie, Stanley, Delores and Leonard.

Dora (Domnica) married Nick P. Hauca. They





L. to rt.: Katrina Bandur, Katrina Musurichan, Jennie Hutzcal, Domnica (Geo.) Zaharichuk, Sanfira Bandur, Vasilca Musurichan, Vera Musurichan, Nick Zalisko. (1935).



Petre and Sanfira Bandur 1915.

farmed for many years, then moved to Edmonton. They had a son Lawrence and two daughters Louise and Doreen.

Kay (Katrina) married Paul Stewart. They had a son Donald and a daughter, Esther.

The baby of the family Stanley (Stephen) married Mary and are residing in Radisson, Saskatchewan. They have five children, Bernard, Charlotte, Mitchell and twins Tammy and Tracy.

Sanfira Bandur was known to many as an excellent cook and showed her culinary skills at many weddings in the Boian area. In addition, she was a midwife and delivered many children in the district. From her mother she had acquired some medical skills and treated with some success people who suffered from chills, fevers and stomach aches.

The Bandurs hauled mail to the country post offices. They would pick up the mail at MacGowan's post office, near present day Hairy Hill and with their 'democrat' haul it to Boian, Shalka, Ispas and Kaleland, then back to McGowan's.

Besides farming, Petre did carpentering. He passed away of cancer in 1928. Sanfira, left a widow, managed to keep the farm going and brought up the family herself. She passed away in 1982 of diabetes.

### **Basaraba, Andrei**

Andrei Basaraba was born in September 23, 1885 in Boian, Bukovina. In 1902 he came to Canada and settled in the Moose district on S.E.14, Rge. 13, Twp. 56, W. of 4th. Two years later he returned to the old country and married his sweetheart Frozina Malin and the young couple returned to Alberta. Accompanying them was Andrei's father and his married sister Katrina.

From Andrei's first marriage, two girls were born,

Marioara who lives in Vernon and Domnica who resides at Peace River. Frozina passed away suddenly of a ruptured appendix.

Two years later Andrei married Veronca Yurko but this unfortunate woman died of an enlarged goiter and for the second time Andrei was left a widower. He then married Veronica Nikiforeak and thirteen children were born from this union. Three died as infants and Bill passed away at age twenty-five. The surviving children are George, Violet, Steve, MaryAnne, Ted, Nick, Metro, Lawrence, Susan and Joanie.

Andrei and Veronica farmed all their working lives and had to toil hard to raise such a large family. Veronica developed a keen interest in photography and had built up a sizeable collection of photos. In 1963 Andrei passed away and his wife moved to Edmonton a few years later where she still resides. The children all have homes and families of their own and are doing well.

Steve A. Basaraba



**Basaraba Andrei and Veronica**

Family picture taken 1966

Boys l. to rt.: Nick, Steve, Ted, George, Metro, Lawrence

Girls: Susan, Violet, Joan

Parents: Veronica, Andrei.

## Basaraba, Wasyl (Vasile)

Vasile Basaraba was born in Boian, Bukovina in 1889 and came to Canada in 1910. He first worked at Lethbridge in a coal mine, then came to Edmonton where he worked at Swift's Packing Plant. He saved his money and then went to Boian where he married Elena Viksush in 1912. The young couple homesteaded at Hamelin where they farmed for ten years.

In 1922 they bought land at Ispas and settled just a half mile north of Sandy Lake. There they proceeded to brush, break and plow the land. In 1929 Vasile bought a tractor and also an adjoining quarter of land. Later he purchased a separator and in the fall threshed the stacks of sheaves for himself as well as for his



Mrs. Elena Basaraba and part of her family cleaning vegetables.

neighbors. Being an aggressive farmer he was also the first one in the district to own a car.

His wife Elena came to Canada in 1912 with her widowed mother, three sisters and two brothers. She was a firm believer in the Lord and attended the church services in the Ispas Ukrainian Orthodox Church, even though at first she did not understand the language. Elena was as ambitious and hard-working as her husband. Besides looking after her growing family she always participated in community affairs. In time she became fluent in Ukrainian and English. All through her life she remained generous and helpful.

Vasile was chairman of the Ispas S.D. for many years. Being trilingual he was able to communicate well. In addition he was elected councillor in the municipality and promoted road building to replace the many trails through the bushes and around sloughs.

Vasile and Elena raised a family of thirteen children: Doris, Steve, Katie, Metro, Sanda, Sarah, Harold, Peter, George, John, Victoria, Constantine and Alexander. Elena passed away in 1952 and Vasile in 1968 after a lengthy illness. They are both buried at Ispas. The children are all doing well, whether they are in business, as tradesmen or as homemakers. The home quarter is still farmed by their son Peter.

Katie Sinclair

## Bezovie, Constantine

Constantine Bezovie came from Boian, Bukovina. His wife Annie (Csania) was born at Andrew, Alberta. They were married in 1916 in St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox Church and settled on a farm about five miles north-east of the church. Eight sons were born from this marriage; Steve, John, George, William, Delmar (Don), Tom, Nick and Alex. John, William and Delmar served overseas during World War II. John was with the Sea Forth Highlanders, William with the G.N.R. Royal Canadian Army, while Delmar was with Canadian Armed Forces in Canada, U.K. and conti-



**Bezovie Constantine**  
Family picture: circa 1936  
L. to rt.: Alex in his father's  
arms, Constantine, Annie,  
Steve, John, George,  
William, Delmar, Tom, Nick.

nental Europe. He was demobilized in Calgary in 1946 after four years of service.

Constantine passed away in 1967. Annie is enjoying retirement in Edmonton.

### **Chebree, Alexander and Katrina**

Both Alexandra and Catrina were born in Toporoutz, Bucovina, Austria. Alexander was born on March 17, 1872. Catrina (née Revega) was born June 9, 1876. They were married Nov. 3, 1896 in Toporoutz. The following year they decided to emigrate to Canada.

In spring 1897 they arrived in South Edmonton (Strathcona). From there they were transported by covered wagon to Andrew where like all immigrants they spent the winter in a bordei. Next year they settled a mile north of Boian Marea School and lived there till Sandyk passed away in August, 1943.

They raised a family of two boys and two girls. A son Toder died of diphtheria at the age of seven. Since

they lived among Romanian people, the children all learned Romanian and spoke it fluently. The two girls Dochița and Marica both married Romanian boys. John the oldest son married Veronica Rusnak and Mike the youngest married Sandra Shymko. The whole family was involved in community activities and were well liked and respected by the Romanians.

Sandyk, as he was known, had many friends in Boian, too. He served in the Austrian army at the same time as Vasile Toma and there they learned the German language. Often the two would meet and reminisce about the old land and review at the same time their German. Sandyk, being Orthodox, helped to build the Boian Church. He hauled logs and during the Christmas season, he and a group of Romanian friends went as far as Smoky Lake to carol in the homes of some of his Ukrainian friends, in order to collect funds for the church building fund.

In the fall of 1918 at the height of the Spanish flu, Sandyk and his oldest son John travelled in a





Sandyk and Katrina Chebree 1943

model T Ford unheated, from house to house where whole families were ill. They brought in firewood and water and a bit of whiskey bought with a prescription in Vegreville, and possibly garlic, the only known medication at the time. Wearing masks over their faces as required by law, they travelled to many homes and helped the ill.

Mike Chebree says that after living in Boian for 35 years, he still calls it home. He always took part in school activities, the Romanian church choir, the Christmas concerts, the Christmas celebration and was secretary-treasurer of the school for a number of years. He still calls it home. Mike passed away in 1985.

Mike S. Chebree

### **Cohan, Vasile Father and Elizaveta**

Vasile Cohan was born Dec. 24, 1897 in Voloca, Bucovina. He emigrated with his parents to Montreal, Quebec, in 1912.

In 1919 he married Elizaveta Pentelciuc, who had also come from Voloca. They were married in St. Elie Romanian Orthodox church in Inglis, Manitoba.

Vasile Cohan was ordained as a priest on Nov. 19, 1924, by the Russian bishop "Opolinarie" of Winnipeg, where Vasile had attended a seminar.

To this couple four children were born; Andrew, Sylvester, Sofia and Joseph.

His first pastorate was in Boian, Alberta in 1924 where he served four parishes; Sf. Dumitru Nasterea Maicii Domnului, (Hairy Hill) Inalțarea St. Crucii (Shenpenge) and Pogorîrea St. Duhului (Hamlin). Five years later, the Cohans moved to Regina where he served at St. George's church but three years later they came back to Boian. They remained at Boian till 1937. At this time they decided on a major move in their lives and left for U.S.A., first to Omaha then to Detroit, Michigan. He served faithfully and efficiently at a number of parishes till his passing to his Lord in 1972.

Father Cohan was one of the most outstanding

priests that served at Boian. Even today, those who remember him speak lovingly and with respect and admiration. Here was a man who truly believed in the Lord and spent many hours studying and praying. He taught the children to read and write Romanian. He conducted choirs for children and adults. He composed songs and poems. On his own he learned to play several instruments as he was musically talented and had a beautiful voice. He loved nature and gardening. The flowers and vegetables raised were a joy to behold. By nature he was mild and tender and loved to help his parishioners by word, deed and through prayer.

One of his hobbies which turned to a profession later was photography. In the twenties and thirties when cameras were still very few in the Boian area, Father Cohan took many family pictures, developed them in his own little "dark room" and today these are priceless. This hobby he enjoyed immensely.

Today Mrs. Cohan lives with her widowed daughter Sophia Brennan in Birmingham, Michigan.

Sophia Brennan

### **Creison, Alexander and Ekatrina**

Alex Creison was born in Russia of Finnish parents. At the age of fifteen he left home and began a long trek across Russia. He recalled that at one time during a cold winter night he and his comrades were travelling by sleigh drawn by horses and a pack of famished wolves appeared out of the forest and encircled the sleigh. The wolves were prepared to tear and devour the horses as well as the men. Suddenly the men took off the fur coats and threw them to the wolves. When the starved beasts jumped on the fur coats snarling and fighting among themselves, the driver lashed the frightened horses and away they dashed for their lives into the dark forest, fearful but alive.

Eventually Alex found himself on the Russian sea coast. There he got a job as a deckhand and sailed for

United States. With him was a young Romanian and the two became best friends. After many weary days they landed at Seattle. Because the Romanian had relatives in Boian, Alberta, the two young men made their way to the Romanian settlement. They arrived at their destination in 1908.

Shortly after, Alex left seeking for work to earn some money. When he felt he had enough he returned to Boian and built his own blacksmith shop and a small house on Vasile Romanko's land. One dark night, fire destroyed both buildings. Alex then bought a five-acre



Mrs. Alex Creison kneading dough 1960.



Alex Creison standing by his house. 1955

parcel from Ion T. Toma just across the road from the Romankos and there built a larger building and a house. In 1922 fire struck again and razed both buildings to the ground. Happily no lives were lost.

For the third time Alex built his blacksmith shop, but to be safer, the shop and the much larger house were built a fair distance apart. Here Alex toiled sharpening plough shares for the farmers, shoeing horses in winter, and repairing many of the farm implements.

In 1927 before the railroad arrived, Alex disman-

tled the shop and house and reassembled them in the new village of Willingdon. He was the first blacksmith to open a shop in the village. Here he lived with his wife Katrina and raised a family of eight children: Mary, Elizabeth (Elsie), Pearl (Rally), Sandra, Nicholas, William (deceased in 1969), Alydia and Annette.

Alex was a hard working man, slow, efficient and very meticulous. Often his services were unpaid but he was a generous soul and overlooked these. He had had so many hardships in his own life that he was always willing to help others. Being a deeply religious individual he early became a member of the Romanian Orthodox Church at Boian. When the church was completed he constructed and donated the three iron crosses that are fixed on the roof of the church. There they are to this day!

Alex passed away in 1963 and Ekatrina followed him in 1972. Both are resting in peace at Boian.

Pearl Prescott

### Cucheran, Geo. K. and Maria

George K. Cucheran arrived in Canada about 1900 at age of 24. Maria, a young girl of 12, came with her parents Mr. & Mrs. Nicolae Yurko. They were married in the Romanian church at Boian several years later and settled in the Boian district. Of this marriage nine children were born. Helen, the first born, died in infancy. Katie is the oldest of the surviving children and owns and operates a garage in Edmonton. Dorothy was next. She married Steve Cochrane and had two children Robert and Eileen. Dorothy always maintained a keen interest in Romanian culture and Romanian activities. The next child was a boy, Toder, who unfortunately passed away at 15 of a ruptured appendix. Elie passed away recently. Constantine (Kost) farmed successfully in the Willingdon area and then retired to Camrose where he resides with his wife. John also farmed in the Willingdon-Hairy Hill area but sold out and moved to Courtney, B.C. where the climate is milder. The youngest son Steven is in



**George Cucheran Family**  
Family picture taken circa 1920:  
At back left to rt. George Cucheran from Romania, Toder with hat on.  
Front row: \_\_\_\_\_Dorothy, Elie, Constantine (Kost), George and his wife Maria holding John, Katie at right.

business in Calgary. Annie, the baby of the family died in infancy.

George Cucheran always took an active part in the local community. He was the first official trustee of the Boian Marea S.D. #2053 and chairman of the board for a number of years. Later from 1928 on he was a member of the Willingdon school board. In addition he operated the first P.O. at Boian, was a member of the Romanian church, and for a time a councillor in Eagle Municipal District. He passed away in 1958 at the age of 82. Maria outlived him by about 24 years and passed away early in 1982 at 96 years of age.

Dorothy Cochrane

### **Cucheran, Ion and Ioana**

Ion Cucheran was born 1868 in Boian, Bukovina. He had only one sister who was left in the old country. In 1896 he married Ioana T. Toma. In 1899 the young family emigrated to Canada with Ioana's parents and brothers and sisters.

They homesteaded on N.E. ¼ Sec. 4, 56, 14, W.4 and built their bordei in which they lived until a larger log house was constructed. Ion was a hard worker and he, too, went out working to earn money needed to purchase food and livestock. He was a great friend of Nazarie Yurko and the two helped each other immensely. Ion had purchased a horse and Nazarie had a cow so they paired them and ploughed land on



both farms – at least enough for a large garden and some wheat for flour. When Nazarie's cow had a calf, Mrs. Yurko milked her and both families shared the milk till the Cucherans were able to buy a cow of their own.

Domnica was the eldest. She was two years old when the family migrated to Canada. In 1915 she married John G. Hutzcal. Sarah, the second daughter, married Nick Schrimbit of Regina where they made their home for many years. They raised a family of six children, June, Danny, Harold, Doris, Sonny and Vicky. Sarah is now widowed, retired and living in Victoria, B.C.

George, the eldest son, married Mary N. Kelba and they farmed on the quarter directly west of the homestead. They raised a family of four girls and two boys, Kathleen, John, Doris, Helen, Gladys and Jimmy. After George passed away, Mary moved to Willingdon where she still resides.

Metro, the second son married Helen Dydik of Warwick and they lived on the home place for many years. They raised a family of six boys and two girls, Edward, Mary, George, Alex, June, Roy, Kenny and Roger. Helen passed away when the youngest boy was two years old. The younger children were brought up in Vegreville by their maternal grandmother Mrs.

Dydik. The others had to fend for themselves at an early age.

Mary (Marghioala) married Steve Puscas of Regina where they made their home. They had one daughter and four sons, Georgina, Steve, Melvin, Albin and Alvin.

The Cucherans also raised a granddaughter, Pach-îta (Katie) who married Metro Toma. Katie was gifted with a beautiful soprano voice and she sang in the Romanian choir at Boian most of her life.

Ion Cucheran died of consumption in 1927 and Ioana was left to continue farming and to raise and marry off her children. One of her constant worries was to pay off the interest on the mortgage on her farm so that she would not be left homeless. She was a strong-minded woman with a fierce determination, worked hard all her life, often doing a man's work on the farm and managed to pay off most of her debts. She passed away in 1942 after suffering a severe stroke. Ioana lies buried in the Boian cemetery, resting place of so many of her relatives and friends.



**Cucheran Ion and Ioana**  
Family picture 1914:  
L. to rt. Mary, Sarah,  
granddaughter Katie, Ioana,  
Ion, Metro, George and  
Domnica.

## Cucheran, Ion E. and Mariuța

Ion Cucheran was born in Boian, Bucovina in 1870 the son of Elie Cucheran. In 1895 he married Mariuța, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Nikita Nikiforeak. At the turn of the century they emigrated to Canada with a three-year-old daughter Sanfira who died soon after their arrival. They homesteaded first at Boian, but after two years they left the farm and moved north to the Desjarlais district where they began farming. When working the land one spring, Ion was killed in a farm accident leaving his wife a widow with eight young



Parents Ion and Mariuța Cucheran

children: George, Nick, Frank (Toader), Rita, Alex, Katie, Mike and Alice. A few years later, Mariuța remarried Mr. Moskal and continued living on the farm.

Nick, the only survivor at the time of writing, lives in Vegreville. As a young man he married Lena (Vas-



**Family of Nick J. Kucheran**

Standing L. to rt.: Elizabeth, Doreen, Mary  
Seated: Pearl, Nick and his wife Lena, Mike.

ilca) Ponich and they farmed near Hairy Hill for many years. They raised a family of five children – Pearl, Mary, Elizabeth, Mike and Doreen. When Nick and Lena retired from farming they purchased a house in Vegreville where they still reside. Both are active in the church work there.

Frank married May Strynadka and they lived in Edmonton. Frank was an employee at Swift's all his life. Frank and May had three boys and a girl: Ernie, Walter, Johnny and Elaine.

Alice, the youngest, married Elie Malin and they bought Sandyk Chebree's farm at Boian. They raised



**Cucheran Ion and Grafina**

Family picture: circa 1934

L. to rt. Dora Cucheran, Violet Feica, Mrs. Ion Cucheran, Mrs. Elizaveta Cohan.

a family of six children: Marion, Georgina, Elaine, Colleen, Dale and Marvin. Elie Malin lives in Willingdon and Dale farms the home place.

### **Darda, Ion and Marița**

Ion Darda and Marița Nesarobni grew up and married in Boian, Bucovina. Ion was a carpenter by trade and therefore built a big house for his family. Because he had the biggest house in the neighborhood, classes for the elementary grades were held there, too. With the school in Ion's house, the teacher allowed Ion's oldest son Nicolai to attend classes at the age of five.

One of Nicolai's tasks as a child was to lead the milk cow to pasture some distance from the village. One day the cow stepped on Nicolai's small toe on his left foot, severing it completely.

Like other Romanians from the village, the Dardas decided to emigrate to Canada. They sold what they could, packed their belongings and set off in 1900 with

their four children, Nicolai, Vasile, Pachița (Pearl) and Mihai (Mike). When they were leaving, Ion's father, Stephen, embraced Ion and handed him a hand-carved wooden cross and with tears in his eyes said to his son "Guard this cross all your life, keep your Orthodox faith, and may the good Lord help you in the New World". Ion never forgot his father's words.



Nicolai Darda and Sanfira 1958.

Along with the cross, Ion and Marița brought other articles, among which were a 12-inch blade broad axe for hewing logs and a double-barrel shotgun.

During the voyage on the ship a huge storm arose which tossed the ship hither and thither. The waves were mountain high and splashed unto the lower deck frightening the women and children. However, the ship sailed on safely and arrived at Halifax where it discharged its cargo. The immigrants boarded the train and set out for the western prairies.

Finally arriving in the Boian area, Ion filed for a quarter of land N.W.14-56-14-4. Once the family was settled, Ion went to work on the railroad track to earn





Girls: Anişa Darda, Rose Buzak (a friend), Pearl (Pachiţa) Darda.  
(Taken in the twenties)

money for the upkeep of his family. He had health problems all his life as his stomach constantly ached, and in 1916 at the age of 60, he passed away. Mariţa, now a widow farmed with her son Mihai, moved twice, finally settling in the Deep Lake area, near the south bank of the North Saskatchewan River.

Nicolai, the oldest of the children was born on Jan. 14, 1887 in Boian, Bukovina. At age 13, he accompanied his parents to Canada. A year later he went to work for a farmer named Johnson. Mrs. Johnson was a retired school teacher, so after evening chores were done, she taught Nicolai how to read, write and speak English very well. He had an excellent ear for music and learned to play the violin extremely well. In his adult years he accompanied Gregori Toma, who played the flute, at many weddings, parties and dances.

Because he was a carpenter, he built many houses most of which are still standing today. When the C.P.R. railroad was built through Hairy Hill, Nicolai helped build much of the town, including the Co-op Store, Lumber yard, Railroad station, plus other buildings.

In 1911, Nicolai married Anişa Ravliuk and lived on their homestead S.E.22-56-14-4. Two daughters were born of this marriage, Dora and Mary. The mother died suddenly in 1917. Two years later Nicolai married Sanfira Semeniuk and their first daughter Vasilca (Mary Ann) was born in 1921.

Until 1947 the Dardas lived at Boian where another nine children were born at home and sometimes Sanfira was her own midwife. Her husband, being a carpenter, was so often away. Only the two youngest, Peter and Roxcellia were born in a hospital.

To earn much needed money, Sanfira would go stooking in the fall for the neighbors. She would put the baby in a wooden box and pull it from row to row. The baby loved the sun and fresh air so while it slept, mommy would stook as rapidly as possible.

In 1947 the Dardas moved some four miles east in the Moose-Shalka area where Nicolai built a new



**Nicolai Darda family 1960**

Standing L. to rt.: Delmar, George, Helen, Shirley, Jenny, Rose, Peter, Ernie, Rocky  
Seated: MaryAnne, Sarah (Mom), Kathleen.

house and where Sanfira still spends her summers. She raised cattle by herself until 1971, and although she is in her eighties, she still puts in a huge garden on the farm. For pastime, she knits mittens, scarves, slippers and blankets. She still loves to sing the Romanian songs she learned as a child and as a young mother. In all, the couple had four sons and eight daughters; namely: Mary Ann (Vasilca), Anne deceased, Kathleen, George a carpenter, Shirley, a medical diet cook at the Misericordia Hospital, Jenny, Rose, Helen (Eleana) a cosmetologist, Delmar a hair stylist and Peter who lives on the home place. Rocky who did all the research for both her paternal and maternal side of the family is married to Ron Chrapko and resides in Mundare. There are twenty-six grand children and seventeen great-grand children. Nicolai passed away on January 3, 1967.

Vasile Darda was born in 1891 in Bukovina. When he came to Canada he went to work at an early age at Crow's Nest Pass for several years. He sent most of his money to his father to help purchase foodstuffs and clothing so necessary in the New World. On his last working day he tried to hop a freight train in order to get home but fell and broke his leg. That put an end to his working away from home. He then filed on homestead N.E.22-56-13-4. In 1915 he married Gafitza Hustiuk. The couple had thirteen children but seven passed way as infants. The surviving ones are John, Mary, Sanda, George, Metro and Doris. Gafitza passed away at age 57. Vasile lived on the farm with his son George and family for several years. When older and weaker he moved to the Eagle-View Nursing Home in Two Hills where he died November 18, 1972.

Pachița (Pearl) was born in 1899 in Bukovina and at age 1 she came to Canada. In 1917 she married John M. Mihalcheon. The couple lived on the homestead owned by John, N.E.-32-56-13-4. They had one son, George, and a daughter, Mary. In 1927 John passed away suddenly. In 1930 Pearl married Nick Myckaniuk and they had two daughters and one son. In 1970 they moved to Holden, where their daughter Anne lives. Pearl lives in her own house and works on ceramics.

Nick passed away recently.

Domnica J. Darda was born in 1901 in Canada. She grew up on the homestead and married George W. Svekla in 1917. They settled on S.W. 15-56-13-4. Domnica, like the other Darda children, was very talented. Though she lived on the farm, she would take clay from the road banks and mold different objects. While still in middle years she became ill and passed away in 1944. Seven of her children passed away before their second birthdays. Surviving children are Sadie, Metro, Nicholas (now deceased), Lena, Anita, Rose and Amy.

Anița J. Darda was born in 1907 in Boian, Alberta. She grew up on the farm and in 1927 married John Huculak and lived on the family farm. The couple had four children, three sons, Metro who died in 1952, George and Johnny and one daughter, Doris. Anne passed away suddenly in 1960 and her husband followed in 1974. The farm is owned and operated by brothers George and John Huculak.

Stephen Darda was the baby of the family. He attended Boian Marea School and then went on to Vegreville High School. He was a very talented artist. He painted locally all the stage curtains at Willingdon, Boian, Hairy Hill and Ispas community halls. He attended the University of Alberta hoping to become a medical doctor, but in 1940 while on holidays at home, he drowned while attempting to cross the North Saskatchewan River.

Rocky Chrapko (née Darda)

## **Dubetz, George and Sarah**

George Dubetz emigrated from the village of Toporoutz, in Austria-Hungary, when he was eighteen years old. Arriving in Canada, he worked in many different places wherever he was able to secure a job. At the age of 22 he met Sarah M. Matei who had also come from Boian, Bukovina with her parents and her sister Sanda and brother Mike. Sarah was not quite fourteen years old when she married George Dubetz. Though very young, she accepted the responsibilities

of a homemaker and the young couple homesteaded some three and three-quarter miles north-east of Boian Marea School. Their life was not an easy one. George left his young bride at home and went out working to earn money. It was mostly work on the railroad track. Together they managed to clear land, plant large gardens, seed wheat, flail the grain by hand, and grind it into flour for bread. The nearest post office was Soda Lake and when her husband was away, Sarah would have to walk the whole distance to get the mail and some groceries. When George had enough money to buy two oxen to plow land, things began to pick up. Later oxen were replaced by horses and another quarter of land was purchased. From this marriage, fifteen children were born. Three died in infancy and Stephen died when he was fifteen. Of the surviving ones, Mary was the eldest. She married Metro Toma, when widowed she married John Darda. John married



Seated: Sanfira Dubetz  
Standing l. to rt. Grace, Katherine, Mary, Pearl, Sanda, Doris, Helen.

Helen Stefanitz and they are retired in Two Hills. Doris married Bill Hutzkal. Pearl married Richard Pollack and they operated a trucking business. Helen married Leo Wowk. Kathleen is married to John Repka. Sandra and Grace married brothers Jacob and Henry Schnell, respectively. Thomas married Doris Hudema and they reside in Edmonton. Donald married Mary Chorney and Sam married Gloria Chorney.

George Dubetz died at 55 years of age in 1939. Sarah lived to be eighty-two and passed away in 1973.

They are both buried at Boian on the hill at St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox cemetery.

Doris Hutzkal

### Dubitz, Tanas and Sanda

Tanas's thoughts about emigrating to Canada began one night after a visit to a boyhood friend's place. There was a good deal of talk in the village of Toporoutz about Canada – a land of plenty. His friend told him that he was leaving for Canada and asked Tanas to accompany him. As he lay on his bed he thought about all the pros and cons of this major move in his young life. In the early morning hours he had reached a decision. Yes, he was going to Canada!

On a cloudy Sunday morning in the spring of 1912, this seventeen-year-old lad bade a sad farewell to his parents, a sister and three brothers and the home of his birth in Toporoutz.

When he arrived in Alberta, Canada, he landed his first job with the C.P.R. and worked in the vicinity of Calgary and Lethbridge for about three years. Misfortune overtook him in his first year at work when in a serious fall he broke his back. He was hospitalized for months but his foreman treated him kindly. He taught him English and many ideas about life in the new country. The C.P.R. also kept him on the payroll and when he was a bit better and barely able to do any work he was made their water-boy. He jokingly remarked he was their running water.

Eventually the love of the land beckoned him so





**Dubitz Tom (Tanas) and Sanda**

Family picture: taken 1937

Back row l. to rt.: Mary, Velma, Con, Mike and Steve  
Front row: Lily, Kay, Alexandra and Tanas seated, William and Sandy. Andrew in front.

he journeyed to Boian to visit his cousin George Dubetz who had preceded him to Canada. George offered him twelve acres of land in return for helping him clear and break land on his own farm. This took a good deal of hard work but he persevered and he experienced a real feeling of pride when he got the title to that piece of land.

It was at this time, too, that he met and married Alexandra (Sanda) Matei who was Mrs. George Dubetz's younger sister. Alexandra was a very hard worker and worked alongside her husband Tom to help clear the land.

Sanda was a very gifted and creative individual. Having learned the art of Romanian embroidery and weaving at an early age, she sheared sheep, spun the

wool, dyed it and wove it into beautiful tapestries. She knew and followed all the steps from shearing the struggling sheep to turning out intricately designed tapestries. She also embroidered beautiful blouses and wove rugs and sweaters.



Tapestries being aired: Mrs. Sanda T. Dubitz's work.

She knitted all the socks and mitts for the whole family. Often during the long winter months Sanda would get up at 5 A.M. and stoke the fires, and by the time the family was up she would have a pair of mitts ready to replace a lost pair, or she would have spun a big ball of yarn.

The Dubitzs lived in a bordei (a covered dug-out) a couple of years where the coyotes serenaded them on the roof at night. They then constructed a large two-roomed log house with a lean-to attached where the two horses and cows were sheltered.

Their hopes and dreams knew no bounds but now and again fate intervened and shattered these same dreams.

One lovely sunny day Tom was driving into the nearest town in his one-horse top buggy and thinking of the future. The crops looked excellent. The wheat

in particular had headed out and the kernels were filling out well. If things went well what would he do with the money from the sale of his grain? The whole family needed some new clothes and these could be ordered from the farmers' bible – T. Eaton's catalogue. If there was any extra money he could purchase another horse or cow, possibly even a new wagon!

But on his way back he noticed the dark grey clouds moving quickly from the west accompanied by thunder and lightning. Soon the storm struck and within five minutes the crops were churned into muck and mud. The storm passed on but Tom was left with his shattered dreams.

Sanda, too, experienced misfortunes. All the farm women of the time would set clucking hens in spring to hatch a new batch of chicks, poults, goslings and ducklings. This particular spring day Sanda was quite pleased with herself. Her hens were set and fortunately she had enough for a good hatch. Mentally she was planning the feather bees to be held at her home as she could use the feathers to make pillows and quilts which would form part of the trousseaus for her growing daughters. That night when the world was asleep she was rudely awakened by a loud commotion coming from the chicken coop. Both she and her husband ran out to see what was happening. Running towards them were two coyotes each carrying a squawking hen in its mouth and the farm dog in full pursuit behind them. When the couple examined the damages caused in the coop, they found the frightened hens, some crippled, all squawking, and broken eggs everywhere. Not a nest was spared!

One fall the Dubitzs shipped a load of turkeys to market only to get in return a bill of three dollars for freight charges. During the depression of the thirties, things were no easier but they struggled on.

They survived the flu epidemic of 1918 when the whole family got sick at the same time. The parents doctored the children and themselves the best they could with home remedies consisting of herbs and plenty of garlic and onions.

The worst tragedy struck on August 28, 1928 when

the oldest son Metro who was fourteen years of age drowned in Matei's lake. The funeral was indeed sad but the family was consoled somewhat by the fact that Metro's schoolmates from Bojan school led by their teacher Mrs. McEvoy filed past the casket and each one laid a white paper rose on the casket, then followed on foot the hearse drawn by horses all the way to St. Mary's church at Boian, a distance of four miles.

There were always joyous occasions too. When Mike at age fifteen took first prize for his oats, Tom was indeed a proud parent. Then the hrams, the two-day weddings, the baptisms and the clacas (bees) all were happy events combining work and play, laughter, dancing and singing.

For some of these celebrations, Sanda used to bake as many as forty-eight loaves of bread in her outdoor clay oven (cuptor). This oven was also used for baking the cabbage rolls and for keeping food warm once it was cooked.



**Clay oven taken 1944**

At times as many as forty loaves of bread would be baked for the family.

Tom and Sanda raised a family of ten children all of whom were born at home on the farm. These are:



Steve, Velma, Mike, Con, Mary, William, Kay, Sandy, Lilly and Andrew.

Tanas and Sanda Dubitz tried their best to give their children a formal education and despite economic hardships at least two of them became teachers – Velma and Andrew. The parents were justifiably proud of this fact.

Tom was a very kind-hearted person. One fall he even delayed harvest because a robin had built its nest in the binder's twine box, so with four blue eggs looking so lovely, Tom did not have the heart to break the nest. After waiting a week he rented a neighbor's binder and let the robin hatch the eggs and raise the young in peace.

Through all their hardships and tribulations they enjoyed life to the fullest and were very thankful to survive and see some of their dreams fulfilled. Both Tanas and Sanda are buried in St. Mary's cemetery at Boian.

Mary N. Romanko

### Esak, Petre and Domnica

Petre and Domnica Esak came from Boian, Bukovina. Domnica was the daughter of Toder and Sanda Toma. Petre and Domnica were married in 1893. They first lived with Petre's widowed mother and two sisters. However, in 1899, they decided to emigrate to the New World. By this time they had four children Peter Jr., John, Eleana and Sanda who was 5 months old. On the trip across the ocean, Mrs. Esak was sick constantly so the captain and his wife would take baby Sanda to their cabin and look after her. By the time they landed at Halifax, the captain and his wife had so become attached to the baby that they offered the Esaks a substantial sum of money. Mrs. Esak refused to give up her baby.

When they arrived in Edmonton, they journeyed as far as Andrew and spent the first winter with Morariu's (Morie's). Next year they settled on a homestead in the Desjarlais district, a farm with excellent soil. A number of other children were born; Mike,



Seated Sanda Lutic holding Baby Floyd, Domnica Esak (née Toma); standing at back Maria Esak. Picture taken in 1917.

Mary, Anița, Catrina, George and Bill. Anița and Catrina died in childhood and are buried at Desjarlais. In 1920 the family moved to Boian and a year later Domnica Esak died of pleurisy. Petre lived to be 84 and spent the twilight years of his life living with his oldest son, Pete Esak, and family.

Petre Jr. married Ana Yurko and lived most of their lives at Desjarlais.

John remained single and lived at Pierceland most of his life. He died at the age of 85 in Vegreville.

Elinka married Nick D. Toma but died in childbirth at age 20 and is buried in Gold Creek cemetery.

Sanda married Andrei Lutic and raised a large family. George left home at age 20 and went to Detroit to seek a job. He was struck by a car and killed. His father

had the corpse brought back home and he was buried at Boian St. Mary's Romanian Church. Mary married Nick Fedoreak in 1920 and operated a store at Desjarlais ferry crossing, south bank of the river. In 1928 they moved to Willingdon and operated a store till 1953. Nick passed away in 1950. They had four children, Pearl, Helen, Don and Sylvia.

Bill, the youngest, finished school at Boian, then attended Vegreville High School. He worked as an accountant for many years at Dawson Creek. He is married and has 2 boys and a girl. They reside in Dawson Creek.

Mary Svekla

### Esak, Peter Jr. and Ana

Peter Esak was born July 12, 1888 in Boian, Bucovina. He came to Canada in 1899 at age 11 with his parents Domnica and Petre Esak. The family settled at Desjarlais, Alberta, about 70 miles north-east of Edmonton.



Pete and Ana Esak.

At a very young age Peter accompanied some older men to seek jobs on the railroad where he worked very hard. Some Catholic nuns felt so sorry for him that they asked him to leave his job and go to school. They supplied him with room and board just so he would get an education. Unfortunately Peter had to leave before completing his schooling as his mother became ill and he was needed at home to look after his younger brothers and sisters. There he grew up on the farm often doing a man's share of work. He would carry a bag of wheat on his back to have it ground into flour and then haul it back again on his return trip.

In 1911 he married Ana Yurko, daughter of Mihai and Maria Yurko of Boian. They bought a quarter section from the C.P.R. company about one mile north from his parents' place. There, they built their first house, one-room mud-plastered log cabin, and proceeded to clear the land. As the years went by, he acquired more land and built a fine two-storey farm house and all the other buildings needed on a farm.

When his sons and daughters were old enough he left much of the farm work to them and began operating as a stock buyer in Willingdon and Vilna. He operated this business very successfully for a number of years.

Peter Esak did not shirk his involvement in local community and church affairs. He worked ably on road construction in the area, since new roads had to be built and old trails to be elevated and repaired. He served efficiently as a trustee of the Desjarlais school board. He worked very hard to have a school built in a more central location of the district. Since the first school was a converted house, and located in southern part of the district, the two older daughters had to walk 5½ miles to school. When that school burned down the district was divided into two. In Desjarlais a two-roomed school was constructed and to the east a smaller one-room school called Deep Lake was built. In this way all the school children had shorter distances to walk to school.

Peter and Ana enjoyed social activities. The "hrams" the Christmas parties and numerous wed-

dings were known to be joyous occasions with good food and plenty of beverages and dancing. The Esaks were invited, in return, by their numerous friends and relatives and wherever they were, you could see that the Esaks were the life of the party. Ana had a beautiful voice and when she sang with others, the nostalgic Romanian folksongs of love, of longing and of sorrow, tears would come to the eyes of the listeners.

After many years of farming and marrying off all their sons and daughters, they retired to live in Wilkingdon in 1953. They lived to celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary at which time they received many congratulatory messages.

The Esaks raised a family of four sons, Nick, Kost, Mike and Floyd and seven lovely daughters, Mary, Dora, Katie, Lena, Doris, Jean and Helen.

Peter died on April 24, 1973 at age of 85 and Ana followed him a year later April 16, 1974 at age of 80. They were laid to rest at Boian.

Lena Ostapiuk

### **Feica, Dumitru and Anița**

Dumitru Feica was born in Boian, Bucovina, and as a child he attended the village school and completed the elementary grades. When he was in his twenties he married Anița Lazur and settled in the local village. Caught up with the fever of other adventurous souls who wanted more out of life, he and his young family emigrated to Canada in the early spring of 1899. He settled on a homestead in the Desjarlais district and farmed for a number of years. Being a deeply religious person and seeing that there was a lack of Romanian priests, he became ordained in 1923. He now combined farming and priesthood. As a result, the family moved about a good deal. They moved to Rouleau, Saskatchewan, then to Shandro, back to Desjarlais, then to Downey across the North Saskatchewan River and finally to Boian where Father and Mrs. Feica lived till retirement. In 1945 they moved to Edmonton, enjoying the conveniences of urban living. In 1949,



Father D. Feica and Mrs. Feica with son Jack 1946

Father Dumitru Feica died at the age of eighty-three. Preoteasa Anița followed him in 1952 at the age of seventy-eight. This couple raised a family of eleven children, Maria, Ileana, Gheorghe, Ioana, Katrina, Ionica (Jack), Toder, Petre (Pat), Vasilca (Violet), Louis (Elie), and Stephen. The youngest followed in his father's footsteps and also entered the priesthood as a Romanian Orthodox priest. He served most of his life south of the border, occasionally visiting the province where he was born and brought up.

### **Gorda, Vasile and Domnica**

Vasile Gorda lived in Boian, Bucovina where at age 25 he met and married Domnica Demniciuc who was 16. He had what was considered a good job in that he loaded and unloaded flour and freight on the trains by hand. Still, he could scarcely make a living for him-





**Gorda Vasile and Domnica**

The couple: l. to rt. Domnica and Vasile Gorda 1920

self and his young wife. What would he do if there were a number of children?

Since there were rumours going around in Bucovina about cheap land in a faraway country called Canada, Vasile decided to sell whatever they had and emigrate. They arrived in Halifax in 1899, then travelled by train to Winnipeg where they spent the first winter. Here they were in a strange land with a few belongings, a spade and \$3.00. That first winter they experienced their first tragedy. A baby daughter was born but died before the winter was over.

In spring they travelled to Edmonton and then to Andrew looking for land. The second winter was spent in a bordei near Andrew. The mound of soil where the sodhouse stood can still be seen.

From there the next spring they searched for a more permanent home. Since they were some of the

first pioneers in what was later called Desjarlais district, they chose N.W. 16-57-14-W4. It was south of the North Saskatchewan River and this location reminded them of the old country. There they lived close to the Prut River where they used to fish. Here, they could do the same in the North Saskatchewan River, where at the time jacks and white fish were plentiful.

Vasile and Domnica immediately built a bordei in which to live till a better shelter could be built. Those were hard and trying times. People had to walk to Whitford to the nearest store. They carried supplies on their backs on trails through bushes as there were few roads. Clearing the land with an axe and spade was no easy task. When they could afford it, they bought oxen before they could buy horses. The women worked alongside their men folk. While Vasile was out working to earn a little extra money, Domnica did some brushing and clearing land at home so it could be broken. She was also skillful at weaving. They raised some sheep, she dyed the wool, spun it,



**Gorda family**

l. to rt. Lena (Vasilca) Hawka, Mary Karbashewski, Kay (Katrina) Romaniuk, John Gorda, Nick Gorda.

and wove it into beautiful tapestries, and also embroidered lovely Romanian blouses.

The pioneer women would be left alone for long periods of time while the men went out to work. On one of these occasions, Domnica and a couple of neighbor women went out and picked what they thought were the worst mushrooms they could find. They cooked and ate them, hoping they would die, but all that happened was that they had severe stomach aches. Sometimes the women thought they would die of loneliness. To overcome this they would get together and walk south to visit some of their Romanian friends at Boian. Since there were no roads, they would walk through the bushes and mark the trees along the way so they could find their way back.

Vasile and Domnica had six sons and five daughters. One son died as an infant and another son Elie drowned at the age of 20, along with a friend. They had gone away to work and on a day off they went swimming in the Battle River, where they both drowned. It was a sad event for both families. The others grew up and married and brought them grandchildren.

Both Vasile and Domnica were well liked and respected in the Desjarlais community. They attended church regularly and always helped with community projects. Domnica was the best midwife and delivered babies in the homes for miles around.

Life was harsh at the beginning but as the years went by, and prosperity increased, there were also happy moments.

Sanfira, the oldest daughter, married Steve Kachuk. They raised a family of 13 children. Jennie (Joana) married Mike Matei and raised 2 sons and three daughters. Lena married George Hauca and had one daughter Kay. They lived on the farm till George's death and then Lena retired in Edmonton. Mary married Metro Karbasheski and had 2 boys and a girl. Metro was an elevator agent in Willingdon for many years. Mary died in a car accident a few years ago. Kate married Victor Romaniuk. They have two sons and are farming at Riley. John married Jennie Andriuk

and raised fourteen children. They lived on a farm at Desjarlais and then retired to Willingdon. Nick married Anne Axani and have five children, including a set of twins. They live on a farm at Desjarlais. Mike died a bachelor. George married Kate Kachuk. The marriage ended in divorce and George then married Johanna Dolski. They have three children.

Vasile Gorda died in 1941 at age of 71 years. His wife passed away in 1952 at 72. They lived fruitful lives on their homestead till the time of their deaths. Both were laid to rest in the Russo-Greek Orthodox Church cemetery at Desjarlais.

Nick Gorda

### **Harasim, Vasile and Maria**

Vasile Harasim was born in 1862 in Boian, Bukovina. There he grew up and married Maria Toma, old-



Maria and Vasile Harasim circa 1920

est daughter of Toder and Sanda Toma. Both were twenty years old at the time of their marriage. In 1899 they and their children came to Canada with the Tomas and homesteaded on the quarter section of land N.W. 16, 56, 14, W of 4th, directly west of Maria's youngest brother, George T. Toma. In all, the Harasims had a family of eight children – five daughters and three sons.



In Vernon 1960: l. to rt. Tom Henetiuk and wife Ioana, Metro Harasim, Vera T. Mihalcheon, seated is Domnica Kostel.

Anița, the oldest daughter, married Simeon, Kachuk and they farmed near Hairy Hill.

Sanda married Mike G. Mihalcheon and they homesteaded in the Shalka district. Three children were born to this couple but unfortunately Mike died a young man. Sanda then married Vasile Yurko and they moved to Pierceland, Saskatchewan where they made their home.

Domnica married Andrei Toma but her husband died a young man leaving her a widow with a young

son Nick and a daughter Vera. She later married Vasile Kostel and they moved to Pierceland. Years later Domnica, when widowed a second time, moved to Vernon where she still resides.

John Harasim married Anița Hantiuk. They followed John's sisters to Pierceland where the young couple raised a large family.

Metro remained a bachelor and lived the latter part of his life in Vernon.

Veronța married Tom Mihalcheon. After farming for a number of years south of Hairy Hill, they moved to Vernon. They had a large family but Tom died at a relatively young age. Vera is enjoying retirement in Vernon.

Ioana married Tom Henetiuk and they, too, farmed at Pierceland for many years. This couple lived to celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary. They had three sons and a daughter.



George Harasin and Vera 1945

George, the baby of the family, married Vera Sandulak. They farmed the home place for many years before moving to Willingdon, where they are enjoying retirement.

Vasile Harasim died in 1935, following a run away in a 'democrat' drawn by a team of fiery white horses. Maria later moved to Pierceland where she lived in the farm yard of her youngest daughter. She passed away in 1948 at age of eighty-six. Both are buried at Boian.

### **Hauca, Nicolai and Domnica**

Nicolai was born and raised in Boian, Bukovina. He married Domnica Falka and three children were born to this couple in the old country. The first infant died but Metro aged 2 and George aged 1 year came to Canada with their parents in 1899 and settled in Boian district on the N.E. ¼ 18-56-14 W of 4th. They

raised a family of twelve sons and four daughters, namely; Metro, George, John, Bill, Floyd, Helen, Steve, Mary, Mike, Toder, Katie, Peter, Charlie, Tom, Sanda and Harry.

Bill, John and Charlie left as young men for Detroit, where they made their living and established homes of their own. The others remained in Canada, and all but three married and established homes of their own.

Tom and his wife Mary farmed the home place till the sixties when they sold out and moved to Edmonton.

Toder who married Pearl Stogre farmed one mile west of the Boian corner and this couple always took an active part in community activities at Boian.

Nicolai passed away in 1941 and Domnica died Jan. 21, 1953.



**Nicolai and Domnica  
Hauca Family 1929**

Back row left to right:  
George, Bill, John, Toder,  
Mike, Steve, Floyd, Metro;  
Second row: l. to rt.: Helen  
(Eleana), parents Nicolai and  
Domnica, Sanda, Katie  
(Pachița), Mary.  
Front row: l. to rt.: Peter,  
Kost, Harry (Gregori) and  
Tom (Tanas).





The Family Home where sixteen children were brought up. 1970

## Hauca, Petre and Rafira

Petre Hauca was born in Boian, Bukovina. As a child he did not attend school since attendance was not compulsory. In 1887 he married Rafira Moroz, also from Boian. Petre earned his livelihood working on the railroad track for a few years. When rumors were flying thick and fast about land in a far away country, he and his family, which by this time consisted of two boys, George and Mihai, decided to emigrate.

Rafira was heavy with child but the family set out by train for Hamburg, Germany. En route while travelling through Poland, the young mother took sick and she was taken to hospital where she gave birth to twin boys who were born prematurely and stillborn. When well enough, Rafira left the hospital and went back to her parents' home.

Petre and his two young sons continued with their trip, got off the ship in Halifax and continued to the west and to Andrew, where Petre left his children in the care of Vasile Murariu (Morie) family and went to

work on the C.P.R. In 1900 Petre filed on a homestead N.E.¼-10-56-14-W.4th. His two sons were taken to Ichim Yurko's place, where they were well looked after, since the Yurko's had no children of their own.

In 1902, Rafira arrived in Canada and the whole family was reunited under one roof. What a joyous occasion for all the members, but the mother was happiest of all to see her young sons again! Six more children were born to this couple in Canada – Mertin in 1903, Domnica 1905, Nicolae 1906, Alexander 1908, Maria 1909 and Frosina in 1911.

George, the oldest son, attended the Manawan School for a few months so he learned to read and write basic English. At fourteen he went to work on the railroad track and the money earned helped purchase necessary food for the family. When of age he filed on a homestead, about a mile north of his father's place. At age of twenty-three he married Eleana Mihalcheon, daughter of Ion Mihalcheon. Eleana had obtained a grade six education in Boian, Bukovina and



at age thirteen had come to Canada with her father and two brothers Thomas and Arthur. Eight children were born to George and Eleana but two boys died in infancy. The six surviving were Dorothy, George, Charlie, Nick, Peter and Patricia. They all attended the local school. Unfortunately Eleana died of heart failure in 1936 at age 32. The children were left motherless but two years later George married Sandra Dumitrashchuk who had two children of her own, Rose and Eddie. George continued farming until cancer claimed him in 1952.



Parents: George and Eleana Hauca and daughter Dorothy circa 1920

Dorothy, Nick, Peter and Patricia all completed high school.

Dorothy, Nick and Peter chose teaching as their career.

Nick and his wife Georgina have both been very active in community affairs in Willingdon and Boian. Nick was Mayor of Willingdon for thirteen years, completing his fifth three-year term in that office.

Mihai (Mike) P. Hauca helped on the homestead on the farm but at sixteen went to work for Swift's in Edmonton and in 1917 went to Davidson, Sask. to work for farmers in the area. Following this he worked in other places but in 1921 he married Catherine N. Iftody and rented a farm at Boian. In 1925 he moved to Vegreville and became an automobile salesman for

Barkley's Garage. In the fall he went out in the country and threshed for the farmers in the Boian area. In 1928 he opened a garage business at the new village of Hairy Hill. His wife died in 1930 and later he married Sandra Toma. One daughter, Jean, survived from the first marriage. They have a son, Ernie and a daughter Frances from the second marriage. Mihai passed away in 1981 at age 84. Sandra is retired in the Casa Română in Edmonton.

Mertin was born at Boian and was among the first group of students who attended the newly opened school in 1911. An eager and able student he attended for some 5½ years until forced to quit to help at home. After working awhile at Davidson, Sask. he came back and accepted the position as manager of Boian Trading. When the store was moved to Hairy Hill in 1928, he formed a partnership with G.M. Mihalcheon. The store prospered under his management.

In October, 1929 Mertin married Anna Gongos and they made their home in Hairy Hill. When the Co-op was formed Mertin continued as the manager. In 1946 the family moved to Edmonton, then Barrhead, McLennan, and in 1950 back to Edmonton. They operated a corner store and in 1960 sold out. Mertin continued as a salesman and Anna worked at Woodward's.

In 1981 they both retired. Mertin and Anna had one daughter Isobel who is married to Rev. Hugh Beaking.

Domnica married George Feica in 1926 and raised a family of seven. Both have passed away.

Nicolae married Dora Bandur. They farmed the homestead for many years before moving to Edmonton. They had three children, Louise, Doreen and Lawrence.

After completing public school, Alexander attended Vegreville High School. In 1928 he became manager of the Imperial Lumber Co. at Hairy Hill. In 1937 he married Dorothy E. Kachuk. He served in the Air Force and after the war he moved his family consisting of two daughters and a son to Detroit, where they made their home.

Maria married Nick Bandur. They also farmed at Hairy Hill for many years. In 1960 they moved to Edmonton where Nicolae worked as a finishing carpenter and Maria worked at Holland Industries Ltd. They have four children.

Rose (Frozina) also attended the local school. She married Mertin Mihalcheon and they farmed near Hairy Hill, then moved close to Two Hills. Frozina died of cancer at age 59 and Mertin is now retired in Two Hills.

### **Hutschal, Ion and Domnica**

John Hutschal was born May 12, 1888 to parents Gheorghe and Maria Hutschal in Boian, Bukovina. While still a young man he had heard neighbors talking about Canada, a country far away but where there were jobs, land, and a future.

He, at age of 17, in 1905, along with his younger brother Nicolai left their native village for this land of

promise. Once they disembarked at Halifax, they took the train and came as far west as Lethbridge. They then decided that each was to go his own way.

John was hired to work on the railroad C.P.R. He was sent to Calgary, Banff and Kicking Horse Pass. While working in that area the great Frank Slide disaster was very much in the news. Years later John still talked about this tragedy. In 1903 a huge Rocky Mountain rock slide buried the mining town of Frank 45 feet deep in 100 seconds. Some sixty-six people died.

After two years of labor, John, who was a very hard worker learned basic English and was advanced to position of section foreman. This meant he could ride the hand car, quite a change from the pick and shovel. He stayed as foreman till 1911.

During this time he had heard of a place called Boian, Alberta. Longing to see and be with his people, he left his job with the railroad company and travelled north. On reaching his destination he discovered that he had an uncle Petre Hutzcal living in that area. It



**John Hutschal Family**  
Back row l. to rt. Sarah,  
Floyd, George;  
Front row: l. to rt. Nick,  
Domnica, Jean, John (Ion)  
Mike.

was here, too, that he met his brother Nicolai whom he had not seen for a few years.

His uncle encouraged both nephews to purchase land in the area. John purchased the homestead S.E. 15-56-14-W-4th, and Nicolai bought a quarter section a mile east of John's place. With some help from a carpenter friend, Elie Rawluik, Ion built a strong log house on his homestead. The location was a very picturesque one. He chose a south-east corner of his homestead, a flat area, as the rest of the quarter was quite hilly. To the north and west of the farmyard were high hills which protected the farm buildings from the strong northwest winds. Not far from the house a babbling creek flowed continuously, at least during the rainy season, emptying itself into Matei Lake, as it was locally known. Across the road lay the fairly large lake itself.

Once his house was completed John decided to go out and earn some money before settling down. He

took a job with a friend Bill Harrison (who is still alive today at 95) whom he had met at Banff. Together these two young men worked at Swift's Packing Plant in Edmonton till the fall of 1913. At this time John decided to quit his job and return to his homestead. In a short time he married Domnica Cucheran, daughter of Ion and Ioana Cucheran. Domnica was born on June 6, 1897 also in Boian, Bukovina. She had emigrated to Canada with her parents in 1899 at the age of two.

After the marriage the young couple settled in the new log house and began farming together. Both were hard workers and soon cleared much of the land to make a living for a growing family. Ten children were born to this couple but unfortunately Mary, born in 1917, died in 1923 of diptheria.

Besides farming, John took an interest in community work and for many years for the municipality, building badly needed roads. The money earned was



Children (1956) l. to rt.:  
Nick, Sarah, Tom,  
Katherine, Geo. Eliuk  
(Sarah's husband), Jean,  
Gordon.

used for paying taxes. Since horses were used so much for doing the work, John took a great interest and pride in these draught animals. He was constantly trading them in order to get animals of a better breed. He was one of the first farmers to introduce the Pinto and Clydesdale in the Boian district.

In 1935 John took ill and on January 11, 1936 he passed away. Three days later, Domnica, now heavy with child, followed the sleigh carrying her late husband, drawn by two powerful horses so beloved by their master, to the grave on the hill at St. Mary's Romanian church at Boian, where he was laid to rest. Father Vasile Cohen performed the burial service.

Two weeks later Domnica gave birth to her last child, a chubby baby boy. Left a widow with a large family, she was determined to hold the family together. She continued to farm till all the children grew up and left to make homes of their own. All her life Domnica was devoted to the church and helped in the community whenever she could. She embroidered beautifully and was an excellent cook. Often hiring out as a cook she prepared delicious meals at weddings and parties. She had a beautiful singing voice and this trait was inherited by some of her children. When she retired she lived in Willingdon where she owned her own home. When she was weaker she spent her remaining years in the local Senior Citizens' Lodge. On August 8, 1983 she died and was buried at Boian.

Her daughters Mrs. Katie Radesh and Mrs. Sarah Eliuk and son Gordon live in Vegreville. George lives in Hairy Hill while Floyd and Mike live in Vancouver. Mrs. Katrina (Dan) Suprovich and Mrs. Jean (Pat) Shewchuk live in Edmonton. Nick who was a bus driver for some thirty years in Edmonton built a Romanian style house on the old homestead overlooking the valley and lives there in retirement.

Kay Suprovich

### Hutscal, Nicolai and Vasilca

Nicolai was born in 1891 in Boian, Bucovina, the

youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. George Hutzcal. He grew up there but as a teenager he decided to accompany his older brother John to Canada. Once he arrived in western Canada he secured a job on the railroad and by the time he was in his early twenties he had been promoted to foreman of a section crew. However, he decided to go farming so he travelled north where he had an uncle already farming at Boian.



**Nicolai and Vasilca Hutzcal**

Back row l. to rt. Vasilca, Constantine (Con), Nick,  
Girls: Shirley, Pearl, Anne  
Front row: Metro, Peter.

In 1918 he married Vasilca Harasim, daughter of Petre and Anița Harasim who lived in the Shandro district. They settled on a homestead a mile and a half directly east of Boian Marea school. There they both worked very hard and made a good living. This couple raised five children including two sets of twins. Constantine, the oldest enlisted in the Canadian army in World War II and was killed in a truck accident while on duty in December, 1944. Ironically enough, his father who had been ill for three years with a serious heart condition also died the same month as his beloved son.



Vasilca who had farmed alone continued to operate the farm with the help of her children. She did a man's work in the fields and around the farmyard. In 1946 she sold her farm and moved her family to Ardmore where she purchased two quarters of good farm land. The children grew up, the girls married and raised families of their own. The twin boys left home and trained as mechanics.

In 1958 Vasilca sold her property and moved to Edmonton where she still resides in her own home. At eighty-four she enjoys relatively good health and is very happy with her children and grandchildren.

### Hutzcal, Petre and Rafira

Petre Hutzcal was born in 1863 in Boian, Bukovina. Rafira was born in 1873. They grew up in their native village and were married in 1889. Four children were born to the young couple in the old country before they emigrated to Canada in 1899. The first year they



(1921) Petre and Rafira Hutzcal

lived in a bordei in the Andrew district with the small children Vasile, Gheorghe, Andrie and Maria. With them was the family of John X. Toma. The men went to work away from home.



Children in front of family home (1921);  
Back row l. to rt.: Elie, Toder, John  
Middle row: Katherine, Rita, Mike  
In front is Steve.

One day when the women were out working fire broke out in the bordei and all the children suffocated. The parents were totally heartbroken by the tragedy.

In 1901 the Hutzcals moved to Boian and filed on a homestead where Petre who was a skilled carpenter put up the necessary farm buildings. Here they raised another family consisting of five boys and three girls; Elie, Tom, John, Mike, Steve, Helen, Katie and Rita.

Petre had brought a good set of carpenter tools with him so he helped with the construction of Boian church. He also built the farm buildings for his son Elie and his son Tom.

Fire seems to have plagued this family. In 1927 in late October, when the harvest was completed, fire

struck again. The barn burned to the ground, with two fine horses and all the sets of harnesses needed for farm work. A lean-to next to the barn and containing 800 bushels of wheat went up in flames.

The tragedies and the hard work took its toll of Petre and he passed away in 1930 at the age of sixty-seven. Rafira and son John continued to operate the family farm. The children all grew up, married and raised families of their own.

Rafira passed away in 1952 at age 80. Both she and her husband were laid to rest at Boian.

Rita Skirka

### Hutzkal, Constantin and Domnica

Constantin Hutzkal and his family emigrated to Canada in 1907 from Boian, Bukovina. Constantin married Domnica Yurko and at the time when they arrived in Canada they had three girls, Unculița, Maria and Raveta. The family settled in the Ispas district. More children were born to this couple: Lazar, John, William (Bill) Metro, Mike, Rena, Sandra and George. In order to earn actual cash Constantin went to work in the coal mines at Bank Hat. He only came home

when he had a chance. With the hard-earned money he was able to buy flour, sugar, tea, some machinery and horses with which to work the land. With the help of his sons, Constantin began clearing the bush, ploughing the virgin land and raising crops to feed his growing family.

Although a school was built in the district, the older children did not get much of a formal education because there was a scarcity of teachers and the youngsters only attended two months a year on the average, in the summer only. The younger brothers and sisters attended on a more regular basis and therefore received a better formal schooling.

To add to the misfortunes, the mother, Domnica was ill for a long time and passed away at the age of forty-two. The youngest child was only eighteen months old when he was left motherless. By this time the older girls had married and had their own families and the younger girls were too small to do the housework. While Lazar and John helped with the farm work outside, Bill's lot was to do the house work, to bake, cook and wash. His father helped when he could and Bill was fortunate that his grandmother was there to help look after the younger children. However, they all grew up, healthy and strong and eventually went



**Constantin Hutzkal Family  
1935**

Back row l. to rt. Lazar,  
John, Bill, Metro, Mike  
Front row l. to rt.  
Constantin, Unculița (Jenny)  
Raveta (Rita), Sanfira (Rena),  
George.

on their own. One of the young girls, Sanda, died when an infant 1½ years old.

Unculița married Metro Cucheran and eventually they ended living in Detroit, Michigan. Maria married Condrea Ionetz and they farmed near Hairy Hill. Raveta married Stephen Hreniuk. Lazar married Pearl Bumback. He always took part in community affairs and now he and his wife are retired in Two Hills. John bought his own homestead where he still resides. William married Doris Dubetz. They farmed near Sandy Lake where they raised their family and are now residing in Willingdon. Bill, also, coached ball teams at Ispas. In Willingdon he still takes an active part in village affairs. Metro married Sandra Mihalcheon. They lived at Bonnyville but now are retired in Sherwood Park. Mike married Vera Pernack. Rena married George Corobotic, and George, the baby of the family, married Kathleen Erama.

Bill Hutzkal

## Iftody, Constantin and Maria

Constantin Iftody was born May 13, 1881 in Molo-dia, Bukovina. Maria was born April 21, 1881 in Boian, Bukovina. They migrated to Canada in 1899 along with relatives and friends.

In Canada, Constantine worked for farmers in order to earn some money, and Maria worked for one year at the Queen's Hotel in Strathcona for \$6.00 a month.

They were married in January, 1903, got a home- stead in Boian and started their farming career together. They lived there until they retired to Wil- lington in the fall of 1959.

In 1964 Constantin died at the age of 83 and his beloved wife followed him a year later at age 84. Both are resting in peace in the St. Mary's Romanian Ortho- dox church cemetery at Boian.

They raised a family of twelve children. Their first born was a son Nick who was born Oct. 27, 1903. He



**Constantin and Maria Iftody**  
Family picture taken 1950:  
Boys at back l. to rt.: Steve, George,  
Peter, Nick  
Girls in middle row l. to rt.: Helen,  
Katie, Annie, Sadie, Rose, Alice  
Seated: Joanna, Constantine, Maria,  
Domnica.

helped his father on the farm and attended the local school. He married Mary Hauca and they took up farming at Boian. Later they moved to Vegreville where Nick went into construction. They raised a family of 16 children including a set of twin girls.

In 1905 Ioana, a daughter, was born. When she was of school age she attended Desjarlais school on top of Eagle Tail Hill, north of the Iftody homestead. She married Mike Zukiwski and farmed for awhile. Later they went into retail business and the hotel business in Willingdon. She passed away in 1951 at age 46. They had three children, Jack who took over the store in Willingdon, Eddie who teaches school in Edmonton and Minnie who is married and resides in Ontario.

Domnica was born April, 1907. She, too, attended the Desjarlais school and helped at home. She married Bill Skoreyko. They farmed for awhile and then went into storekeeping and hotel operator. Domnica passed away in 1971 at age 64.

Annie was born Feb. 14, 1909 and also attended school. When she was about nine years of age she contracted polio and it affected her right side. Since she couldn't walk very well, her father took her to the Lamont Hospital where Dr. Archer operated on her leg and had it straightened out so Annie could walk much better. In Nov. 1930 she married George Yaroslowski and they resided in Edmonton and raised a family of three children. George passed away.

Sadie was born Nov. 10, 1910 and followed her older sisters. She attended Desjarlais school and when old enough, helped with the farm work and household chores. In 1930 she married Nick Soprovich and they farmed for awhile in the Hairy Hill area. After a few years they moved to Edmonton where Nick worked as a realtor. In 1956 he passed away. Sadie remarried and is now Mrs. Bill Maciborski.

Helen was born June 21, 1912 and attended Desjarlais school and also Borowich school when she lived with her older sisters. In 1930, she married Harry (Gregori) Svekla and they, too, farmed for a while in the Boian area. They later sold out and moved to Bonny-

ville where Helen owned and operated a dress shop. Both Helen and Harry were gifted with beautiful voices. Anyone who knows them will always remember Harry's tenor and Helen's alto voice. They've both sung in Romanian choirs for years. Now, they reside in Edmonton.

George was born May, 1914 and attended Boian Marea school. At an early age he started working on the farm. In 1942 he married Sally Russ and they continued farming. George is known for his successful farming operations and friendliness. Both Sally and George are outgoing folks and enjoy socializing. They have two daughters, Elaine and Gail.

Peter was born in June, 1916. He attended Boian Marea school and took his high school in Willingdon. He took his Normal School at Camrose and went on to teach school. During World War II he joined the R.C.A.F. and served for four years. On being discharged he went on to other jobs and in 1950 married Jessie. They moved to Port Alberni, B.C. where Peter worked until his death in 1974 at age 58.

Alice was born Sept. 1918 and attended Boian Marea school. In 1937 she married George Semenuik and they farmed in the Warwick district. They later moved to Vegreville and farmed. They still reside in that town. They raised a family of four boys and one girl.

Steve was born in Dec. 1920. He attended Boian school and then began helping his dad on the farm. In 1941 he enlisted in the army and was sent overseas. After the war he was discharged and came home. In 1946 he married Delima Toma and they lived and farmed on the home place. In 1959 Steve went to Whitecourt where they operated a service station. From there they moved to Edmonton. In 1978 he died suddenly at age 58. They had 2 daughters, Darline and Georgette.

Katie was born June 1, 1923, went to Boian school and helped her parents at home. In 1939 she married Kost Kelba. Together they farmed the home place. They later sold the land and purchased a home in Willingdon. Kost passed away in 1982 at 66 years of age. Katie works in Jack Zukiwski's store. They had 5 chil-



dren, including a set of twins.

Rose, the baby, was born Aug. 5, 1925 and attended Boian Marea school. In 1950 she married Morris Sinclair and had a daughter Sharon. This marriage was dissolved and Rose later married Mike Zaharuk. They lived and farmed at Vegreville. Rose passed away in 1974 at age 46.

Helen Svekla

### **Iftody, Nicolai and Sanda**

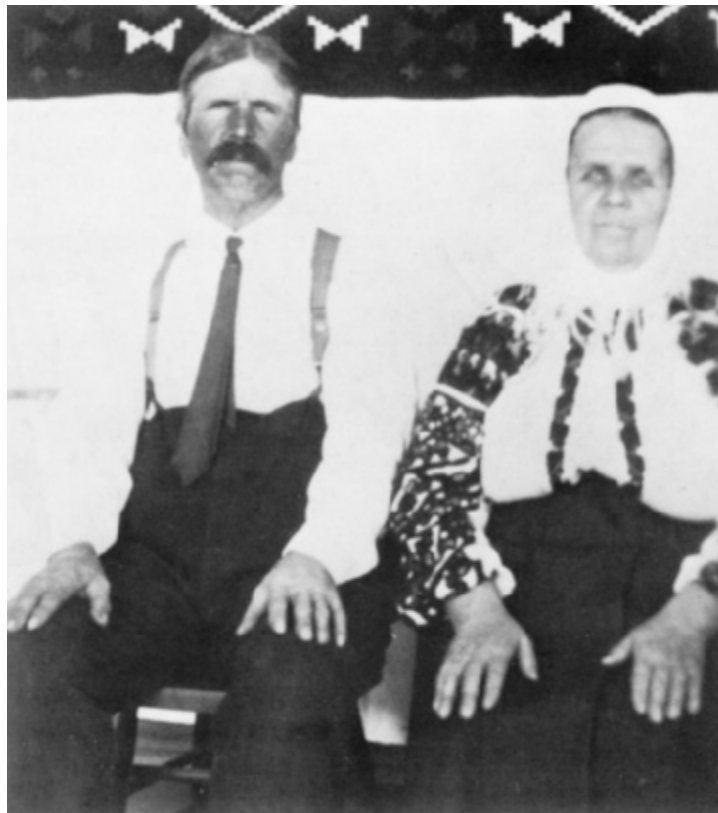
Nicolai Iftody was born in 1865 in the village of Molodia, Austria-Hungary. He married Sanda Strimbul also of Molodia and in 1899 they emigrated to Alberta with a family of one daughter and four sons. John was nine, Maria was seven and there were three younger boys, Elie, Petre and Mihai. They spent the first two years in a bordei near Andrew during which time the three small boys all died of croup. They were buried in the Wostok cemetery.

From Andrew, the Iftodys moved to Boian and homesteaded two miles north of the church. Here the family built a log house and began the hard work of clearing the land. The family increased in number. Unfortunately two of the younger daughters passed away. Annie died at age 11 in 1922 and Pachița died at age 3 in 1924. Six children lived to be adults.

Maria the eldest daughter married Mike Hantiuk and they farmed at Ispas for a number of years before moving to Vegreville where they raised a family of five boys and five girls. Maria worked in the Vegreville General Hospital for many years.

Katherine married Mike P. Hauca. They had a son Sandy (Alexander) and a daughter Jean. Another daughter Mary died at the age of six. The mother died young too, of kidney problems.

William, the youngest son, married Elizabeth Hudema. They farmed for many years at Boian, then moved to the great Peace River country where they continued farming. They had three sons and two daughters; Florence, Elinor, Johnny, Martin and Bill.



Parents 1929: Nicolai and Sanda Iftody

Four of their children became school teachers. Johnny is a successful farmer on the home place.

Jean (Ioana) married Mike P. Esak. The young couple first farmed at Desjarlais but eventually settled in Vegreville where they raised a family of two boys and two girls; Pete, George, Pearl and Alice.

Helen, the youngest daughter married Mike N. Yurko. They farmed for a few years the Yurko homeplace, then moved to Hairy Hill where Mike became an elevator agent. From there they moved to Vegreville where Helen, now a widow, still resides. They have a son William, who is a successful farmer in the Vegreville area and two daughters, Katherine and Lily both of whom are pharmacists.

John Iftody was born in 1890 in Molodia, Bukovina and came to Canada with his parents. They settled at Boian and John being the eldest son had to work extremely hard on the farm. As a young lad he trained a calf to haul wood on a sled from a forest about half a mile away. When his father sold the calf to acquire some much needed money, John felt he had lost a real friend. In 1911 John married Rose Goroniuk, a Ukrainian girl, daughter of Mike Goroniuk. They were married in St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox church and settled on the quarter of land across the road from John's parents. There, John built a large log cabin and divided it into two large rooms. The doors faced west. The north end of the building was used as a barn for the cows and horses, the south end with more windows was their home. Rose mud-plastered it smoothly and the living quarters were whitewashed inside and out. This south room became a cozy little home. Significantly their first child, a healthy baby girl was born there on Christmas Day, 1912. Appropriately enough they named the child, Maria. John and his wife were very thrifty, pious and hardworking people. They

were church-minded and attended religious services regularly. Through hard work they managed to acquire more land and when they could afford it, they built a sizeable two-storey home, at a respectable distance from their first home. Five children were born of this marriage.

Maria, the oldest, married Floyd G. Toma in 1931 and they farmed in the Boian district for many years. They had four sons and three daughters; Rosalette, Richard, Gerald, Delores, Kenneth, Marvin and Karen. Both Floyd and Mary were always active in the local community affairs, cultural, religious and political.

Metro farmed with his father for awhile then left for Two Hills where he operated a farm implement agency. There he married Anne Olinyk and they had two daughters, Patricia and Arlene. Sandra married George Porozni and settled on a farm at Boian, too. They had a daughter, Georgina and two sons, Ron and Barry. George and Sandra, too, were always active in local affairs and were always willing to help whenever possible. Mike attended the local school, then went to



Family picture at 60th anniversary 1971:

Back row l. to rt. George Porozni, Metro, Nick, Floyd G. Toma

Front row: Mary, Rose (Frozina), John, Betty (Mike's wife), Katherine (Nick's wife), Sandra.

Willingdon High School. During the war he enlisted in the R.C.A.F. as a pilot and eventually went overseas. It was while in Britain that Mike met his future wife, Betty. After the war they came back to Canada and eventually settled in Calgary. They raised a family of four; Moira, Roy, Gary and Colin.



Bill's family 1934: l. to rt. Elizabeth Iftody, son Martin, Bunica, Bill Iftody and son Johnny.

Nick, the youngest child of John and Frozina Iftody began farming after completing high school in Willingdon. He immediately undertook the task of modernizing the farmstead. A giant step forward was made when Nick bought and installed a 110-volt generating unit, fuelled by gasoline, which produced enough electricity to light up the farm home and the buildings. He even converted his mother's wash machine to an electrically operated one.

In 1952 he married Katherine Lichuk of Andrew and together the young couple began farming. However, in 1956 they sold out and moved to Wildwood where Nick managed the local Texaco Bulk Station from which he serviced the oil fields. Six years later they moved to Edmonton where Nick works as an agent for a large insurance firm and for a hobby he does carpentry and has also managed to achieve a pilot's license. To the Iftodys four daughters were born: Rosemarie, Peggy, Wendy and Barbara.

John Iftody passed away in 1975 and his wife Frozina died the following year. Both are buried at Boian.

### Living Under The Same Roof

In today's conventional society, our living patterns are alienated and often isolated from all relatives. Three decades ago, even two, living under the same roof was quite popular and resourceful. This was mainly because people were more tolerant of one another, more thoughtful and more respectful of their elders. Peace and harmony were striven for. Young people were taught to say less and listen more. Obedience dominated almost in every household.

I arrived at the district of Boian as a young bride in June, 1929. We arrived at three o'clock in the morning at my future husband's living quarters. A few relatives, who were staying over the night for next day's wedding, greeted us. The household consisted of my husband and his 60-year-old widowed mother. I became the third member in the family. Being a city girl with a country background, I adapted to the farm activities quite well. I loved the quiet and peaceful surroundings. Being an avid gardener from the age of ten, gardening was no burden but a pleasure instead.

My husband and I were both young, full of dreams and with great expectations. But the advent of the thirties was just around the corner. The depression taught us many things which we never find in books. We learned to spare, share and even pinch pennies. There was always food on the table because we produced most of it ourselves. Above and beyond our dispari-

ties, we learned about humanism, and were happy with what was available at the time. Materialism was impossible because we sold our farm produce for next to nothing. There were no jobs, wages were very low, and unemployment insurance was unheard of. Among young and old, there was that common bond of human understanding.

We shared this lifestyle for nine long years. Looking back, I'll never regret it, for we benefitted from one another. We profited from our Mother's experience of struggle, hardship and survival at the turn of the century when pioneering was tough and real. I believe she gained from us likewise, due to our spontaneous youth and enthusiasm.

Elizabeth Iftody.

### Kachuk, Mike and Maria

Mike Kachuk left Bukovina with his mother, two brothers and four sisters on May 2, 1905. They arrived at Sandy Lake on June 7, 1905. As a child he attended



60th wedding anniversary of Maria and Mike Kachuk.  
l. to rt.: Bill Kachuk, Mary Leonty, Kay Arthur.

school only two winters, then went out working. At the age of eighteen he was financially able to buy his own farm. On Oct. 2, 1921 he married Maria Toma and they began farming together. In time they had a family of six children. Nick died as an infant. Sandy and George were out working, digging wells and accidentally were overcome by carbon monoxide in June, 1952. This was a very tragic blow to the family.

The surviving children are Bill who farms in the Shalka district, Mary Leonty of Vegreville and Kay Arthur of Edmonton.

The Kachuks farmed all their lives until retirement. Mike passed away in 1982 and Maria is presently enjoying retirement in the Eagle Hill Lodge in Willingdon.

### Kachuk, Vasile and Domnica

Vasile Kachuk was born in Boian, Bucovina, in 1858. He married Domnica Hutzcal in 1885. At the age of forty-three he left his wife and eight children behind in the old country and emigrated to Canada. He filed for a homestead S.W.¼, 28, 56, 13, W.4th at Sandy Lake. He liked the area because there was plenty of



Vasile and Domnica Kachuk circa 1930.





Family house built by Elie Kachuk in 1925.  
Standing on stone fence l. to rt. Alex Michalcheon, Elie Kachuk

water, trees and grassy meadows for the livestock. The lake was also a source of food in that there was a plentiful supply of fish and then during the summer months there were plenty of wild ducks. When Vasile had built a shelter and after earning some money he returned to the old country to fetch his wife and family. On May 2, 1905, the complete family set out for Canada and arrived in Alberta the latter part of June. Vasile and Domnica Kachuk raised a family of eight children: Elie born 1886, Jenny (Unculița) born 1888, Veronța 1890, Ileana 1892, Stefan 1895, Kost 1898, Mike 1900 and Dora 1903.

Vasile died in 1935 at age of seventy-seven. His wife followed him a year later at the age of seventy-six. Both are resting in peace in St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox cemetery at Boian.

### **Kelba, Nicolai and Sanda**

Nicolai and Sanda Kelba left the village of Boian, Bucovina in 1899 in the month of April, with their son John who was three. They came as far as Winnipeg and since they had no more money they stayed behind with six other families. Here they built little huts where the families stayed. The men went working on the railroad tracks and by September, they had



Nicolae and Sanda Kelba on their 50th wedding anniversary.



Kelba Family car 1918: behind wheel George N. Hauca; next to him is Katie Moskaliuk; back seat l. to rt. Mary Kelba, Helen Hauca and Dorothy Kelba. Behind the car is John G. Porozni.

enough money to take them to Edmonton. In Edmonton they were met by some friends and eventually homesteaded at Boian.

Like all pioneers they worked very hard. Nicolai walked as far as Calgary looking for a job on the tracks. In winter he stayed on the farm where he worked clearing as much bush as he could, getting it ready for ploughing in summer. Oxen were used at first. Since Nicolai had only one ox at first he teamed up with a neighbor who also had one ox. The first year Sanda dug some land by spade enough for a big garden and some wheat which she planted the next spring. When it ripened she threshed it, cleaned it, bagged it and took it on her back to Whitford where it was ground into flour. By this time she had a baby girl and she had to carry it with her wherever she went.



Strange offsprings in Kelba's farmyard 1934.



John Kelba's wedding 1918: l. to rt. Katie (Chița) and John Kelba, Raveta Kelba, Domnica and Nick Sandulak (nanași).

In 1916 Nicolai bought a new 2-ring Ford car, one of the first in the district to have a motor vehicle.

Nicolai lived to be seventy-nine years old and Sanda passed away at the age of eighty-three.

Mary Cucheran

### **Kelba Toder and Maria**

The annals of bygone days reflect the many facets of pioneer life; however the magnitude of the hardships encountered by these pioneers in a raw new land is relatively unknown. The acquisition of 160 acres for a small fee of ten dollars in a country of freedom and unlimited opportunities, was a dream that became a reality for Toder Kelba at the turn of the century.

Having served in the Austrian army for three years, he decided to emigrate to Canada from Boian, Bucovina. Toder Kelba was the youngest of four chil-

dren. He had an older sister Mary and two older brothers Metro and Nicolai. Upon arriving in Canada he worked as a labourer for the C.P.R. and in the Lethbridge coal mines. In April 1902, Toder applied for a homestead S.W.4-56-14-W4 in the Boian district, a predominantly Romanian settlement.

On Feb. 15, 1903, he married Maria Sandulak, daughter of Simeon and Vasilca Sandulak who lived in the same area on S.W.34-55-14-W4.

The Alberta Provincial Archives records indicate that in 1905 the assets of Toder Kelba were 4 horses, 4 cattle, 4 sheep, a log home 17' × 36' valued at \$200; a stable 14' × 20' \$50; a well \$30; 10 acres broken; a crop valued at \$20.00. A patent for the homestead was issued on March 16, 1906. After residing in Canada for a minimum of three years and meeting the necessary requirements, Toder Kelba was granted a Naturalization Certificate September 20, 1905.



Parents: l. to rt. Toder and Maria Kelba, Vasilca Sandulak (Maria's mother) 1912.

To supplement a meagre farm income, he worked on the construction of the High Level Bridge in Edmonton. The extra money earned enabled him to provide more adequately for a growing family. At home, Toder took great pride in his assets, especially a team of horses. Often he would bring the harnesses indoors and oil the leather and polish the brass buttons. Today the surviving sons and daughters remember him as a kind and considerate father.

In 1918 the Spanish flu was raging in North America and taking its toll of lives. Toder Kelba was one of its victims, dying at age 46 (1872-1918). Three-year old son Nick died the day of his father's funeral. Maria's life was short, too. She passed away at age 37 (1884-1921). Both have been laid to rest at the local St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox church cemetery at Hairy Hill.

Of this marriage there were eight children, namely, Annie (Mrs. Alex W. Svekla), Metro, Lena (Mrs. Metro Soprovich), Katie (Mrs. Tom P. Hutzcal), Mike, Gregory, Nick and Sanda (Mrs. Nick Demchuk). After Maria's death, the children ranging in ages from two to seventeen were left to fend for themselves. The older ones hired themselves out as domestic help in

return for room and board while the two youngest were looked after by the oldest sister, Annie. The trials and tribulations of the ensuing years are lonely, fading memories. As the years went by, the children married and established their own homes and had nice families of their own.

Annie passed away in 1971 at sixty-eight years of age. Gregory served in the Canadian Army overseas during World War II. He passed away in 1979 at age of sixty-five.

Kay (Soprovich) Hudema.

### **Kokotaila, Tom and Veronca**

Tom (Tonasko) Kokotailo was born in Toporoutz in the province of Bucovina in Austria-Hungary in 1888. He followed his three older brothers to Canada, leaving his homeland in 1912. His journey across the Atlantic Ocean on a White Star liner, the Carpathia, was highlighted by the fact that the sinking of the Titanic took place then. The Carpathia was able to save about seven hundred passengers.

He met a brother, Sandy, in Kapuskasing, Ontario while the train was taking on water and coal, but decided to continue west where he contacted his other brother John. He worked in Lethbridge, Calgary and Edmonton as a labourer on the construction of sewage and water systems and roads, as did so many other immigrants anxious to supplement their limited funds. His agricultural life in Bukovina inspired him to take up farming in Western Canada. His brother John had settled on a farm in Shalka and welcomed Tom's help to clear the land. While in the Shalka district he met and married Veronca Moscaluk and they settled on a farm in Boian in 1915 and lived on it until they retired and moved to Edmonton in 1957.

Tom Kokotailo had received little formal education in his homeland. He was self-taught and learned to read and write Romanian and English in addition to his native Ukrainian. He was well-read, having read some classic books including most of Shakespeare's





**Tom Kokotailo's Family 1934**  
 Back row l. to rt. Metro, Steve, Sanda,  
 Toder, John George.  
 Seated: Tom and Vera  
 Front: Billy and Doris.

plays. He was keenly interested in the education of his family, making many sacrifices in order to help them through school. He took an active part in the community, in the church, in the school and in local government. He served as a school board member and chairman of the Boian Marea school district until it was incorporated into the Two Hills School Division. He was instrumental in the building of the stone school house with local help in 1937 after the previous one burned down. This stone building now remains a monument in the district. He was very active in the cooperative movement, serving as an elected representative for Alberta Wheat Pool members in his area for over 20 years. He was a councillor for the Municipal District of Eagle and was reeve when it was incorporated into the County of Two Hills. He was a sheriff's bailiff from 1927 to 1935. His legacy in the district which extends as far as Vegreville is still very visible. He built many of the roads and maintained them. He helped keep telephone service in the district

when he and seven others formed the Eagle Hill Mutual Company and acquired lines being discontinued by the Alberta Government Telephones. He was dedicated to improving farming and the quality of stock and grain in the municipal district of Eagle.

Veronca Moscaluk came to Canada with her parents, Metro and Sanda Moscaluk in 1899. They settled in the district which they called Boian. The hardships they endured were considerable and they almost certainly would have gone back except that it was impossible. These hardships continued after she married at the age of 16. She continued the Romanian art of embroidery, making traditional costumes, many of which are still being used especially on church holidays and events. Some of her grandchildren have inherited her artistic qualities and will no doubt carry on the tradition. Her marriage resulted in six sons and two daughters. She was the main driving force in trying to have her children obtain the education she was denied. In her later years she was able to look

back with satisfaction at the fruits of her labours. Recollections of her early life in Boian have appeared in a number of publications.

Fred (Toder) left for Ontario in the thirties where he became a welder and established the Courtland Welding company. Married to Mary Aurite, they have a daughter and two grandchildren.

Sanda worked during the war in a small arms plant. She married Jack Caruk, a welder. They had two children and two grandchildren. They reside in Edmonton.

George attended the U. of A. where he graduated with an Honours Degree in mathematics. After working in Eastern Canada he returned to the U. of A. where he obtained a degree in Education, then switched to Physics. After earning his Master's Degree he joined the Mobil Oil's research laboratory in Paulsboro, New Jersey. At Mobil he achieved the second highest research position in the company. He is also professor of Physics at Drexel University in Philadelphia. He has over 100 publications and twelve patents.

While at Mobil he earned a doctorate in solid state physics at Temple University in 1955. He was an exchange scientist in Romania in 1975. George is married to Cecilia Wacowich and they have two children.

Steve attended the Edmonton Normal School once he finished high school. He taught at several schools including Boian Marea, and then went into the lumbering business. He was married to Elsie Petriuk and they have three children and six grandchildren.

John also became a teacher then changed to engineering. He worked his way up to chief electrical inspector, in charge of the provincial electrical and elevator safety program. He lives with his wife Connie (nee Horgan) in Regina. They have five children and three grandchildren.

Andy (Metro) left Alberta for Vancouver where he worked in various occupations. Married to Ann Turner, they have one child and three grandchildren.

Doris married Al Mitchell of Vancouver. They have four children and three grandchildren.

Bill stayed on the farm. He continued the family



**Clacă at Kokotailo's 1935**

L. to rt. Mike N. Hauca hiding in barrel; Bill J. Toma holding a dipper in his hand; Tom Kokotailo is ready to take anybody on.

tradition of community service. He married Pearl Storochuk and they have six children and eight grandchildren.

Tom Kokotailo passed away in 1962 at the age of seventy-four. His wife died in 1974 at the age of seventy-seven. Both are buried at Boian.

George Kokotailo

### Kokotilo, John and Vera

John was born in the village of Toporoutz, Austria-Hungary in 1877. As a young man he served from 1902-1905 in the Austrian Cavalry, a very prestigious honor. After completing his military service he journeyed to Canada, a sixteen-day trip. From Halifax he travelled to Edmonton where he worked installing sewer lines. When the High Level Bridge was being built he worked there pouring concrete for the pillars. At that time he worked with another Romanian, Fred Bidulock. From Edmonton he went to Medicine Hat where he worked for one year. It was at this time that he decided to go north and homestead, so he purchased a horse and set out. He filed on a quarter of land in the Shalka area and settled there in 1907. He cleared some land, built a log cabin and plastered it. In 1908, John married Vera Kachuk and together they raised a family of ten children: Mike, Dora, Mary, Lena, George, Katie, Kathleen, Nick, Bill and Sally. In March, 1939, tragedy struck the Kokotilo family. Fire broke out in the house and before anything could be saved, the whole building was ablaze. The contents and the house burned to the ground. Luckily no lives were lost. That summer the family lived in granaries while a new building was built.

Mike, the eldest, married Helen Yassenko of Vilna and they had four children. They farmed at Two Lakes before moving to Whitecourt where Mike was employed by Western Construction for thirty-five years before retiring to Indianapolis, Indiana.

Dora married Metro Darda of Shandro and they had six children, two of whom died young. They



Parents 1937 – Ion and Veronța Kokotilo.

farmed in the Brinsley district till they retired in Willingdon.

Mary married George Kereluik and they raised eleven children, three of which are deceased. Elsie died in infancy. R.C.M.P. Constable Clifford Kereluik died of cancer in 1969 and Eugene was killed in a traffic accident in December, 1983. The Kereluiks farmed in the Shepenitz and Shalka districts before moving to the Willingdon area. They are now retired in Willingdon.

Lena married Bill Skoreyko and raised four children. They farmed at Andrew before moving into the town where for a time Bill and his son John operated the Andrew Tire Shop.

George married Katherine Chebree and had two children. Johnny died in infancy. They farmed the home place before moving to the Boian district where George learned the plastering trade. He later moved to Edmonton where he worked for the Brotherhood of Plastermen's Union until retirement.

Katie married John Morgan and had nine children. John was a carpenter and they lived in Willingdon. After John's death in 1974, Katie moved to Vancouver where she was employed in a hospital until her retirement in 1983.



Kokotilo children 1981, l. to rt. Katherine, Dora, Sally, Mary and Lena. At back Bill.

Kathleen married Bill Serbu and they had five children. They farmed at Boian until 1952 when Bill died as a result of an accident. His wife moved to Willingdon where she was employed by the Federal Government as a postal clerk. In 1964 she married John Hunchak of Willingdon.

Nick married Victoria Hlewka and had five children but three died in infancy. Nick served in the Canadian Army for four years before moving to Vancouver where he was employed in the logging industry as a faller until his death in 1978.

The youngest son Bill married Elizabeth Toma and they had three daughters and one son. They farmed the home farm. In between seasons Bill worked away from home as a faller in various parts of B.C., Hay River and N.W.T. He worked as a plasterer in the Willingdon area until 1968 when he and his family moved to Edmonton. Bill is currently employed with the Industrial Construction and General Worker's Union #92.

Sally married Bill Martin of Toronto and they had two children. They live in Toronto where Sally is employed by Instamatic Washers and Dryers as a sales representative.

John Kokotilo left this world in November, 1941 at age sixty-four followed by his wife Vera in December, 1968 at age seventy-six.

(Wm. J. Kokotilo)

### **Lutic, Andrei and Sanda**

Andrei Lutic migrated from Bucovina during the reign of Franz Joseph I of Austria. Upon landing in Canada he obtained employment in Montreal for a short period of time. His desire to obtain farm land forced him to travel to the western prairies of Canada.

In Alberta he worked on the railroad crew and while there he heard that there was a Romanian settlement in the Boian area 25 miles directly north of Vegreville. He decided to visit the area and there he met Sanda Esak with whom he fell in love.

Andrei and Sanda were married in 1914 and settled the same year on a homestead in what was known as Gold Creek district. There they farmed for 14 years during which time seven children were born to the young couple, Floyd, Dora, Peter, Nick, Constantine, Katherine and Alice.





#### **Andrei Lutic's Family 1959**

Back row: Boys l. to rt.: Andy, Con (Constantine), Paul, Peter, Sandy (Andy's twin), Floyd.  
Front row: Alice (Elisaveta), Andrei, Sanda, Doris (Domnica).

To obtain better land they purchased the quarter of land owned at Boian by Sanda's father Peter Esak. The exact location was S.E. ¼ 9-56-14-W4 and this land became the new family farm. Andrei purchased the land for approximately \$4000 and two years later the depression hit. The farm was not producing enough to provide for the family. As a result Andrei took the job of delivering mail to Boian so he would travel 24 miles round trip twice a week for the sum of \$15.68 a month.

Four more children were born to the Lutics, George, Paul and a set of twin boys Andy and Sandy. However, they lost two children. Katherine passed away in 1934 and George died in 1942 at age of fifteen.

Andrei and Sanda turned the farm over to Andy in 1958 and moved to Willingdon. They lived there in their own home until 1978 when they moved to the local Eagle Lodge for seniors. Sanda passed away in 1981 at age 82. She was known for her beautiful embroidery and delicious Romanian cooking. Andrei is 89 and still living at the Lodge.

Floyd, the oldest of the Lutics graduated as a teacher and taught in Boian area before joining the Air

Force. During the war he married Vera Penzar. He continued teaching after the war until his death in 1962. They had three children, Lloyd, Lorne and Louise.

Dora married John Zaharichuk. After a brief farming career they moved to Edmonton and finally settled in Two Hills. They had five children, Eddy, Audrey, Bobby, Bernice and Leslie. John passed away in 1978 and Dora is still living in Two Hills, Alberta.

Peter farmed in the Boian area and married Mary Cucheran. They had three children, twins, Leslie and Leonard and a daughter Bonnie. Peter passed away in 1967.

Nick left home and travelled to Ontario where he joined the armed forces. He married Sarah (Sadie) Hughes and they have two sons Gregory and Michael. After thirty-one years, Nick retired in Edmonton and is working for the federal government. Sadie passed away in 1980.

Con attended the U. of A. and graduated with a B.Ed. and B.A. degrees. Later he obtained an M.Ed. He taught high school in Hairy Hill and was principal there for a number of years. Here he married a former



Peter's family 1953  
L. to rt. Mary and Peter Lutic  
Twins: l. to rt.: Leonard, Leslie.

pupil, Margaret Kowalchuk. They have two girls, Noreen and Charlene. Con and Margaret both teach in Two Hills.

Alice attended Hairy Hill High School and then took nursing in Edmonton. She married John Dorish and they have three children, Janice, Jim and Brian. Alice is still practicing her career.

Paul farmed for several years and then went out working. Single, he lives in Sherwood Park and is employed by the Provincial Highways Department.

Sandy left home to seek his fortune. He eventually began working for the post office in Edmonton and is presently employed as a Postmaster. He married Lydia

Appel and they have four children, Sharon, Howard, Glenn and Karmen. They reside in Edmonton.

Andy stayed in Boian and took over the family farm. He married Kaye Frank and they have three children, Randy, Sally and Byron. Andy and Kaye are both actively involved in local community activities at Boian and Hairy Hill.

Sandy Lutic

### Matei, Mitru

When Mitru Matei decided to take his family to Canada he took along with him his youngest sister Pachița, who was married to Mitru Hantiuk. He left behind him in Boian, Bucovina two brothers Constantine and Paul. Mitru Matei and his family came to Canada in 1900 and by this time they had three children Sarah 9, Sanda 6 and Mike 3. In Alberta they settled by the lake, which locally bears the name



Sisters: L. to rt. Sarah Kozub and her sister Maria Matei (née Moscaliuk) 1935.

Matei. Two more children were born here, Katie and Stephen. In 1906 Mitru died at age 46. Like other pioneers the family worked hard to establish themselves and make a decent living.

The oldest daughter Sarah married George Dubitz. They farmed practically all their lives at Boian and raised a large family.

Sanda married Tom Dubitz. They too farmed just north of the Mateis.

Mike married Jenny Gorda and they farmed the home place.

Katie married John Kelba. They had one daughter Anita who became a nurse.

Stephen, the youngest became an efficient school teacher and taught capably at Boian Marea for many years. He married Helen Moroz and when Stephen left teaching they moved to Langley, B.C. They have a son Gordon and a daughter Sylvia.

### **Mihalcheon, George and Pachița**

George and Pachița Mihalcheon were both born in Boian, Bucovina. George was born in 1864 and Pachița in 1867. They were married in Boian and five children were born there, Mike, Maria, Malesa, Kate and Floyd. The youngest was one year old when they decided to emigrate to Canada.

Following the route that other immigrants followed they arrived in Strathcona in 1899. George's brother Zaharie (Harry) and his family came at the same time.

The two brothers and their families continued their search for land and squatted first at a point five miles north of Pakan. Zaharie stayed there but George and his family moved to Shalka and homesteaded on NW-8-56-13-4. Their friends the Svek拉斯 and Hutzkals homesteaded in the same section. The land they chose was heavily timbered and some logs were hauled from here to build the Boian church.

After some improvements were made the Mihalcheons left the farm to their oldest son, Mike, and moved to what was known as the Soda Lake area



Parents 1931: l. to rt.: Pachița and George A. Mihalcheon.

where they settled on S.E.-28-56-14-4. By 1911 five more children were born; Ion, Nick, Alex, Merton and Dorothy.

George and Pachița Mihalcheon had been brought up in the Greek Orthodox faith and were deeply religious. Although illiterate they were God-fearing parents and their strong faith kept them striving for a better life for themselves and their children.

In 1928 the C.P.R. railroad cut through their farm and brought joy and excitement in their lives. Previously their nearest town was Vegreville and the nearest country store was Magowans, four miles south of the homeplace.

After 54 years in Canada George and Pachita had qualified for three homesteads, raised a family of ten children, and finally received their first pension cheque of five dollars a month. Despite the many hardships and frustrations both lived to a ripe old age. George passed away in 1950 at the age of 86 and Pachita died in 1949 at 82. They were laid to rest in the Romanian cemetery at Boian.

Mike the oldest son married Sanda Harasim. From this marriage three children were born – George, Vera and Dorothy. Mike passed away at a very young age.



Malesa married Elie Kachuk and had eight children, Nick, Dorothy, Kate, Mary, Rose, Stella, Rita and Mike (Mac). Kate married Kost Zaharichuk and they had two children Pearl and Tom. Floyd married Kate Hutzcal and had five children, Rita, Art, Mike, Gloria and Virginia. Ion married Ruth Palmer and had no children. Nick married Vera Ruptash and had three children – Archie, Jean and Richard. Alexander married Helen Krawchuk and had two boys – Elmer and Walter. Merton married Rose Hauca and had three children – Lorraine, Marlene and Kenneth. Dorothy married Charles Svekla and one child Edward. Dorothy, too, passed away at a very young age.

Alex Mihalcheon

### **Mihalcheon, Gheorghe M. and Maria**

Gheorghe was born in Boian in 1892, the youngest child of Maftei and Pachița Mihalcheon. He was left motherless at four so his father and his older sisters took care of him. He attended the local school and completed grade two before coming to Canada with the rest of the family in 1901. They settled in the Shalka district, but as a very young lad he went to work for Richard Hughson, a large rancher in the Whitford district. While in the employ of Hughson, he was encouraged to attend the Manawan School #282, a one-room log school located on S.E.32-56-15-4. There and from his employer he quickly picked up the English language. From there he went to Vegreville School. He did odd jobs in return for room and board. In 1917 he graduated from the Camrose Normal School and began teaching at Boian Marea School where he remained till 1926.

Up to that time teachers had come and gone, but “G.M.”, as he was known popularly, stayed. A strict disciplinarian, he introduced ball games such as soccer and baseball, organized school fairs and began the practice of working with the whole community, school and church, to put on English and Romanian programs. Money was raised as early as 1920 through a

school concert to raise money for the purchase of an organ. This musical instrument was in great use in the following years and the quality of singing improved accordingly.

In 1921 George Mihalcheon married Mary Lutzak of Shepenge and they lived for a few months in the parish house with Doctor Lazar Gherman, the local priest. Then he took over the Boian Trading store and moved there and lived in the small house nearby. In 1926 he was elected as M.L.A. for the Whitford constituency and represented it until 1930, when he was renominated but resigned. In 1928 the family moved the store to Hairy Hill. He later sold it and went into the hotel business in North Battleford and then Vermilion. George Mihalcheon was always involved in community and school activities all his life. He helped the Romanian community a great deal and often acted as interpreter, counsellor and adviser.

George and Mary Mihalcheon raised a family of



George and Mary Mihalcheon 1954.



five girls and one boy – Elizabeth, Marion, Anne, Marjorie, Frances and George.

In 1956 this man who had worked so hard to raise the quality of life in the Romanian community, who had always participated in the political, religious, cultural, educational and social activities passed away at age 62. He was buried at Boian, the district in which he had spent most of his life. His beloved wife Mary resides in Edmonton.

### **Mihalcheon, Peter and Maria**

Peter Mihalcheon came to Canada in 1908 as a boy of 16 from Boian, Bukovina with his parents, three brothers and two sisters. Two brothers went back to the old country and made their home there.

Maria was born in Alberta and grew up here. They were married in 1919 in the Romanian church at Hairy Hill. Fourteen children were born of this marriage. The Mihalcheons farmed at Hairy Hill all their lives. In 1962 they retired to Vegreville. Of the thirteen living children, only two are farming. The rest are all working in the urban centres in Canada.

Margaret Darda

### **Mihalcheon, Zaharie and Domnica**

Zaharie Mihalcheon was born in 1866 in Boian, Bucovina. His wife, Domnica Marițak, was born in 1872 also in Boian. They were married in 1888 and had four children in the old country – Alexander who died in infancy, Sarah, Maria and Sanda. In 1899 the family emigrated to Canada along with other families from the same villages.

When they finally arrived in Edmonton, Zaharie, his brother George and brother-in-law Mihai Yurko pooled their money and purchased a wagon and a team of horses. They packed their belongings and their families in this vehicle and set out for Pakan some seventy miles north-east of Edmonton. At Pakan there was already a thriving settlement and more important

there was a mission with a school, a church and a small hospital with a Dr. Lawford in charge.

Here Zaharie decided to settle on a homestead which had a creek running through it. He constructed the necessary buildings and proceeded to break the land and raised good crops as well as livestock. The family grew in size and prospered. Zaharie always had hired hands working for him as there was so much to do and all the children, except one, were girls. The older children attended the local school and learned to speak, read and write English. They became trilingual speaking Romanian, Ukrainian and English.

In 1918 Zaharie sold out and moved to the Warwick district as he wanted to be closer to a Romanian church and he also needed more good farm land. Here he purchased three quarters of rich farm land and again proceeded to establish an excellent farmyard. The family grew in size too.

Sarah married Metro Predy. They had four boys, Steve, Nick, Mike and George. Maria married Kozma Cherniwchan and they had two boys Don and Johnny and two girls Kay and Anne. Sanda married Vasile Romanchuk. They raised three children John, Steve and Katie. Ioana married Tom Zaharichuk. Five children were born to this couple, Mary, Doreen, Pearl, Katherine and Steve. Katie (Dochița) married Wm. Harrison and they had three girls and one boy, Doris, Marie, Velma and Nick. Mr. and Mrs. William Harrison always took a very active part in the Romanian community both at Boian and in Edmonton. While on the farm Bill was secretary-treasurer for the Boian church for twenty-five years. His wife was a member of the Romanian Ladies' Auxiliary for many years. Both are still enjoying life. Bill at the time of writing is ninety-five years young. Katrina married Mike Serbu and raised a family of five children, Doris, Sam, Steve, John and Evelyn. Frank, the only son, married Laura Bordian and they had three sons, Sandy, Bobby and Johnny. Velma (Veronca) married Alex Hawka. They had two daughters Marjorie and Irene. Bella, the youngest, remained single and lived all her life with the Harrison's.



**Zaharie Mihalcheon's Family**  
 Couple at back: l. to rt. Veronța and Ion  
 T. Toma  
 Front row l. to rt.: Velma (Veronca),  
 Katherine, Dochita, Joanna, Domnica,  
 Vasilca (head turned), Frank (Ștefan),  
 Steve Predy, (face covered), Mrs.  
 George Predy holding Nick, Sanda,  
 1916.

Zaharie and his wife were extremely hard workers. Blessed with eight daughters and one son there were bound to be parties, anniversaries and, of course, weddings. The Mihalcheons enjoyed entertaining and enjoyed socializing. They were also church-minded and attended the Romanian church regularly. When they got older, Frank took over the farming operations.

Domnica passed away in 1938 at the age of sixty-six and Zaharie died in 1940 at the age of seventy-four. Both are buried in St. Mary's cemetery at Boian.

### **Moskaliuk, Metru and Sanda**

Metru Moskaliuk was born in 1867 in Boian, Bukovina. He married Sanda Falka in 1892 and emigrated to Canada in 1899 with two children, George who was five years old and Vera who was four. At the same time Sanda's father and her stepmother, the Nikolai Falkas came.

The two families brought with them articles and clothing they felt they would need in the new world.

In bags and boxes and trunks they had packed bedding, clothing, tools such as saws, a scythe, a spade and a sickle. Some had even brought a quern for grinding wheat into flour and also one family had brought a spinning wheel and loom. Like many others, they brought very little actual cash.

When they finally got to Edmonton they hired teamsters and wagons to take them to the Boian area.

Arriving in late March they found the land covered with forests, bushes, frozen lakes, streams and some open meadows and prairies. They were all very glad to see there was so much wood. There would be no shortage of fuel or building materials.

Like others they first built a bordei large enough to accommodate the two families. Then they dug a well close by and cribbed it with rails. The men left the families and went to Edmonton to search for work.

The women cleared more land to plant a garden and the pile of logs grew. One day Sanda and her stepmother decided to build a log house as they were fed up living in a hole in the ground like animals. They cut down trees, limbed them and cut the logs into



Parents L. to rt. Sanda and Dumitru Moscaliuk 1924.

equal lengths. This was hard work and Sanda's shoulders became raw from hauling those heavy logs, but she refused to give up.

The first summer and fall they lived off the land. They gathered wild duck eggs, picked berries, and edible roots. When the men came back, how happy they all were to see some fresh food supplies, especially flour for baking and tea for drinking. With some money to spare they hired some neighbor to break enough land for a bigger garden and for some wheat.

It was a great day when Mitru brought home a cow and Mr. Falka brought a cow and a plough. They teamed the two cows and ploughed more land. Now they had milk and cheese and cow-power. How heart broken they all were when Sanda's cow took sick and

died! However, being a practical woman, she skinned the animal and was able to fashion moccasins for the entire family.

In time Mitru purchased another cow but this time they did not use it for plough-power.

The years went by. More land was cleared and more children were born. The family moved two more times and finally settled one mile directly west of Boian Marea school. In all, they had five girls and six boys.

George, the eldest, worked on the farm and during World War I, he served overseas. After the war he returned home, then left for U.S.A. where he lived till his death in 1928 in Buffalo, New York.

Vera married Tom Kokotailo and they farmed in the Boian district for many years.

Katie was born in 1900 and married Pete Revega. They farmed at Boian for a few years, then moved to Pierceland, Saskatchewan, where they continued farming.

Nick was born in 1904 and unlike his brothers he became a carpenter. He operated his own shop in Willingdon for many years up to his death in 1944.

Bill was born in 1905 and at age 18 left home to seek his fortune. He worked in a number of places and ended up in Butte, Montana where he worked in the copper mines. Here he took up boxing at the local Y.M.C.A. and soon began making his name known. In 17 matches he won three gold medals, five silver and two bronze medals. He went on to Buffalo where he fought for the Niagara District. He won a Hamilton gold watch and went on to the national boxing in Boston in April, 1927. He won two K.O.'s but also suffered a cracked jaw. A year later he took up pro boxing in Buffalo and became known to his readers in the "Buffalo Courier Express" as the K.O. artist. His pay was \$350 for a round fight. His brother's untimely death brought him back to Canada, but he continued boxing from Drumheller. He won the middle weight championship for western Canada but after a bout with acute appendicitis, he decided to hang up his gloves for good and return to farming at Boian.



Moscaliuk sisters: l. to rt.: Doris, Lena, Mary, Katie, Vera 1970.

## Bill Moscaliuk

When working at a copper mine in Butte, Montana in 1925, Bill Moscaliuk had the opportunity to witness a boxing match in which Jack Dempsey participated. He was so impressed by Dempsey's skill and strength that he immediately started training at the local YMCA.

Bill still talks of how he won his first fight against a boxer named Charles McGillvary who had come to get the "long-legged guy". After the bell went Bill gave his opponent the straight left but the latter moved his head and ran into Bill's strong right. Fourteen seconds and McGillvary was out. No one was more surprised than Bill.

From Butte, Bill went east to Buffalo N.Y. where with his one-two punch he earned the title of "kayo-artist". Later family and health problems forced him to return home where he took up farming. His record as a middleweight amateur boxer follows:

Duration	1926-1929
Fights	58
Wins	24

Lost	3
Draws	2
K.O.'s	23
T.K.O.	1

In 1933 he married Ann Russ and raised a family of four sons and one daughter. The Moscaliuks' high priority on education was reflected in the educational careers of their children, all of whom attended post secondary educational institutions.

Patricia graduated from U. of A. in Home Economics and became a Home Management specialist in Alberta. Bernie attended the school of technology in Calgary and specialized in meteorology. He is at present in Brisbane, Australia.

George attended U. of A. and has his own business investments in Edmonton.

Don Mitch took up veterinary medicine and won a gold medal for proficiency.

Armand, the youngest, studied law at the U. of A. and also won a gold medal.

John Moskaliuk was born in 1907. He joined the U.S.A. army in July, 1926. With the American artillery



he served in the Philippine Islands. He also, took up boxing and became a champion boxer in the army. While serving, he took sick and passed away in 1927.

Mary Hryhorets was born in 1908. She resides in Edmonton and is in good health.

Lena was born in 1910. She married George Cleet and they resided in Drumheller. They had two daughters and a son but unfortunately George was killed in a mine accident leaving a young family behind. Later Lena moved to Calgary and married Albert Solverson. In 1979 after a brief illness, Lena passed away.

Doris, the youngest daughter, was born in 1912. She completed school at Boian, then left for Drumheller where she married Joe Suffesick. She moved to Calgary where she owned and operated a hair dressing salon. She died of cancer in 1978.

Mike Moss was born in 1914 but left for Drumheller

in 1928. There he began working for Canadian Utilities Power Co. where he worked his way up to the position of assistant operating superintendent.

In 1940 he married Lucy Laurent, which resulted in two sons Nolan and Brent. Besides being an excellent worker and a good father, Mike took a very active part in community affairs. Like his brothers, he also took up boxing and won a bronze medal in Drumheller. After a long illness, Mike passed way in 1981.

The baby of the family was Floyd who was left motherless when very young. He is presently living in Toronto where he has his own business.

Anne Maskaluk

### Nickifor, Nick and Katie

Nicolai was born Nov. 2, 1887 in Cernaui, Austria. Later, he and his parents, four brothers and one sister moved to Transylvania, Romania.

As a young man he ventured to Canada with a few of his friends, finally settling in Drumheller where he was employed in a coal mine. He also established there a small general store and shoe repair shop.

In 1925 he came to Boian to find a Romanian bride and married Katie Serbu, daughter of John and Anne Serbu. After the wedding, held Feb. 7, 1926, they returned to Drumheller. There they made their home till 1929 when fire destroyed store, home and belongings. They returned to Boian and lived on Mrs. Nickifor's parents' farm. Depression had begun and money and jobs were scarce. Nicolai, being a resourceful and handy man, painted, plastered, and made monuments in order to earn a few dollars. In the early 30's he painted the dome inside the church and some years later he stuccoed the exterior.

In 1935 summer, they located in Willingdon and five years later they were able to open their own butcher shop, the Willingdon Meat Market. While Katie operated the business, Nick continued with his plastering and stuccoing. Many homes and churches were done by him in the surrounding communities.



**Bill Mascaluk's family**

Standing l. to rt.: Mitch, George, Armand  
Seated: l. to rt. Patricia, Bill, Anne, Bernie. 1978.



Parents and grandparents: l. to rt. Anne and John S. Serbu; 1927. Nick and Katie Nickifor.

He made many tombstones in the Boian cemetery. A structure in which he took exceptional pride was the pioneer monument in Willingdon dedicated to the pioneers of the area in August 1955.

Always interested in Romanian activities he devoted much of his time and talents there. He was secretary for the St. Mary's Romanian Church from 1944 to 1952. During that term of office, he, with George N. Kelba and Mike Serbu succeeded in having the Certificate of Title read that the St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox Congregation of Boian is the owner of the forty acres of land and of course the church too. Gifted with a good voice, he enjoyed singing and at Christmas he would go carolling and organized the Irod. In this way, very much needed money was raised to keep the church functioning.

While working for themselves, and doing their share of community work, the Nickifors managed to raise four beautiful daughters and two fine sons.

Mary, the oldest, married George Bezuko and after farming successfully for a number of years they moved to Edmonton.

Victoria married R. Chornetski and they reside in Toronto.

Ann married Walter Fedorak and they reside in Edmonton.

Kay married H. Stork. At present they are in Germany.

The boys are also married and have families of their own. Nick lives in Edmonton, while Tom is in Vancouver.

In the late 60's the Nickifors moved to Edmonton due to ill health and enjoyed a few happy years of retirement. Nicolai passed away in 1968, while Katie followed him in May, 1969.

Mary Bezuko

## Porozni, Gheorghe (George) and Domnica

Lack of land and opportunities resulted in Gheorghe and Domnica Porozni leaving the province of Bukovina in Austro-Hungary, November, 1899. They had a two-year old little girl Pachița. After arriving in Canada they had four more children – John 1903, Velma 1905, George 1908 and Metro (Mike) 1917.

Gheorghe was 27 years old and Domnica was 20 when they arrived here. They had spent six weeks crossing a stormy Atlantic Ocean. Most of the passengers were very seasick. After docking in Halifax they took the train and finally arrived in Strathcona, Alberta, the end of the railroad.

They decided to settle in the Boian district among other Romanian settlers who had preceded them by about seven months. They found Alberta to be a land of rolling prairies, trees, grass, lakes, rivers and wild life. Only the Indians and the earliest settlers had seen this panorama before them. Incredible as it seemed, they could buy 160 acres of land for ten dollars!

The Poroznis spent their first winter with

Gheorghe's sister Elena and Mihai Cucheran whose land was adjacent to their quarter of land. The next summer they built a bordei on their own land. This sod house was warm enough in winter and cool enough in summer but lacked all of today's comforts.

In 1905 they built a thatched house close to the road allowance. It had two large rooms, and a porch. The kitchen had a cuptor (clay oven) and a șparhat (șparhut). The cuptor was used for baking bread and the top was a bed especially comfortable after a batch of bread had been baked inside. The other room was used as a storeroom for clothes, food, carpets, quilts, etc. Later it was also used for receptions.

In 1918 a larger three-room house was built to accommodate the growing family.

Clearing the land was an onerous task – so much back-breaking manual labor. The trees were cut down and burned. The roots were grubbed out. The ploughing itself was difficult as this was virgin sod. Then the mosquitoes in swarms pestered the workers.

Fortunately, Gheorghe had been trained as a car-



Early farm scene: l. to rt. George Jr., Domnica, Velma and George Porozni, 1917.

penter in the old country and brought with him a set of tools and a plow. With his skill and tools he was able to build window frames, fit doors, made a set of wooden harrows and even built pine coffins from the local native trees.

Like other immigrants Gheorghe went working on the railroad track to earn much needed currency. Domnica, with another lady, was left to look after the home and the small children.

In 1903, which was his last year on the railroad track, Gheorghe purchased two high-spirited grey horses from a rancher in the Fort MacLeod area. These horses were only partially broken but he managed to lead them home to Boian, a trip that took eighteen days. Early in the trip he lost control of these broncos and had to engage the help of some local cowboys to round them up. The journey was resumed. When the trip seemed to be almost over, the horses attempted to turn away again. Poor Gheorghe was dragged over the rough prairie but being stubborn and tenacious he held on to the rope. He arrived home with his shirt almost torn off, his back bleeding from numerous cuts and bruises, but nonetheless proud owner of a team of strong, healthy horses.

Looking to the future, Gheorghe knew he would

need more land so in 1915 he bought an additional quarter of land across the road from the homeplace, for \$17.00 an acre. In 1925 another quarter section was added. This land was a mile directly south. Three years later still another quarter of land was purchased. As his sons grew up and learned to farm, Gheorghe had land for each of them.

Machinery was added too as needed. A seed drill was bought early and in 1917 a Huber steam tractor was purchased. In 1927 he acquired a McCormick Deering threshing machine. His first car was a Model T Ford bought in 1921. His next automobile was a fashionable 1924 Buick Phaeton Touring Model bought in 1925.

Life was not easy for Domnica. Beside the usual household chores and looking after the children, she, like other pioneer women, worked beside her husband in the yard and in the field. To supplement her food supply she would pick wild berries and mushrooms and, of course plant a large garden.

One day while helping her husband by holding the team of horses, she was knocked down by the wagon pole as the animals tried to bolt. As a result she spent several weeks in the hospital at Pakan. Once she recovered she was back working hard as ever.



50th wedding anniversary in front of farm home 1945:  
Front row l. to rt.: Maria K. Iftody, Raveta V. Toma, Sanda N. Kelba, Domnica and George Porozni, Nicolai Kelba, Vasile Toma, Mike Serbu.



In 1927 a windmill was erected on their farm to pump water for their livestock. It still stands as a sentinel over the land where so many changes took place.

Gheorghe and Domnica were married in 1896. George was born in 1872 and died in 1948 at age 75. Domnica (née Toma) was born in 1879 and died in 1962 at 83. Pachița (Katie) is an efficient homemaker and an accomplished seamstress. She is now retired. John lived across the road from his dad's place. He was always involved in community work and ably held many executive positions. He resides in Vegreville with his wife Anne. Velma was an excellent worker. She liked farming and could handle horses better than most men. After running several successful businesses, she and her husband Fred Fediuk retired and live in Burnaby, B.C. George, like his older brother, chose farming as a career. He lives a mile south of his parents' homestead. He also took an active part in community affairs, along with his wife Sandra. Metro (Mike) farmed his parents' quarter section for a time, then went into business. He built a series of motels and after thirty-five years he returned to his parents' original homestead where he lives with his wife Jean in a very modern home.

Ron Porozni

### Porozni, John and Anne

One of the more progressive farmers in the Romanian community at Boian was John Porozni. He was born in 1903 and grew up on the farm, had little formal education because the local school remained open only during the summer months.

By the time he was eleven he had to help in the fields by walking behind four harrows drawn by three horses. Three years later John started breaking prairie by hanging on to a walking plow pulled by four horses.

In 1923 he left home and for five months worked at Davidson, Saskatchewan which affected his views about farming. In 1924 he went west to Vancouver



John Porozni Master Farm Family Award 1951: l. to rt. Robert, Nicholas, John, Anne holding Betty, Willis and George.

Island to work at a Pulp & Paper Mill that employed some 300 Japanese workers and only five Caucasians. Although the weather was mild, John was very homesick for the prairies and his home so he returned to go farming with his father.

Farming was still not easy. It meant long hours of hard work in summer. In winter it meant hauling grain in the cold weather to Vegreville or hauling sleigh loads of wood from across the Saskatchewan River – wood for fire, rails for fencing and posts for corrals and fencing.

In 1926 John married Anne Svekla of Shalka district and together they started their farming venture. The following year they built a log house 16'x20' on the quarter across the road from his father's homestead. Other buildings followed in due time. In 1930 they bought another quarter of land and more machinery all on credit, but all paid for later.

The farming enterprise was registered as the Willingdon Stock and Seed Farm. They raised purebred Yorkshire hogs, also pure bred Hereford cattle. Some

of these animals were shown at fairs in Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Lacombe, Lloydminster and St. Paul. Breeding stock was sold at home and abroad.

In 1951 the Porozni family won the Master Farm Family award for north-east Alberta, an achievement of which they were justly proud.

John and his wife Anne have served on many boards and committees, almost too numerous to mention. A few of these include, John as president of the Agricultural Society of Willingdon for ten years, first president of Willingdon Seed Cleaning Plant, member of the Agriculture Service Board, and for sixteen years trustee and chairman of the Boian Marea S.D. #2053, just to mention a few. His wife Anne was active too. She took part in the agricultural society, the Shandro museum, Boian Ladies' Club, I.O.D.E. and Willingdon Home and School Association.

In 1977 they retired to their new home in Vegreville but are more active than ever.

The Poroznis are proud of their children. Nicholas is the A.M.A. Manager CNCP Tele-communications in Edmonton. Willis is farming successfully in the Willingdon area. George is a professor at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg. Robert is a pharmacist and owns his own pharmacy in St. Paul. Bettyann worked at the Univ. of Alberta Hospital as a lab technician for ten years and for two years as a dietitian at the same place.

John and Anne have thirteen grandchildren and one great grandchild. They still enjoy farm life and often assist their son on the farm.

### **Ravliuk, Elie**

One of the first to emigrate to Canada was Elie Ravliuk. He had three daughters and one son Nicholas. The daughters all married in the Boian area. The son, Nicholas, married Alexandra Hantiuk in 1920. In 1929 Nicholas and Elie left for Pierceland, Saskatchewan to search for a homestead. Having located one, they travelled to Lloydminster to register the homestead.

It was at this time that the name was changed from Ravliuk to Rawlake, on the advice of the registrar in the Land Titles Office at Lloydminster. A year later (1930) Nicholas took his family to the Pierceland area, and his father accompanied them. They worked hard at establishing their homestead about five miles south of Pierceland.

Nicholas died in 1940 at 50 years of age and was buried in the Romanian church cemetery five miles west of Pierceland. Elie died in 1942 at Wolsley, Saskatchewan where he was living in a nursing home. Elie was buried there.



On the right is Alexandra M. Hantiuk 1917.

Nicholas left eight children, three daughters and five sons, all to be brought up by Alexandra. She now resides at the Senior Citizens' Lodge in Cold Lake, Alberta.

Nick Rawlake

### **Romanko, Vasile and Elena**

Vasile Romanko was born in Voloca, Bucovina and grew up there. He attended the village school but as a young man he decided to leave his land of birth and emigrate to Canada along with many other Romanians and Ukrainians in 1898.

Once in Canada he worked where he was able to find a job and earned enough money to file for a homestead in Boian in 1903. He cleared enough land and put up the necessary buildings so that by 1906 he received the title to this quarter.

In 1903 he married Eleana Cutzangavich, daughter of Daniel and Vaselena Cutzangavich. Together Vasile and his young bride built a bordei (a sod house) and began farming. The first two children were born in the sod house, and while still living in this shelter, the Romankos had some frightening experiences. One rainy day Elena opened her door to throw out the dishwater and was surprised to see a big bear sniffing near the door. Who was more surprised? On another occasion Vasile was enjoying a Sunday afternoon nap when he was rudely awakened by a heavy thump on his chest. Upon checking this disturbance he saw a garter snake slithering away towards the door. The next spring they built a log house with a lean-to for the domestic animals.

Eight children were born to this couple. Vasile never lived to see his children grow up. He passed away suddenly during the flu epidemic in 1918 leaving his young widow with a large family.

Two years later Elena married Nicolai Dorish and three more children were born. Nicolai, too, passed away in 1930 and again Elena was widowed. She persevered and with her children continued to farm and



**Romanko Vasile and Eleana**

Mother and daughters: l. to rt.: Alice, Eleana and Olga Dorish. 1933.

brought up all her children to be fine men and women.

From the first marriage there were five sons and three daughters. Mary married Peter Dohei and they had four boys and four girls. George married Katherine Bordian. They have a son James and a daughter Tillie. Dora married Sam Rogoza. They have one daughter. Mertin married Jean Serbu. They have one daughter Eleanor and one son Willis. They lost one daughter, Carol, in a car accident. Ted married Mary Balko. They, too, have one son and one daughter.



Hardy pioneer stock: l. to rt.: back row, Alex, Martin, Ted, and George Romanko; John Dorish. Front row l. to rt.: Dora Rogoza, Olga Bezovie, Mary Dohei, Alice Karpetz, Susie Hart and Nick Romanko. Eight members have attained Golden Age status.

Susie (Vasilca) married George Hart. They raised one son and two daughters. Nick married Mary Dubitz and they have a son Ron and a daughter Darlene. The youngest of the Romankos, Alex, married Sanda Goroniuk. They have two boys and two girls.

From the second marriage there was John who married Alice Lutic. They have two boys and a girl. Olga married George Bezovie and they have two boys and a girl. The youngest, Alice, married Nick Karpetz and they have two boys and a girl.

Of the many pioneer families at Boian, this is the only one where all the children are still living. The Romankos have all reached the golden age – the oldest is eighty and the youngest sixty-eight.

Elena spent the last few years of her life in Edmonton where she enjoyed all the comforts of city life. In 1956 she passed away at the age of sixty-eight. She was buried at Boian.

(Mary N. Romanko)

## Russ, Vasile and Sophia

Vasile Russ was born in Boian Bukovina in 1878. In 1898 he married Sophia Holowity and in 1911 they emigrated to Canada, a distant unknown land, with their first born son, Tom.

Like all newcomers when they arrived they lived in a hurriedly constructed sod house (bordei) on a homestead in the Soda Lake district. Three more children were born here.

Tom married Pachița Porozni in 1916 and settled on a farm in the heart of the Boian Marea S.D. #2053. There Tom and Pachița brought up five daughters – Anne, Helen, Dorothy, Mary and Sally. Their only son, George, died as an infant.

Tom Russ and his family operated the Boian Post Office from 1927 to 1941 and carried the mail from Boian and Shalka Post Offices to the main post office in Hairy Hill.

During the depression of the thirties, three of their daughters had the courage to venture at an early age





**Tom Russ's Family**

Back row l. to rt.: Dorothy, Mary and Sally (Sanda)  
Standing between Pachița and Tom Russ is Sandy Kozicar.

to the metropolis of Montreal and make their livelihood there for several years. Helen left in 1936 and became a seamstress. Dorothy went in 1937 and was employed as a secretary in the C.P.R. office. Mary followed in 1938 and worked as a salad girl at the C.P.R. hotel. Anne, the eldest, married Bill Mascaluk, a former boxer and farmer. They had five children. Helen died at 25 in 1943 of a heart condition. Dorothy married Fred Markowski, a furrier in Edmonton. Mary married Steve Semeniuk who worked for Independent Wholesale. They have two children – Al is a car salesman, and Brigette is an assistant District Agriculturist in Red Deer area. Sally married George Iftody, a prosperous farmer in Boian. The couple was blessed with two daughters. Elaine became a school teacher and is presently acting principal in one of the schools at Stony Plain. Marsha Gail is a social worker and pro-

bation officer in Edmonton. John Russ, the second son of Vasile and Sophia, married Velma Koles and settled on a farm near Willingdon. They had three sons and a daughter Kathleen. Domnica, the only daughter of Vasile and Sophia, married Timofy and lived in Vancouver.

The spirit of these early settlers is out there in the open country where the first Romanian pioneers settled. They came to create a new world in a virgin land. Some may say that they failed, but it is in their failures, as well as in their success, that the history and romance of the beautiful community named Boian is to be found.

Sally Iftody

### **Sandulak Lazur and Dochița**

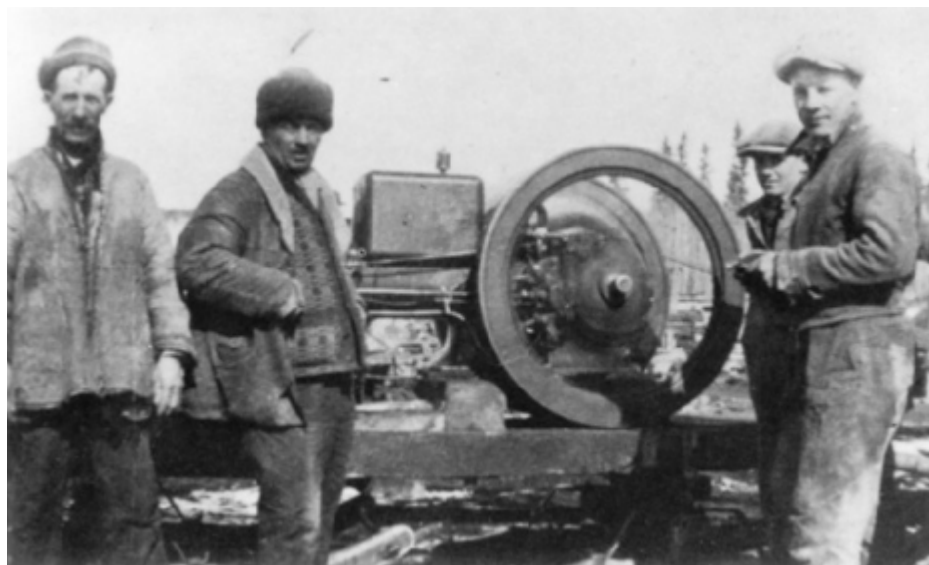
Lazur Sandulak was born Sept. 20, 1882 in Boian, Bucovina, the son of Simeon and Vasilca Sandulak. He grew up in Boian and in 1902 emigrated to Canada with the rest of the family.

Dochița was born March 9, 1889, the daughter of Metro and Gafita Burmey. She came to Canada in 1901 with her parents and the family settled twelve miles north of Mundare in the Beaver Lake district.

Lazur and Dochița were married Feb. 16, 1907 and settled on a homestead a mile directly west of Boian Marea School, where they spent most of their lives. Twelve children resulted from this marriage but two little girls died in infancy during the flu epidemic. The surviving children all attended the local school and also helped on the farm. Besides farming Lazur also operated a small blacksmith shop in his farm yard where he sharpened plough shares, shod horses and repaired parts of farm machinery for the neighboring farmers.

As the children grew older, the girls married and the boys left home in search of work and to establish homes of their own.

Katie, (Pachița) the oldest married and settled in the Desjarlais district close to the south bank of the



Sawing wood 1934: l. to rt.: Mitru Mereniuk, Lazur Sandulak, Nick and George Sandulak.

North Saskatchewan River. She has two daughters, Katherine and Victoria, both of whom are married with families of their own. Katie and her husband Bill Elchuk still live at Desjarlais. Vera married George Harasim and farmed successfully at Boian for many years and are now retired in Willingdon. They have one daughter Georgina who works in Edmonton. Doris married Harry Tokariuk and have one boy and two girls. They live in Drumheller. The two older boys, Nick and George lived in the Drumheller area as well. Nick and his wife Pauline operated a dairy farm near Stettler and adopted three boys. Pauline passed away in 1968 and Nick died three years later. His brother George and his family took over the dairy farm. Mary Sandulak left home at a very young age and worked in various places finally ending in Calgary. She and her husband Ted Nielsen are enjoying retirement in Calgary. Mary is quite widely known for her collection of hundreds of different kinds of saucers. Grace married Mike Boyko and they have three sons. They operate a mixed farm near Mundare.

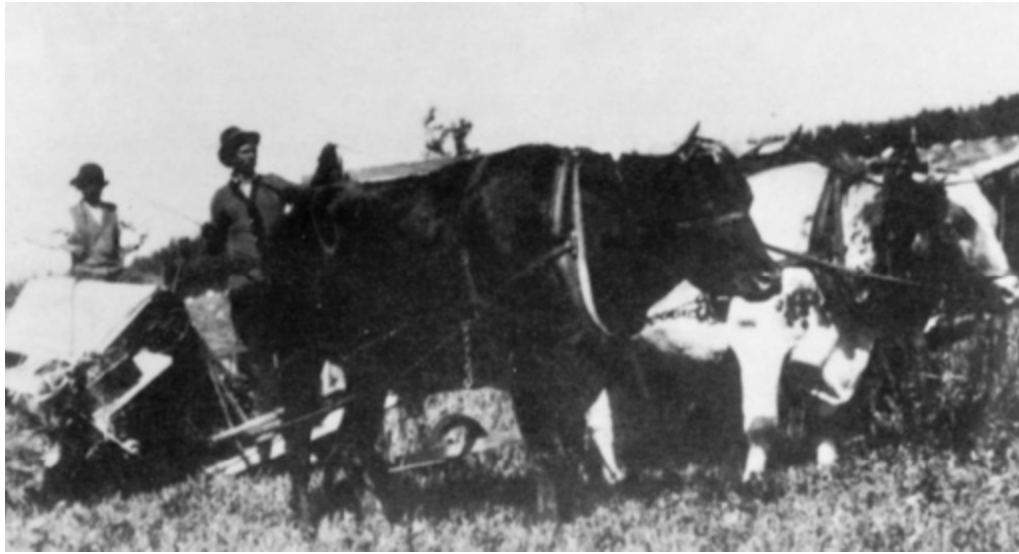
During the depression Lazur and his wife and the younger children left farming and moved to Andrew

where they lived the remainder of their lives. They are buried in the Hairy Hill Romanian Church cemetery.

Katie Elchuk



Mrs. Lazur (Dochița) Sandulak 1950.



Binder drawn by ox-power.  
Behind l. to rt. is Simeon Sandulak and  
Gawrylo Lakusta. 1912.

### Semeniuk, Ion and Domnica

Ion was the son of Metro and Axania Semeniuk. Domnica was the daughter of Vasile and Marița Bodice. They were born in Bucovina, where they grew up and married. Two sons – Metro-Vasile and Pete and two daughters – Ioana and Vasilca were born in Boian, Bucovina. Unfortunately Metro-Vasile and Ioana passed away as infants.

In 1899, the Semeniuks decided to emigrate to Canada along with many other families from the area. Their son Pete was four years old and their daughter was two. Upon arrival in Edmonton they journeyed to Andrew to take up their homestead in April.

Their first home was a bordei (sod house). Since the ground was still frozen, the young couple gathered dry grass from the sloughs and burned it to thaw out the soil. A hole was dug rectangular in shape, about twelve feet by ten feet and two feet deep. This would form the base of their shelter. Trees were cut down and limbed, then cut to appropriate lengths. These poles were used to build a roof in the form of a teepee in the sense that one end of a pole was against the base of sod wall and the other leaned inwards and met

a similar pole leaning inward from the opposite side. These poles rested on a ridge pole which was supported across the centre of the whole structure. Back and front wall were built upright. The spaces between were filled in with a mud plaster made from clay soil and mixed with grass or slough hay with enough water added to make it soft and workable. The whole structure would be covered with more slough hay and then layers of sod to keep the rains out.

In order to bake bread a cuptor (oven) was built into a hill side. A hole large enough was dug out, a crude door was made and the oven was ready.

It was still the month of April and Orthodox Easter was fast approaching. Domnica was worried about the Easter dinner. How to make pasca (Easter bread) and the traditional colored eggs? Fortunately she was able to find some wild duck eggs in the rushes near the nearby lake. Also, she noticed a wild duck sitting on a nest and she crept close enough to grab the bird by the neck as it stretched its head curiously to see what was coming. The duck furnished the meat, she had eggs and flour, and the Easter dinner proved to be a small feast.



Parents l. to rt. Ion and Domnica Semeniuk 1905.

When the bordei (bordey) was liveable, Ion left for work on the railroad track far from home. He earned some money and brought back supplies for his hungry family. He also worked for farmers near Bruderheim. One farmer paid Ion some money and also donated a little pig because the sow had too large a litter.

After six years, the Semeniuks abandoned their bordei and moved to the Boian area and settled on S.W.24-56-14-W4. While their new log home was being built, the family lived with Mr. and Mrs. Nicolai Iftody.

Ion was also community minded. He did his share in helping to build the St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox

Church by volunteering his labour and also using a horse and an ox for hauling the huge logs.

Ten more children were born in the Semeniuk family. While at Andrew, twins George and Mary were born but both passed away as infants. Metro (No. 2) and Sanfira were also born at Andrew. At Boian, Sanda, Nicolai, Constantin, Andrei, Mary (No. 2) and Elasa were born. All attended the local school at Shalka. The parents lived on the farm till their deaths. Ion passed away in 1934, to be followed by his wife Domnica in 1936. Both are buried at Boian.

Pete Semeniuk the eldest surviving son was born July 9, 1895. While still a child at Boian, his parents took him to Vasile T. Toma's home where Mrs. Toma (Raveta) taught him to read and write as there were no schools, as yet, in the area. As a young man he



l. to rt.: Vasilca and Andrei Euchuk 1919



worked in southern Alberta and also in Saskatchewan.

In 1915 he married Domnica (Vasile) E. Cucheran and they homesteaded on S.W.1-57-14. From this marriage there were six daughters and two sons who passed away as infants. The girls all married and have families of their own.

Vasilca, the oldest daughter, married Andrei Euchuk at 16. They lived in the Deep Lake district, north-east of Boian. Three children were born; Pete, Mary and Katie. When Katie was two weeks old, her mother went to the nearby lake to cut a hole in the ice so that the cattle could drink water. She caught a severe cold and died shortly after, leaving the young tots motherless. Several years later, Andrei remarried.

Metro (Mike) Semeniuk, like other farm boys, had to work hard on the farm and then went into farming himself. In 1922 he married Mary Strinbitsky and had three children; Jenny, Helen and George. From his second marriage to Katie, there were nine children.

Sanfira was born Feb. 26, 1903 near Andrew. She was baptised in St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox Church at Boian by a priest from the Shandro Orthodox church. Sanfira attended school very little as she was needed at home to take care of the younger siblings. At the age of 15 she married Nicolai Darda, a neighboring widower who had two daughters aged five and three years.

Sanda (Jenny) Semeniuk was born at Boian and worked on the farm like her brothers and sisters. She married Mike Miller in 1926 and farmed near Ashmont, finally retiring in Ashmont. Mike and Jenny have thirteen children and thirty grandchildren.

Nicolai (Nick) Semeniuk was born in 1908, and he, too, worked on the farm. In 1929 he married Lena Michalcheon and they farmed in the Shalka area. They have one son. Lena passed away in 1977.

Constantin (Charley) Semeniuk was born in 1909. He attended Bojan School, a very eager student. In 1925 he left home to seek work and spent most of his working days at different types of jobs in Alberta and B.C. He is at present in the Willingdon Senior Citizens' Lodge.



l. to rt.: Standing: Mary Dobush, Jenny Miller, Sanfira Darda.  
Seated: Charley, Pete and Nick Semeniuk. 1975.

Andrei (Andy) Semeniuk followed the life pattern of his older brothers. Early in life he moved to Vernon, B.C. In 1940 he married Sarah and they have one daughter and two sons.

Mary, the youngest daughter was born in 1914. She completed public school at Boian (Shalka) school. In 1935 she married George Sambor and they settled on the family homestead. Mary worked very hard on the homestead, but when she sat down she automatically would pick up her embroidery. Her handicrafts were always beautiful. Mary and George had two children, Lillian and Peter John (Pat). In 1958 George passed away suddenly. She later married George Dobush who passed away in 1981. Widowed again, Mary lives in Vegreville where she is active bowling,

playing bingo, working in her garden in summer and, of course, still embroidering.

Alex (Elasa) Semeniuk was the baby. He left the farm early and became a mechanic by trade. He married Helen Scherba of Glendon, Alberta, and had one daughter. At present they all reside in Ontario.

Rocky (Darda) Chrapko

### **Serbu, Ion and Anița**

Ion Serbu came to Canada with his parents Sava and Maria Serbu in 1899. The first winter they spent in a bordei near Whitford, but next spring they moved to Boian.

Ion had completed grade VI education in Bukovina and this helped him a good deal when he went out working at the age of eighteen in Alberta. He married Anița Skirka and they homesteaded just east of his parents' quarter of land. Eight children were born to this couple; Katie, Harry, Bill, Kost, Doris, Jean, Rita and Sam.

One very cold winter day in 1929 Ion was returning from the Mundare flour mill with his sleigh full of bags of freshly milled flour, but for some reason, the load overturned and pinned Ion under. He could not pull himself free and he knew if help did not arrive he would freeze to death. Fortunately another farmer travelling on the same road saw the accident and after struggling for some time managed to free Ion. The unfortunate man never fully recovered and died a year or so later.

Anița was left a widow but managed to bring up the children on her own. One of the sons, Constantine, became a chef in Toronto. Doris, who married Tom Zaharichuk, has become a well-known artist in Western Canada. Anița passed away in 1940. Both she and her husband are buried at Boian.

### **Serbu, Sava and Maria**

Sava Serbu was born in 1849 in Boian, Bucovina and his wife Maria (née Dumitrashchuk) was born in

1860 also in Boian. In 1899 they emigrated to Canada and spent the first winter in a bordei close to Andrew. They had brought as many household items as they could which included clothing, home spun blankets, cups, wooden spoons, some pots and the top of a shparhut (șparhat). There were seven children in the family, John, Domnica, Frozina, Petre, Nicolai, Mike (Mihai) and Todosia.



Mike Serbu, his wife Katherine holding baby Doris, and his mother, Maria in doorway, 1924.

In the early spring of 1900 they moved to Boian where Sava had already built a small log house. Later in spring when Sava was returning home through melting snow and mud he caught a severe cold which developed into pneumonia and despite Maria's frantic efforts to save him with known remedies of the day, he died. Since there was no cemetery at Boian, Sava was laid to rest in a home-made coffin in the cemetery at Shandro. Maria was left a young widow with a large family in a strange country. How helpless and lonely she must have felt!

In December of the same year, her second son Peter (Mitru) took sick and complained of a terrible pain in his left arm. He was a mere ten years of age. Maria went to her neighbor to the south, Ion T. Toma and asked for help. She wanted her son taken to a doctor. Ion Toma immediately walked to his father's place across the snow-covered fields and asked his youngest brother George to assist him. Ion had previously purchased a pair of Indian ponies and the two men proceeded to make a rough sled from poplar trees. They filled it with slough hay, hitched the two horses to the sleigh, then drove to the Serbu home. Maria proceeded to bundle up the young lad on top of the hay and the three of them started their wintry journey to Edmonton. It was bitterly cold and the two men took turns walking behind or sitting on the sled and driving. They followed the trail through the bushes westward, and westward still. Some three days later they arrived on Jasper Avenue and first street. They went to a small clothing store which was owned by a man who spoke Romanian. Ion asked him if there was a doctor or a hospital as they had a very sick boy, who was getting worse daily. The storekeeper told them to follow the trail north-westward to St. Albert where there was a hospital and doctors. So the travellers thanked him and set out again. In time they reached St. Albert and sure enough, there was a hospital.

Mitru was hospitalized and Ion and George T. Toma began their long trek back to Boian. The doctors, a Dr. Whitelaw and his assistants Dr. Park and Dr. Blais decided to amputate the sore arm. Mitru was put to sleep and his arm was removed just above the elbow and when he regained consciousness he asked "Unde e mână?" (Where is my hand?). No one could understand him but there was a young Ukrainian girl who knew some Romanian and explained to him what had happened. But the arm got worse and the pain intensified. In time a second operation was performed and the complete arm from the shoulder was removed. More convalescing, but by May he was up and walking around in the convent. There were a number of French-Canadian lads who stayed there. It

was at this time that he was named Peter (Pierre) and he was no longer known as Mitru. He stayed five years at the convent where he went to school and became very fluent in French and English.

At the age of fifteen he went to Edmonton where he worked as an orderly at the newly constructed General Hospital. Two years later he left and worked at various jobs ending up eventually in Midnapore at a time when Father Lacombe was there. Other jobs followed but he still wanted to come back to his family so he made his way to Vegreville and northward to Boian. He was appointed land assessor in the Municipal District of Eagle and he used the money earned to further his education. He attended the Alberta College South in Edmonton where he completed Grade XI. After graduating from Calgary Normal School he taught school at Desjarlais then located in Willingdon where he was secretary-treasurer of both the school and the town for many years.

The author remembers how Pete played baseball for Boian at the picnics and sports days. Although he had only one arm he was able to catch, pitch and bat as well as the best of them. Pete lived to a ripe old age of ninety-five.

All this time Maria Serbu continued farming with the help of her children. In the course of time they all married and left to establish homes of their own. John married Anița Skirka. Domnica married Vasile Coleasca and they had two children, a boy Nick and a girl Vasilca. When this marriage ended, Domnica married George Patinta and they had one daughter Mary. When Domnica was widowed she married Mitru Mereniuk and this marriage resulted in three boys, George, Mike and Stephen. Frozina, the second daughter, married Vasile Lastiwka of Borowich. They raised a family of four boys and two girls, Mike, Nick, Piccola, Elie, John and Anne. Peter married Katie Bandur and they had a son Peter and two daughters, Marian and Patricia. Nick married Domnica Budnitski. They had no children.

Mike being the youngest son took over the family farm and with his wife Katherine developed it into a





Mike Serbu's family, l. to rt.: John, Evelyn, Steve, Doris and Steve. Seated are the parents.

successful operation. They purchased more land in the vicinity and became very efficient farmers. Mike and Katherine were always involved in the Romanian community and for a few years Mike served as president of St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox Church at Boian. They lived on the farm until retiring in Edmonton where they still reside. They raised a family of five, Sam, Doris, Steve, John and Evelyn. John was the first person of Romanian origin in this area to earn a medical degree. He is now practising in United States. All the children have families of their own so that Mike and Catherine are deservedly proud of their children and grandchildren.

### **Skirka, Condrea and Rafira**

As a young man of 23, Condrea, along with other relatives and friends, planned to leave their native Bukovina and emigrate to that land of hopes and dreams, Canada. In March, 1899 they boarded a freight ship in Hamburg, Germany and sailed across the Atlantic to Halifax, Nova Scotia. Condrea, along with others went to western Canada. From Edmonton

he journeyed with others to the Andrew-Wostok area.

Like other young men he went to work for the C.P.R. on the railroad track earning \$1.25 for a ten-hour day. He managed to save some money with which he bought a pair of horses, a wagon and a plow. These he brought to his homestead where he had already cultivated a few acres and had built a little hut.

In 1901 he married Rafira Yurko, daughter of Mihai and Maria Yurko. They settled on their homestead and



Parents; L. to rt.: Rafira and Condrea Skirka 1950

worked hard and long, like most of the pioneers. Their family grew in number till eventually, they had eight sons and four daughters.

In 1912 they moved to Vegreville, and again Condrea got a job on the railroad track and worked long ten-hour days at \$1.50 per day. Their love of the land forced them to go back to the farm, so they sold their property in Vegreville and bought a farm at Boian in 1916.



Condrea Skirka was a founding member of St. Mary's Orthodox Church at Boian and an elder for many years. In the winter months he would get up early, take wood and chips and start the fire in the church so that the building would be warm and cozy by the time the parishioners arrived. Rafira, too, was a member of the Boian Ladies' Club and volunteered her help whenever possible.

During the dreadful flu epidemic, Condrea was one of the few who was not ill, so he helped look after the sick. Sadly, the Skirkas lost three boys and one girl during this flu. Later, another son passed away.

They were now left with three sons and three daughters, Michael of Vegreville, Nicholas of Willingdon and Steven in Edmonton. Mrs. Mary Michalcean of Vegreville, Mrs. Dora Werenka of Andrew and Mrs. Elizabeth Lastiwka of Vegreville.



Mike and Rita Skirka 1950.

Condrea and Rafira farmed till they retired to Hairy Hill. Condrea passed away in 1955. Rafira lived with daughter Elizabeth and finally was placed in the Vegreville Nursing Home. She passed away at age ninety-nine.

Mike Skirka, oldest of three surviving sons married Rita P. Hutzcal in 1932. After farming for five years, Mike started buying grain for National Grain Co. of Hairy Hill. Subsequently Mike and Rita undertook other businesses as well. But throughout their life both were very active in local community affairs. Gifted with a beautiful tenor voice, Mike was a cantor in the Boian church for forty years. He was secretary of the Village of Hairy Hill for eight years, president of the Hairy Hill Co-op for a number of years. They were both life-long members of the Romanian Orthodox Church at Boian and both sang in the choir.

In 1974 they retired to Vegreville but are still active in church and community affairs.

Mike Skirka

### **Soprovich, Costache and Sanfira**

Costache Soprovich was born in June 1865 in Bucovina. Sanfira was born in Rarancea, Bucovina in 1866, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Cocasco. When they got married, Sanfira spoke no Romanian but fortunately her husband was fluent in Ukrainian. In the old country the Soprovichs owned a big house with a shingled roof, two pigs, fifteen chickens and a cow. When there was talk in the villages about free land in a far-off country, Costache decided to go and find out. He left his family behind and came to Canada where he worked for a year and a half. Then he went back. When he was approaching the house with his new hat and coat the children mistook him for some important official. However the misunderstanding was soon cleared up and Costache began narrating stories of what he had seen. They decided to emigrate.

The Soprovichs left Bucovina in 1899, boarded the ship S.S. Numidian and sailed for Halifax. The family



Sanfira Soprovich 1945.

consisted of the parents, and four children, Maria age 8, Domnica age 6, Sandra age 4 and Metro who was only two. They landed in Halifax on May 1st, 1899. En route westward their first major stop was in Winnipeg where they had to wait two days for the next train connection to Edmonton.

In Winnipeg just as the train was leaving, Costache rushed to find the conductor and began hollering in Romanian and waving his hands. Seeing that the conductor did not understand him, Costache grabbed him by the arm and led him to where his wife was sitting. She was in labor and the conductor knew that some-

thing had to be done immediately. He stopped the train and the whole Soprovich family disembarked and the train proceeded westward. Mrs. Soprovich was taken to the hospital where a healthy boy named Elie was born. After a week's rest, the family once more boarded the train for Edmonton.

Once in Alberta, the Soprovichs first homesteaded in the Wostok-Andrew area, N.E. 36, 56, 17, W. of the 4th. Here they lived in a bordei for two years and cultivated a few acres of land to raise vegetables. They then moved to the Desjarlais area and settled on S.W. 32-56-14-W4. Here too, they struggled a few years then decided to move again. This time they moved to Rouleau, Sask. in 1906 where some of his friends had homesteaded. Here he bought an abandoned farm which had a small shack and a small patch of land cultivated for a garden. After checking the farm itself, Costache found it to be rocky and more surprising that there was no bush. One reason that they had come to Canada was to find plenty of land, water and forests for building and for firewood. Here, ironically enough, they had to use buffalo chips for firewood. Being a carpenter Kost worked in the district building houses, barns, chicken coops and granaries. After two years at Rouleau they decided to move back to Alberta. This time they settled on S.W.-14-56-14-W4 in the Boian area. Kost built a sod roof house into a hillside where they spent the winter. The following year the Soprovichs decided that a forty-acre farm was not enough so they sold the land and bought a quarter of land near Hairy Hill, S.E. 33-55-14-W4 where they spent most of their lives. In this new community, Kost found himself busy building and also doing a bit of blacksmith work, as well, for his neighbors.

The Soprovichs were deeply religious folks and helped to build and support the Romanian church. Kost also served as cantor for many years. The family consisted of Maria who married Wasyl Visitew. This couple had four children, Martin deceased, Andrew, Sandra and Judith. Wasyl passed away in 1956 at the age of seventy-seven. He is remembered for his lamentations at funerals. Maria died in 1976 in Victoria,



l. to rt. Elie and Mary Soprovich, Nick and Sadie Johnson. 1942.

B.C. at the age of eighty-five. Domnica married Steve Eliuk in 1910 and lived near Hairy Hill. Steve passed away in 1956 at the age of sixty-eight. His wife retired to Vegreville where she lived to the ripe old age of ninety-three. The Eliuk family consisted of William, George, Tom, Andrew, Mary and Helen who died of cancer in 1972. Sandra married Nick K. Kachuk and their family consisted of George, John, Pearl, now deceased, Mary and Dorothy. Sandra passed away in the early thirties and Nick died in the seventies. Metro married Vasilca Kelba and they had three children: George, Mary and Katie. Metro passed away in 1972 at the age of seventy-six. Lena is retired happily in Edmonton. Elie Soprovich married Mary V. Toma. They raised a family of four children: John, Willis, Rose and Jeannette. Elie died in 1981 at the age of eighty-two. His wife is residing in Edmonton. The youngest son, Nick married Sadie K. Iftody and they



**Metro Soprovich Family**

l. to rt.: George, Metro, Mary and Lena the mother holding Katie 1929.

farmed in the Hairy Hill area for several years, then moved to Edmonton where Nick was involved in real estate. He passed away in 1957 at the age of fifty-two. Nick and Sadie had two boys, Mike and Edward. Sadie later remarried Bill Maciborski who passed away in 1985.

Of the parents who started all this, Costache died in 1937 at the age of seventy-two and his wife Sanfira died in 1946 when she was eighty.

George S. Eliuk

### **Suprovich, Elie and Ioana**

Elie T. Suprovich was born July 1, 1886 in the village of Boian, Bukovina, the son of Toader and Maria Suprovich. He attended the local school where he learned to read and write the Romanian language perfectly. Gifted with a strong singing voice he loved singing the old Romanian folk songs, carols and church hymns. He kept up his knowledge of Roman-



ian by continually reading Romanian books, newspapers, and whatever he could lay his hands on. He shared this knowledge with his oldest son Mitru (Dan) by teaching him to read and write Romanian before he started school at Boian Marea. Mitru's first teacher was Mrs. Nellie Berry, who was surprised that this young lad caught on to reading English so quickly, till she realized later that Mitru was literate in one language already.

At the age of 21, in 1907, Elie decided to emigrate to Canada, a far-away country about which he had heard so much. He had already been called to serve in the Austrian army but he thought he would escape this service. When he arrived in Winnipeg, he got a job and worked for six months, then decided to return home and do his patriotic duty. He returned to Boian, reported to the Austrian officials, and served in the infantry for three years. During this time he became quite fluent in the German language.



70th birthday of Elie T. Suprovich 1956: l. to rt.: Mrs. Elie Fedorak, Mrs. Tom Kokotailo, Mrs. Floria Axani, Mrs. Elie Suprovich, Mrs. Domnica Hutscal, Mr. Elie Suprovich, Mr. Tom Kokotailo, Mr. Elie Fedorak, Mr. Floria Axani.

On being discharged from the army in 1910, he left for Canada again and this time journeyed as far as Vegreville. Knowing that there was a Romanian settlement at Boian, some twenty-five miles directly north of Vegreville, he set out on foot and walked all the way, and in due time, he arrived there tired and hungry. He was welcomed in the community so he decided to settle there. He homesteaded on S.E. 1/4-section 27, tsp. 56, range 14, W.4th.

Now that he had some land, he needed a companion to establish a home. He had left his girl friend Ioana back home in Boian, Bukovina but he corresponded with her continuously. In 1913 he paid her travel fare and had her come to join him. Ioana was born March 15, 1892 in Boian, daughter of Stefan and Elena Caba. In September, 1913 Ioana arrived at Boian, Alberta.



Suprovich children; 1975, l. to rt.: Standing Dan and his sister Anne. Sitting Nick and Mike Suprovich.



A month later Elie and Ioana took the vows of holy matrimony. Since there was no priest at the local church Elie made all arrangements to have the marriage ceremony at the Shandro church, with Ion and Maria Cucheran as godparents.

The young couple began farming on their own land, working hard like so many of the pioneers. In due time the children began to arrive. Two boys, Toder and Gheorghe, died as infants. Doris died in 1976 at age of 52. The others married and have homes and families of their own. Dan and Kay live in Edmonton, where they participate in Romanian church activities. Dan has been a cantor there for many years. Nick and Nadia are also in Edmonton. Ann and Tom Weir live in Grovenor Park whereas Mike the youngest son and his wife farm the home place.

Elie and Ioana lived all their lives on their land which they loved so well. Ioana passed away in 1968 at age 76 and three years later Elie died at the age of 85. Both are resting in peace in the Boian cemetery.

Dan Suprovich

### **Svekla, Nicolai and Domnica**

Nicolai Svekla was born in 1877 in Boian, Bucovina. In 1898 he married Domnica daughter of George and Katrina Kebak. Two years later he came to Canada alone, leaving his wife and two children Pearl and Metro behind. He worked, bought land in the Shalka area, built a bordei, then went back to bring his wife and kids to Canada. They farmed, working hard and in 1927 moved to Boian, leaving the home place to the oldest son. Domnica was a very sociable woman and she worked hard weaving tapestry and hand bags and selling them in Vegreville. With the hard earned money she bought clothing and groceries. In all, they raised a family of nine children.

Metro married Dora Toma. They farmed for a few years then left for the coal mines at East Coulee, where they lived till retirement when they moved to Edmonton. They had 3 children – Margaret, Nicky and George. Metro passed away in 1979.

Pearl married John Hrenuik and settled on a farm in Deep Lake area close to the Saskatchewan River. They had five girls – Grace, Dora, Helen, Rachel and Julie, and a son Metro.

John married Sandra Hauca. They farmed and then went into business and lived in various towns. They had a son George and three girls, Rosemarie, Judy and Ruby. John passed away in 1976.

Helen married Mike Semeniuk. They farmed at Warwick. They raised a family of seven – Shirley, Margaret, Raymond, Richard, George, Nick and Ernie. Mike passed away in 1964 of cancer.

George, a handsome boy and a very likeable person, died of a ruptured appendix in 1937 at age 20.

Floyd married Elizabeth Radesh. They lived in Edmonton and had three children – George, Marie and Martin.

Katherine first married George Badiuk and had a son Bobby. Sadly, George lost his life while swimming



**Nicolai Svekla Family 1957**

l. to rt.: Standing at back: Kay (Katherine) Mary, Robert (Elie), Helen (Rachira)  
Seated: John, Nicolai and Floyd.

on his anniversary. Later Kay married Karl Petersen and they have one son Johnny. They too, live in Edmonton.

Elie (Robert) married Margaret. They lived in Vegreville where Elie operated a butcher shop. They had two children, Kenny and Monica.

Mary, the youngest member, married Tom Hauca and they farmed the Hauca home place before selling out and moving to Edmonton. They had five children – Danny, Angelina, Peggy, Frances and Susanne. Tom passed away in 1976. Mary subsequently remarried John Chacun.

Domnica passed away in 1951 at age 67, while Nicolai passed away in 1961 at age 84.

### **Svekla, Vasile and Sanda**

Vasile Svekla and his wife Alexandra were both born in Boian, Bukovina. Vasile was the son of Simeon Svekla and Catrina Yurko. Alexandra was the daughter of Gregori and Catrina (nee Mihalcean) Pavel.



Parents 1922; l. to rt. Alexandra and Vasile Svekla.

They were married Oct. 21, 1895 and came to Canada in 1899 with three small children, George, Katie and Elie. They arrived in Halifax by boat, then boarded the train and eventually landed in Strathcona, south side of Edmonton. From there they travelled to Andrew and Whitford Lake by oxen and cart. By the lake Vasile pitched a tent and left his family there. Then off to work he went on foot as far as Fort McLeod. There he took a job for 50¢ a day. He then filed on a homestead in the Boian area and worked at improving it.

He got logs to build a house first. He built the walls, put a roof on and then mud-plastered the chinks. This plaster was smoothened and then a second layer was applied, this time a mixture of clay, fine sand and dampened with water. When the mud plaster was completely dried Sanda whitewashed the walls. Other buildings were put up on the farm but these others were not whitewashed.

Each year more land was cleared and as the children grew older they were able to help with the heavy farm work and the many farm chores.

Although neither Vasile nor Sanda had attended school in Europe, they made sure that their children went to school. Two of their children became school teachers – Nick and Lena.

Unfortunately, Alexandra Svekla died in 1932 at age 58 following a gall bladder operation. Vasile outlived his wife by many years but died suddenly a few days short of his seventy-fourth birthday in 1944, when he was struck by a car while walking home from a neighbor.

George Svekla was born in Boian, Bukovina on January 25, 1896. He attended Bojan (Shalka) school but left home early to work and earn some money. In 1920 he married Dora Darda and they farmed in Boian area. He passed away in 1959.

Katie was born in Boian, Bukovina too, July 10, 1897. She helped her mother with the numerous household chores and in 1916 married Elie Basaraba. They raised a large family of their own. In 1968 she passed away.



Three couples Easter 1928: Standing l. to rt.: Elie Svekla, John G. Porozni, George Svekla.  
Seated l. to rt.: Mrs. Annie E. Svekla, Mrs. Anne Porozni, Mrs. Domnica G. Svekla.

Elie, the second son, was also born in the old country in 1899. He attended Boian school and also went out working early. Later he married Annie Kelba and farmed in the Warwick district. They raised a family of 3 boys, William, Nick and George, and a daughter, Marie, who became a hairdresser. He passed away in 1960 at age 61.

Dora was the first Svekla child born at Boian on June 4, 1901. She attended the local school and helped at home. In 1925 she married Walter Tanchuk and they moved to the Hythe district where they farmed. Dora died in 1978 at age 77.

Nick Svekla was born in 1902. He attended Boian school and then completed high school in Vegreville.

After attending Normal school he began teaching and taught at Moose, Ispas, Desjarlais, Boian and Willingdone. In 1929 he married Marie Rusnak and had two children, Ruth and Willis. In 1941 the marriage was dissolved and Nick raised the two children himself. In 1953 he married Mrs. Mary Fedorak. After retiring they moved to Edmonton where he passed away in 1974 at age 74.

Nick Svekla was one of the first teachers of Romanian origin. Those who knew him remember him as a quiet gentleman who always took part in community affairs, often heading the many organizations to which he belonged.

Lena was born January, 1904. She followed in her brother Nick's footsteps. After completing Normal School she taught school at Alderina, then Bojan and Ispas. In 1928 she married John Fedorkey. They had two children. She passed away in Edmonton in 1973 at age 68.

Charles was born December, 1905. He attended Bojan school and later Vegreville high school. He started out as a grain elevator agent in Kaleland. In October, 1933 he married Dorothy Mihalcheon and they had a son Edward. Dorothy passed away in 1947. Charles later married Anne and they lived in Hairy Hill, then to Unity, Sask. where they operated a hotel. The next move was to Two Hills where they owned the hotel. Charles passed away in 1984.

Harry was born April, 1907, and also attended Bojan and Vegreville schools. Then he took up farming with his dad. In 1930, he married Helen Iftody and they lived on the same quarter as Harry's parents and continued mixed farming. Harry loved horses and began raising registered Percherons. In 1940 his stallion won the Grand Championship at both the Edmonton and Calgary exhibitions. He was awarded a silver medal. In 1945 he sold the home place and moved to North Battleford to a hotel business. Two years later they sold out and moved to Bonnyville and bought a theatre. One more move took them to a farm west of Edmonton where they farmed until retirement in 1971.



50th anniversary of Harry and Helen Svekla 1980  
 Standing l. to rt.: Charles, Harry, Martin Svekla  
 Seated l. to rt.: Anne, Ruby, Mary sisters and sister-in-law Helen.

Wherever the Harry Svekla family lived they had many friends and they became well known for their singing, especially the old favorite Romanian folk songs.

Anne was born in 1908. She attended the local school and after completing public school she helped her mother on the farm. She married John Porozni in the fall of 1926 and they farmed in the Boian district for many years till retirement to Vegreville. Both John and Anne led very active lives in both the Boian, Willingdon and Vegreville communities.

Mary was born Nov. 1910. She attended Boian school and helped on the farm. In 1929 she married Thomas Yurko and they farmed south of Boian school. They sold out eventually and went into farming near Vegreville.

Martin was born July 1, 1914 and like his older siblings attended the local school and then helped on the farm. Unlike the others, Martin early learned to play the violin and in his late teens started a band and for years he was in great demand to play at weddings and parties. In 1932 he married Mary Chebree and continued farming.

In 1966 he left farming and went into the construction industry in Edmonton. Because he was a capable builder he became a building inspector for the government of Alberta where he worked till retirement in 1979. Mary and Martin have four children, two sons and two daughters.

Ruby was the baby of the family. She was born in April, 1916. She attended Boian and Desjarlais schools. In 1936 she married Toder Kelba and farmed in the Boian district. Later they moved to Calgary and brought up a family of three. Ted passed away in 1982.

Helen Svekla

### **Tkachuk, Simion and Anița**

Simion Tkachuk was the son of Constantine and Domka (née Ostashuk) Tkachuk. He came to Canada with his parents and three brothers Nicholas, Jack and George. They settled in the vicinity of present day Andrew with younger friends John Ropchan Jr. who was married to Maria Scraba. The land was level and



well wooded. It was here that Simion's only sister, Ksenia was born. However, the land was so level that drainage was poor so the families moved eastward to higher and more rolling land in the Shalka district where the Andrietz, the Cutsungavichs and the Huculaks were already established. It was normal and natural for these people to settle near friends and relatives. In the new district Constantine proceeded to develop his farm quite successfully and his family grew in number. Two more sons were born here, Toder and Martin, making a total of six sons and one daughter.

George and Martin attended school in Vegreville and the latter continued with his education at Alberta College in Edmonton. Because George had some formal education he was able to handle the N.W. Elevator grain buying agency in Vegreville and then the prestigious Alberta Farmers' Wheat Pool elevator in Wilingdon. Jack served four years in World War I and then made his home in the Kooteney Valley in B.C. where he provided guide services. When he died he was buried in the soldiers' plot in Vancouver. Nick, Toder and Ksenia married and raised large families of their own.

Simion Tkachuk hired out as a young man to Indian Chief Daniel Hawk on the Saddle Lake Reserve as a ranch hand and wood cutter to provide fuel for the home and the fur trading store. While on the reserve he learned to speak Cree fluently. While he worked he took very little pay in actual cash, just enough for clothing. Rather he shrewdly exchanged his labor for ten head of cattle and two Indian ponies – livestock that served him well when he married Anita Harasim and settled on his own homestead some three miles south of the Romanian Church at Boian. Once he was settled he left his wife and her younger brother Metro in charge of the livestock and decided to go out working with the C.P.R. extra gang in the Crow's Nest area. Before leaving he ploughed a 12-furrow fire guard around his homestead so that when a prairie fire swept through, his livestock, his mud-plastered hut, the stable with the hay stack next



Sam Tkachuk



Two widows – Mrs. Burns, Anita Tkachuk (l. to rt.) 1947

to it were all saved. On and off the job he saw the evils of alcohol but he never succumbed to it. What a resolute and determined husband and father! But every person has a weakness and Sam, as he was commonly known, was enslaved by the tobacco weed. He became a perpetual pipe smoker of the T & B plug.

One day Simion and his eldest son Constantine were clipping along in a wagon with some ten bags of wheat making their way to Vegreville. Coming towards them were three weather-beaten native women also in a wagon. On recognizing Sam when they were alongside the Tkachuk wagon, they called out in unison, "whoa – whoa!" The ponies came to a dead stop. "Any tobacco?" was the query in Cree by one of the women. Simion reluctantly pulled out his plug and handed it to the native women. They took the whole package, thanked him in Cree and goaded their horses onward. Sam shook his head in disbelief but never said a word. He and his son proceeded on to Vegreville and halted by Teodose Eliuk's general store where Sam replenished his supply of tobacco.

Sam was an excellent grain farmer. With the excep-

tion of Joe Webber and Julius Telsro, Sam exceeded all farmers in the area in growing good clean wheat, oats and barley. He was rewarded in that he received a higher price for his seed grain, because he usually seeded the latest variety, free from weeds. Often in spring farmers were seen in Sam's farmyard having come to buy seed grain. Unpaid taxes and bank loans at high rates of interest eroded the credibility of even some of the literate farmers, whereas Sam, this supposedly illiterate peasant's son, realized that living within one's means and keeping one's word to all made him stand tall amongst his fellow men.

When Sam died prematurely, the priest from Shepenitz, the Very Reverend Chrustawka, who was burying him remarked, "It saddens me to bury this man. He was a man of his word."

Sam and Anița were frugal people and strove to give their ten children the best education within their means. Four of the children became teachers. Constantine was the first to graduate as a teacher and taught ably and conscientiously in several rural schools before moving to Edmonton where he took up carpentry. As a single parent, he raised his only son Ronald who holds a Master's degree in science and is presently employed by the city of Edmonton. Jack graduated from the University of Alberta and taught school too, before locating near Lesser Slave Lake where he operated a saw mill for many years. Sharon also taught school before joining the army. She married later but passed away at a young age. Kathleen enjoyed teaching for a number of years and still substitutes when required. Mary, Lily and Dorothy have households of their own.

The family farms were left by Sam's early death in the care of Martin who is every bit as orderly as his father. For a long while he was assisted by his brother George who has a born cattle man.

Both Simion and Anița Tkachuk are resting in peace in St. Mary's cemetery at Boian.

Constantine Tkachuk

## **Toma, George D. and Sanfira**

George D. Toma's parents Dumitru and Vasilca, emigrated with four children to Boian, Alberta in 1900, from Boian, Bucovina. George was born that same year on Dec. 16, on their homestead S.E. ¼, 10, 56, 14 W. of 4th below the hill where St. Mary's church now stands.

His brothers were Vasile, Nicolai and John. His sister Pachița looked after the family and household after their mother died in childbirth in 1904. As a boy, George remembers snaring rabbits and shooting prairie chickens to add to the family larder. When he was 11 he started attending school at Boian once it opened. In those days the school was kept open during the summer months only as the winters were bitterly cold and the children had poor clothing. In his early teens he left school to help on the farm, walking bare-foot behind a two-furrow plough pulled by three horses.

His father remarried in 1909 to Domnica, a Romanian girl from Boian. In 1920 the Tomas sold their land and most of their personal effects and returned to Bukovina, because there were rumours of free land there. The rumours proved false, so they had to buy land after all. George went back with them, and his sister, too, who was married to Metro Mihalcheon, with their children. George's step-mother died five or six years later and his father passed away in the early 1930's when he was about seventy-four.

However, George stayed only one year in the old country. He returned to Alberta where he was born, because he saw little future for anyone to prosper in the old land.

The first four years after he got back, George worked as a farmhand for farmers in Alberta and Saskatchewan. His wages ranged from a dollar a day to forty dollars a month. In 1925 he bought a threshing machine for about \$2000.00 with his savings and money paid in advance by farmers for whom George had arranged to thresh their grain. That same year, with money earned from custom-threshing, George

bought the Gongas farm, a quarter section in the Soda Lake area.

In 1926 George summer-fallowed the land and broke more land using horses and chains to grub the trees. In all he had 120 acres in crop in 1927. He harvested his very own first crop of wheat.

Sarah Toma (née Semenuik) emigrated to Canada in 1911 when she was two years old. She came with her mother Domnica Semenuik, a widow with six children. The eldest, Peter, had already emigrated at age sixteen to Canada and was now working in his new



**Nickoriuk George and Domnica**

l. to rt. Domnica and George Nickoriuk and son Elie 1916.

homeland. After Domnica's husband Nicolai died in 1910 from pneumonia, she decided to go to Canada with her five younger children, Mary - 14, Andre - 12, Louis - 7, Mihai - 5, and Sarah -2. Another son, George, had drowned swimming across the Prut River when he was a young boy.

The family settled on a homestead at Desjarlais just south of the North Saskatchewan River, about 10 miles north-east of Boian. They raised a few cattle and farmed a little land, growing wheat. Sarah's

mother also used to trade fish in exchange for other items such as wool. Then Sarah and her grandmother dyed the wool and Sarah would weave rugs for benches and special wall tapestries which her mother would sell.

Domnica's mother, Ioana, had three husbands and was widowed twice before she left Romania in 1899. Her first husband was Cucheran and there were two children from this marriage, Pete and Domnica. She then married Basaraba and had two daughters, and when she decided to emigrate she took these two daughters with her. She married Nicolai Falka and moved to Boian, Alberta.

Sarah started school at Desjarlais when she was twelve, walking a distance of four miles to the school. At fourteen she left school and helped her grandmother, Mrs. Falka to weave rugs, to knit, make quilts and pillows which her mother sold. She also looked after her half-sister and brother, Vera and Dan Nickoriuk. Two girls Maria and Dochina died as infants.

Sarah and George were married Sept. 11, 1927 in the Boian church, when she was 18 and he was 27. Their sponsors were Pete and Ana Esak.

After the wedding, George and Sarah settled on the homestead where they farmed for next forty-nine years and raised eight children. They were very active and friendly, so that neighbours and relatives visited at their home often. They entertained frequently and were always included in community events.

Working together all the time, George and Sarah were involved in a number of different business activities. George farmed and in the fall he would custom-thresh for neighbouring farmers. He opened a stockyard at Hairy Hill and one at Warwick, 12 miles south. He remembers buying pigs, cows, and steers at \$10 a head in those days. George would work five days a week buying livestock from farmers, then shipping carloads of animals by rail to Swift Canadian Meat Company in Edmonton. After five years, George sold this business to the Hairy Hill Co-op.

In 1936 George was elected councillor for the Municipal District of Eagle which included a fairly





**George D. Toma Family 1949**

back row Steve Iftody and wife Delima, Shirley and Lawrence.  
Front row l. to rt.: Andy, George holding Diane, Sanfira holding Dale, Georgina.

large area. As councillor he was responsible for road building, maintenance of roads, arranging old age pensions, welfare and widow allowances. He was re-elected twice, staying in office for a period of nine years.

While continuing with mixed farming, in 1954 George began another business – house construction. Within three years he built and sold twenty-seven homes in Edmonton. All week he worked in the city, and spent the weekends on the farm.

In the meantime Sarah was busy on the farm raising the family of four boys and four girls. Everyone helped with the farm work and the chores – Delima, Shirley, Laurence, Georgina, Andy, Diane, Dale and Daryl. For a period of forty years Sarah packed school lunches for her children.

At this time (1984) four of their children have chosen farming as their careers. Farming in the Hairy Hill

area are Laurence and his wife Ann (née Tomy), Andy and his wife Mary Lou (née Cleghorn), Daryl and his wife Pat (née Myer) who have taken over the home place. Georgina and her husband Willis Porozni farm at Willingdon.

Three other children currently reside in Edmonton; Delima (Steve) Iftody, Shirley and Pat Howe, and Dale. Dian Jonsson, the youngest daughter, lives in Vegreville.

George and Sarah retired from their farm in 1976 and moved to Vegreville to a brand new home. Both continue to be very active in their church and community. George still loves to work in the fields with his sons, helping to put in their crops in the spring and harvest them in the fall. An ardent hunter, he enjoys his life-long hobby hunting big game and birds. Sarah recalls feeding threshing crews during the 1930-40 with ducks George had shot as they flew over the workers in the fields. She used the feathers for pillows.

Family gatherings for special holidays include over forty adults and children descended from these two Romanians whose history began in Bukovina.

Darline Iftody

## **Toma, George T. and Maria**

George T. Toma was born Jan. 1, 1880 in Boian, Bucovina, the youngest child of Toader A. Toma and Sanda (Alexandra) Toma (née Cozocari). He had two older brothers, Ion and Vasile and three older sisters, Maria, Domnica and Ioana. As a child George was fortunate enough to attend the village school and by age twelve had completed grade six. After that he had to help on the farm.

His father Toader A. Toma was a fairly prosperous farmer in those days as he owned about thirty acres of arable land and another five in the village where he had a large house a large garden and an orchard with fruit and nut trees. With all the talk about the faraway land in Canada, Toader, rather reluctantly, decided to sell his comfortable dwellings and all his land. With



this money he was able to pay the fare for himself, his wife and that of all his six children and their families. He sacrificed all this for a brighter future for his children and grandchildren. Quite an undertaking considering that he was already sixty-three years of age, an old man in those days.

Boxes, trunks and bags were packed and labelled and the families embarked on the train from Cernaui to Hamburg, Germany. There on May 25, 1899 they boarded the vessel, S.S. Bulgaria for passage across the stormy Atlantic. On June 5th at 11:00 A.M. they arrived in Halifax. (Public Archives of Canada). From there they made the long trip by train to Calgary and



Bunica Sanda T. Toma 1918

north to Edmonton. From there they travelled to Andrew where the Tomas spent the first winter in the bordei with Ichim Yurko. The men went to work that summer and fall.

George Toma got a job on the railroad track like so many others. He earned \$1.25 a day out of which fifty cents was deducted for room and board. The money earned was sent home to help purchase flour, tea and sugar for those left on the land.

In April, 1900, the families moved to the Boian area where Toader A. Toma, his wife Sanda and two single sons settled on N.E. Sec. 16, 56, 14, W. of 4th. They proceeded to build a fairly large log building in the middle of the farm north of a little lake. The walls were plastered with mud. The roof was thatched with slough hay cut by scythe and in each of the two larger rooms there was a clay oven built (a cuptor). For cooking a clay stove was built and on top a piece of tin was placed. And so Sanda began cooking and baking in their new kitchen. Here she shed many bitter tears and often she would vent her wrath on her mild uncomplaining spouse.

"Husband", she would say, "you did very well. You sold our beautiful property in Boian for so little. You paid the fares (drumul) and you brought us here to starve in the wilderness where there is nothing but bushes, Indians, wild geese and mosquitoes. And how lonely I am!" And she would burst in tears and sob broken heartedly. But slowly conditions improved.

Toader Toma never lived to see the Boian community develop. He longed for his old surroundings and died in 1905, the year the church was completed. Sanda (Bunica) lived to enjoy many of her grandchildren in her new home and passed away in the spring of 1919 at the age of eighty-three.

George worked all summer in 1903 on the railroad tracks and in late fall he purchased for the sum of \$50 from a rancher near McLeod a young mare and a three-year-old gelding. These horses were halter broken but that was all. He, along with George Porozni Sr., who had also purchased horses, started leading the animals home to Boian. When they got to Calgary

it began snowing very hard and turned bitterly cold. They stayed in Calgary at a livery barn four days before resuming their journey northward. The whole trip took approximately eighteen days. Since they had little money they existed on bread and water.

Now George had a team of horses and he had the mare bred so a year later there was a colt on the farm. He was able to start breaking prairie with a walking plough.

Maria, his wife, was born July 8th, 1887 also in Boian, Bucovina, the youngest daughter of Maftai and Pachița Mihalcheon. She came to Canada with her widowed father, her married sister Sanda, an older half-brother John and two younger brothers Steve and George. She, too, had attended the local school and completed Grade VI. But since their mother died when Maria was ten, she and her older sister had to do the housework.

When they arrived in Canada, Maria, although only fourteen years old, went to work as a maid in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Dick Hughson (Eusten as the Romanians called him) for \$5 a month. Mrs. Hughson didn't know Maria's name so she kept calling her Annie till

Maria learned enough English to tell her employer what her real name was. Maria worked very hard taking care of the two young children and helping with the housework. The job she detested most was stomping the haystacks during the early fall when the men were putting up fodder for the winter. In 1904 she went to Edmonton where she got a job as a housemaid in an engineer's home on 107th st. just south of Jasper Avenue. She was now earning \$10 a month. Here she became quite fluent in English and learned to read the English language very well.

On January 25, 1905, George and Maria were married in the Wostok Russian Orthodox Church with Father Mihailo Skibinski officiating. Sponsors (nanași) were Petre and Domnica Esak. They travelled to church all the way by sleigh and returned the same way. They settled on the home place with George's parents and began farming together.

The marriage was a happy one. George was aggressive, hard-working and physically very strong. He loved singing, dancing and social activities in general. His strong characteristics were complemented by Maria's who was gentle, intelligent and very under-



George T. Toma and Model T car 1917. In front seat George behind the wheel. His wife Maria beside him holding Mihai. In back seat Pachița and John and their uncle G.M. Mihalcheon.

standing. Twelve children were born of this marriage: Katie (Pachița), John, Sadie, Floyd, Grace, Toder, Mike, Constantine, Alexander, Emilia, Hazel (Victoria) and Andrew.



Sandy (Alexandru) G. Toma in a pensive mood, 1939.

George T. Toma was always involved in Boian community activities and in politics provincially and federally. He served as cantor (dascal) in St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox Church for fifty-three years from 1928 till 1961 – a week before he passed away. He served as trustee and chairman of the local school board for a number of years. George learned to speak English and fairly fluent Ukrainian. In the Toma home there was always reading material available in two languages. The author remembers that his father was a perennial subscriber of the Edmonton Journal. The colored "doo-dads" were a source of much amusement to the children for years. Then there was the Country Guide, the Free Press, the Western Producer, and later the Romanian paper, "The Solia" (Faith).

Both Maria and George believed that education was very important and encouraged their children to attend school. All the children finished public school at Boian. In addition Katie and Sadie (Sanda) attended Vegreville High School. Mike completed high school in Willingdon, attended Edmonton Normal School and after five years of teaching, returned to the U. of A. and completed a combined B. Ed. and B.A. program in four years. He taught school for over thirty-five years. Emilia attended Hairy Hill High School, and after completing Normal School, taught a number of years before marriage. Andrew (Andrei) graduated from Willingdon High School then received his B.Sc. degree in electrical engineering from U. of A. He joined the Canadian Air Force and rose to the rank of Squadron Leader. Katie (Pachița) married Harry Nikipilo. Katie had one son Sandy who is a psychiatric nurse in the Jubilee Hospital in Vancouver. John left home in 1926. Sadie (Sanda) married John Wardrop. They had one son who died in infancy of pneumonia. Floyd married Mary J. Iftody. They raised a family of seven children – Rosalette, Richard, Gerald, Delores,



Bidding farewell to their mother Maria G. Toma, Jan. 1945. L. to rt.: Emilia, Sandy Kozicar (grandson), Mike, Victoria, Floyd and his daughter Rosalette, Sadie, Karl (Constantine), Andrew and Toder G. Toma.



Kenneth, Marvin and Karen. Grace passed away of diphtheria in 1922. Toder, a bachelor, was killed in a truck accident in 1973. Mike married Anne Lupul and they had five children – David, Darrell, Margaret, Albert and Laverna. Karl (Constantine) married Doris Wagstaff and they had six children. Sandy (Alexandru) married Norma and they had one daughter and four boys, including a set of twins. Emilia married Nick Kachuk. They have a son and a daughter. Hazel (Victoria) married Harvey (Nick) Haresym and have a son and a daughter. Andrew, the baby of the family married Janet McLeod and they had five children – Michael, Mary, Anne, Jenny and Mark.

Most of the Toma children left Boian early either because of marriage or for jobs and today the survivors are scattered from St. Thomas, Ont. to Victoria, B.C.

Maria Toma died of cancer after a brief illness in January, 1945 at age 57. George T. Toma died in February, 1961 at age 81. Both are buried at Boian. Veşnica lor pomînere! (Memory eternal!).

### **Toma, Gregori and Sanda**

Gregori Toma was born Sept. 29, 1884 in Boian, Bucovina. He came to Canada at the age of eighteen with his mother Katrina, and his brother John. His father Mihai Toma had arrived in Canada in 1900, and later sent for his wife and family. Both father and son applied to purchase land in 1902 in the Boian district.

Like other young men at that time, Gregori went to work on the railroad track. For awhile he was section foreman for the C.P.R. and worked in the Yakk and Kingsgate area. He later married Sanda Harasim and settled on N.E. ¼, 4, 56, 14 W. 4th in Boian close to his father's homestead. They had a family of two a son Mike who is now residing with his wife Nellie in Vernon and a daughter Lena a widow who lives in Edmonton. Sanda passed away at an early age.

In 1918 Gregori married Alexandra Vicsush. They lived at Boian for eight years, then moved to the Ispas area where they farmed for many years. Eight children were born of this marriage. In 1926 the family suffered

a grave tragedy. Within a three-week period, four children were swept away by the diphtheria epidemic which was raging in the area. Alexandra's eyes still fill with tears when reminiscing about those unhappy days. Helen, Mary, Katie and little Johnny were all taken away.

Gregori was a very sociable person, a gifted musician, story teller and singer. He was a cantor (dascal) in the neighboring Romanian Orthodox churches. At the local church, the Holy Cross (Malin) he was the cantor and also treasurer for some eighteen years. When the church holiday (Hram) was observed the Tomas always had a large hram at their farm home. Gregori, being tri-lingual, was a perfect host while Alexandra, dressed in her beautiful and colorful Romanian costume welcomed all her guests from church with her usual hospitality. Although she had no fridge and no running water, she managed to feed the numerous guests. Outside the house she had a large clay oven (cuptor) in which she baked and cooked her mouth-watering foods.

After the meal, the music would start. Gregori had brought a flute from the old country and when he began blowing the nostalgic doinas, the women with tears in their eyes would sing those beloved Romanian folk songs. Gregori also played the violin and the dulcimer (Çimbala) and so did his younger brother Nicolai. Because these two brothers played well, sang and joked so much, they were in great demand at gatherings and festivities.

The Romanian weddings at the time would last three days and Gregori would be away quite often. His wife sometimes stayed home and looked after the children and did all the farm chores.

During the long winters, Gregori would harness his best team of horses and go north sometimes as far as Lac La Biche and Primrose Lake. Some two weeks later he would return with a load of frozen fish and the odd time, some venison. They would now have food for the whole family till spring.

Gregori was also active in the community. He was a school trustee for many years and during elections





l. to rt.: Gregori, George, Margaret, Pearl, Elizabeth. Sanda Toma. 1935



Musicians, l. to rt.: Mrs. Sanda N. Toma, Nick Toma, Gregori M. Toma and his wife Sanda, 1942.

he would be the returning officer. Along with the other farmers he would work on the roads, repairing, building, rebuilding bridges and so on.

Alexandra was also born in Boian, Bucovina and came to Canada with her mother Domnica Vicsush – Mihalcheon and the whole family. Fortunately Domnica's married sister Sanda V. Svekla was already fairly well established in the new land and took them in until they got settled.

Alexandra had three sisters, Eleana who married Bill Basaraba, Veronca married Nick Kozak, Mary who married John Seminovich and two brothers, Metro and John. Today only Alexandra and John are still living.

In 1959 Gregori and Alexandra retired from farming and moved to Edmonton. They had four surviving children. Margret married Les Langston. They have two children and three grandchildren. George married Helen Esak. They have five children and four grandchildren. Pearl married George Demchuk and have four children, including a set of twins and three grandchildren. Elizabeth married Bill Kokotilo and have four children and two grandchildren.

Gregori passed away in 1963. Alexandra is in a senior citizens' lodge in Edmonton. Both lived long enough to witness so many changes in their lives and in the lives of many others.

Pearl Demchuk

### **Toma, Ion T. and Veronica**

Ion T. Toma was born in 1861, the first child of Toader A. and Sanda Toma, in Boian, Bucovina. He grew up there but being the oldest he was needed to help at home so he never attended the village school.

As a young man he married Domnica Hutzcal and in 1899 he and his wife who was heavy with child set out for Canada with the rest of the Tomas. When they finally arrived in Winnipeg, everyone got off the train and Domnica complained to her husband of labor pains. Ion promptly searched for a midwife. With Mrs. Sanda N. Kelba attending, the young mother gave birth to a healthy baby girl. The father was a bit disappointed as he was hoping for a boy. The mother with her new baby and the midwife were left behind in Winnipeg while the train rolled on westward over the prairies with the rest of the immigrants.

Later in the early fall the young mother joined her husband and they spent the first winter near Andrew, then moved on to Boian. They first settled on S.W. ¼, 20, 56, 14 West of the 4th. Like the other newcomers they began putting up buildings, breaking land, and growing vegetables and grain. Four more children were born here, Ioana (Jennie), Bill, Nick and Mike. Then in 1912, the mother died leaving Ion with five little children. Sanda, being the oldest girl, with the occasional help of some of her older cousins, had to do all the housework previously done by the mother.

In 1914 Ion married Veronica Stefureak, eldest daughter of Toader and Elisaveta Stefureak. Veronica had an only son, Floyd from a previous marriage. The blended family worked well as Veronica worked very hard and treated her stepchildren as her own.

Ion experienced at least one setback as a farmer. One Sunday he and his wife went visiting and did not return till late in the afternoon, and what a sight met their eyes. Nick had been playing with matches in the fairly large machine shed and it caught fire, burning everything to the ground. When his dad asked him what he had done, he said, "Bill forgot to close the farm gate and the fire came in from the neighbors and burned the shed!"



Family picture 1938: at back l. to rt.: Johnny, Alice, Victoria  
Seated l. to rt.: Ion and Veronta Toma

In 1923 Ion Toma moved his family to N.E. ¼, 9, 56, 14 W. of 4th, directly across the road from the school. He hired two carpenters Nicolai Dorish and Elie Ravliuk to build a larger two-room log house which in time Veronica plastered and white-washed so that it always appeared clean and cozy. The

family increased in number. Several children died as infants but the surviving ones are George, Elsie, Metro, Victoria and Johnny. Ion moved to the new location in order to be close to the church and the school. Both these institutions meant a good deal to Ion and Veronica Toma.

This man played a major role in procuring the land for a cemetery and a church and also in the building of the church itself. He worked voluntarily, pleaded for help and donations and made many trips hauling materials for the church. Once the building was completed, he noticed that the north and south walls were bulging outwards so he immediately went to see the carpenter Elie Ravliuk. The latter, after examining the structure, told Ion that they would require two long iron rods to tie the two walls together. Ion took off to Edmonton with his Indian ponies harnessed to a wagon. There the blacksmith told him that he had no rods long enough but that he would order them from Winnipeg. He expected them in two weeks. Ion returned home and two weeks later made a second trip to the city. To his dismay, the blacksmith informed him that the rods had not arrived and that he was to come back later. Another useless trip! In time another trip was made to Edmonton. How happy Ion was when he saw the long awaited rods lying near the blacksmith's forge! The blacksmith helped him to tie them on the wagon and away Ion went, happy as could be. The carpenter placed them in position, tightened them and there they are today eighty years later.

One cannot write about this couple without mentioning how kind they were to acquaintances and strangers alike. Because their home was situated near the crossroads, wayfarers often stopped there for a meal or to sleep overnight. No one was ever turned away.

Then the annual church anniversary was held on St. Mary's holiday, September 21 – the hram. For a month prior Veronica worked hard to repair the plaster on the walls. Then the whole house was white-washed inside and out. The colourful tapestries would be aired outside on a sunny day, then hung on the



Steps in weaving tapestry: Veronța spinning wool, Ion holding the ball of yarn. At back Victoria and Johnny holding the finished product.

interior walls. All the food had to be arranged for and prepared. Finally the day would arrive and Veronica would don her most colourful Romanian costume and after attending the church service, was ready to receive her guests from near and far. She was particularly glad to welcome the friends from neighboring districts whom they had visited earlier in the year when their respective church anniversaries were observed.

The years went by quickly. The children grew up, married and left. Sanda married Pete Hudema and they went farming north of the mighty Peace. Jennie married Vasile Henetuik and they went north also. Jennie died young leaving a family of six children. Her husband died soon after and the children were looked



after by their aunt Sanda until they were able to fend for themselves. Bill married Katie Stefanetz. They lived in Edmonton and in Toronto. Nick married Sarah Hantiuk and they farmed most of their lives at Pierceland, Saskatchewan. Mike remained a bachelor and farmed at Hotchkiss. George, too, remained single and farmed at Boian for many years. Elsie married Paul Borstel. They had three children and Elsie still resides in Willingdon. Mitru (Bob) married Helvie and they had one son. After Bob returned from the army he worked as a mailman in Edmonton until retirement. Vickie married John Sarafinchan. They have three daughters and they, too, live in Edmonton. The youngest, Johnny, married Pearl Heyduk and they farm the home place where they still reside. They had a family of seven children, including a set of twins. Both Johnny and Pearl always took an active part in the Boian community activities.

Both Ion and Veronica lived to a ripe old age. Ion died in 1946 at the age of eighty-five. His wife being much younger passed away in 1978 at the age of eighty-seven. They are buried at Boian in the cemetery of their beloved church.

Interestingly enough, Sanda, who was born in a grassy field near the railroad track in Winnipeg, lived to marry, raise a family of eleven children and died at the age of eighty-four.

### **Toma, Mihai and Katrina**

Mihai Toma was the son of Ion Toma who was the son of Andrei Toma. He married Katrina Cuciurean, daughter of Metro Cuciurean and Vasilca Foas̃ (Fosh). Mihai emigrated to Canada about 1901 and two years later sent for his wife and children. He homesteaded on S.E. 4-56-14-W.4th.

Prior to the arrival of his family most of his time was spent in Edmonton working at any available job in order to earn enough money to pay for the transportation expenses of his family. He also needed money to purchase implements for cultivating his newly acquired land and, of course, he had to live as

well. To economize further he batched. The wages earned amounted to one or two dollars a day. To him it was very gratifying to be able to purchase a whole pig's head from which he could make enough head-cheese to provide food for a week. Sometimes the butcher would throw in a chunk of liver as well.

His first abode on the homestead was the usual bordei which was later converted into a very cozy chicken coop when a more suitable residence was built. Mihai was particularly proud of his well which was one of the few stone-cribbed wells at Boian. He had a counter-weight balance with which he could draw the thirst-quenching cool water.



Bunica Katrina Bota, age eighty 1951.

Mihai's book learning was limited but he insisted that his children attend school, and his grandson, who bore his name, was early initiated into the fascinating skill of reading.

Mihai's wife, Katrina, was a skillful cook and was often hired to be the head cook at weddings and parties where large quantities of food had to be prepared, without all the modern conveniences. Once she knew



the approximate number of expected guests, she set her culinary skill to work. The result was always plenty of wholesome, tasty food. In addition, Katrina had learned from her mother the duties of midwife. Since the nearest doctor was miles away and the Romanians had numerous children, Katrina was often called at all hours of the day and night to deliver a bouncing baby boy or a delightful little girl, or even twins. Katrina was indeed a *moaşa* to many mothers. In addition she could treat stomach ailments and even drive the evil from those who had it.

### **The Healing "Pot"**

This is a photo of the pot used by Katrina Bota to help cure stomach or belly aches of the Romanian women. The patient was asked to lie flat on her back with her abdomen exposed. On the exposed part Katrina would put a thick slice of bread or a thick piece of cloth soaked in soft wax. A candle was lit and placed or stuck in the cloth so that it was upright and burned well. Next, the pot was placed over the burning candle. The flame burned until all the oxygen was used up. The partial vacuum inside the pot caused the air pressure from the outside to push against the flabby muscles and flesh of the patient's abdomen. This "cure" was often used on women after the birth of a child. Whatever it did, many felt better and this skill, along with midwifery, kept Katrina busy. One claim



The "Healing Pot".

made for this treatment was that it healed the "*vătă-mătură*", (injury or hernia).

Left a widow at a very young age, she later married Toder Bota. The latter part of her life she and her second husband lived at her daughter's place, Mrs. Mike Kachuk. Although in the same yard, she had her own house where she lived till her early eighties.

Mihai and Katrina had three boys and two girls. John died, a young man, after injuring himself while cutting down trees. Gregori married and farmed most of his life. Nick married Sanda M. Goroniuk and they raised a family of nine children. Mary married Mike V. Kachuk. Pachita married Avram Kozak. They reside in Hamilton.

Mike (Gregory) Toma

### **Toma, Vasile and Raveta**

Vasile Toma came to Canada in 1899 with his parents Toder and Sanda Toma, his three married sisters, one married brother and one single brother. They spent the first winter in a *bordei* near Andrew. Vasile, like other young men, went out working on the railroad tracks. Even after he married and had children he still continued going out working to earn much needed money.

One time late in the fall he was returning home from work near Calgary and because the fare to Edmonton was eleven dollars, he decided to walk all the way and save all that money. It was cold and the white snow covered the ground wherever he looked. He had a grey woollen blanket in a bag and some bread. Day after day he followed the railroad tracks northward. At night he would roll himself in the blanket and try sleeping. When he was hungry he ate some of the frozen bread and to quench his thirst there was plenty of snow. A week or so later he arrived in Strathcona, south side of Edmonton. He was so cold and stiff that he could barely talk. All this to save a few dollars, but at what a sacrifice! According to his wife Raveta, Vasile complained all his life about not being

well and blamed it on that journey on foot in sub zero weather from Calgary to Edmonton.

Vasile filed on homestead S.E. 16, 56, 14, W.4th, the same quarter on which the Boian Marea school was built. In 1903 he married Raveta Yurko who had also come from Boian, Bukovina. They lived one year with Vasile's parents till their own house was finished. Raveta remembers that there were very many garter snakes near the house especially by the barn when



Parents 1927 l. to rt., Raveta and Vasile T. Toma.

they built one. It was in this first house that the first few children were born. In 1920 they bought another quarter of land about a mile south and it is here that they raised a family of eleven children, eight lovely daughters and three stalwart sons.

Both Vasile and Raveta always took an active part

in the Boian community affairs – the church and the school. Vasile was a church elder for many years and Raveta was a founding member of the Romanian Ladies' Auxiliary of Boian.



Metro Toma and wife Katie (Pachița) with daughter Audrey 1948.

The oldest son Metro married Katie Semeniuk and they had five children – Willis, Ruth, Gerald, Ernie and Audrey. They farmed in the Hairy Hill area and took an active part in the Romanian community.

Anne married Nick Cozocari and they farmed north of the North Saskatchewan River at Gold Creek. They raised a large family too.

Mary married Elie Soprovich and had two sons and two daughters, Johnny, Willis, Rose and Jeanette.

They farmed at Hairy Hill for many years and then retired to Edmonton. Willis is farming the home place and Johnny is in construction in Edmonton.

George married Helen Eliuk and they had three children, Phyllis, Wayne and Gerald. George and Helen lived on the original homestead and were successful farmers. They, too, were very active in the community. Helen passed away in 1972.

Sandra married Mike P. Hauca. They lived in Hairy Hill where Mike was in the garage business. In the forties they moved to Edmonton. They have two daughters, Jean and June and one son Ernie.

Dora married Mike (Metro) Svekla and they moved to East Coulee where Mike worked in the mines for many years. After retirement they moved to Edmonton. Mike passed away in 1979. They had three children: Nicky, George and Margaret.

Katie married Mike Greckol and they too farmed in the Hairy Hill area for many years before moving to Edmonton. They have a son, Nick, who has an M.Ed. degree and is principal of a school in Calgary.

Their daughter Sonia has her Ph.D. in psychology and is living in Toronto.

Con served overseas during W.W. II and on returning married Ellen. They live in the Edmonton area. They have three daughters and a son.

Kay (Katherine) graduated as a hair dresser. She married Bill Stadnyk and had two children. They live in Edmonton.

Lillian married Stanley Kuper of Ranfurly. They farm there and raised a family of eleven children.

The youngest member, Rose, married Mac Rosichuk. They had three children and reside in Kelowna, B.C.

Vasile and Raveta raised eleven children. There are now fifty-one grandchildren and eighty-eight great grandchildren.

Vasile passed away in 1947 at the age of 72. His wife Raveta outlived him by many years and died in 1982 at the age of 97. Both are resting in peace in St. Mary's cemetery at Boian.

Kay Greckol



At Raveta Toma's 90th birthday 1975, l. to rt.: Mary, Katie (Dochița), Lily (Vasilca), Doris, Raveta, Con, Sandra, Kay (Katherine), George. Sitting in the centre is Rose, the youngest. Absent is Annie Cojocar.

## Yurko, Ichim and Iftinca

Ichim Yurko was one of the first Romanian immigrants to settle in the Boian area. He arrived in the spring of 1898 with his young wife Iftinca and their only child, a girl, Joanna five years old. They spent their first winter in a bordei near Andrew and then moved to the Shalka district. During the first winter their daughter died of unknown causes but it was probably pneumonia and malnutrition. They built a better house at Shalka and continued living there. Like most early homes they had a cuptor (clay oven) in the house where Iftinca did the baking and cooking. At night the cuptor served as a bed.

In June of 1919 Iftinca had built a big fire in the oven for baking her week's supply of bread. Her dough had been kneaded and while it was rising in the large container (covata), she washed her hair, dried it, and was sitting in front of the oven gazing at the flames and combing her long dark hair. She was going to pleat it next and coil it into a bun on top of her head and then wear her white cotton shawl over it like all Romanian women did. Ichim was sitting on a home-made bench near the wall by the open door. Suddenly a flash of lightning struck Iftinca and the poor woman was burned beyond recognition. Ichim was thrown to the ground in a coma. The house caught fire. The neighbors, Constantin Bezovie and Mitru Hantiuk saw the smoke and immediately rushed to save the Yurkos. They pulled the bodies out shortly before the whole house was engulfed in flames.

Ichim regained consciousness a few hours later whereas his wife was laid to rest in the Boian cemetery three days later.

Ichim later transferred his land to his nephew but continued to live in his own newly built home on the same quarter of land. In his old age he became an avid gardener and would always have lovely cucumbers and juicy tomatoes. He would even ripen some of his vegetables and sell seeds to the neighbors.

He died in the late 30's when he was eighty years of age.

## Yurko, Mihai and Maria

Mihai Yurko was the son of Toader and Dochița Yurko. He was born in Boian, Bukovina in 1855 and died in 1938 at the age of 83. In his twenties he married Maria Harasim, daughter of Dumitru and Catrina Harasim. Maria was born in 1860 and died in 1941 at the age of 81.



Mihai T. and Maria Yurko, 1931.

In Boian, Bukovina, Mihai Yurko was very active in community affairs and eventually rose to the position of vornic (chief magistrate). As a vornic he could mete out punishments and since he was a very strict



man, these punishments were often severe when one thinks of the petty crimes committed. Mihai liked partying and so he had many friends but because of his position he had enemies too.

In the old country five daughters were born to the Yurkos. In 1899 they, along with many other Romanians, including Mihai's brother-in-law Gheorghe A. Mihalcheon, came to Canada. When they arrived in Strathcona, they crossed the Saskatchewan River into Edmonton. There Mihai Yurko and Gheorghe Mihalcheon bought a wagon and a team of horses and set out for Pakan, where a settlement of Métis and Ukrainians already existed. The Yurkos spent only a short time there.

They moved south across the river and east where they filed on a homestead S.W.¼ section 2-56-14-4 in the Boian area. They lived here until 1912 and then moved to Vegreville. After operating a livery stable in Vegreville for five years, they moved back to Boian.

Like other newcomers the Yurkos went through a great number of hardships. Their first home was a bordei and next they built a log cabin and mud plastered it. They had very little money so Mihai left his wife and children on the homestead and went out seeking jobs. Often the pay was pitiful, amounting to \$7.00 to \$10.00 a month. To bring home groceries, Mihai would pack them on his back and walk and walk following the Indian trails or newer trails made by the many immigrants that were pouring into Western Canada. Sometimes Mihai and his friends would build a raft in Fort Edmonton and try to steer it down the swiftly flowing Saskatchewan River. If the water was very rough, the sugar and flour would get wet.

To Mihai and Maria Yurko, five daughters were born in the old country – Rafira, Raveta, Domnica, Anita and Dochita. Two more children were born in Alberta, another daughter, Catrina who died in 1917 at age of 16 and their one and only son Thomas (Toader) who was born in 1903.

Dochița married Elie Vaipon and the couple moved to Calgary early in their marriage and then went back to Boian, Bukovina. They established their home there

and the descendants are still there today.

Thomas farmed at Boian for many years. Then he sold out and bought land near Vegreville where he proved to be a very successful farmer. When he became ill, he retired with his wife Mary to Vegreville, but his heart remained on his land.

(Thomas Yurko)

### **Yurko, Nazarie and Ksenia**

Nazarie Yurko was born in Boian, Bukovina and married Ksenia Matichuk. In 1899 along with other



Parents: Elie and Maria Morgan 1937.

Romanian families, they emigrated to Canada. They arrived with the three older children, Raveta, Maria and Domnica, and settled in Boian on the N.E. ¼ sec. 2, 56, 14, W. of 4th. There they proceeded to make their home and in time six more children were born to this couple; John, Katie, Sanda, Mike, Kost and Peter. Today only Katie Baiton survives.

Maria Yurko married Elie Morgan. They raised a family of thirteen children.

John Yurko married Eleana Hauca, daughter of Nicolae and Domnica Hauca. They farmed in the Shalka area until their retirement in Hairy Hill where Helen spent many hours weaving rugs. John was busy



Eleana and John N. Yurko.

with his hobbies and took an active part in St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox Church. John passed away in 1965 and Helen died in 1973. Both are resting in peace in the Boian cemetery.

Mike, John's eldest son, attended the local Boian School, then went on to Hairy Hill School where he completed Grade XII. He then enrolled in Engineering Physics at McGill University in Montreal. After spending some time in the Canadian Air Force he secured a position with the United States Government in the

Communications Department of Project Mercury which was engaged in space travel. Mike married Kay Ewanishan of Two Hills and they reside in New Jersey. They have two sons and four daughters.

Bill also completed his public school education at the local school then went on to Hairy Hill High School, where he completed his Grade XII. He, too, served in the Air Force and on being discharged he enrolled at the University of Alberta in chemical engineering. He graduated with distinction and then entered the working world. In the meantime he married Mary Paul and they were blessed with one son and three daughters. Bill held various jobs in Canada as well as south of the border. However, he was always interested in politics so he decided to enter the political arena. He was elected as a Conservative M.L.A. in Alberta and served eleven years, most of this time as a cabinet minister. Seeking a greater challenge, Bill entered federal politics and has the distinction of being the first M.P. of Romanian origin from Western Canada. He served one term as M.P. Bill and Mary reside in Edmonton where they enjoy a variety of interests.



John Yurko's children, l. to rt.: Boys, George, Michael, Con, Bill.

Girls: l. to rt.: Mrs. Mary B. Humeny and Mrs. Dori S. Bezovie.

Con (Constantine), the third son, married Alice Fodchuk and took over the family farm. They developed it into a very successful enterprise. They raised a family of two sons and six daughters. One son and one daughter passed away at a young age. Con, besides farming, has always been involved in many farm organizations.

Dora, the eldest daughter married Steve Bezovie and they made their home in Calgary where they raised a family of three sons and three daughters.

Mary married Bill Humeny. They reside in Edmonton where Bill operates a plumbing business. They have a family of three sons and two daughters.

George, the youngest member, married Ruth Roth. They live in Hairy Hill. George plays the violin and plays in an orchestra at public dances and other social events.

In the John Yurko family there are twenty-nine grand-children and twenty-eight great grand-children.

Mike Yurko, Nazarie's second son married Helen Iftody, daughter of Nicolae and Sanda Iftody. They

took over the family homestead where they farmed for a number of years. Then they moved to the village of Hairy Hill where Mike worked as an elevator agent for the United Grain Growers. Mike died in 1963 and Helen moved to Vegreville where she resides with her sister Ioana. Mike and Helen have a son, William, who farms very successfully with his wife Verna, north of Vegreville. Tina (Kathleen) is married to Ernie Feduniw and Lily is married to Norman Harasym. Both Tina and Lily are pharmacists.

Kost Yurko married Lena Hantiuk in 1934. At first they operated a small country store at Shalka for many years. Kost added to the family income by trucking livestock and grain for the farmers in the area. In 1950 the family moved to Hairy Hill where Kost worked for many years as a mechanic first in Hairy Hill and then in Willingdon until his retirement. Lena worked in the Hairy Hill hotel and then the local co-op store. Her last seven years before retirement she managed the co-op store quite capably. Kost passed away in 1983 at the age of seventy-three. Lena is enjoying retirement in Hairy Hill.

Kost and Lena raised a family of two boys and two girls. Johnny married Sandra and they live in Prince George, B.C. Rita married Willis Soprovich who took over his father's farm. They have a son, Barry, a daughter Barbara, married to Mark Bizovie and a daughter Shelley. Barbara and Mark have one daughter. Tom, the second son married Vicki Hill. They live in St. Paul where they have an upholstery business. They, too, have two daughters and one son. Phyllis, Kost's second daughter, lives in Grande Prairie where she owns and operates a Beauty College. She has one daughter.

Peter Yurko, Nazarie's youngest child, married Mary Euchuk. They farmed for many years, then moved to Edmonton where Peter was employed by the city. Both have passed away. They raised two sons and one daughter, George, Bill and Rose. All are married and have families of their own.

Willis and Rita Soprovich



Three generations, l. to rt.: Acsenia Yurko, son Mike and wife Helen, grandson William, 1937.



## **Zaharichuk, Kost and Katrina**

Kost Zaharichuk came to Canada from Mahala, Bucovina in 1912. As a young boy, he had completed school in the village and then was sent to Cernaui where he attended the gymnasium (high school). With his brothers George and Trajan he came to the New World.

In 1913 he married Catrina Michalcheon, daughter of Gheorghe and Pachița Michalcheon who had come to Canada in 1899. They were married in the Boian St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox church and settled on N.E. ¼-30-56-14 W. of 4th.



Tommy and his sister Pearl (Pachița) are helping their mother carry the bread to be baked in the clay oven, 1926.

Kost spoke German and Romanian fluently and soon began speaking the English language. He believed strongly in education.

They raised two children, Pearl, a daughter, and Tom, a son. Pearl completed her high school in Vegreville and then went on to the U. of A. where she completed her B.A. and B.Ed. degrees, majoring in Latin and French.

Kost farmed till retirement and lived in Willingdon till his death.

Tom married Helen Huculak and they farmed the home place for many years then moved to Victoria, B.C. Catrina is there too now, where she spends her time embroidering Romanian dolls and sells them or donates them to friends.

Pearl taught high school in Willingdon for three years, then married Leo Kunelius who became a school superintendent and moved to Westlock. They lived there for 14 years and raised a family of four. In 1955 Leo was appointed high school inspector with his base in Calgary, so the family moved there.

In 1965 Pearl Kunelius was chosen as a delegate to attend the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in New York, representing the Business and Professional Women's Clubs from across Canada.

While there she talked with many delegates from different countries including the delegate from Romania. After the session Pearl spent many evenings and weekends flying and speaking to Business and Professional Women's Clubs from Toronto on the East to Victoria on the West.

When Kost and his wife retired they lived in Willingdon a number of years. Later when Kost passed away Catrina lived with her son and his family. When Tom retired they all moved to Victoria, B.C. where they still reside.

Pearl Kunelius

## **Zaharichuk Tom**

Tom Zaharichuk came to Alberta from the village of Mahala in Bucovina, in 1912. He settled in the Boian area and in 1920 married Jennie Mihalcheon. Four daughters and one son were born of this marriage, Steve, Mary, Doreen, Katherine and Pearl. They all completed high school in Willingdon and took post secondary training for various careers.

Tom was an excellent farmer and was active in politics as well as community affairs. He was a trustee on the Borowich school board for many years. Later he was trustee on the Willingdon school board and when the Willingdon school burned on March 1, 1949,



Tom was chairman of the board and supervised the building of a brand new school. Later he was a trustee in the Two Hills School Division. Earlier he had been a councillor in the Municipal District of Eagle.

In 1933 Jennie died suddenly leaving five motherless children between ages five to thirteen. The following year Tom married Dora Serbu and two daughters were born of this marriage – Virginia who graduated as a teacher and Loretta who became a nurse.

In 1954 the Zaharichuks moved to Edmonton but Tom continued farming till retirement in 1960. He passed away six years later.

His wife was very lonely now as the daughters had married and now with Tom's death, she felt so alone. She decided to enroll in an art extension course. Given much encouragement by her instructor and her daughters she persevered, spending many hours at her easel in her sunny home. Ten years later she had her own art shows in Edmonton, Banff, and Toronto. Her art is unique and she has become quite widely known.

Mrs. Doris Zaharichuk

## **Zuk, Constantin**

Constantin Zuk and his wife Sanda, daughter of Maftai and Pachița Michalcheon were married in Boian, Bucovina. In 1901 they came to Canada with Sanda's father and her only sister Maria and three brothers, John, Steve, and Gheorghe.

Constantin settled on a quarter section in the Shalka district and began farming. They farmed there till their children were old enough to go to school. They left the farm and moved to Vegreville where Constantin operated a fairly large livery stable, where the farmers would bed the horses overnight. With the advent of the railroad to Vegreville in 1907 and the building of elevators, the farmers hauled grain from as far north as Desjarlais, Boian and Shalka. Constantin built a big livery barn and charged 25¢ or 50¢ a night for a team of horses and the owner generally slept in the barn too.



Constantine Zuk standing by his livery stable 1911.

Because Constantin had learned German in the old country and spoke it fluently, he caught on to the English language much quicker than his fellow countrymen. This way he was able to act as interpreter at the court house for the Romanians in trouble and so earned some extra money. In summer he went to southern Alberta and herded sheep on the big ranches.

The girls along with their mother Sanda milked seven cows and sold the milk to local residents. This pin money helped purchase clothes and books for the children in school.

Both girls, Katie and Sarah finished school and went to work. Ted, the youngest, finished high school and became a school teacher. He taught school for three years and passed away at age 22.



The Zuk family 1920, l. to rt.: Toder, Sarah, Mrs. Zuk and Katie.

Katie married, had two daughters, and lived in southern Alberta, and then moved to the coast. She worked for the Hudson Bay store and worked her way up to a managerial position. Unfortunately she died of cancer at 63.

Sarah married George Kachuk, an elevator agent, and in 1929 they moved to Willingdon where they resided and raised a family of two boys, Willis and Richard, and a daughter Lucille.

In Willingdon, both George and Sarah were active in community affairs. Sarah ran the Kozy Korner coffee shop. She was active in Willingdon Hospital Ladies' Auxiliary, the I.O.D.E. and the Boian Ladies' Club. George passed away and Sarah is still in Willingdon.

Both Sanda and Constantin rest in peace in St. Mary's Romanian Cemetery at Boian.

Sarah Kachuk

### Romanian Proverbs:

Încet, încet departe ajungi.  
Slow and steady wins the race.

Fie care buruiană are umbra ei.  
Every weed has its shadow.

Cine se scoală de dimineață departe ajunge.  
The early bird gets the worm.

# Community Institutions

## Churches

### The Romanian Orthodox Churches

#### 1. St. Mary's (Sfânta Maria) Romanian Orthodox Church at Boian.

The church on the hill some four miles directly east of Willingdon has had a long, interesting and at times a rather turbulent history. As early as 1900 when the first Romanian emigrants settled there, the more aggressive ones began to think of building a house of prayer. Already two persons had passed away and there was no cemetery and no church. They needed such an edifice in which to baptize their newborn, in which to marry their youth, and from which to bury their dead. The first meeting was held in the home of Mitru Moscaliuk early in 1901 for the purpose of choosing a location for a cemetery and a church.

According to earlier research done by a former local teacher, George N. Kelba, we learn that in 1901 a forty-acre parcel of land legally described as subdivision thirteen N.W. ¼, sec. 10, 56, 14, W.4th was purchased as homestead land, paid for and registered in the names of three elected trustees, namely, John (Ion) T. Toma, Mihai T. Yurko and Konstantin Kachuk. A good deal of correspondence took place between this group and Ottawa, since Alberta was not yet a province and letters took a long time to reach their destination. However, progress was made towards the fulfillment of their hopes.

A Russian Orthodox missionary priest from Edmonton was invited to bless the cemetery once a site was selected. Then a committee was elected to make necessary arrangements for the erection of a church. It consisted of Ion T. Toma, Nicolai Iftody and Dumitru Moscaluk. In the fall of 1903 Ion T. Toma, George T. Toma and Dumitru Moscaluk hauled huge stones from Ion Seminiuk's and Nicolai Yurko's farms

to serve as a foundation for the new church. Other men helped cut down tamarack logs and hauled them to the banks of the North Saskatchewan River at Desjarlais where some French sawyers operated a sawmill and squared the logs. Then these had to be hauled back to Boian some six miles south. Ion T. Toma, Dumitru Moscaliuk, George T. Toma and George Porozni Sr. played a major role in hauling these logs. At a subsequent meeting it was decided that each man was to donate twenty dollars in cash and volunteer twenty days of free labor. The chief carpenter was Elie Ravliuk and he was to be paid two hundred dollars for this major project. The building was started and Ravliuk, without any blue prints, built it basing his design on what he could recall about the church in Boian, Bucovina. Typical of Orthodox churches, it includes a belfrey (separate from the church), a cupola, crosses on top, fan-light windows, the altar and sacristy.

By the summer of 1905, the building was completed and a Russian Orthodox priest from Wostok, in all probability Father Mihailo Skibinski, was invited to come and consecrate the church. On Aug. 2 the consecration took place. What a joyous occasion for all the members! They came from far and near, on foot, or by wagons drawn by horses or oxen, following the trails that led to the church on the hill. Everyone enjoyed the festivities and left with a feeling of pride and satisfaction. In 1918 the building was covered with siding and in 1948 stucco replaced the siding and the entrance was modified. The stone foundation was covered with concrete. The roof too has been repaired and the belfrey rebuilt. Credit must be given to all the active members of the community for having taken, through the years, such excellent care of the building that it is as solid today as the day it was completed.

The church's original designation was not St. Mary's. Not only has its name changed but its owners too. Research in the files of the Land Titles Office in

SECRET  
-TOP SECRET-  
RECEIVED BY THE DIRECTOR  
CYRUS

...

1a.

749053.

February 23th, 1905.

copy for A. D. L. Edmonton. Reference 61569.

Reverend Sir,

I am directed to say that in September, 1903, the Department approved a grant being made of legal sub-division 13 of Section 10, Township 56, Range 14, West Fourth Meridian to the Russo-Greek Catholic Orthodox Church, and so soon as a church is erected upon the land a patent can be issued therefor. Will you be good enough to advise the Department at once whether a church has been built; if not, when it is proposed to build one.

his,

Worob, Alla

I have the honor to forward you herewith the sum  
of \$ 10.00, being fraternal fee for Church Band  
of 40 men at \$490.83 & c. 13. 10.56 14 w. H. M.

Your obedient servant

Her M Ribinsky



HISTORY OF TRANSFER OF BOIAN CHURCH  
FROM 1901 to 1945, as PREPARED UPON  
THE REQUEST OF ALL THE MEMBERS AT  
THEIR ANNUAL MEETING FEB. 25, 1945.

XX

1901 - 1906. Area of 40 acres as per title of N.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of N.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec 10, Tp. 56, Rge. 14, West of 4th Mer. The above parcel was purchased as Homestead paid for and registered in the names of the three elected trustees, John TQ Toma, Mihai Yurko, & Konstantin Kachuk, for the members. The Church was registered at this time in the name of the Bishop of the Russo-Greek-Orthodox Church, because that was the only religion suitable for these people registered in Canada at that time.

1906, Feb. 18. The land was still on the three elected trustees. On this date, the Church was transferred from the Bishop of the Russo-Greek-Orthodox Church to the Parish of Rumanish Greek Oriental Church of Soda Lake.

1909, Dec. 18. This year the land of 40 acres was transferred from the names of the three trustees to the Parish of Rumanish Greek Oriental Church of Soda Lake. Now both land and church were on the above title. The land was valued at \$600.00 and the Church at \$1900.00. Total \$2500.00.

1911, Feb. 13. All property (church and land) were transferred from the Parish of Rumanish Greek Oriental Church of Soda Lake, to----- The Bishop of Russo-Greek-Catholic Orthodox Parish of St. Demetrius of Soda Lake. This was done under a court order of Judge Scott, solicitors-Short & Cross, and signed by Nickolai Yurko on Feb 9, 1911.

1912, May 28, Municipality of Eagle # 545 took the property for arrears of taxes. Then ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Bishop ~~XXXXXX~~ paid taxes and re-registered in the name of the Bishop of the Russo-Greek-Catholic-Orthodox Parish of St. Demetrius of Boian, Alta.

1924, Feb. 26. Municipality of Eagle # 545 took the property for arrears of taxes. Then Rev. Piza of Shandro Church paid the taxes and re-registered in the name of the Bishop of the Russo-Greek-Catholic-Orthodox Parish of St. Demetrius of Boian Alberta.

IX 1945, - Feb. 3. Transferred from Bishop of Russo-Greek-Orthodox Catholic Parish of St. Demetrius of Boian to The ST. MARY'S ROUMANIAN ORTHODOX PARISH OF BOIAN, ALBERTA.

On this instance a delegation consisting of Nick Nickifor, George Kelba, & Mike Serbu, were sent to Edmonton to see Bishop Yossart and they obtained such transfer and duplicate Certificate of Title No 5804. Lawyer J.E. Basarab. This transfer was subject to a separate agreement between the delegation and the Bishop;

Note- Above transcript prepared at the request of all members by Geo. N. Kelba (member of the executive)

*Geo. N. Kelba*  
*Willingdale, Alta.*



The first Romanian Church Ladies' Auxiliary organized by Father Cohan in 1932  
Seated l. to rt.: Helen Svekla Sec., Raveta Toma vice-pres., Veronica Toma Pres., Preoteasa Cohan, Anne Porozni Treas.  
Standing l. to rt.: Lena G. Hauca, Lena Soprovich, Father V. Cohan, Mary G. Mihalcheon, Mary E. Soprovich.

Edmonton shows that in 1906 this property was registered as the Parish of St. Demetrius and the owner was the Bishop of the Russo-Greek Catholic Orthodox Church. In 1909 it became the Parish of Rouminish Greek Oriental Church of Soda Lake. The owner was "His Majesty the King in the Right of the Province of Alberta". Then in 1945 the Certificate of Title states that "The St. Mary's Roumanian Orthodox Parish of Boian, Alberta" is the owner. To conclude this part of the history of this church it is necessary to add that in 1979 the local church board drew up a realistic constitution and replaced the word "parish" by "congregation".

Today the Certificate of Title to the property reads as follows: "St. Mary's Romanian Orthodox Congregation of Boian is now the owner. . . ."

This place of worship has been in continuous use since it was built and is being used today. The church has been the scene of hundreds of church services,

numerous christenings, weddings and funerals of the Romanian and Ukrainian people of the Orthodox faith. Because this church was one of the first to be built in the area some Ukrainian families became founding members as well. Among them were Gawrylo Lakusta, Sandyk Chebree, Mike Goroniuk, Vasile Chrapko and a few others.

The Romanian Community of Boian and neighboring districts was far from other similar ethnic settlements. This and the fact that it was a rural community, it was difficult to retain the services of a local priest for long periods of time. For these and other reasons priests came and went. From 1905 till the forties there were at least twenty priests who served in the local churches.

Most of these priests were bilingual, speaking Romanian and Ukrainian and some spoke English as well. Three of the more outstanding ones were Doctor Lazar Gherman, Vasile Cohan and Grigore Costea.



The St. Mary's Romanian Church Choir 1933:

Back row l. to rt.: George W. Toma, George K. Iftody, Metro J. Iftody, Harry W. Svekla, Toder W. Romanko, Bill Moscaliuk, Mike S. Chebree.

Middle Row l. to rt.: Anne Moscaliuk, Katie W. Toma, Sanda J. Iftody, Alice K. Iftody, Katie N. Hauca, Helen T. Russ.

Seated l. to rt.: Alice J. Toma, Sarah J. Cucheran, Helen H. Svekla, Father V. Cohan (choir director), Ruby Svekla, Sanda N. Hauca, Dora A. Lutic.

Missing: Mary and Floyd G. Toma, Katie and Metro W. Toma.

## 2. The Romanian Orthodox Church of Hairy Hill (Nașterea Fecioarei Maria)



Biserica Nașterea Fecioarei Maria from Hairy Hill. Father Vasile D. Toma taking a stroll.

When one studies the history of religious groups it is not unusual to find conflicting opinions and strong disagreements among the members and if two strong personalities emerge there is bound to be a split. Such a situation occurred at Boian. The first church built was under the jurisdiction of Russian Orthodox bishops and some of the members wanted a truly Romanian church. In 1911 a small group held a meeting of their own and elected Vasile Moroz as president. They decided to build a church of their own on a small parcel of land which the president donated. In time a small church was built. Services were held intermittently, whenever a priest was available. Today services are held annually when there is a prohod – prayers for dead – on a Sunday between Easter and Ascension day. This property is located on N.W.¼, 32-55-14, W.4th.

### 3. Holy Cross Romanian Orthodox Church of Shepenge (Inălțarea Sfinței Cruci)

A number of Romanian families living several miles east of the Boian church decided to build a small church in their own district. Nicolae Cuciurean donated about two acres of land on N.E.¼-10-56-13, W4th. This was registered in April, 1914, at the same time as the church was incorporated. The first president was Toder Nickiforeak. Other founding members were Stefan Nickiforeak, Nicolae Basaraba, Vasile Basaraba, Andrei Basaraba, Stefan and Ion Simenovich, Toder Shuhany, Costachi Harasim, Petre and Nicolae Cuciurean, Toder Biduleac, and Vasile Darda. Initially about two or three hundred dollars were collected locally, to pay for the materials. Doors and windows were made at Oshatski's cabinet shop in Vegreville



Holy Cross Romanian Orthodox Church at Shepenge 1945.



where a special discount was granted to the church. All the labor was voluntary. Since the community was too small to support a local priest, they depended on the occasional monk who would perform services for them. Later priests from Boian journeyed to the Malin Church, as it's popularly known locally, and performed marriage or funeral services, or church services on special church holidays. The first burial there was Petre Cuciurean, infant son of Nicolae Cuciurean. Frozina Basaraba, wife of Andrei Basaraba was the first adult buried there.

Today there are very few members but these few devoted ones upgraded the building in 1984 and the church was rededicated in June of the same year.

#### **4. Descent of the Holy Ghost Romanian Orthodox Church at Hamlin. (Pogorârea Duhului Sfânt).**

On the north side of the swiftly flowing North Saskatchewan River, north of the former Desjarlais ferry

site, there existed a school district known as Gold Creek. The land is sandy, hilly with many ravines through which in the rainy season and in spring, bubbling brooks flow southwards to the river. Here, too, as early as 1912, several Romanian families began settling on homesteads. Among these was a monk, Teodosie Nica, who built a log cabin in which he conducted religious services. In 1915, a general meeting was held for the purpose of electing an executive and planning the building of a church. Vasile Basaraba was the first president. The following year the church was built on S.E. ¼ sec. 22-57-14 W.4th. and Father Nica served the parish for two years. He was followed by Elie Alda, a local farmer who had been ordained as a priest. Following his death the church has been served intermittently by the priests from Boian. Today the church is still there in a very picturesque place, guarding the well-kept cemetery, but there are few members. Generally, in June, a grave-side service is held in memory of the deceased pioneers.



An artist's conception of what the church at Boian looked like when it was completed in 1905.

## School Districts

### Boian Marea S.D. #2053

#### Școala

Mîndră-i școala, școala-i mîndră,  
Mîndri-s cei ce-n școala intră.  
Școala-i sfînta și-a ei prag  
La copii mult le e drag.

#### The School

Beautiful is the school without and within,  
Beautiful are the children that enter therein.  
Saintly is the school and past its threshold,  
To the eager children there is much to unfold.

Since nearly all the pioneers that settled south and east of Eagle Tail Hill were Romanians, they decided to name their district Boian after the village in which they lived in Bucovina. However, just four miles east there was already a district named Bojan, also settled largely by Romanians. The spelling was Austrian but the pronunciation was the same. Since it was impossible to have two districts by the same name, they decided to call their school Boian Marea. The spelling should have been Boian Mare meaning "Big Boian", to differentiate it from Bojan. In later years the districts were called Shalka, the same as the post office, and Boian respectively. Officially the names of the schools remained as originally registered.

As early as 1908 parents with children of school age began thinking of building a school. The following year the district was organized and comprised the following lands: Sections 2-11, 14-18, 21-23 in Township 56, Range 14, West of the fourth meridian. A special meeting was held in the home of Vasile Romanko on May 28, 1910, with trustees Wasyl Romanko, Nazarie Yurko and George K. Kucheran (Cucheran) present. The last named trustee was elected chairman. At this meeting it was decided to appoint Pat (Patrick) Bolan

of Whitford as sec.-treas. for 1910 at a salary of thirty dollars and five dollars for stamps and stationery. At the same meeting it was decided to borrow \$1150. for the purpose of purchasing a site, building and furnishing a school house as well as a teacherage.

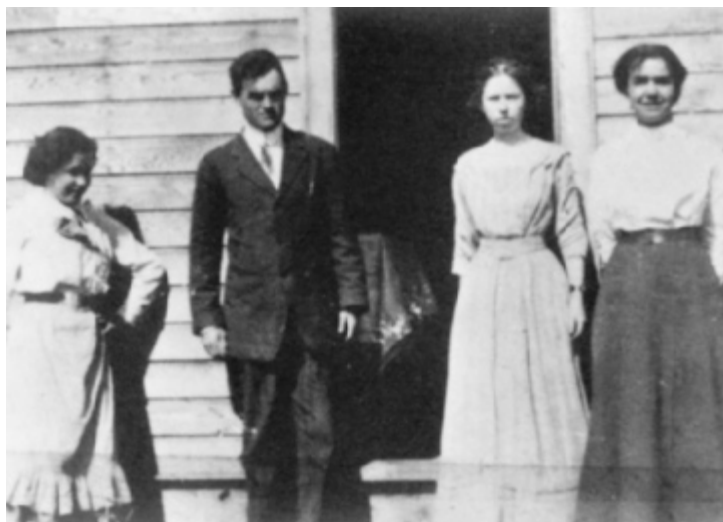
On July 5, 1910 the full board met at the new school, found it satisfactory and agreed to pay the builder, Frank Mikota, \$117.00 for building it. Early the following year, Pat Bolan was again appointed as sec.-treasurer and George Kuchurian as chairman. The board decided to purchase forty-six primers, twelve seconds and twelve firsts and to engage a teacher.

The school was built on a brick foundation of lumber and painted white. The interior was typical of the schools of the time. The north wall had a blackboard from end to end and the teacher's desk was at the front by the blackboard. The pupils sat in double-row desks facing the front. In one corner was a small shelf for books and there on the walls were the usual maps and pictures. The children used slates and pencils. When the slates were covered with writing, they were cleaned and the students started writing again. The core subjects taught were reading, writing and arithmetic, art and grammar. At recess few organized games were played as there was no equipment of any kind.

For lunch the children brought some bread, possible boiled eggs or cheese. Sometimes some of the children brought boiled potatoes or dumplings. The lunch pail was an empty lard can.

The first teacher was Etta Smalley, a young attractive girl of medium height who lived south of present day Hairy Hill. Her brother would bring her to Boian on Monday morning. She stayed in the teacherage all week and Friday evening she returned home. She taught about six months as the school was closed during the cold winter months.

Among the first pupils at Boian Marea school were the following: John, Dochita and Tom S. Chebree;



**Boian Marea S.D. #2053**

First teacher at Boian Marea School 1910-11 Miss Etta Smalley at extreme right of picture.

George and Metro J. Cucheran; Domnica and Pachița J. Dârda; Bill, Pat and George J. Gordey; George, John and Bill N. Hauca; Mertin and Dora P. Hauca; Nick and Bill J. Hnetka; Elie P. Hutzcal; Raveta and Domnica N. Kelba; Annie and Metro T. Kelba; Nick and John M. Moscaliuk; Alex, Metro and Steve G. Sawchuk; Ewana and Vasile J. Toma; Mary and Pachița M. Toma; John and Sanda N. Yurko.

Miss Smalley was followed by a Mr. Hudson, a man of medium height, dark complexion, very artistic and a teacher who explained the lessons extremely well. In 1913 Mr. Keyes was hired as the teacher and he taught one term. He was succeeded by Earl Smalley, Etta's cousin. Earl Smalley was a tall man, of dark complexion and very religious in his outlook on life. He was followed by Mr. Wallace, an older man who mixed well in the community. Mr. Wallace was followed by Frank J.W. Fane who taught until Christmas in 1914 and then enlisted in World War I. John B. Cavey arrived to teach in 1915, having come directly from London, England. He smoked a pipe continuously and impressed the students with his knowledge

of British history. The school was closed in December. In March of 1916 the board employed George M. Mihalcheon to teach until the end of the year. In 1917 G.M. Mihalcheon attended the Camrose Normal School for a few months and then returned.

The one-room school was now becoming crowded. More of the older students remained in school longer and there were many beginners starting school each year. Since the families were large, as many as five or six children from one family would be attending the school at one time. On October 24, 1917 a special meeting was held at the school for the purpose of reaching a decision on adding another room to the existing structure. A vote was taken and some fifteen people voted in favor of the addition on condition that approval be received from the Department of Education.



Pupils by the teacherage in 1916 (?) Back row l. to rt.: Mary J. Cucheran, Raveta W. Cuciurean, Pachița M. Toma, Sarah J. Cucheran, Eleana N. Hauca, Vasilca T. Kelba, Katie G. Cucheran (?), Dora P. Hauca, Mary V. Romanko, Annie W. Toma.

Boys l. to rt.: Sandy P. Hauca, Nick J. Toma, Floria N. Hauca, \_\_\_\_\_, Mertin P. Hauca, John N. Hauca, Andrew Shewchuk, Bill N. Hauca, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Nick P. Hauca.



Two-room school completed in 1919.  
At left is the one-room school built in 1910.

Surprisingly enough, a month later a special rate-payers meeting was held at the school under the chairmanship of Matthew Shalka. After the preliminaries were dispersed with, a motion was made and seconded that all construction on the addition be stopped. The motion was passed with a large majority.

Those who voted against the motion, in other words, to have the addition completed were the following: Metro Mihalcean, Wasyl T. Toma, Geo. T. Toma, Gregori M. Toma, Wasyl Harrasim, G.M. Mihalcheon and Nicolai Darda. (Minutes of Meetings 1917). The construction was halted. Heated arguments and name



First community picnic July 1919, organized by G.M. Mihalcheon.



calling followed. Matters got so out of hand that on June 10, 1919, J.C. Butchart, the school inspector, who lived in Vegreville, was appointed as official trustee by the Department of Education and the local school board was dissolved.

On September 24, 1919 following instructions of the official trustee and the sec.-treas. A.M. Boutillier, the district was to borrow three thousand dollars for the purpose of: a. erecting a frame addition and to equip it, b. to construct a stable on the school grounds, c. to add two acres to the school site. This money was to be paid back in ten equal instalments at eight per cent per annum. The money was borrowed and construction was completed.

For a brief period a Mr. A.C. Francis was engaged as teacher to teach from May 3rd to the end of September at a salary of \$100 a month. This gentleman was teaching a class one day and remarked casually, "If any of you do not understand any material or you have any problems just ask this *chap*," and he pointed to himself. Not long afterwards on the playground and in the community he was known as "Mr. Chap". In Sept. of that same year G.M. Mihalcheon returned to teaching.

Mr. J.C. Butchart acted as official trustee until Sept. of 1922. On Aug. 2nd of that year a special meeting was called chaired by Geo. T. Toma. The purpose of this meeting was to seek permission from the Department of Education to allow the taxpayers to elect their own trustees and be self-governing. Three delegates were elected, namely, Geo. T. Toma, George Cucheran and Peter Mihalcheon. They were instructed to see the inspector as soon as possible and make known their request.

As a result on Sept. 2nd another meeting was held at which the official trustee presided. A.M. Boutillier was secretary. It was at this meeting that authority for discharging the duties of trustees was placed back in the hands of the local people. The same three men who had previously been chosen as delegates, were now re-elected as trustees. Local government had been restored!

The two-room school now had a gravity furnace in which coal and wood was burned.

A Mr. Halverson taught briefly in the Junior Room and then Mrs. Nellie Berry arrived. She taught the junior room classes for nine consecutive years and she left a lasting impression on her classes. G.M. Mihalcheon left in 1926 when he was elected an M.L.A., running as a candidate for the United Farmers of Alberta party.

When Mr. Mihalcheon left in the spring of 1926, classes were instructed by a Mr. Gardiner briefly and then Mr. Charles Seeley who completed the school term. In the fall of 1926 S.M. Matei took over the principalship. He was a local farm boy who had completed high school in Vegreville, went to Camrose Normal School and came back to teach at Boian. He taught for thirteen consecutive years and besides being a very conscientious teacher, he was very active in organizing community activities, particularly concerts and sports.

In 1927, a local young man Mertin P. Hauca was appointed Sec.-Treas. for the district, a position he held until 1931 at which time Mike S. Chebree replaced him.

The Romanians were a prolific people so that by 1928 the two-room school was overflowing with pupils. In 1928-29 a third room was opened in Wasyl T. Toma's vacant house on top of the hill just north of the school. There were now three teachers: Nellie A. Berry who taught grades 1-3, Alice W. Martin who taught four and five on the hill and S.M. Matei who was the principal and taught grades 6, 7, 8 and 9. At this time Boian Marea had the distinction of being the only three-room rural school in the province of Alberta. Because of the additional expenses the mill rate was increased from 7½ cents an acre to thirty mills on the dollar of the assessed value of the farm land.

Mrs. Nellie Berry resigned at the end of June, 1929 and the community felt a real loss in her departure. She was replaced by Alice W. Martin. At this time the C.P.R. railroad had been built and the neighboring villages of Hairy Hill and Willingdon had sprung up like mushrooms overnight. School boundaries were



### Boian Marea

When school attendance reached its peak, 1928-29. The three teachers at the back are l. to rt. Mrs. Martin, Mrs. Berry and Mr. Matei.



Festival winners 1929. Group l. to rt.: Dora G. Cucheran, Dora M. Moscaliuk, Mike P. Hutzcal, George J. Toma, Mike G. Toma, Kost N. Hauca, Katie G. Dubetz, Tom N. Hauca, Katie W. Toma, Dora J. Serbu, Mrs. Alice W. Martin, Katherine Bandur holding the trophy, Mrs. Nellie A. Berry, unknown, Mary L. Sandulak, Peter K. Iftody, Sanda J. Iftody (?), Mary M. Skirka, Kost N. Kelba, Mary N. Radesh (?), Nick Skirka, Nick W. Romanko.

changed and students were transferred to the newly constructed schools in Willingdon and Hairy Hill. The school population shrank so the school reverted to its previous status of a rural two-room school.

In the early hours of an August cloudy night, 1937, this school burned to the ground, destroying all supplies, books and records. All were sacrificed to the angry gods. It was a complete loss. No one knew or was able to determine the cause of the conflagration. Immediately meetings were held to plan the construction of a new school. That fall, classes were held in the vacant parish house and in the community hall on Ion T. Toma's farm. The Junior Room was taught by Peter K. Iftody and S.M. Matei was still principal. The children enjoyed school that fall. At noon they would go berry picking in the churchyard and sometimes would forget to get back in time.



Five sets of twins attending Boian Marea School in 1944.  
Back row l. to rt.: Lena Kelba, teacher of Junior Room, Pearl and Annie N. Hutzcal, Katie and Rosie Iftody, George N. Kelba, Principal.  
Second row l. to rt.: Metro and Peter N. Hutzcal, Rose and Jennie Darda.  
Front row l. to rt.: Sandy and Andy Lutic.

Under the chairmanship of John G. Porozni it was decided to erect a stone building with two classrooms on the main floor, cloak rooms and office space. It was to have a full basement with two large rooms and a furnace room in the center. During the thirties many of the ratepayers owed money on back taxes and so were able to pay these in the form of labor by hauling stones for miles for the new building. In 1938 the school was completed and everyone was rightfully proud of it.

On Nov. 2, 1938 Boian Marea S.D. #2053 became part of the Two Hills School Division No. 21. In 1950 the school was closed and the students were vanned to Willingdon and a few went to Hairy Hill. On March 6, 1951 approval was given for the sale of the site and buildings of this school district. The community bought the property and it owns it to this day.

Some interesting facts gleaned from the minutes of the meetings held in the district:

- a. The district was always borrowing money for building or for operating expenses. What else is new?
- b. Although school attendance was compulsory, it was difficult to enforce.
- c. In 1912 the teacher was paid sixty dollars per month but was charged one dollar (\$1.00) per week "for the use of the residential shack and furniture".
- d. In 1914 the tax rate was set at seven and one half cents per acre. If a farmer owned 160 acres of land he would pay a tax of twelve dollars. The good old days!
- e. In 1914 the interest rate was 8%. Not too far out of line today.
- f. Two additional acres of land were purchased in 1914 from Wasyl T. Toma at fifteen (\$15.00) per acre. What are land prices today?
- g. As early as Jan. 1916 at a meeting of the Board of Trustees a motion was passed authorizing the chairman to plough the school grounds in spring and prepare the land for seeding it to grass. Further, the ground along the fence was to be prepared for planting trees. The secretary was to write to Indian Head, Saskatchewan and make an application for young





Festival winners of THREE trophies in May, 1931.  
 Back row l. to rt.: Toder T. Kokotailo, Mr. Matei, Mrs. Berry, Metro Porozni.  
 Second row l. to rt.: Dora Lutic, Elizabeth E. Radesh, Helen Russ, Sanda Kokotailo, Dora Russ, Alice K. Iftody, Alice J. Toma, Katherine P. Bandur.  
 Third row l. to rt.: Katherine Dubetz, Sarah J. Hutscal, George T. Kokotailo, Sanda Dubetz, Metro Axani, Katherine Toma, Dora Skirka.  
 Front row: Steve Axani, Sanda Russ, Dora Radesh, Katie K. Iftody.



Boian Men's Softball Team 1934.  
 L. to rt. standing: Floyd G. Toma, Stephen M. Matei, Geo. W. Toma, Geo. J. Toma, Toder Romanko, Toder N. Hauca, John N. Svecla.  
 On the ground l. to rt.: Kost N. Kelba, Geo. N. Kelba, Kost N. Hauca.



trees. That was why the Boian Marea School grounds were always the nicest in the vicinity of Eagle Tail Hill! h. In 1918 a young girl was employed as janitor of the school at the rate of seven and half cents (7½¢) per school day. She probably supplied her own cleaning materials too!

### The Bojan School District #1777

On March 11, 1908, the Bojan S.D. #1777 was established. It comprised the following land areas: Sections 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 28, 29 and 30, in twp. 56, rge. 13; sections 1, 12, 13, 24 and 25,



**Boian Marea School Picture 1941.**

Identification is left to right:

Back row: Tommy Dubetz, Andy G. Toma, Mike J. Hutscal, Nick G. Hauca, Peter G. Feica, George Lutic, Nicholas J. Porozni, Willis J. Porozni, Sandy Cozicar, Danny Cleet, Edward Cucheran, George M. Suprovich, Johnny J. Toma, Metro T. Kokotailo, Vicky G. Toma, Dora T. Kokotailo, Mary M. Soprovich, Grace G. Dubetz, Emilia G. Toma, Vera E. Radesh, Michael G. Toma, Principal, Peter K. Iftody, Junior Room teacher.

Second row: Donald Dubetz, Anne Soprovich, Dora N. Iftody, Alice Lutic, Rose N. Iftody, Anne Hutscal, Alice Dorish, Mary M. Chebree, Mary M. Cucheran, Rosie W. Toma, Kathleen G. Cucheran, Pearl N. Hutscal, Shirley N. Hutscal, Katie M. Soprovich, Johnny Cucheran, Billy T. Kokotailo, Mike E. Suprovich.

Third row: Tommy Feica, George M. Chebree, June N. Iftody, Rosalette F. Toma, Junie J. Hutscal, Doris G. Cucheran, Katie G. Hauca, Elizabeth Skirka, Katie N. Iftody, Helen Cucheran, Junie M. Svekla, Patricia G. Hauca, Junie M. Cucheran, Olga E. Radesh, Kathleen G. Feica, Mary G. Feica and Shirley N. Darda (standing), Bob Melnyk, William M. Yurko (kneeling).

Front row: Peter N. Hutscal, Sammy G. Dubetz, Peter G. Hauca, George Axani, George J. Porozni, Kost N. Iftody, George M. Cucheran, Paul Lutic, Alex Cucheran, Metro N. Hutscal.

Missing: Con Axani, Katherine J. Hutscal, Nick J. Hutscal, Vicky J. Toma, Peter Radesh.



**Bojan S.D. #1777**

Senior Room in 1942: Back row l. to rt.: Peter G. Feica, Alex Leonty, Andy Knapp, Metro Bujak, Sandy T. Dubitz, Metro Hantiuk (?), Jim G. Romanko, Nick K. Kachuk (?), Tommy G. Feica.

Second row l. to rt.: Nick Bezovie, Rosie Kachuk, Lucy Fedorak, Shirley N. Hutzcal, Kay Dubitz, Marjorie Lutzak.

Third row l. to rt.: Rosie Matei, Lucille Lutzak, Rita Kachuk, Sandra Kokotailo.

Fourth row l. to rt.: Lily Dubitz, Stella Kachuk, Helen Hreniuk, Rosie Morgan, Katie M. Kachuk, Katie Petraschuk.

Seated l. to rt.: George Kachuk, Tommy Skrepneck, Metro Holenchuk, Nicholas G. Svekla.

twp. 56, rge. 14, W.4th. The official trustee was Robert Fletcher of Wostok, Alberta.

On Aug. 14, 1909 approval was given for a site selected at S.E. corner of sec. 18, 56, 13, W.4th. That same year on Nov. 17, the district borrowed seven hundred dollars for the purpose of constructing and furnishing a school and a teacherage. During the following years lands were withdrawn or added to the district, i.e. the boundaries kept changing. In 1919 Mr. J.C. Butchard of Vegreville was appointed the official trustee.

Since the school population kept increasing it was necessary to build another room. On Feb. 3, 1926 the district borrowed sixteen hundred dollars for the purpose of paying for the additional room.

When the school first opened in 1910, the teacher was Mr. Disher. When the junior room was added the first teacher was Lena W. Svekla. The treasurer at this time was George W. Svekla.

In 1928 more land was required for a playground area. Hence approval was given for additional land making a total of five acres. There was room for a baseball diamond. When the school burned down in 1930, it was replaced by the existing present structure.

In 1937 the Bojan School District was incorporated into the Two Hills School Division No. 21. In 1955, in April, approval was given for the sale of the site and buildings. Today the grounds and buildings are still there but are seldom used.

## **Desjarlais S.D. #1779**

The Desjarlais S.D. #1779 was established on March 11, 1908. It was comprised of the following lands: Sections 33-36 inclusive in township 56, range 14; sections 1-10 inclusive, 16, 17 and those portions of sections 11, 12, 15, 20, 21 and 29 lying South and West of the Saskatchewan River in twp. 57, rge. 14, W. of 4th. The senior trustee was Thos. Strenatka of Desjarlais. On March 26, 1910 the following lands were added: sec. 26, 27 and 28 in same township. On April 5, the same year, the district borrowed



**Desjarlais S.D. #1779:**  
Desjarlais School built in 1926. Picture taken in 1940. Mrs. N. Tkachuk with child is by the entrance.



The Desjarlais ferry plied the North Saskatchewan River for many years. It was particularly busy on Sundays and at blueberry time.

eight hundred dollars for the purpose of building and furnishing a school. The treasurer was Wm. Hawreliak of Shandro, Alberta. On June 28, 1910 a site was selected at S.E. corner of section 4, in twp. 57, rge. 14, W. of 4th. The one room school was built and classes

began. During the next few years lands were withdrawn or added. A serious problem existed in that the school was not centrally located so that the children living near the river had some four miles to walk to school. In 1925 the school burned to the ground and

a new school was to be built. In the interval classes were held in a farm house.

The ratepayers working with the Department of Education through O. Williams, who was the school inspector and the official trustee, agreed to divide the area into two school districts to be named Desjarlais and Deep Lake respectively.

On Aug. 14, 1926 the district borrowed the sum of five thousand dollars in order to build and equip a two-room school, a teacher's residence and a barn. The treasurer was Wm. Karbasheski, of Desjarlais. The site selected was a parcel of three acres situated on S.E.¼, 9, 57, 14 W.4th. More lands were added or subtracted.

The buildings were put up and classes were held for many years in the Desjarlais School. In 1938 the school district was integrated into the Two Hills School Division. On December 29, 1950 approval was given for the sale of all the school buildings situated on the site. The pupils were vanned to the neighboring Willingdon School. On November 16, 1965 the school site was put up for sale and only the memories were left.

## Schools

### **Soda Lake #1119 (Later New Hairy Hill S.D. #1119)**

On Oct. 11, 1904 the Soda Lake School District #1119 was established. It was comprised of the following lands: Sections 3 to 10 inclusive, 15 to 22 inclusive and 27 to 30 inclusive in twp. 55, rge. 14, W. of 4th. The senior trustee was J.H. Weldon of Soda Lake, Alberta. On Feb. 11, of the following year the district borrowed eight hundred dollars for the purpose of erecting a school building and furnishing it. The treasurer was A.M. Boutillier of Soda Lake. In the following years lands were added or withdrawn.

In 1928 all the sections of land comprising the Berhometh School District #1499 were added to the Soda Lake S.D. #1119, and the former school district was



#### **Soda Lake**

A group of Soda Lake students 1927

Standing l. to rt.: Con S. Tkachuk, Anne Gongos, Robert Boutillier, and Lilly Boutillier. Kneeling l. to rt.: Alex Mihalcheon, and Art Boutillier.



Hairy Hill High School Girls' Rural High School Basketball Provincial Champions 1929-30. Coached by Nicholas Poohkay.  
L. to rt.: Rita Boutillier, Katie Gongos, Siah (Anastasia) Yaraslowski, Lily Kachuk, Dorothy Kachuk, Marie Yaraslowski.



dissolved. Owen Williams of Vegreville was appointed official trustee.

On March 8, 1929 the name of the school district was changed from the Soda Lake School District to the new Hairy Hill School District. The same year on March 11, the new school district borrowed the sum of twenty thousand dollars for the purpose of erecting a brick veneer school of six rooms, with full equipment, on the south-west corner of the Hairy Hill town-site. The name Soda Lake became extinct.

### **The Deep Lake School District #4242**

As the number indicates this was a comparatively newer school district. It was established on March 17, 1926, and took the following lands: Section 31 and N.E.¼ of sec. 30, twp. 56, rge. 13; sections 25, 26, 35 and 36; N.E.¼ of section 27; east half of section 34, in twp. 56, rge. 14; section 6 and that portion of section 7 lying south of the Saskatchewan River, in twp. 57, rge. 13; sections 1 and 2, and those portions of sections 11 and 12 lying south of the Saskatchewan River, in twp. 57, rge. 14, W. of 4th. The senior trustee was George Leonty of Desjarlais, Alberta.

Two days later in 1926 a site was selected, comprising three acres situated on N.E. corner of N.W.¼ section 36, 56, 14, W.4th. The name Deep Lake was chosen because near the site there is a lake, not too large, but deceptively quite deep.

On Aug. 7, 1926 the district borrowed the sum of twenty-seven hundred dollars for erecting and equipping a new school house. The school was built and functioned for some twenty-five years. The treasurer in 1926 was Mike Chornohus of Desjarlais. Few changes were made in the boundaries of this district.

On Nov. 2, 1937 the Deep Lake School District #4242 was included in the Two Hills School Division #21. The final chapter in the life of this small school district took place on Oct. 7, 1953 when the site and buildings were put up for sale. The author recalls with nostalgia spending an interesting week doing his practice teaching in the Deep Lake School in April, 1936.



**Deep Lake S.D. #4242**

Deep Lake Softball Team with their teacher Mr. Bill Gegolick 1932.

## **Post Offices in the Area**

The earliest post office was established in 1894 on sec. 20, 56, 15, w.4th m. It was called Manawan and Miss L.M. Bibbie was the postmistress. She resigned two years later and was replaced by Richard L. Hughson who operated it till late 1898 when the office was closed.

Whitford Post Office was used extensively by the early settlers in the surrounding area. It was established on sec. 36, 56, 16, w. of 4th in July 1897. It was operated by John C. Gordon and was succeeded by Archibald Whitford. The latter operated it from 1898-1903.

A post office closer to Boian was opened on July 11, 1903 in the home of A.M. Boutillier on sec. 30, 55, 14, w. of 4th. In 1907 the name was changed to Hairy Hill. Further north of Boian, the Desjarlais Post Office was opened on sec. 11, 57, 14, w. 4th. Since the first postmaster was Daniel Desjarlais, the local district was



Boian Post Office in 1926  
L. to rt. Stephen M. Matei and Mertin P. Hauca.

named after him. George Strynadka also was postmaster a few years, but in 1920 Andrew Fedoreak became postmaster and operated it in his home at 9-57-14 w.4th. The post office remained there till 1958 when it was permanently closed.

To the east the Shalka post office was opened in the home of Matt Shalka who operated it till 1943. Kost Bizovie operated it one year and then Alex Dubec operated it till 1970 when it too was no longer needed.

The Boian post office was first established in the

home of George K. Cucheran on sec. 18, 56, 14, w.4th in 1913. Three years later Vasile D. Toma became postmaster for two years. When he resigned G.M. Mihalcheon took it over, followed by P.M. Serbu, then G.M. Mihalcheon again. In 1927 Tom Russ was appointed postmaster and operated it till 1942 when it was closed because of lack of usefulness.

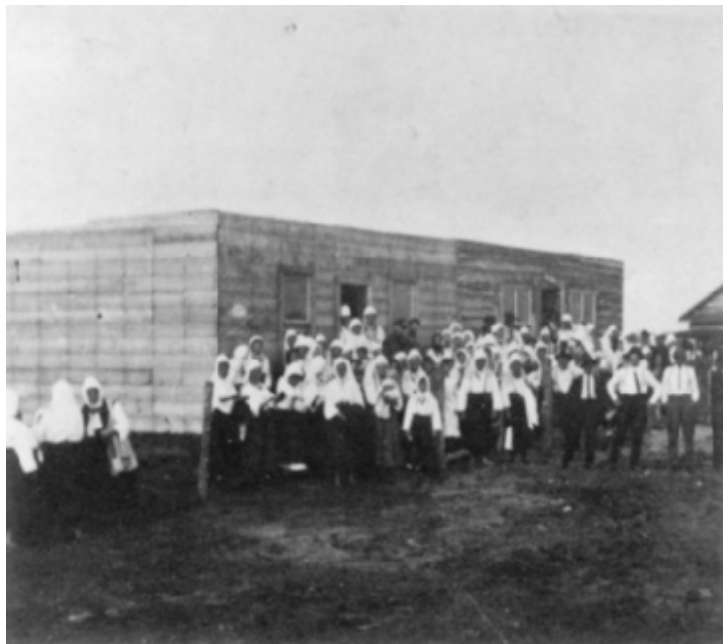
## The Community Hall

The first community hall was built on Vasile D. Toma's homestead in 1914. It was a log building with siding on the outside. The floor was shiplap with an elevated stage at the front. Two years later the building burned to the ground and arson was suspected. When George Kachuk and G.M. Mihalcheon owned the store they added three walls to the west side of the store and this building served as a hall for a few years. Then this part was dismantled and a separate, modern lumber building was built. This lasted till the coming of the railroad, when the store closed and the hall was moved to Hairy Hill where it was converted to a store.

In 1929 a new community hall was built on John T. Toma's farm directly across the road from Vasile Romanko's farmyard. This served till the early forties when another frame stucco building was built in the north-west corner of the church property. When the school was closed in 1951, the community sold the hall and purchased the stone school. This solid building was and still is used as a community centre for the district.

## Boian Trading Store

As early as 1914 Vasile D. Toma and Dumitru Cucheran invested money and opened a store in the former's house on S.W. 10, 56, 14, w. of 4th. In 1916 the partnership was dissolved and new buildings were



Boian Hall and store with owner's residence to the right, 1920. It was a meeting place on Sunday afternoons.

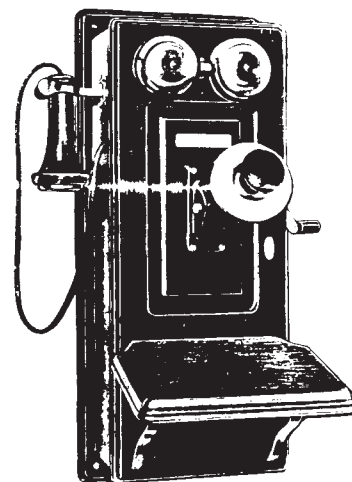
built about one quarter of a mile south on the east side of the road on land owned by George T. Toma. The business was operated by Dumitru and Petre Cucheran for two years. In 1918 a co-operative was organized by G.M. Mihalcheon. When this venture failed, G.M. Mihalcheon and George K. Kachuk, purchased the store. A year later P.M. Serbu and John Harasim bought the store but in 1922, because of financial difficulties, G.M. Mihalcheon repossessed the business. At the time he was teaching the senior room in the Boian Marea School so he engaged Mertin Hauca to manage the store. The young employee proved to be an excellent manager and stayed on for many years. In 1928 the business was moved to Hairy Hill and the old buildings were destroyed.

## The Telephone Service at Boian

Telephone service was first introduced at Boian on March 22, 1920. This office consisted of a single hand-cranked telephone by means of which the operator could place long-distance calls usually to Vegreville the nearest town. There were never any private or rural line phones connected to the Boian office.

George M. Mihalcheon and George K. Tkachuk were the first agents handling the telephone service. They were followed by P.M. Serbu and John V. Harasim. In 1922 G.M. Mihalcheon regained the telephone and continued to this capacity until February, 1929. Then Rev. Vasile Cohan took over the phone service. The following year on January 28, 1930 Mike S. Chebree became the phone agent and he continued until January 11, 1937 when the Boian office was closed. By this time there were telephones in the neighboring villages of Willingdon and Hairy Hill.

As payment the agents received twenty-five percent of the money handled.



No. 1317 Type Wall Telephone Set for Magneto Service

# Customs and Traditions

## Christmas

### Obiceiurli de Craciun (Christmas Customs)

The Romanian homesteaders tried to transplant their customs and traditions in their adopted country. One of the most important events of the year was Christmas which at that time was celebrated on January 7.

Preparations began early. In the home the mother would whitewash the complete interior and replace the icons and the many colorful calendars that were brought from the village stores or grain elevators. These calendars were free and the brightly colored scenes added much to the rooms. Among them there was always a Ukrainian calendar because it had the Orthodox holidays clearly marked.

In November the school children and the young who had left school began rehearsing for the Christmas concert. Which of the readers who attended the rural schools in the twenties, thirties and possibly the forties can forget the Christmas concert?

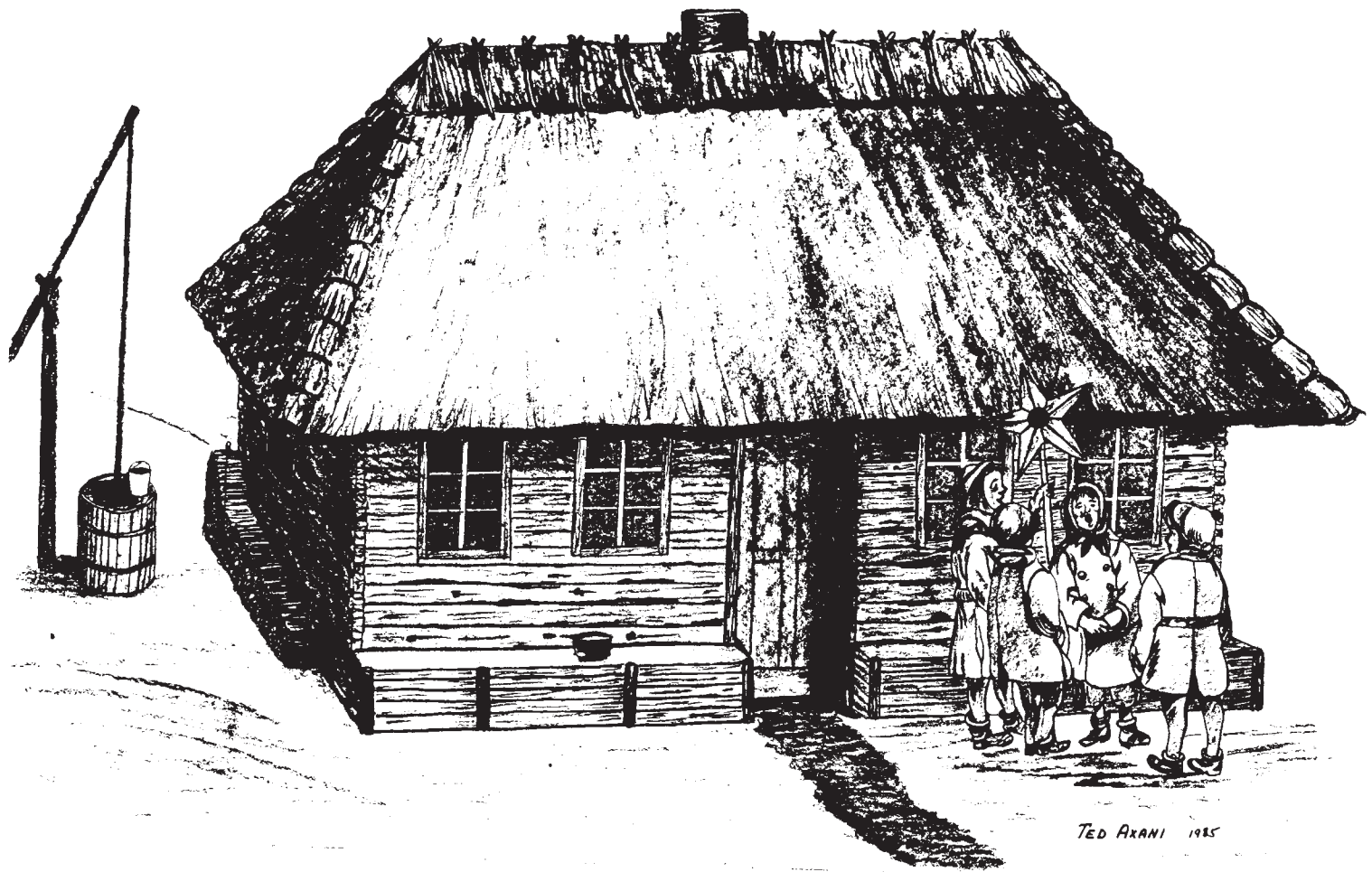
On the last teaching day of the year, generally December 23, the school children under the direction of their teacher put on the performance in the community hall. The program was almost totally in English, possibly sprinkled with a Romanian carol or two and likewise one or two recitations. The applause with which the program was received spoke for itself. Two weeks later on the eve of January 6 the youth of the community under the direction of the teachers and the local priest would put on a lengthy Christmas concert totally in Romanian. As a part of the program there was always a three-act play which formed the biggest



### Christmas

The first Irod (King Herod) play was performed in the Boian Marea School Jan. 1919. Directed by G.M. Mihalcheon. Actors l. to rt. are: Pat Gordey, soldier; Stephen Matei, King Herod, G.M. Michalcheon, Nick Mihalcheon, soldier; John N. Hauca, wise man; George Romanko, shepherd; Dora P. Hauca, angel; John Porozni, wise man; Katie G. Toma, Mary; Metro P. Hauca, wise man; Metro J. Cucheran as Joseph.





## Customs and Traditions

part of the entertainment. The first such program was put on in 1920 by G.M. Mihalcheon who wrote the text of the play, "Aşa au fost sa fie". (It had to be thus). It was well received and the money earned was used to purchase a used organ to help raise the quality of music in the community. The author recalls that in the thirties the youth acted the Shakespearian play, "The Taming of the Shrew," in Romanian. Floyd Toma acted the part of Petruchio and Katie Kelba acted opposite him as Katherine. The hall was packed literally to the rafters and the applause was thunderous. On such occasions there were always carols interspersed among the items and Romanian dancing.

Often there would be the King Herod play, con-



The Irod in 1947

L. to rt.: Nick M. Toma, Santa Claus; Peter Lutic, wise man; Mertin Romanko, soldier; Floyd G. Toma, Herod; George J. Toma, soldier; Toder N. Hauca, treas.; Steve K. Iftody, wise man; Half-kneeling Nick Nickifor, director; Kost N. Kelba, wise man.

sisting of three short scenes which re-enacted the announcement of Christ's birth, the arrival of the three magi, the visit to King Herod's court, and then the magi returning via another route to escape Herod's wrath. The singing of the carol Trei Crai (Magi) was solemn and impressive. These programs were always wholesome, enjoyable and uplifting. Everybody would leave contented.

In the early days, January 7, Christmas morning, most families went to church by horse-drawn sleighs. The women wore their traditional clothes including their fine sheep skin coats. The jingle of sleigh bells was heard from near and far as team after team pulled up the steep hill leading to St. Mary's Romanian Church. By eleven o'clock the church would be packed with young and old. At the end of the service after the Christmas message was delivered the whole congregation would burst out singing the old favorites, "Trei Crai," "Dimineața lui Craciun," and "În Orasul Vifleem". There were no books of song sheets because the older folks, particularly the mothers knew these songs from memory. Once the service finished everyone left eager to partake in the Christmas dinner, now that the lenten season was over.

Early in the afternoon young boys who had previously organized themselves into small groups started their carolling. Often if the weather was mild, they would carry a star (steaua). They walked or else road in a cutter drawn by one horse. The carollers would continue as long as their energy and voices held out. At each home they were welcomed and were paid five cents per person by the host or hostess. Prior to the author's carolling days, the host would reward the carollers with a colac (bread twist). The writer remembers when he was twelve years old he earned \$3.50 at Christmas and on New Year's eve. With this money he purchased a sled from T. Eaton's catalogue. What a thrill it was to go sledding down the hills by the school, if you didn't meet a horse-drawn sleigh coming up the hill towards you! For a few weeks he was the most popular boy in the school because everyone wanted to try a bought sled.

One group of older boys would act the play, "Irodul" (King Herod). These were generally young men with good singing voices. It was a solemn serious play and everyone waited anxiously for the arrival of these actors.

Another group would dance the "Calu" (the horse). In contrast to the King Herod play, this performance was humorous and boisterous. The man dancing the horse was graceful and light on his feet, keeping time to the music provided by the violinist and his partner who played the dulcimer. The "old man" with his sheepskin coat turned inside out covering a huge hump on his back and carrying a cudgel in his right hand led the dance in a large circle constantly dancing backwards, followed by the prancing horse. The "baba" (old lady) dressed in a typical Romanian older woman's costume carried a doll cradled in one arm and in her free hand carried a broom, symbols of motherhood and household duties. She followed the "horse" closely, shuffling her tired feet but keeping time to the music. To add to the merriment there was a gypsy who was out to tell everyone's

fortune for a price; a pedlar and a woodsman each one trying to outdo one another. In the late forties the young men of the time Canadianized this performance by including an "Indian" as a member of the troupe. The high point of this spectacle was reached when the moşneag (old man) danced a Romaneasca with the farmer's wife or daughter – whichever was more buxom. Likewise the farmer would dance with the baba. In charge was the constable who was also the treasurer. He saw to it that the various dances were of proper length and that the performers did not outdo themselves in one place as there were many homes to be visited. When he called out "forverds" the dance ended and all too soon the entertainers left, much to the sorrow of the children in the house. Since most of the entertainers wore masks, the host and his guests spent some time guessing who played what part. Everyone enjoyed the "calu". The money collected by these groups was turned into the community fund. Part of it was used to hire an orchestra and the whole community enjoyed a free dance usually in the afternoon of January 8.



"Calu" (the horse) Jan. 14, 1943.  
L. to rt.: Pedlar, Bill J. Yurko; Driver, Mike Axani; Horseman, Steve Axani; violinist, Metro L. Fedoreak; policeman, Tom J. Hutscal; "old man", Dan Suprovich; "Baba", Nick J. Hutseal.

One New Year's Eve January 13, on the Julian Calendar the "calu" performance was repeated if there were enough willing to participate. The young lads visited the homes this round with the plugușorul (the plough). While one boy kept swinging a bell, another recited a long poem in which the narrator described the ploughing of the land, seeding of the grain, ending with the baking of the bread. Since they were an agrarian people, this was understandable. To complete the New Year's Day activities early in the morning these same boys would come with their pockets full of grain and would scatter it in the homes while reciting verses wishing long life and a fruitful harvest in the coming year. When the groups were through the housewife geneally ended up with enough grain to feed her flock of poultry that day.

With "the blessing of the water" on January 19, the Christmas holidays ended and the community settled down to the regular winter activities. The children were in school, the mothers and older unmarried daughters held feathering bees, carded, spun and wove the wool for their tapestries. The menfolk looked after the livestock and cut down cords of wood so that there would be a plentiful supply for the coming year. All this would be done before the spring thaw.

## Easter

The Orthodox Easter is observed on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the first day of spring. That is why it varies from year to year. Keeping in mind that the first day of spring is March 21, it is easy to set the date for Easter. One other condition must be met. It cannot precede the Jewish passover.

At Boian, Easter too, was an important day but the whole occasion was and still is a solemn dignified observance terminating on Sunday morning with the resurrection service and the blessing of the pasca (Easter bread). The Easter service started at midnight, Saturday night with the priest chanting the prayers,

the choir responding. While this went on, the young men of the district built a huge bonfire at a respectable distance from the church and kept it burning all night. The men and boys chatted, exchanged jokes and took turns hauling firewood from the nearby bushes. Those who were tired standing in the church would come out and others would go in.

Early in the morning the priest and the members of the congregation would come out and the women would make a large circle in front of the church placing their pascas on the ground before them. The priest, cantor and a few choir members were inside the circle for the special prayers before the blessing. This was followed by the blessing itself which consisted of sprinkling of holy water by the priest. At this time the whole congregation would sing, "Hristos a inviat!" (Christ is risen). When completed everyone went home to have a short nap before the joyous Easter dinner which was always eagerly anticipated after six weeks of lent.

## The Baptism of Children

Generally within a year after marriage, a baby would be born to the young couple. There were no doctors or hospitals so the birth took place in the farm home and the delivery was supervised by a moașă (midwife). Occasionally the birth would be a real traumatic experience and some mothers died in child birth. Within three weeks or so the baby would be baptized and named, often right at the church following the regular service.

A basin of water would be placed on the table in front of the altar and the sponsors would take turns in holding the baby while the priest and the cantor chanted the appropriate prayers. The climax would be reached when the priest would lift the naked child from his swaddling clothes and dip him in the water. Some priests would pinch the child's nostrils and if there was sufficient water would hold the child's face



down, completely immersed. None drowned. Nearly all children cried loudly, not knowing what was taking place. Once dried, and dressed, the little darling would quieten down especially if there was a soother handy.

During the pioneer days, most of the children were named after close relatives, generally the grandparents and then favorite uncles and aunts. At one time in the Boian area, there were six George Tomas. Evidently George was a favorite name but what confusion it would cause. None of the children had second names. Every child inevitably used the initial of the father's christian name. So we had George J. Toma, George D. Toma, George W. Toma and so on. The writer's grandmother was Sanda (Alexandra) Toma and she lived to see five granddaughters named after her. The next generation chose other names for their offsprings.

## Nunta (The Wedding)

The long Orthodox church service had finally ended this October Sunday. The priest had finished his message and was now making his announcements of forthcoming events. Suddenly everyone, including the older women at the back of the church, who had been busy exchanging bits of gossip, began listening attentively.

"From today in three weeks", announced the priest, "the marriage ceremony of Sanda, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. T. Ionescu\* and Nicolai, son of Mr. and Mrs. V. Balta\* will be performed in this church following the service. If for any reason anyone feels that this marriage should be prevented, please let me know prior to that day. The banns will be proclaimed two more times". With these words the priest snapped shut his notebook and took his place between the two icons in front of the altar, holding a small cross in his hands, ready to bless each person that passed him on the way to receive the offering of holy bread.

\* Names have been changed.

Sanda and Nicolai had known each other since childhood. They had attended the same school, although Nicolai was six years older. Their parents had known each other in the old land. The traditional customs had been followed closely. Nicolai with a "staruste" (matchmaker) had visited Sanda's home and Sanda had consented to the marriage. She had barely passed her sixteenth birthday, but she saw no other occupation other than marrying and living on a farm, like her mother and her grandmother had done before her. Besides there were eight younger brothers and sisters.

The wedding day had arrived and at Sanda's home there was great excitement as everyone was preparing for the celebration. The young bride, looking radiant in her Romanian wedding dress, was in the third room of the fairly large house, looking quite happy. She wore the traditional embroidered blouse with an attached underskirt. Over this she wore a *sucnă* (jumper) made of a rich velvet material, wine in color. The skirt was further embellished by ribbons sewn horizontally on the lower part of this garment. Around her neck she had a beaded neck piece, given to her by her grandmother, and two strands of red beads. On her feet she wore white stockings and white shoes. She looked remarkably lovely and very innocent.

The bride's parents were busy welcoming guests and relatives who had already arrived to help and participate in the bride's send-off to church. The members of the orchestra were seated to one side, each one holding his instrument – a violin, a dulcimer and a flute. The table was set for a light meal. In the center was a large "colac" (a braided bread) and on it lay the bridal wreath made of peacock feathers, decorated with colorful ribbons. The groomsmen hastened to seat everyone while they themselves sat at the ends of the long table ready to assist in the proceedings.

When everyone was seated, the light meal was served and appropriate toasts made. Following the repast, the orchestra struck a wedding song and the parents approached the bride who was seated directly behind the braided bread with a bridesmaid on each



Nick and Maria Fedoreak's wedding in Nov., 1920.

L. to rt.: Maria, the bride; Nick, the groom; Ioana Iftody, bridesmaid; Bill and Dochita Harrison, nanași (sponsors); John Harasim at right, vatajel (attendant).

side of her. The parents reached forward and picked up the bridal wreath and placed it on their daughter's head. Her maids adjusted it quickly, making certain that it rested securely. The bride who had tasted no food, appeared slightly nervous but still radiant. She and the groom had gone to church Saturday evening and had confessed. Since they were to receive holy communion before the ceremony, they were warned not to eat any solid food.

The moment had arrived for departure. The ushers stood up and motioned to everyone to join hands. The orchestra began playing. Those at the table began singing the traditional wedding song:

"De trei ori pe lângă masa (bis)  
Sa scoatem dansul din casă.  
Sa rămăe binili  
Sa traiescă tineri!"  
----- etc.

"Thrice we go the table round,  
For the outside we are bound.  
May the good be left behind  
May the young a long life find".  
----- etc.

Led by the "vătajel" (groomsman), the guests still singing, proceeded to the outdoors. As they left the house the bride's aunts threw rice after the bride, a symbol of good luck. The wedding party left shortly for the church in the few cars that could be mustered for the occasion. Others left by wagon or democrat.

A similar tradition was being observed at the groom's home some four miles away. The groom sat behind the head table with the nanași (sponsors) on one side and his young niece on the other side. The colac was in front and on it lay his hat. At the appropriate moment, his parents approached the table and placed the hat on his head accompanied by music. Then all joined hands and the circle dance and singing started. This time words were directed to the groom:

"Pe o margină de pământ (bis)  
Merge badea sămăbind.  
Și din gură cuvântind."  
----- etc

"On a piece of ploughed land  
Walks a man seeding by hand  
With his mouth these words he utters."  
----- etc.

The participants ended outside and they left for church.

The bride's group entered first. All eyes turned towards the entrance and even the members of the choir upstairs began stretching their necks in order to catch a glimpse of the young bride. The priest continued chanting the prayers. After venerating the icons, the bride and her attendants moved to the north side of the church and listened to the service.

Shortly after the groom arrived, tall, dark and strikingly handsome. He and his attendants venerated the icons and took their place at the south side of the room. He clasped his hands in front, glanced briefly at the bride, then drew his breath in sharply. She looked prettier than ever. The service droned on.

At 12:30 P.M. the service was over and preparations were made for the ceremony. A small table was placed in front of the altar. This was covered with an embroidered cloth on which were placed items necessary – the crowns, the jar of honey, the colac and the rings. On the floor before the table the "nanaşa" put a Romanian tapestry and on it a pure white hankerchief was spread out. At the four corners of the hanky four quarters were placed for good fortune.

The couple approached the table and each one placed one foot on the hankerchief, the bride her right, the groom his left. Directly behind the bride stood her matron of honor (nanaşa) holding a lit candle decorated with a pink ribbon and a flower. Behind the groom stood his nanaş (sponsor) also with a lit candle embellished with a blue ribbon and a blue flower. Everyone was now ready. The Romanian Orthodox marriage ceremony is long and rich in symbolism and ritual. The lit candles (symbols of purity), the rings (symbols of endless love and union), the joining of the right hands (which signify that the bride and groom become one) – all these add much to the ceremony. The most exciting moment is the crowning of the groom and bride. The crowns represent the honor and reward placed on them for the purity of their lives. The drinking of wine from the same cup symbolizes the sharing of joys and sorrows. Finally the procession

around the table led by the priest signifies that the marriage has no end and likens Christian living to an orbit around the gospel. Triple circling commemorates the Holy Trinity.

The next part of the ceremony was the removal of the crowns. The priest and the nanaş each placed one hand on the crown and the former chanted, "Bridegroom, may you be exalted like Abraham, blessed like Isaac, fruitful like Jacob, yet obeying the commandments of God". The crown was then removed and placed on the table. Likewise the nanaşa and the priest each laid a hand on the bride's crown. Again the priest intoned, "Bride, may you be exalted like Sarah, rejoice like Rebecca and be fruitful like Rachel, also obeying God's laws". The crown was laid on the table.

A few more prayers with responses of "Doamne milueşte" (Lord have mercy) and the ceremony was over. The whole congregation led by the choir sang "Mulţi ani"! (Many years!).

The wedding party left the church slowly, and as they descended the steps, pictures were taken by the one person who was fortunate to have a box camera. The bride and her group left first and returned to her parents' home where a huge meal was served. The afternoon was spent dancing, singing and visiting. The groom, with his attendants, returned to his home where similar festivities were enjoyed by all.

At about 4:00 P.M. preparations were hastily made by the groom's usher to leave for the bride's place and "buy" the bride. Once there, they were invited in. Sanda was behind the table with her bridesmaids. The groom's usher with the help of the bride's younger brother proceeded to "buy" the bride. The young lad held two slender willow wands over which was draped a white silk shawl with long fringes. Appropriate verses were exchanged between the groomsmen and the bridesmaids ending with coins being tossed to the latter. The shawl was then placed on the bride's head over her wreath and adjusted to stay in place. Sanda will henceforth wear her hair in a bun on top of her head and over this she will wear a white shawl. At this point the guests sang the bride's farewell song.

It told the bride not to grieve for her parents, siblings, nor the garden with its lovely flowers as she really is not going so far away. More toasts followed and more shouts were heard of “Vivăt! Vivăt! Să traiescă mireasa! Să traiescă tineri!” (Long live the bride! Long live the young couple!). The groom who now joined his bride prepared to leave. Hands were joined and the group began singing once again. Sanda tried to look happy as she bade her parents farewell but tears blinded her eyes. Her mother, too, was overcome as she gazed at her favorite daughter, so young, so lovely and so innocent, and prayed silently that her marriage be a happy one and that she not be burdened by too many children.

Before the group left for the groom’s house, the bride’s trousseau had to be carried out. The grooms-men brought out the trousseau which consisted of a sizeable trunk filled with the bride’s clothes, table cloths, pillow cases and linens. In addition there were pillows and two wool-filled quilts. All these were brought out to the accompaniment of couplets sung by the attendants.

Then on to Nicolai’s place, the wedding party

made its noisy way. At the door of Nicolai’s home the couple was met by the parents. Nicolai’s father held a bottle and a glass in his hands for more toasts while his mother held a colac and a glass half-filled with salt –basic necessities of life. Toasts were exchanged and the mother-in-law took the bride’s hand and let the group inside the house where they were seated once more at the head table. More food and drinks were served. How could they eat so much!

Later in the evening the head cook and three of her helpers put on a performance. They danced into the room (more of a shuffle than a dance) chanting humorous verses all the while about the important guests. Each woman carried a platter with a well roasted stuffed chicken decorated with grapes and slices of apple. Each chicken was meant for one of the participants behind the table such as the groom or the sponsor. The cook wanted to show her culinary skill. Humorous verses were exchanged, as the women swayed their bodies rhythmically and tempted the seated guests with the loaded platters. Eventually money was offered to the cooks and the delicious food was laid on the table. The tired bride looked up and



Bill J. Toma’s wedding Aug. 1935. Back row left to right: Mrs. Sandra M. Hauca, Alice Toma, Katherine Dubetz, Anita Kelba, Mrs. Mary F. Toma. Front row l. to rt. Mike Serbu, Bill and Katie Toma, Mrs. Katherine Serbu.



smiled graciously. The cooks enriched by the proffered money, joined hands and made a circle of their own. The orchestra struck up a "hora" and these jolly women performed a circle dance of their own all the time interjecting humorous couplets.

When this was all over, the groomsmen took up the donations to the young couple and following this there was dancing and singing late into the night.

In the early pioneer days the Romanian weddings generally lasted three days. The marriages always took place in a church on Sundays and despite some unhappy ones, they lasted through life. The receptions were held in the homes of the young couple as described above and there was a definite ritual to be followed. The "vatajel" (groomsman) was in charge and he saw to it that the traditional steps were followed closely. In the mid-twenties the brides began wearing the white dress and veil in place of the Romanian attire. Slowly some of the other customs were dropped. In the forties, weddings began to be held at the community hall as a joint venture by the parties concerted. This made it more economical and less tiring for the women. Today, besides the usual good food that is served, the only custom that is still retained is the custom of donating money and/or gifts to the newly married. Only a few of the older people know the traditional wedding songs.

## Mormântarea (The Funeral)

Near St. Mary's Church at Boian, there is a belfrey which holds a huge church bell. The original bell has been replaced but it was said that on clear, quiet days, when the church bell rang, it could be heard within a seven-mile radius. The bell tolled to call the faithful to worship, at certain times during a church service but also to let the people in the area know that one of their own had been called to the Lord.

Should the bell be rung during the week, the first thought that came to the listener's mind was "Cine a murit"? (Who died?). The priest and the cantor would

be the first to know, as well as Ion T. Toma's family, as nearly always one of the boys would be ringing the bell. Even though there was only one phone in the district the news spread via the grapevine and within a day or so the whole community would know.

Maria\* had kidney problems for some time but she continued working and caring for her eight children. She kept hoping that another day or in another week she would improve. The opposite happened. Her condition worsened till one day she was so ill that her oldest son took her to the nearest hospital. Within two weeks Maria died.

The bell began tolling the sad news on a Wednesday evening. The immediate relatives were notified and in time everyone knew. The women began arriving immediately at the home of the deceased. The body was brought home and since there was no funeral home nearby a few of the older women prepared the body. They bathed the corpse and then dressed it in the usual colourful Romanian costume – Maria wore her bridal costume – the same blouse, same underskirt and jumper, the shawl on her head, but different shoes. The men made a wooden coffin out of some pine boards and the body was placed in it. It was then put on a wide bench in the "casa cei mare" (the third room of the house). There it would lie for three days. A candle burned nearby and as the news travelled, friends and relatives would arrive to pay their respects to the departed. It was customary to offer food to guests so the women were constantly occupied in the kitchen. Everyone was so kind and helpful and many moved about quietly saying nothing but kind words about the deceased woman.

The evening prior to the funeral the priest and cantor arrived and the prayer service was held right in the room where the deceased lay. After the service a light lunch was served to all who attended. Then all would leave except some of the closest relatives and friends who stayed all night, observing the wake for the dead.

\* not the real name.



Funeral of Mrs. Eleana Cucheran June 1944. Preotul D. Feica and Father Chrustiwka officiating.

The day of the funeral arrived. The priest, cantor and pallbearers came early. They had brought two banners from the church to use in the procession. The prayers began at ten o'clock and when completed, the pallbearers proceeded to take the coffin out. As they crossed the threshold they raised and lowered the body three times. This symbolized Maria's farewell to the home she loved so well. While this went on two older women were wailing close to the body causing the children to cry too as well as other soft-hearted folk. Outside the house, the coffin was placed on some supports and the husband invited all to the "prasnic" (memorial dinner).

The tables had been set quickly and efficiently by the many women who volunteered to help, feeling that they could at least do some small favour for the deceased. There was a large crowd so this meant three settings would have to be made. This was done rapidly enough under the supervision of Domnica, the head cook who seemed to have boundless energy. When everyone finished the procession set out for the church.

It was a sunny day and the hearse was drawn by

two white horses who seemed to sense that it was a sad, dignified occasion. They responded knowingly to their master's every command. Many of the people walked. At the farm gate the procession halted and prayers were said. When this was finished one of the older children handed a pomana (braided bread, apple and a candle) to one of the bystanders. This would be repeated at least six times, ending in front of the church. Once the body was inside the church, the long funeral service started. Candles were lit in memory of the dead.

After the eulogy was given, the crowd filed past the open casket paying their final respects. More tears, blowing of noses and sobbing! The unfortunate husband and father moved slowly, numb from so much sorrow and so many problems. Even the most hardened of the spectators could not hold back their tears when the children, especially the little ones, were lifted up to kiss their mother farewell. The casket was closed and the procession moved out. Again the wailers started and continued till the open grave was reached.

More prayers by the grave ending with "Veşnica

ei pomînere'' (memory eternal), sung by all and the body was lowered. Some of the older people threw a few coins into the open grave. Then grave diggers began shovelling dirt into the hole. At this point the youngest child looked back and asked "Why are they doing that Bunica"? His grandmother clasped him in her arms and began sobbing uncontrollably. Others crowded near the family trying to comfort them. Slowly the crowd began dispersing, many of them whispering almost inaudibly, "Dumnezeu s' o ierte"! (May the Lord forgive her!) The family left last returning slowly to a motherless home, but time heals all wounds, physical or emotional.

## The Typical Romanian Pioneer House

After living two years or so in a bordei or possibly a small hut built totally above ground, most families built sizeable log houses on their own homesteads. The architecture was simple and nearly all their homes had similar characteristics.

Each house was built of long straight tamarack logs hauled from the forest to the north bordering the Saskatchewan River although poplars were used too. These logs were hewn on four sides, then dove-tailed at the corners when put in place. Holes were drilled at appropriate places and wooden pegs were pounded in securing the last log to the one below. Windows and doors were cut out where necessary.

The typical house faced south with a door in the centre of the structure, two windows with small panes appeared on each side of the main entrance. In addition there was at least one window on the east side of the house counterbalanced by one or two windows on the west. To the north there were no windows for obvious reasons. The rafters for the roof were made of straight rails from coniferous trees. Likewise, the ceiling was constructed from rails which were later covered with plaster. The roofs were thatched at first

with slough hay, then later with rye straw. When more money became available and especially when the C.N.R. was built through Vegreville in 1907 and it was easier to procure lumber, shingles replaced the thatch. On the south slope of the roof two breathers were inserted to allow the smoke to make its lazy exit.

Once the log structure was completed a clacă (bee) was held for the purpose of mud plastering the walls and ceiling. The gospodar (owner) would haul enough clay soil, straw and water needed for the plaster. The clay had to be spread out and mixed with water so that there were no hard chunks anywhere. To this would be added straw and more water and the whole mess mixed and trampled on. Sometimes a young lad on horseback rode the animal up and down and around making sure that the horse stepped on every spot in the gooey mixture. If there were no horses the women and children would do this work while the men would turn the plaster over so that in the end it was soft, pliable and easy to handle.

Then began the plastering. Some of the helpers would haul the plaster while others applied it to the walls by throwing handfuls of the soft mixture into the cracks of the walls and then flattening it out so that it would be fairly smooth. The interior walls were done the same way. After a week or so when the walls were completely dry a second coat would be applied. This was much thinner and easier work. The mixture this time was made of clay, finer straw and even fresh horse manure if there was any available. These added ingredients along with some sand prevented the clay from cracking when drying. All this required a good deal of hard labor. When the women felt that the walls were smooth enough they would whitewash the whole house inside and out. To add to the beauty of the building the women would search for humă (clay) that was blue grey in color. To this they added some bluing and water and then painted a three-inch border around the base of the walls. Some ambitious women would even paint crosses just below the eaves all around the house. Others would make little crosses out of busioc (sweet basil) and arrange them below the



The Ion Cucheran Home 1975. Notice the breathers on the south slope of the roof.



**The Cradle**

There was a cradle in every home and the "bunicas" or the older children rocked the babies.

wide eaves on the walls. The whole building when completed looked clean, bright and homey.

The main entrance was on the south side, so if a visitor entered he would find himself in the tindă (porch). To the right was a door which led to the "casa cei mare" (the big room). Once inside this room the visitor would notice a long table at the far end reaching almost from wall to wall. Above this table on the wall there would be a number of icons hung just below the ceiling. These icons included generally the Last Supper, the Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ as well as some of the apostles. Along the sides of the walls there were benches usually covered with tapestries. This room was always kept clean and used for weddings, hrams, parties or any other large festivity. Most women also used it as a storeroom and a pantry since it was always cool and clean. If the family was crowded for space, this room was also used for a bedroom.

If on entering one opened the door to the left, he would find himself in a fairly large room that served as a family room, dining room, bedroom, and initially as a kitchen too. There was always a table near the south windows. In the northwest corner there was a



bed and above a beam suspended from the ceiling. On this beam the housewife stored pillows, bedding and pieces of linen. In the jog created by the walls of the vestibule the famous clay oven (cuptor) would be built with a șparhat (clay stove) next to it. The oven besides being used for baking excellent bread also served as a bed. Although the cuptor was hard, it was very cozy and warm after the baking was done especially in the long cold winter nights. The smoke from the fires made its way upwards into the attic through a hole in the ceiling and then out through the breathers. In time chimneys made out of wattles and clay were built into this opening. These too, were replaced in time by genuine brick chimneys.

These houses were solidly built and very practical for their time. They had low ceilings which helped conserve the heat and wide eaves that kept the sun's rays out in summer, yet allowed the same sunshine to penetrate the small window panes in the cold winter months. Most homes were warm and cozy in winter, yet cool and comfortable in summer.

The Romanian pioneer houses in some cases lasted two generations, being gradually replaced by modern wood and stucco buildings. If one drives in the area today, one may still see the remnants of these structures that housed such large families not so long ago.

Nu dă pasărea din mână pentru cea din gard.  
A bird in hand is worth two in the bush.

Apa trece dar pietrele rămân.  
The water flows on, the rocks remain.

După furtună vreme bună vine.  
After the storm, fine weather arrives.

# Recipes for Romanian Pioneer Foods

## 1. Lapte acru (sour milk)

1 quart homo or fresh whole milk

1 pint sour cream

Boil the milk about ten minutes being very careful not to scorch it. Set it aside to cool. When the milk is lukewarm, add the sour cream and mix it well. Set the container on the counter and allow the mixture to jell. When the milk has thickened refrigerate it and use it next day for dessert.

## 2. Caș (rennet cheese)

Use fresh whole milk if possible. Add ½ rennet tablet to two gallons of warm fresh milk. Let it sit till it jells like yogurt. Now mix it thoroughly and then allow it to sit till the cheese rises to the top. When this happens, strain the whey into a cheese cloth container or use a colander. Once the whey is drained, the cheese can be used. This type of cheese freezes very well and can be used later.

## 3. Mamaligă (cornmeal mush)

In a medium sized pot pour four cups of water. To it add one teaspoon of salt. Bring to a boil. When the water is boiling vigorously add one cup of cornmeal. Cut through the centre with a knife and cover tightly. Allow it to boil slowly for ten minutes. Remove the cover and stir well till the mush is smooth and free of lumps. Serve as desired. The pioneers ate it with cottage cheese and cream or with caș. The women prepared it so well that when the mamaligă was done they would turn the pot upside down and the mamaliga would fall out in one piece on a specially prepared board. Then they would proceed to cut it with a piece of black thread.

## 4. Friptură (roast pork)

Cube two lbs. pork into bite-size pieces. Chop two large onions and mix with the meat. Salt and pepper to taste. Place one tablespoon whole spice in the bottom of a roaster. To this add 2 garlic cloves chopped fine. Now bake in the oven set at 350 degrees for at least two hours, or until the meat is tender. Do not stir as this will break up the meat. Check periodically and if the meat is too dry, add a small amount of water and continue cooking till done.

## 5. Alivinci (baked cheese buns)

This cheese bun requires large wilted cabbage leaves and bread or bun dough.

1 lb. cottage cheese

1 egg well beaten

chopped dill

salt and pepper to taste

Mix the above ingredients well. Flatten a piece of dough and place it on half of a large wilted cabbage leaf. Spoon 2 tblsp. of cheese mixture on the dough. Seal the edges to form a large triangular cheese dumpling. Cover with the other half of the leaf. Let the dough rise till double in size. Then bake at 350 degrees till well done, at least ½ hour. Remove from the oven and peel the leaves off. Serve with fried sour cream to which dill and chopped onions have been added.

## 6. Borș (beet soup)

The Romanian women always prepared borș (borsh) almost daily when there were fresh vegetables in the garden. The recipe was not different from that used by other ethnic groups but they always used sour cream and in winter they would add beans to the mixture.

Anne Toma

# A Bit of Romanian

## Romania and the Romanian Language

Before the Christian era Dacian tribes lived in what is now Romania. These inhabitants who were an agrarian people, were defeated by the Roman Emperor Trajan in A.D. 106. For the next one hundred and sixty-five years Dacia was a Roman province. The lingua franca used among the colonists who were drawn from many different parts of the Roman Empire, was a kind of Latin. Thus Latin became and remained the official language of communication in the region.

When the Romans left, other warring powers invaded this country but through it all, the Romanians managed to retain their identity. In 1877 Romania achieved full independence from the Ottoman Empire. The Romanian language has preserved its basic Latin character but Slavonic elements are apparent in the vocabulary as are also elements from the Albanian, Greek, Hungarian and Turkish languages. During the nineteenth century a conscious attempt was made to 're-Romanize' the language with French and Italian supplying some models. Today English words are creeping into the language.

## A Short Pronunciation Guide

a as in father e.g. sat (village)  
ă as in er in brother e.g. masă (table)  
i as ee in feet, e.g. sigur (certain)  
u as oo in noon e.g. bun (good)  
ai as y in by e.g. cai (horses)  
ei as ay in day, e.g. bordei (hovel)  
s as s in six, e.g. sat (village)  
ș as sh in shop e.g. și (and)  
t as t in tall e.g. telefon (telephone)  
ț as ts in its, e.g. țipat (shriek)

Ce ție nu-ți place, altu-ia nu-i face.  
Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.

Nu este pădure fără uscături.  
There is no forest without some deadwood.

COLLECT & WRITTEN  
By  
VALERIU APAN

EDMONTON ALTA  
INT. HARRY SVEKLA  
HELEN SVEKLA  
DELIMA IFTODY

## DIMINEAȚA LUI CRĂCIUN

Moderato

IO-SIF CU MA-RI-A-N-TRA — IO-SIF CU MA-RI-A-N-TRA —  
DI-MI-NEA-ȚA LUI-CRĂ-CIUN  
IO-SIF CU MA-RI-A-N-TRA.

### Dimineața lui Crăciun

Iosif cu Maria-ntra  
Dimineața lui Crăciun  
Iosif cu Maria-ntra.

Un prunc mîndru și plăcut  
Dimineața lui Crăciun  
Un prunc mîndru și plăcut.

În sălaș pe-o noapte grea  
Dimineața lui Crăciun  
În sălaș pe-o noapte grea.

Și în lume ne-ncăput  
Dimineața lui Crăciun  
Și în lume ne-ncăput.

Nașterea s-apropia  
Dimineața lui Crăciun  
Nașterea s-apropia.

Raza pe cap îi lucea  
Dimineața lui Crăciun  
Raza pe cap îi lucea.

Și Maria se-n grija  
Dimineața lui Crăciun  
Și Maria se-n grija.

Pe sălas îl lumina  
Dimineața lui Crăciun  
Pe sălas îl lumina.

Ca ușor să nască vrea  
Dimineața lui Crăciun  
Ca ușor să nască vrea.

Și îngerii îi cînta  
Dimineața lui Crăciun  
Și îngerii îi cînta.

Și în pace s-a născut  
Dimineața lui Crăciun  
Și în pace s-a născut.



COLLT & written  
V. Apron

EDMONTON ALTA,  
INF. HODZY SVEKLA  
~~HELEN SVEKLA~~  
DELIMA IFTOJY

## TREI CRAI DE LA RĂSARIT

Moderato

TREI CRAI DE LA — RĂ — SĂ — RIT TREI CRAI DE  
LA RĂ — SĂ — RIT SPRE STEA AU CĂ — LĂ — TO  
RIT SPRE-STE A AU CĂ — LĂ — TO — RIT

### Trei Crai de la Rasarit

Trei crai de la rasarit  
Spre stea au calatorit  
Si-au mers dupa cum citim  
Pina la Ierusalim.

Acolo cum au ajuns  
Steau-n nori li s-a ascuns.  
Și le-a fost a se plimba  
Prin oraș a întreba.

Unde s-a nascut zicind  
Un crai mare de curind  
Iara Irod imparat  
Auzind s-a turburat.

Pe crai in grab-a chemat  
Și in taina i-a-ntrebat  
Ispitind-i vru setos  
Ca să afle pe Christos.

COLLECTED & WRITTEN

VALERIU APAN

LINĂ CAROLINĂ

EDMONTON ALTA

INF. DARGA

RUBATO

Sinfira Dargan.

Li-NĂ CA-RO-LI-NĂ VI-NĂ-NA-POI VI-NĂ,  
VI-NĂ-NA-POI VI-NĂ NU FI TU NE-BU-NĂ

### LINĂ CAROLINĂ

LINĂ CAROLINĂ  
VINĂ-NAPOI VINĂ  
VINĂ-NAPOI VINĂ  
NU FI TU NEBUNĂ  
CĂCI TU ȚI-AI UITAT  
SI TU ȚI-AI LĂSAT  
GHETUȚA FRUMOASĂ  
LA MINE PE MASĂ

LINĂ CAROLINĂ  
VINĂ-NAPOI VINĂ  
VINĂ-NAPOI VINĂ  
NU FI TU NEBUNĂ  
INELUȘUL TĂU  
PE DEGETUL MEU  
-NU M-OI ÎNTRUNA  
DAR TE-OI BLESTEMA  
CĂCI N-AI FOST BĂRBAT  
D-AI FOST CÎINE TURBAT

LINĂ CAROLINĂ  
VINĂ-NAPOI VINĂ  
VINĂ-NAPOI VINĂ  
NU FI TU NEBUNĂ  
CĂCI BĂRBATUL TĂU  
ZACE-N PAT MEREU  
-LASA ZACĂ, ZACĂ  
ȘAPTE SĂ-L ÎNTOARCĂ  
CĂ N-O FOST BĂRBAT  
D-O FOST CÎINE TURBAT

LINĂ CAROLINĂ  
VINĂ-NAPOI VINĂ  
VINĂ-NAPOI VINĂ  
NU FI TU NEBUNĂ  
CĂCI COPII TĂI  
PLÎNG PE LA ODĂI  
-LASĂ PLÎNGĂ, PLÎNGĂ  
DUMNEZEU SĂ-I STRÎNGĂ  
CĂCI MIE NU-MI PASĂ  
ȚARA DE-AR FI-N PACE  
DE-AR FI ȚARA-N PACE  
EU COPII MI-OI FACE.

COLLECTED & WRITTEN  
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INT: Sanfira Darda

# CÂNTEC DE LEAGĂN

Andante



Liu Liu, Liu Liu, Liu Liu LEA H-ARE CIN' MĂ LE GĂ NA  
SĂ MĂ LE-GE - NE-FRU-MOS SĂ NU PTIC DIN LEA-GĂN JOȘ

CA-SA SÎNT EU ÎNVĂTAT

SĂ NU DORM NELEGĂNAT

HAI LIU, LIU LIU, LIU LIU, ȘOR

DRAGUL MAMI PUIȘOR

TU ESTI FĂCUT DE CĂTANĂ

ȘI NU AI PE LUME HRAHĂ

AA, AA, AA, A

DORMI ÎN BRATE LA MAMA

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INT: Y. HUTZKAL

# PE-A IEST DRUM,

Allegretto

~~Allegretto~~



PE-A- IEST DRUM CE MĂ DUC EU PE-A- IEST DRUM CE MĂ DUC EU



NU-I FÎN-TÎ-NĂ NICI PĂ - RĂU NU-I FÎN-TÎ-NĂ NICI PĂ - RĂU



SĂ-MI PO - TO-LEȘ DO-RUL MEU SĂ-MI PO - TO-LEȘ DO-RUL MEU

DORUL DE LA ÎNIMIOARĂ

NU MI-L POATE STINGE-O TARĂ

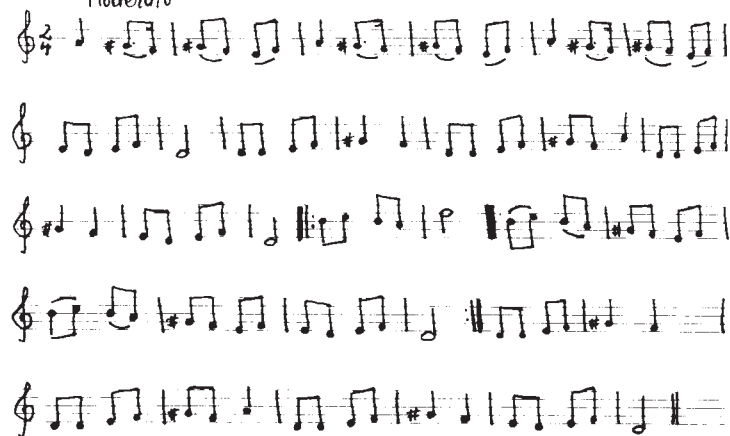
NUMA-I BĂDÎTA-NTRO SARĂ

COLLECTED & WRITTEN  
BY  
VALERIU APAN

# ARCANUL - DANCE

EDMONTON ALTA,  
INF. DUMITRU DAN  
SUPROVICH

Moderato

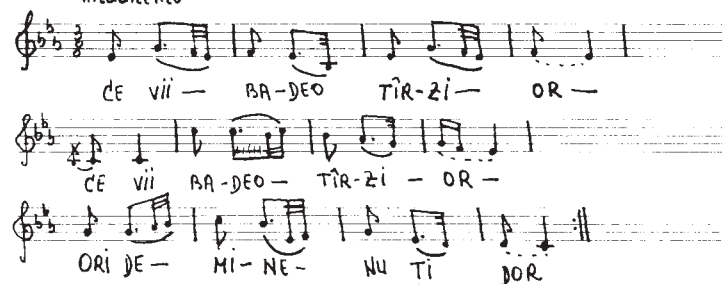


COLLECTED & WRITTEN  
BY  
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# CE VII BAREO TÎRZIOR

EDMONTON ALTA  
INF. J. HUTZKAL

Andantino



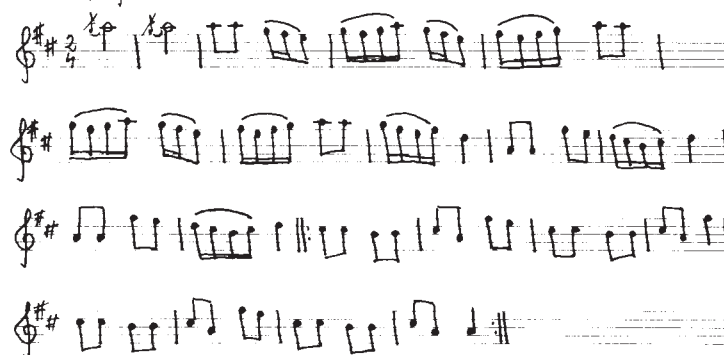
BA ZĂU MÎNDRO MI DOR TARE  
NU POT TRECE VALEA-I MARE  
VALEA ARE PIETRICELE  
ȘI-NTRE NOI SÎNT VORBE RELE  
VALEA ARE BOLOHANI  
ȘI-NTRE NOI SÎNT MULTI DUSMANI

COLLECTED & WRITTEN  
BY  
VALERIU APAN

# ROMÂNESCĂ - DANCE

EDMONTON ALTA  
INF. DUMITRU DAN  
SUPROVICH

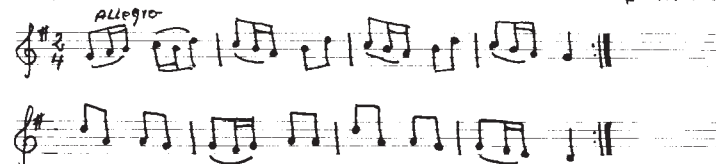
Allegro



COLLECT & WR  
V. APAN

# MĂRIUTA - DANCE

INF.  
D. SUPROVICH





COLLECTED & WRITTEN  
By  
VALERIU APAN

EDMONTON ALTA,  
INF: H SVEKLA

# SĂNĂTATE EU DE-AMU MĂ DUC

*Rubato*

MĂRG PE DRUM JA - LEA M-A - JĂN - GE  
MĂRG PE DRUM JALEA M-A - JĂN - GE MĂ PUN JOS ȘI -  
NCEP A PLIN - GE SĂ - NĂ - TA - TE EU DE-AMU MĂ DUC

ȘI MĂ NCEP A JELUI MĂ  
CĂ PRIN STRĂINI GREU A TRĂI MĂ  
SĂNĂTATE EU DE-AMU MĂ DUC  
CĂ STRĂINU - I CA ȘI SPINU  
ȘI - I AMAR CUM - I PELINU  
SĂNĂTATE EU DE-AMU MĂ DUC  
PELIN BEAU PELIN MĂNÎNC  
SARA PE PELIN MĂ CULC  
SĂNĂTATE EU DE-AMU MĂ DUC  
DIMINEATA CÎND MĂ SCOL  
CU AMAR PELIN MĂ SPAL  
SĂNĂTATE EU DE-AMU MĂ DUC

COLLECTED & WRITTEN  
By  
VALERIU APAN

EDMONTON ALTA  
INF: J. HUTZKAL

# DE TREI ORI PĂ DUPĂ MASĂ

*Allegretto*

DE TREI ORI PĂ DU - PĂ MA - SĂ DE TREI ORI PĂ DU - PĂ MA - SĂ  
I - HAI HOP ȘI TOP TOP TOP I - HAI HOP ȘI TOP TOP TOP

DE TREI ORI PĂ DUPĂ MASĂ  
SĂ SCOATEM DRAȘUL DIN CASĂ  
SĂ RĂMÎNĂ BINILI  
SĂ TRĂIASCĂ TINERII  
I - HAI HOP ȘI TOP, TOP, TOP  
FRUNZĂ VERDE FOI DE MAC  
DE NE-AM VEDE PÎNĂ - N PRĂG  
FRUNZĂ VERDE FOI DE MÎNȚĂ  
DE NE-AM VEDE PÎNĂ - N TÎNGĂ  
I - HAI HOP ȘI TOP, TOP, TOP  
FRUNZĂ VERDE DE SECĂRĂ  
DE NE-AM VEDE PÎNĂ - AFĂRĂ  
I - HAI HOP ȘI TOP, TOP, TOP.

## Conclusion

More than four decades have passed since the Romanian settlers arrived to carve out their homes in the vicinity of Eagle Tail Hill. The hills and valleys, bluffs, lakes, and streams are still there. All the arable farm land has been cultivated intensely to yield bountiful harvests to feed a growing world population. The turbulent North Saskatchewan River flows eastward as it has for many aeons. The school districts have disappeared from the maps. Local post offices, too, have outlived their usefulness and are now in limbo. The churches are there and have been upgraded but none are frequented as often as they were forty years ago. The few farmhouses with their manicured gardens and lawns are comparable to those in any wealthy neighborhood in the city. The farmyard with its varied kinds of livestock, its noises and odors is gone, too. No one is worried that the roads will be mired in summer after a heavy deluge or blocked by six-foot snow drifts in the cold winter months.

Still, local inhabitants say that the eagles soar in the sky, free and unfettered as their ancestors were. They, too, have noticed the changes and probably wonder what will happen next. They cannot comprehend the fact that change is inevitable, and therefore mankind must constantly adjust or perish.

“Not in vain the distance beacons  
Forward, forward, let us range!  
Let the great world spin forever  
Down the ringing grooves of change.”  
Tennyson

## Aşa A Fost! (Thus it was!)



L. to rt. George T. Toma  
(cantor), Father Cohan,  
Andrew on chair, Mrs.  
Cohan holding Sophie, Mary  
N. Kelba, Dora P. Hauca.  
1926



### Pierceland Romanian Dancers 1935

Seated l. to rt.: Doris  
Diamond, Jean Kostel,  
Helen Revega, Lazur Sudom  
(instructor), Vasilca V.  
Toma, Rose Revega, Grace  
Kostel, Sanda Revega. At  
back Preotul V. Toma's four  
sons. In the background the  
Romanian church.



George Romanko's wedding 1929 l. to rt. Mrs. Katherine M. Hauca, George Romanko and his bride Katherine, Mike P. Hauca (nanași).



Wedding picture 1931: Dora and Mike (Metro) Svecla.



Priest's residence at Boian 1936. Horse and buggy with which Father Cohan made his rounds.



Priest's residence at Boian in 1942. Alex Romanko and Helen Russ on front steps, reminiscing.



Basketball at Boian Marea School in the twenties.





Expecting a cold winter 1933  
George W. Toma next to the  
load. Mrs. Cohan by the  
horses Notice the shadoof in  
the background for drawing  
water.



Celebrating St. Mary's feast  
day Sept. 21, 1935.

Hramul biserici at Holy  
Cross Church 1937.  
Front row l. to rt.: Father D.  
Feica. Preoteasa Anița,  
Katrina Bota, Sanda G.  
Toma, Helen Basaraba, Mrs.  
Tomasky, Katrina V.  
Basaraba, Anița Fedoreak,  
Bill X. Toma, George  
Trașcău, ---, Vasile Svekla,  
Vasile D. Toma, George B.  
Toma (young lad).



**Balada Dance Group 1976:**  
L. to rt.: Les Lutic, Effie  
Sinclair, Len Lutic, Darlene  
Romanko, Dave Buehler,  
Coralee Kokotilo, Barry G.  
Axani, Joanne Young, Rick  
A. Axani, Kathy Young,  
Don Gnatiuk, Rhonda  
Axani. Missing – Gary  
Woloshyniuk.



Approaching St. Mary's church on the hill with Elie Morgan and Ion Iftody leading the funeral procession, Jan. 1945



Mihai T. Yurko, vornic (chief magistrate) in Boian, Bucovina, 1895.



L. to rt.: Vasile Darda, Johnny Darda (Vasile's son), John Huculak (brother-in-law), Mike J. Darda.



The church had a large congregation in the thirties.





Mrs. Lena Hawka demonstrating spinning.



Fete în gâță. Girls of marriageable age wore a special headgear at social functions. This indicated that they were prepared to take on the responsibilities of marriage. L. to rt.: Maria M. Toma, Ioana Harasim and Annie T. Kelba. (1920).



Funeral of Mrs. Maria G. Toma Jan. 1945. The procession has stopped to "prohodit" (say prayers for) the deceased.



Grandma Pachița Mihalcheon in her Sunday dress 1921.





Wedding picture 1932 Nick and Maria Bandur



Tom (Tanas) and Annie  
David 1937



Pete and Pearl Serbu 1977



All dressed in their colourful costumes for Green Sunday 1936



Father V. Cohan in the midst of his Sunday School class, 1934.



Boian Recreation Centre 1937-1950



Mary Kelba's Wedding, 1926. The bridal party is ready to leave for church.



50th wedding anniversary: l. to rt. Sanda and Nicolai Kelba (1946) Vasile T. Toma, Constantin Iftody, Mike Serbu, Nick Nikifor, Floria Axani, Nicolai Serbu.



Teacherage in 1919. L. to rt. Grafina and Toder G. Toma, G.M. Mihalcheon, teacher and uncle of the youngsters, Mike and Sanda G. Toma.



Senior Girls' Softball Team  
1934. L. to rt. Sanda  
Kokotailo, Annie Moscaliuk,  
Helen Russ, Alice J. Toma,  
Sanda J. Iftody, Dora Lutic,  
Ruby Svekla, Alice K.  
Iftody, Katie N. Hauca,  
Katie W. Toma.



Bishop Policarp Morușca  
visited the church in July,  
1936.





Preparing the field for a playground and hall in 1936-37.



George D. Toma and threshing outfit 1928.



**Group of Ladies taken at Katrina Esak's wedding: 1935.**

L. to rt. Mrs. Raveta V. Toma, Mrs. Maria M. Yurko, Mrs. Veronta J. Toma, Mrs. Rafira C. Skirka, Mrs. Ana P. Esak, Mrs. Vasile E. Cuciurean and Mrs. Annie N. Cojocari. Standing at the back is Condrea Skirka.



l. to rt. Sanfira, Zaharie holding Joanna on knees, Domnica holding Dochița on her knees, Maria in front and Sanda on extreme right, circa 1904.



Four young men: Standing l. to rt.: Steve and Kost Kachuk. Seated l. to rt.: Tom and John Kokotailo.



Mother and daughters 1935: Standing l. to rt. Raveta, Dorothy, Mary & Katie Kelba.



The ladies pose with the workers in front of the newly plastered house. They will next clean up, have a huge meal, and dance later.

Mertin Mihalcheon looking  
despondent. The 1933  
drought resulted in a poor  
crop.



Festival winners 1927: Back  
row l. to rt.: Sanda W.  
Toma, Dora G. Cucheran,  
Steven J. Darda, Toder  
Romanko, Bill P. Esak.  
Middle row: Rosie P. Hauca,  
Vera L. Sandulak, Katie N.  
Kelba, -----, Mary S.  
Chebree, Mary J. Iftody,  
Peter K. Iftody, Toder N.  
Kelba.  
Front row: Helen Russ, ----,  
---, Sanda Kokotailo (holding  
trophy), Sanda J. Iftody,  
Kost N. Kelba.



l. to rt.: Ioana Henetiuk (née Toma), Maria V. Harasim, Mrs. Pachița Hantiuk (née Matei), Anita Harasim (nee Hantiuk) and Mrs. Katrina (Alex) Creison.



Back seat l. to rt.: Mrs. Nick Hutzcal, Mrs. Petre Hutzcal, Mrs. Constantin Hutzcal, Jenny with baby in arms.  
Front seat: Constantin Hutzcal, Nicolai Hutzcal:  
On running board l. to rt.: Elie P. Hutzcal, Sam N. Hutzcal.





Boian Hall being moved to Hairy Hill by horse power in 1928. In the foreground l. to rt. Mary E. Soprovich, Mertin Mihalcheon, Anne and John Porozni.



Breaking land on Tom Mihalcheon's farm North of Hairy Hill 1927. L. to rt.: Bill Mihalcheon, John Harrison, Steve Mihalcheon, and Tom Mihalcheon.



A few of the ladies at the first Boian picnic 1919. L. to rt.: Mrs. Pete Semeniuk, Mrs. Nick Serbu, Mrs. Nick Ruptash (Tkachuk), Mrs. George Fedoruk, Mrs. Tom Zaharichuk, Mrs. Kost Zaharichuk, Mrs. John Ropchan looking at the ball game.



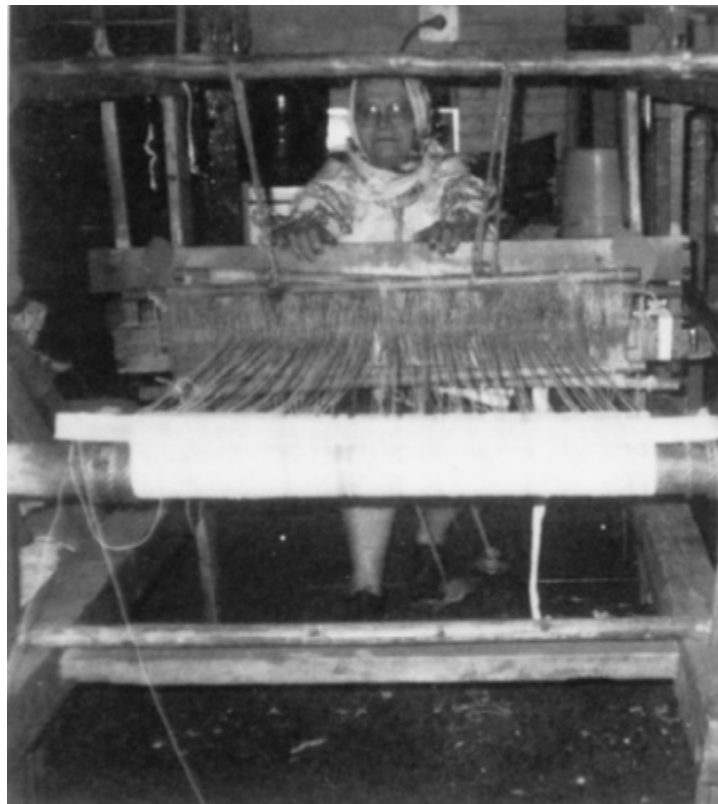
Group of young men: l. to rt. Back row: Mertin P. Hauca, Metro W. Toma, George Romanko, Nick Soprovich, George W. Toma. Middle row: Bill Esak, Harry Svekla, Sandy P. Hauca, Stephen M. Matei, Charles W. Svekla. Half-kneeling in front: Nick W. Svekla and Floyd G. Toma. (1930)



Sawing the winter's supply of wood 1935. L. to rt. Peter Lutic, George W. Toma, Johnny J. Toma, Toder G. Toma, Alex Romanko (partially hidden) and George J. Toma.



Three generations: l. to rt. Sandra Caruk, Mrs. Tom Kokotailo, Sonja Caruk. All embroidery work was done by Mrs. Kokotailo.



Mrs. Mary G. Kereliuk weaving.



Stacking sheafs in 1920.





Champions again in 1930-31.  
L. to rt.: Mary Zaharichuk,  
Lily Kachuk, Rita Boutillier,  
Siah Yaraslowski, Dorothy  
Kachuk and Marie  
Yaraslowski.



Boian Hall converted to a  
store in Hairy Hill in 1928.  
L. to rt.: Alex Mihalcheon,  
Mertin Hauca, George M.  
Mihalcheon.





Lena and Frank Lakusta, founders of the Ukrainian Heritage Village, operating a pioneer flour mill.



Boys Scouts à la mode 1925. L. to rt.: Toder Romanko, Florică J. Toma, George N. Kelba, Floyd G. Toma, George V. Cuciurean.



Two Romanian beauties 1935. L. to rt. Dora A. Lutic, Mary T. Zaharichuk



Main street of Hairy Hill in the thirties. Rapid means of transportation.

## Sources of Information

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10. National Postal Museum
11. Palmer Howard, The Romanian Community in Alberta
12. Personal Interviews and Tapes
13. Provincial Archives of Alberta
14. Public Archives of Canada
15. Questionnaires to Families Involved

# Family Tree

# Family Tree

1



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# Family Tree

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