

## Chapter 1 Birthday

My grandfather (Verigin) was legally adopted in what is now the country of Georgia sometime in the late 1800s.



Fedya and Paranya Verigin were childless at the time that my grandfather, the third son (born 1878) of Wasyl Slastukin became a partial orphan after the accidental death of his father.

As was the custom of that era, my great grandmother appealed to the community and my grandfather was legally adopted (prior to) migration of the Doukhobors to Verigin, Saskatchewan in 1899.

My father was William W. Verigin, the oldest in my grandfather's second family of five brothers and two sisters. His mother was Auxuta Chursinoff. (See *VERIGIN VERISHINE FAMILY TREE* created in 2021 by EWV on Excel)



Picture was taken by a Schoolteacher from England, who taught in Tolstoi School which was originally located just below the Verigin homestead located five (5) miles due North of Verigin, Saskatchewan.

Photo is Wasyl Verigin (born Wasyl Slastukin in Georgia (country)) as third son.

Auxuta was the daughter of Nick Chursinoff and the second wife of Wasyl.

Auxuta was a sister to Fred Chursinoff's grand father. Fred would be a third cousin to me and lives three doors up from our house at Grandview in 2020.

For the record here, my grandfather Wasyl had a first marriage where a son Petro was born. His mother (Wasyl's first wife) had died and Petro married Nastiya Savinkoff. They had four (4) children. In the late 1920s, a group of Doukhobors decided to move back to Russia following an invitation from the then Communist government, as a political maneuver. Petro and his family took some farm equipment with them to demonstrate the Canadian ingenuity and progress in agriculture.



Photograph (Below, left to right)  
son PETER (killed in WW II)  
father PETRO,  
daughter MARY,  
son, PAUL  
daughter, MOLLY  
missing, daughter, ELAINE (born in Russia)

The oral update from various family members was as follows:

1. Cousin Petro purchased a flour mill upon migration to Russia (somewhere in the Ukraine)

2. A daughter Elaine was born in Russia.
3. The Communistic society quickly confiscated all his possessions.
4. Uncle Petro and one of his sons (Peter) were conscripted into the Soviet Army during the Second World War.
5. My cousin Peter was killed in the War.
6. My uncle Peter was near the area that separated the East from the West just after the War.
7. He decided to escape to the West and was shot by the Russian Army while during the act.
8. In 1947, a letter was received by my Aunt Ann and Uncle George (his sister and brother) from the remaining family in Russia, advising of the above.
9. The letter also stated that that letter would be the last that would be written as the family is now under strict surveillance.
10. No further correspondence was received since.
11. Nastiya's brother, Bill Savinkoff, did visit the family in the Ukraine sometime in the early 1980's and provided me with addresses of Petro's surviving family members.
12. The report from them was that the rest of the family was well as they could be.
13. When we were considering our Europe Trip in 1980, I contacted the Seminoff's who had moved from Pelly to White Rock to obtain these addresses as we needed an invite to visit them. That was the only way anyone could get behind the Iron Curtain at that time.
14. The addresses were for their cousins who would then pass on a letter to the Verigin's
15. I had Peter Samoyloff, write the letters and we sent them off
16. We received no response
17. The mystery surrounding the family still remains.



The Verigin homestead built by Wasyl Verigin about 1919, five (5) miles due North of Veregin, Saskatchewan.

The home was occupied by Wasyl and Auxuta along with children William (my father), Polly (Ratushny), Sam, John, George, Annie (Popoff) and Alex. Adopted parents Fedya and Pearl (Paranya) Verigin lived with their adoptive family. My father admitted "financial combustion" destroyed this mansion. Replacement construction used the same foundation that aged in place to "collapse" in recent years

My mother was the oldest of three sisters of my grandfather Samuel S. Morozoff's first marriage to Masha Maloff.



Left to Right:

Polly (married Fred F. Chernoff), Samuel, Annie (married Wasyl W. Verigin), Masha (nee Maloff), Lillian (married John Sookochoff)

Picture is likely about circa 1917, My mother, Annie was about 9 years old when her mother, Masha died of the Spanish Flu in 1918

Samuel was the son of Sommya who had served eight (8) years of a fifteen (15) year sentence in Yakurst, Siberia for participating in the Burning of Arms by the Doukhobors in 1895 in Georgia.

He was together with his brother Elyoosha. Although there were five (5) brothers in the family, the Russian authorities had them draw straws as the penalty was that at least two (2) brothers would be incarcerated in Yakurst. My great grandfather Sommya and Elyoosha drew the short straws leaving brothers Petro, John and Michael behind with the family.



My great grandfather Sommya stands on the left of his brother Elyoosha. This may be taken just as they were able to migrate back to Canada from incarceration in Yakurst, Russia. My mother recounted that both were part of about 95 Doukhobors that were incarcerated for the act of The Burning of Arms.

Upon arrival in Yakurst, the Governor did not know what to do with them. He needed tradesmen and all were expert carpenters and bricklayers, etc. He directed them to build a Governor's House and other buildings. He ended up paying them and they used this income to fund their return fare to Canada.

Their sentence was reduced to eight (8) years from the original fifteen (15) by the Czar upon recommendation of the Governor and migrated to Canada in 1902

My name, Elmer, is the English derivative of "Elyoosha" and was acceptance, by my mother to a request by Elyoosha, so that at least his name may continue as his young and only son had died in a car accident. He wanted his name to continue.

Elyoosha had his "Yakurkta" wife, Matrusha, (which he had brought with him from Yakurst), and his picture set in tombstones over their graves at the Veregin cemetery.



On the manifest (dated 1902) from Liverpool, England, the record shows three passengers: Elyoosha, his wife Matrusha and his brother Sommya travelling to Canada.

A young lady (Sherstobitoff) spoke to the DCA about 15 years ago, regarding her post graduate studies in Yakurst. She visited a museum where the story described the presence of Doukhobors in Yakurst. The record stated that this woman along with others that married Doukhobours and left, could not cope with the "warm" climate in Canada and died soon after migration. Matrusha lived well into the 1930s.

See my blog entries for more information:

- <https://elmerverigin.wordpress.com/Life of Syomma Morozoff and>
- <https://elemreverigin.wordpress.com/History of Wasyl Verigin>

I do not remember much on the day I was born on August 12, 1940, but it must have been hectic as this took place right when harvesting would have been in full swing. I was told that a mid-wife was there to assist my mother on the second floor of the house about eight miles NE of Canora, Saskatchewan. In rural areas of the day, the legal description was stated where one was born. My legal description is 25-31-03-2 which is translated as Section 25 - Township 31 - Section 3 - West of the second Meridian on my birth certificate.



My father was considered older (26) than a normal age for marriage on March 30, 1930. My mother was considered a spinster at 21 as most young girls were already married at that age.

A friend of Dad's Pete Haleshoff also knew Mom and my mom said he essentially "arranged" this partnership.

After the wedding, they moved into the Verigin Estate where Dad's brother Sam had his wife Mary, joined by brother John and his wife Vera. Cousins Mildred, Mike, and Sam (Sam); Lawrence and Russel (Wasyl); Peter (John) all lived together until family separation in about 1935.

My birth was finally registered on July 13, 1946, just in time to enroll me at grade school in Veregin and the fact that there was no family allowance being received from the Saskatchewan Government. My illiterate father did the best he could, but registration took place in Veregin, and my family name followed the wrong spelling of the Village of Veregin on my birth certificate because he would not have been able to read the difference.

On the day of my birth, my brother Russel was informed by my older brother Lawrence, who was trying his best to explain to his brother, about the "birds and bees", reason as to why there was someone making a ruckus upstairs. Lawrence casually explained that I was pulled out of the well that was being cleaned by my father and a neighbor that afternoon as they walked home from Phoenix School.

Maybe that is where the term "wet behind the ears" came from when I was later discussed by my elders.



From left to right back row:

Brothers Russel and Lawrence (Note that Russel is wearing a soldier cap that was given by Uncle Sam Morozoff that was wounded in Dieppe, France (in 2<sup>nd</sup> World War)

Front Row left to right:

Elmer and Mary

I remember the Canora farmhouse, which was the usual two storey design. Main floor had a large kitchen/dining room with a living room adjacent. Usually, a Master bedroom was located at the far end of the Living room on the left and a rear door opened to the covered porch. There would be a staircase from the living room to an upstairs that covered the entire living room and master bedroom area. The upstairs would be partitioned at the top of the stairs into two bedrooms for the children. Usually, an open closet was located right at the top of the stairs. There would be windows on each gable end for the bedrooms.



This photo was taken behind the house in Canora. It was Sunday morning, and the apparent scene was typical, Mom was sulking that dad had over-imbibed at Canora.

Dad decided to improve the situation and he set a pot lid on his head and snuck out to where Mom and the hired girl were sitting in the sun with Uncle Lawrence.

So, he suddenly roared and scared the "daylights" out of them and of course the scene went positive.

He then picked up Mom and they posed for the neighbor who took the photo. The hired girl decided to curtsy for the photographer. Yes, there were happy times.

In those days there was no indoor Plumbing.

A portable tub was set up on chairs in the middle of the largest room of the house. Water was heated on the stove to fill the tub to a comfortable level for a soak and wash. Here I am at about three (3) years of age having a bath in a tub set on two (2) chairs:



This was in the house in Canora in the large room that served as kitchen and dining room.

Note the telephone hanging on the wall in the right-hand corner. The receiver is on the left and there would be a "crank" that would be used to contact a central telephone office to request a line. The projecting mouthpiece was used to talk into. Every person had a liner and a ring number. To call you provide a line number and number of rings (turns of the "crank". People on the same line were on a "party line". Then the required "cranks" alerted them.

An outhouse serviced the needs in the Summer and shoulder seasons, but winter was a challenge. A two (2) gallon bed pan would be just at the head of the stairs for convenience. This very necessary utensil is a subject unto itself as it had many adventures to tell if anyone could communicate with it. So, I will provide a few here:

- One of the siblings' jobs was to take turns to empty this "can" every morning before leaving for school. That is a chore that was accepted not by choice and many a time the "can" would wait for us to come home as our mother was teaching us responsibilities. Of course, we did not note this abuse of someone's responsibility until bedtime. In Summer this may be heralded by an aroma but in winter, this thing would just "stare" at you. So, the errant sibling still had to take it out before bedtime. Well by this time all the winter clothing had been carefully set out by the wood heater in the living room to be dry for the next day and so putting all these clothes back on was not what was desired at that time. I will note that one day my brother Russel would take this "can" and run barefooted on the frozen path to the dump station at the end of the garden in minus 40 temperature. What a feat of endurance!
- Funerals were mostly held at the home of the deceased. The living room would have all the Singers sitting around a table with the coffin in a corner. Since everyone came a distance on horse and buggy, it was customary to feed a meal to all in attendance. Typically, a table would be set on one side to organize shifts of Mourners to eat. All the youngsters went upstairs to play and at my namesake's funeral (Ely Morozoff), we managed to tip over this "can", and it poured out through the hole where the winter heater chimney would normally come through and started trickling unto the Singers below. I doubt that any fire drill could have been better executed as about ten (10) of us managed to escape through the bedroom window, unto the rear porch roof and jump off into the garden below. Whoever came upstairs to check, could not find anyone around. Perhaps a trick of Quantum Physics even in those days?

End Chapter 1 (Final edit October 23, 2021, by NDV)