

SOMMA MOROZOFF LOCATES HOMESTEAD 3 MILES NORTH AND 2 ½ MILES WEST OF VERIGIN SASKATCHEWAN IN 1904

This article is a cooperative effort by Elmer Verigin and Jason Morozoff in June 2024, to assemble known data regarding the events that developed in 1904, that resulted in their ancestor, Somma Morozoff Sr., to become expelled from the Doukhobor Community of (___?___). He was able to locate on one of the first Doukhobor homesteads in the Northwest Territories, near the future Verigin, Saskatchewan Village.

This handwritten account, composed by his granddaughter, Annie Verigin (nee Morozoff), is as follows:

“.....MY MOTHER’S (ANNIE VERIGIN) VERSION ON HISTORY OF Somma (Michael) Morozoff

(Dated January, 1990)

Note: Elmer Verigin, son of Annie Verigin, transcribed from her personal writings using her own words (she was a grade four graduate) with no corrections to keep the authenticity. EWV notes are included as necessary, to coordinate information.

“.....True life about Somma (Mihailvich) Morozoff. He was my grandfather and your great, great grandfather (Elmer’s note: as written to her son Elmer’s children Nona, Lori, Tamara and Kimball). I had a lot of respect for him. He was a kind man, he tried to help all he could do, if anybody ask him for help, he would give his last shirt off his back. His life was rough hard life. He was born in 1859 (a conflict here, as the manifest from Liverpool in 1904 list Somma as 41. This would suggest his birth year as 1863) in Russia Republic of Georgia Village of Slavanka. He was the son of Meisha (Mike) and Poilya (Polly nee Dubosov) Morozoff.

There were four (4) sons besides Somma. Their father Meisha, was a drinking man. He kept drinking until his sons grew up and told him to quit.

Somma never went to school (I don’t think there was school). They just learn from their parents or from who ever knew how to read and write. Somma was a respectable man. He married and had 5 children of his own, and he was mayor of that village in Russia. They called him Deissatnick. I don’t know exactly what year it was, when Russia demanded that they need so many soldiers but Doukhobors won’t let their sons join the army. They burned their guns, who had, and refused to join the army (Elmer’s note: that was just before June 29, 1895 when the Doukhobors burned their arms). They were pulling some tickets, and if ticket say to be soldiers, he has to join the army and obey their laws. Somma and his two brothers pulled those terrible tickets and they had to go but refused to go, so they were sent to prison (Elmer’s note: they were sent to Yakutsk) for life (Elmer’s note, the sentence was 15 years).

Somma had 5 children. His brother Pete, that had to go too, were also married and had one child. Brother Elya, was a young lad, but he had to go too. Two brothers that were lucky that didn’t had to go, were Mike and youngest brother, John. Mike was married and had family, I can’t remember how many, but John wasn’t married.

Somma and his two brothers were sent to prison and meanwhile first group of Doukhobors were emigrated to Canada. Somma and Peter's families were with that group. While brothers were in prison, Pete got sick and died. (Jonathan Kalmakoff reference states that Pete was in the Reserve and Reservists were sent to Armenia while conscripts were sent to Yakutsk)

Martha (Somma's wife) and her 5 children, one of them was my father Somma Jr., and he used to tell us later, about sailing on the sea. He was 7 years old and he could remember when the weather was rough and the ship used to rock from side to side, old people were scared and they sit and pray but children like him had fun. They would run from side to side.

They were thirty days and nights on the water. They landed in Halifax in 1899. Lot of kind people helped them in many ways, but they had to work hard to survive. For Martha and other women like her, whose husbands were in prison, was a hard life.

I really don't know how long Somma and Elya stayed in prison. When they were transferred them and other men to cold Siberia forever. There Elya met with one young girl and got married, by name of Matroniya and later the son was born to them as Mike.

There were many things happened, I don't know exactly now and there is nobody living now that could tell us. Finally, Somma and Elya and his wife got to Canada the hard way. Somma (grandfather) used to tell us, it was 10 years (actually 9) passed before they got together with his family (Elmer's note: the approximate 100 prisoners, so impressed the local Governor with their trade(s) talent in the work they performed for the Governor that he recommended their sentence be reduced to 10 years and so they used their earnings, that the Governor had decided to pay them. to permit them to travel to Canada in 1904 . Children grew up and his youngest son George burnt his eyes out. Martha (grandma) was living in some village with other Doukhobors all working together. There was Lordly, Peter Verigin, was their leader.

There was some misunderstanding and soon Somma was pushed out of that village. Somma was quite hurt to think he had suffered so much and being away from his family and saving Doukhobors from going to war, now he was no good anymore. God helped him or otherwise he wanted to get rid of himself. He said he had three friends who really helped him: one was Patience, second was Reasoning and the third was Meekness and after he talked with them, he could keep on living.

Pretty soon he found job for himself, and after a while, Martha and their family came joined him. She worked hard too, to keep the family fed. She used to tell us later, that she washed some body's clothes for a bar of soap. Then use to wash her clothes. They used to have dirt floors. There was no money to buy wooden floors and many had roofs made of dirt too.

The life went on and most of the children grew up and got married. Then time came when homesteads were given for five dollars and Somma got homestead 4 ½ miles Northwest of Veregin but lived in village called Pakrovka but farmed on their homesteads. His second son Somma Jr., was married and he had his family living together in same house there in that village. Brother Elya was living in that village but across the street. His oldest son Pete and his second wife moved to their own homestead some place

North of Canora. Pete's first wife died, when she was giving birth to a little girl. So that baby was left for Martha to look after. So Somma and Martha had two big burdens, blind son George and granddaughter Nora to look after. So Somma Jr. and his family were living in same house and helping them in many ways.

Little by little, everybody started moving to their own farms and so did Somma and his son Somma Jr., and his family too. Everything went smoothly for awhile. Then in November 1918, there was terrible Flu went around and lot of people dying and so it did happen to Somma's wife Masha died (that was my mother), and she was 28 years old, leaving us girls motherless. Soon Martha had to look after us also.

That winter, Somma Sr., got married to a girl 10 years younger than him. Within a year, their son Alec was born to them, but they still living in same house with Somma and Martha and the family. I can't remember how long they lived like that and it was getting hard so they decided to break the family in two. So Somma Sr., Martha, the blind son and granddaughter, Nora, would live in old house and on same yard, they pulled house from other farm that was for Somma Jr., family. I was about 13 years old and same with Cousin Nora (she was the same age) when our dear hardworking grandma (Martha) died. She was 65 years old and it was 1924. The life sure changed for Nora. She had to cook and look after grandpa and after Uncle George. But we lived in same yard, we helped each other a lot. Then after 10 years or so, another bad luck happened....Somma Jr., got sick and died of Cancer in October 27, 1929. He was not quite 40 years old and left 7 children fatherless, 3 from his first marriage and 4 from his second wife, Alec, Sam, Nick and Florence.

Then next spring in March I got married to Bill Verigin and in April, Cousin Nora got married to Nick Chernoff. There was grandfather Somma, left with blind son George. So, he asked my sisters, his granddaughters (Polly and Lillian) to move to his place and help him look after George and him. So, girls moved to his place. They thought it will be better to to live there with Grandpa then with stepmother. She was young yet. She decided to get married again, and they will be on their way. So, they moved to Somma's (Grandpa) place and look after their grandpa and Uncle George.

I can't remember how long they lived like that when Lillian got married to John Sookachoff from Buchanan. Then after a year or two, Polly got married to Fred Chernoff. Then Grandpa asked his Granddaughter Nora and her husband Nick Chernoff, to look after him and George. I can't remember how long they lived like that. When Syomma's health went down and in December 27, 1938, he died. Nick and Nora and their three girls lived there for a while then (Elmer'snote: Nick and Nora owned Somma Sr. homestead where Somma Sr. lived in a log cabin with George and the girls. He also bought land where the Chernoff family moved to with their family and later their daughter Molly inherited the original homestead) bought farm of their own and moved there and took Uncle George with them there too}.

When they retired, they built house in Canora. Yes, they took Uncle George along too, but it wasn't very good for Uncle George in town cause he likes to be outside but in town they can't leave him or he might wander away. They use to put him in the hospital, if they go away for a few days and in 1972 they took him to Nursing Home in Canora and there he stayed till he died in December 27, 1978.

It used to bother Nora for giving him to Nursing Home cause she promised Grandpa to look after him to the last. But she often visit him in Nursing Home and bring him something to eat from home. I and my sisters, we would visit him too. Once in a while, he wouldn't say anything, bet he would smile as if to say that he knew that we are there and he would stretch his hands to us. We always bring him something to eat. Even now, when I think of him, I could see him with his hands stretched to us.

I can't remember how long Uncle was at Nursing Home. Then he finally died in 1979. (Elmer note, a conflict in a specific death date as December 27, 1978, stated above). He was in his 80s. His funeral was in Canora at Doukhobor Dom, but he was buried in Veregin Cemetery.

There are no old buildings where Somma Morozoff and his son Somma Jr., use to live, just good happy memories where we used to slide down the hill, when we were young.

Those were the Days!

(Elmer note: Anne Verigin was the oldest daughter of Somma Morozoff Jr. Anne died on January 17, 2003 and was also buried beside he husband Bill in the Veregin Cemetery with most of her immediate relatives).

Transcribed by Elmer Verigin September 19, 2012...."

There are some discrepancies in mother's written account that were verbally passed to her son Elmer Verigin and some of these are as follows:

1. Annie Verigin also provided information that Somma was immediately questioned upon arrival in the settlement where his wife and family were located. The "Committee" demanded that Somma pay a fee as part of his earnings in Yakutsk to the Doukhobor Community. The account included the following issues:
 - a. When Somma responded with the fact that he had no money left as all was spent on the trip from Russia, he was considered a liar
 - b. He was threatened with expulsion from the Village immediately with his family a month later
 - c. He considered suicide as he was disappointed by the demands of the "Committee" as he was still a strong Believer in the Doukhobor mission and had been incarcerated and "paid the penalty of his Doukhobor Beliefs. Now his contemporaries were treating him ruthlessly.
 - d. Somma's friends were able to console him and gathered the \$5.00 he would need to register for a homestead
 - e. Then he did get expelled and excavated a Dugout on the newly acquired homestead where he improvised a Dugout shelter.

- f. One account that mother recalled, suggested his family follow him with a month.
- g. Annie's written account suggests that that they were able to live in a nearby Doukhobor Village named Pakrovka, Not sure if this was a possible refuge village from which Somma was expelled.

This information has been provided, with compliments from Doukhobor Historian, Jonathan Kalmakoff as follows:

Information from Jonathan Kalmakoff regarding Somma Morozoff Sr.

Received by Messenger: Dated July 25, 2024 upon request by Elmer Verigin

".....The Morozovs sailed to Canada in 1904 aboard the SS Ionian. This Allan line steamship departed February 4, 1904, under Captain J. Brown, from the port of Liverpool, England. It carried 260 passengers, including 4 Doukhobor exiles from Yakutsk, Siberia. After 10 days at sea the vessel arrived at the port of Halifax, Nova Scotia on February 13, 1904. The intended destination of all Doukhobor passengers is listed as Yorkton, Saskatchewan. The Morozovs are listed in the ship manifest as follows: Ilya 32 Matrona 22 Mikhailo 1 Semyon 42

Somma's wife, as you may already know was Marfa Vasil'evna Bondareff. She and her children accompanied the second boatload of Doukhobors to Canada in 1899 aboard the SS Lake Superior. She died in 1924. We are distantly related through the Bondarevs. Ilyushka's wife was a non-Doukhobor Russian whom he met and married in Yakutsk. Her name was Matrona Varfolomeyevna Kozlov from the village of Pavlovsk, Yakutsk region. She died in 1937.

Matrona had two sisters who also married Doukhobor exiles in Siberia. One, Avdotia, married Kuzma Ivanovich Dergausoff. The third one I knew and didn't write down and now I don't know.

I can trace the Morozov family of Doukhobors from their arrival in Milky Waters through to their residency as odnodvortsy peasants in Tambov province through the 1600s and 1700s.

They were not an aristocratic family of Old Believers or whatever garbage it is your cousin chooses to believe, just because he found a reference to another family with the same surname.

I have heard a number of accounts about the Doukhobor exiles in Yakutsk building a very stately residence for the local governor of the Tsarist administration. I have heard that the two Dergausov elders exiled there helped plan and build it, although they would have hardly been alone in the endeavor

Syoma and Ilya were in active service. They were sent to Yakutsk. Petro was not in active service - he was a reservist, arrested for handing in his reserve papers and exiled to a Tatar village in Erevan province (Armenia) where he perished.

Petro was not exiled to Yakutsk, Siberia. Reservists were treated somewhat differently than those in active service

To understand Petro's specific experience (as opposed to that of Sooma and Ilya's) you need to read Alyosha Chernoff's account and Akimooshka Fominoff's account on my website....."

Copied from text in Messenger by EWV June 25, 2024

Pictorial information regarding this article:



On the left is Matrona Morozoff (Elya Morozoff's wife from Yakutsk) Matrona was born Matrona Varolomenyevia Koxlov from the Village of Pavlovsk, Yakutsk region.

On the right are the two (2) Morozoff brothers just after they arrived in Canada from incarceration at Yakutsk. They departed Liverpool February 04, 1904 and arrived in Halifax February 13, 1904 and travelled by rail to Yorkton. The immediate travelling party included Ilya 32, Matrona 22,



Maikhalio (their son) 1 and Sooma 42. There is no information on the travel arrangement from Yakutsk to Liverpool.

Photo taken by Allan Morozoff on tombstone in Verigin cemetery

Photo Annie Verigin Album

On the right Sooma Jr. Family, Son of Sooma Sr., (Left to Right), Daughter Polly (Chernoff), Sooma Morozoff Jr., Daughter Annie (Verigin), Wife Martha



(nee Maloff), Daughter Lillian (Sookochoff) on knee. The Sooma Jr. family lived together with the Sooma Sr. Family. Circa about 1917 shortly before Martha succumbed to the Asian Flu in 1918.



On the left Original location of Sooma Morozoff Dugout of 1904. Looking South

Photo by Jason Morozoff June 14, 2024

Photo Annie Verigin Album



On the left is Somma Morozoff Dugout looking West and on the South side of the existing pond.

Photo by Jason
Morozoff June 14, 2024



Jason has provided the coordinates of this Dugout location on the current farm with a record of ownership as follows:

1. Somma Morozoff original homestead and estate
2. Passed down to Nick and Nora Chernoff (daughter of Pete Morozoff, Somma's brother)
3. Passed down to Molly (married name) and 3rd daughter of Nick and Nora Chernoff.

Location of Somma
Morozoff fSr. Dugout

The Somma Morozoff Sr. Family Tree can be accessed by this hyperlink:

[Somma Morozoff Sr. FamilyTree](#)

There is a substantial article on the Vereschagin Family which provides a detailed outline of the incarcerated Doukhobors at Yakutsk. It appears that it was different for the various "prisoners". For those that would like to read this lengthy article, it may be accessed by searching Vereschgin's Exile to Siberia on Google, The file is:

<https://doukhobor.org/the-vereschagins-exile-to-siberia/>

There is much more to assemble in this story but Elmer leaves this for now.

Compiled by: Elmer Verigin, Jason Morozoff, Jonathan Kalmakoff

June 15, 2024 Draft #1

June 25, 2024 Draft #2

September 19, 2024 Draft #3

Draft #4 pending