

# **ANTONI/TONY**

The sixth son of Stepan (Stephen) and Theclae (Tillie), Antoni (Tony) was born on Tuesday February 13, 1912 in house # 16, in Szydlowce (Shidlivtsi), Kopychyntsi then part of Ternopil. This area was then a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It would later become part of Poland and then come under German rule during WW II. Next, it would be part of the Soviet Union. Now it is part of Ukraine. If Tony had remained in Shidlivtsi and not immigrated to Canada, his passport would have been changed from Austrian to Polish to German to Soviet and finally to Ukrainian, without having moved from house #16.

In the same year Tony was born, across the ocean, Henry Ford opened his first assembly line and ushered in a revolution in mass production. Tony would one day be the proud owner of a Ford car.

## **World War 1**

When Tony was two years old, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was assassinated in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914. This signalled the start of World War I, which would dramatically affect the Onyszczuk family of Shidlivtsi. The outbreak of World War I in August 1914 ushered in a period that over five years later was to have a profound impact on the territorial disposition of Ukrainian lands. Tony and his brothers grew up surrounded by the turmoil of war. This would influence their life-long interest in world affairs. The Onyschuk brothers would always have a deep concern about what was happening to their world and they subsequently developed progressive ideas about what needed to be done.

As soon as he was old enough he would help out with the farming chores, as did each son. Children, in this part of the world, had a very short childhood and had to quickly learn to accept adult responsibilities. There was little time for play during these trying and desperate times.

Tony would recall how he learned to swim in the Zbruch River and that one could swim across it, from Austria to Russia and back, in a few minutes, at most. He enjoyed swimming and years later would swim for miles at a time in Lake Ontario. He took a great interest in the marathon competitions to cross Lake Ontario in the 1940s and 1950s. He even considered entering the

competition. Because the Zbruch was a border river, fighting raged back and forth across the river throughout World War I and during the period of turmoil following the Russian Revolution.

Click on the thumbnail to get a larger image of the Zbruch River.

During the initial months of the war, from the autumn of 1914 to the spring of 1915, the Tsarist Russian army held most of Galicia (as far west as the Dunajec River) and Bukovina. By the summer of 1915, the Tsarist troops were driven out and the Austrians returned, although the Russians were able to hold on to a slice of Galician territory between the Seret and Zbruch rivers throughout most of the war. Shidlivsti was held by Tsarist troops throughout that period.

Tony would tell of the stench of war and how you could smell a body from a quarter of a mile away. During that period, he would suffer an almost fatal stab wound in his back, from a fight he had with another kid. For this he would be hospitalized for a number of months.

In 1917, his home would be levelled and the family would live in the root cellar. During this time, across the ocean in Canada, an event was taking place which would later have an effect on Tony's future. On February 10, 1917, Peter Dutka (age 21) married Mary Boyachok (age 18) in the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Sifton, Manitoba. They would have three daughters, Helena, Tilley and Anne. Tony would later meet, fall in love and marry their oldest daughter Helena.

There were other events of 1917, which would mark a period which would affect all Ukrainians in many profound ways. The stirrings of political revolution were being felt in Galicia. In February, of that year, Russian Tzar Nicholas and his cronies were overthrown. The population of Galicia eagerly seized on any bit of information and news of the spreading revolution. Events moved rapidly following Kerensky's rise to power and the formation of a Republic. Most were hoping that this change would bring about the end to the tragic war. However, it soon was clear that Kerensky had no thought of ending the war. This position would pave the way for the eventual replacement of Kerensky's Government.

On March 17, 1917, the Ukrainian Central Rada (Council) was formed in Kiev in the wake of the Russian Revolution, which had started in February.

In October of that year, the working class in Russia, under the leadership of the Bolshevik party would overthrow the Kerensky Government. On November 7, Vladimir Lenin would go on to lead the Bolshevik Party to power in Russia.

On the 20th of November, the Central Rada proclaimed formation of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) as part of a future Russian federation. The idea of a Ukrainian state was now becoming firmly entrenched in the minds of the Ukrainian speaking population in Galicia/Halychyna. Ukrainians were now seeing themselves as Ukrainian and not as Austrians, Poles or Russians. Many in Galicia hoped that they too, would be liberated from the yoke of their rulers.

In western Ukraine, lands were directly affected by the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the imminent end to World War I. In such an atmosphere, Galician and Bukovinian leaders proclaimed in L'viv on November 1, 1918, the existence of a West Ukrainian People's Republic (ZUNR). Soon after, the Polish-Ukrainian war began.

This Republic, headed by Ievhen Petrushevych, claimed as its territory all of Galicia east of the San River, including the Lemkian Region farther to the west and the Ukrainian-inhabited areas of Transcarpathia and northern Bukovina—encompassing the Ukrainian lands formerly belonging to Austria-Hungary

## **Tragedy Strikes**

In 1918, the family was struck with tragedy when both parents, Stepan and Theclae died from Typhus. Stepan died first and a month later Theclae succumbed. Neighbours remembered seeing Theclae being taken by stretcher from the root cellar where the family had been living. The seven Onyszczuk brothers were left to grow up as orphans. When their parents died they ranged in ages from 5-16 years. They were cared for by being “farmed out to” different relatives. Each child would be taught a trade. Six-year-old Tony would learn to fix and make shoes as his trade. He would later also learn tailoring.

The event of their parent's death would be the key driving force which would result in strong and lasting bonds between the seven brothers. To survive,

they had to hold their family together and rely on each other as never before. There would be no sibling rivalry between these brothers, only a powerful loyalty to each other. Despite their tragedy they developed the love and the will necessary to move them out of their sorrow and desperation into a new life. This new life would eventually take them to another country half-way around the world.

In that same year, Tony's future wife was born. On Tuesday, January 22, 1918, Helena Dutka was born on a farm on Section 13-29-23, in Bodhan (Gilbert Plains), Manitoba. She was the daughter of Peter Dutka and Mary Boyachuk.

## **War Does Not End For Shidlivtsi**

The end of World War I, when Germany surrendered, on November 11, 1918 did not bring peace to the village of Shidlivtsi.

In January 1919, the West Ukrainian People's Republic (ZUNR) declared its unity with the Ukrainian National Republic (UNR) which had been restored in Kiev after the fall of the Hetmanate government in December 1918. On January 22, 1919, the Central Rada proclaimed Ukrainian independence.

However, despite the proclamations of these various Ukrainian governments, none ever exercised effective control over all the territories being claimed. This was particularly the case during 1919 when the conflicting interests of the various Ukrainian governments were complemented by invasions of the Bolsheviks, White Russians, Poles, and the Entente (the French occupied Odessa and the nearby coastal region). There were also almost continual peasant uprisings. The area was seized by a general civil war—all of which resulted in virtual anarchy throughout Ukraine.

Tony would recall how one couldn't, at times, tell which army was on their land, with the to and fro of battle. One day they would be looking at the ZUNR forces, then at another time Austrian forces or Hungarian or Tsarist troops or Polish troops or White army or Red army troops—and this went on for eight years.

As for western Ukrainian lands and a brief period of independence, the Poles would drive the West Ukrainian People's Republic (ZUNR) out of Galicia. After defeating the armies of the West Ukrainian People's Republic, Poland took over all of former Austrian Galicia in July 1919. The victorious Entente, which claimed sovereignty over Galicia, initially recognized Poland only as its temporary military occupant, but later in March 15, 1923 the Council of Ambassadors recognized Polish sovereignty and its claims to Galicia as well.

In 1919 Sam, who was 17 and the oldest brother would marry 17 year old Angella (Nellie) Szewchuk in Ukraine. They would later have three children, Wlodzimierz (Walter), Ievhen (Eugene) and Karolina (Caroline), all born in house # 16.

By the end of 1920, the situation in Galicia had finally begun to stabilize and the village of Shidlivtsi could start to rebuild. For eight long years, the Onyschuk brothers continually had to watch where they went and what they did due to the ever presence of war. They learned to hate war and saw no glory in it.

## **The Lure of North America**

From about 1891, land-hungry peasants mainly from the provinces of Galicia and Bukovina would be attracted to North America with the promise of free lands or "homesteads" to settlers. Others were attracted by job offers in mines and the railroads.

Word spread quickly throughout the villages of the provinces and by 1896 thousands of Galicians and Bukovinians would be immigrating to North America. Between 1891 and 1914 it is estimated that 170,000 would settle in Canada.

From the tiny village of Shidlivtsi, twenty-one individuals would emigrate to North America before the War, coming via Ellis Island. Most likely others would have made their way via Halifax, St. John, Montreal and Quebec City.

On May 2, 1911, Tekla Onyszczuk, a cousin from Shidlivtsi, would emigrate to the United States. She arrived at Ellis Island, New York aboard the SS

President Lincoln. She was 18 years old and was headed for New Bedford, Massachusetts. She listed herself as a domestic. On the ship's manifest, she indicated that her father Hawrylo Onyszczyk was her closest living relative in Ukraine.

The Onyszczyk brothers would hear stories from their neighbours and relatives who had received letters from North America about how much easier it was in Canada and United States. It would certainly be easier to live in Canada than remain in Shidlivtsi trying to scratch a living from their small piece of land.

Sam and Nellie would see their first child born in house #16. Włodzimierz (Walter) was born on April 13, 1922.

The brothers knew that to make a life for themselves that they would have to emigrate. They decided that Iwan (John), the second oldest, would be the first to emigrate. Sam, the oldest would remain to care for his family of Nellie and Walter and his younger brothers. At this stage, they lacked the funds to pay for the passage. Their uncle, Harry Shklar, who had earlier made his way to Canada, would help out by paying for Iwan's passage. This would pave the way for the Onyszczyk brothers to come to Canada. Iwan would work in Canada and pay the passage for the next brother to come. They would in turn pay for the third brother to come and so on.

The year, 1923, would prove eventful for the Onyszczyk brothers. In April, their cousin Roman Onyszczyk would leave the village and arrive on April 26 aboard the SS Regina. He was headed for Stonewall, Manitoba. He was 31, at the time.

## **The Onyszczyk Brothers Emigrate to Canada**

Four months later, in August, 1923 after lengthy preparations, 18 year-old Iwan would sadly leave his brothers to make his way to Canada. He would arrive on August 30, aboard the SS Montclare (third class). The Passenger Declaration had him listed as Iwan Onyszczyk from Szydłowce, Husiatyn. He arrived with \$20 in his pocket. The ship's documents indicated that Iwan was headed to work for Mike Swidzinski at Pine Ridges Manitoba. John would end up working for his uncle Harry Shklar to pay off the costs of the passage. He would now earn enough money, to begin sending money back

to his brothers in Szydlowce to pay for their travel costs to Canada. Tony was ten years old when his brother John left Shidlivtsi.

Nellie and Sam would see their second child born at house #16. Eugene would be born on August 2, 1925. Eight months later, baby Eugene would tragically die a painful death, on April 2, 1926 after contracting diphtheria.

It would be three years, before the money Iwan was sending would be enough to pay the passage for the next brother to emigrate. In August 1926, Petro would be the next brother to leave Shidlivtsi. On September 3, 1926, 17 year-old Petro (Peter) sailed from Liverpool aboard the S.S. Montrose (third Class). After eight days on the Atlantic, he arrived at Quebec City on September 11. The Passenger Declaration indicated that a relative had paid for the passage and Peter had \$30 in his possession. Pete would make his way to Osage Saskatchewan, where his Uncle Onyske (or Onyake) Haliniak had a farm. Tony was 14 when his older brother Petro left for Canada. Tony knew that he would soon be making his way to Canada.

On the following year, the oldest brother, 25 year old Semko (Sam) Onyschuk, would leave his pregnant wife Nellie, son Walter and remaining brothers, Michael, Paul, Tony and Nick behind. He would first make his way to Liverpool, England, on Saturday March 19, 1927. From there his voyage to Canada would last seven days. He arrived at the port of Halifax, Nova Scotia, on Saturday March 26, aboard the SS CARMANIA (third class) of the Cunard Lines. His passage was paid by an uncle. He indicated a destination of Worcester, Saskatchewan, where his uncle Antoni Rysz lived. He had \$15 in his possession. Two weeks after arriving, his wife Nellie would give birth to Karolina (Caroline) on Wednesday April 13, 1927 in house # 16 in Shidlivtsi.

Sam would later return to Husiatyn, Galicia, in May, 1931, to visit his family and arrange for their trip to Canada. He would then make a second voyage back to Canada aboard the SS MONTROSE on February 27, 1932.

On May 20-21, 1927, thousands of immigrants who were crossing the Atlantic in various steamships would look up and see a strange sight--the "Spirit of St. Louis" flying from New York to Paris. American, Charles Lindbergh would be the first to pilot an airplane solo across the Atlantic. The flight would only take 33.5 hours, while the typical ocean voyage would take 7-9 days. This historic flight symbolized the fast pace of life and the

new technology that immigrants were about to experience. Decades later, immigrants would take to the air and hundreds of passenger steamships would go out of service.

## **Tony's Voyage**

**This is a fictionalized account of Tony's voyage to Canada. It is based on his passport documentation, which located him at various stops along the way. Some of it is based on my memories of what my father and others told me. I try to imagine what my father was experiencing as he made a very exhausting twenty-eight day trip to Toronto from his village. I researched the route he would have taken, the time it took for each leg of the journey and the process that he would have experienced at each point along the way.**

Now it was Tony's turn to make the long voyage to Canada.

In the early 1900s, in Poland, every citizen had to have two passports, one for residence and one for leaving the country. In September 1928, two months prior to leaving for Canada, Tony went to Kopyczynce, the Powiat (district) capital for Szydlowce, to get his travel passport. When he arrived at the passport office, every seat in the waiting room was taken. He would have a long wait ahead of him. Finally in the late afternoon Tony received his passport, just in time to catch the last train to Husiatyn. From the train station, Tony walked the nine kilometres back to Szydlowce. But that didn't matter, for he had his prized passport in hand. He grew excited at the thought that in two months he would be travelling to Canada in an ocean liner. He had heard about the luxury seen on these vessels and the food that was tasty and plentiful. His brothers in Canada were paying for his trip across, so he would not need to carry much money with him.

Two months later, in the early hours of Tuesday, November 20, 1928, Tony would leave his beloved village of Szydlowce, never to return. The days before, had been spent packing and visiting relatives and friends. This was both a happy time, for he was soon going to be reunited with his older brothers Sam, John and Peter and a sad time, for he was leaving his brothers Michael, Paul and Nicholas behind as well as relatives and friends. His three remaining brothers and Cousin Anton Szewczyk, accompanied Tony as he made his way to visit his aunts, uncles, cousins and friends. Each would give



him a few Kopecks and lots of advice on how to care for himself while on the road. They would exchange hugs and tears, knowing they may never see each other again. Each place he visited he would be given some kielbasa, bread, sweets and other types of food to take on his journey.

Monday evening, Tony hardly slept as he imagined his future. He knew that he would sorely miss those relatives and friends he was leaving behind. When he finally did doze off he was soon awakened by the roosters doing their duty. His aunt, Mary Szewczyk, was already up preparing a hearty breakfast for her sixteen-year-old nephew. She also prepared food for him to take on the trip. After washing himself and eating the last breakfast that his aunt would prepare for him, Tony gathered his belongings and placed them at the doorway. Uncle Szklar would soon be arriving with his horse and carriage to transport Tony to nearby Husiatyn, where he would board a train to Kopyczyńce.

Despite it being late November, the weather was rather pleasant and not too chilly. Tony loved the brisk autumn air and he wondered how much different the weather would be in Canada. He was told that the weather was similar at that time of the year.

When Uncle Szklar arrived, the neighbours and relatives were already gathering in the front yard to see Tony off and wish him a safe voyage. The Priest would arrive to give his blessings. His aunts and uncles embraced Tony and wept, knowing that this may be their last time together. Tony's brothers, Michael, Paul and Nicholas, along with his cousin Anton Szewczyk, would accompany him to Husiatyn. When the carriage slowly pulled away, church bells were rung. This was the custom when people left their village for foreign shores. Some of the children of the village ran behind the carriage trying to hitch a ride on the undercarriage. The horse soon picked up its pace leaving the children behind. Tony would turn and capture the last image of his house as it disappeared from view behind a hill. Throughout the morning, Tony managed to maintain his composure, keeping a stiff upper lip, while others would shed tears.

The carriage first took them to the cemetery, where Tony's mother and father were buried. Here he would pay his last respects at his parents' grave site. This would be his most difficult moment and he finally broke down while gathering some soil from his parents' grave to take to Canada. His brothers comforted him as he viewed his parents' headstone for the last time.

## Husiatyn

They would next make their way to Husiatyn, enjoying the sites of the rolling countryside and the clusters of geese foraging for food. They travelled for five kilometres, in a north-westerly direction to the small village of Suchodil. From there they veered in a north-easterly direction on the road to Husiatyn, which was only another four kilometres. They headed straight to the train station and the ticket window, where Tony purchased a ticket to Kopychyntsi.

The boys had some time before the train was to arrive, so they decided to visit the shops and see what was new and enjoy each other's company. Uncle Szklar went his own way to pick up some provisions for his kitchen that he couldn't get in Szydlowce. As the boys explored the streets, they talked about the trips that John, Peter and Sam had earlier made to Canada. They reminded Tony to be on the look-out for shysters trying to sell him over-priced food and other items. They then made their way back to the station where they saw Uncle Szklar talking to a family from the village of Lychkivtsi, who were also immigrating to Canada. Szklar asked the family if they would keep an eye out for his nephew. The father of the family, Hrycko Melnyczuk introduced his wife Nastia and son Piotr to Tony. Piotr was also sixteen. Tony would have someone his own age to chum with during the trip.

The train to Kopychyntsi arrived at noon. By this time the station had filled with excited and tearful immigrants, their family members and friends, who were seeing them off. Soon the conductor called "All aboard" and Tony hugged and kissed his brothers, cousin and uncle while they offered some last minute advice. He climbed aboard carrying two, rather large and heavy suitcases. He quickly found a window seat and was waving to his brothers as the train pulled out of the station. The clickety-clack sound of the train was to become a constant companion throughout his trip through Poland, a sound he found difficult to get used to.

The train slowly chugged along the curvy landscape. It no sooner had started out when the train slowed and stopped a few kilometres away at Chabarivka. Here, a few passengers scrambled aboard. This was to be the pattern as the train slowly made its way to Kopychyntsi—stopping at Vasil'kivtsi, and

Krohuletz to take on additional passengers. The 25 kilometer ride to Kopychyntsi took 90 minutes due to the many stops. The station was located on the south-east edge of the town. Here, Tony and most of the passengers would get off and head straight to the Canada Steamship Lines office which was located at the station.

## **Kopychyntsi**

The office was almost full when Tony entered. He was given a number and could see that he was going to have a long wait. The process of getting his ticket and passenger papers would take a whole day, from morning until well into the small hours of the night. The immigrants first had to wait for their number to be called where they would then pass singly through a corridor, where doctors examined each of them for trachoma and for other communicable diseases. If none was detected, then one would be given a stamped pass, which you had to present in order to get your passenger ticket, train passes and papers.

Tony next lined up to get his ticket and an Immigration Identification Card. He would need to show his ticket and Immigration Identification Card at every transfer point along the way and when he would arrive in Canada. Tony's brother John had already paid for his passage at a CPR office in Toronto, Canada. John had recently moved from his uncle's farm in Manitoba, where he had been working and was now living at 120 Hope Street in the north-west end of Toronto. His uncle, Harry Shklar, had earlier paid John's way to Canada and had employed him on his farm.

Tony noted that the clerk in the wicket bore a striking resemblance to Taras Shevchenko, the famous Ukrainian poet. Tony was carrying Shevchenko's book of poems called Kobzar in his suitcase. Most Ukrainian families owned a copy of the Kobzar and religiously read the poems which extolled Ukrainian culture and its language. Tony would read the collection of poems many times throughout the long journey.

The clerk displayed a kind and fatherly attitude towards Tony once he saw that Tony was only 16 and on his own. He asked Tony if he was travelling with any friends. Tony pointed to the Melnyczuk family with whom his uncle had earlier made arrangements. He examined Tony's passport #520654 and stamped it with the date November 21, 1928. The clerk spent a

few minutes explaining the travel process and made sure that Tony understood what would be happening from the time he left Kopychyntsi to the time he would arrive in Canada. He warned him to watch out for his money and suitcases. He assured Tony that the food was excellent and abundant and that he should eat as much as he could since the voyage had been pre-paid. He also said that eating would help counteract sea-sickness, should the seas get rough. He wished Tony a safe and pleasant voyage.

Tony felt reassured after his session with the clerk. Now he would have to wait until the morning before the train would be leaving for the next leg of the journey to the city of Ternopil. Tony had seen pictures of Ternopil and had read articles about the city and was looking forward to this part of the trip. He checked his papers and reviewed the many stops and train changes that he would have to make. He put his papers in a pouch that he kept under his shirt which was secured by a string around his neck. Fortunately, there were enough benches for everyone to sleep on. Tony claimed a bench for himself next to the Melnyczuks'. They were soon chatting about their expectations in Canada. The Melnyczuks' were going to a farm in Manitoba owned by an uncle of theirs. Tony shared some of his kowbossa with them and they shared some pirohies and kapoosta. After a while they decided to get some sleep. Tony made a makeshift pillow with a jacket he retrieved from his suitcase along with a small blanket. He would sleep fitfully and be awakened frequently by some profound and loud snoring from other nearby passengers.

On Wednesday around 6:00 AM, Tony awoke to the smell of coffee and freshly made bread. Tony and the Melnyczuks took turns watching over their possessions while each went to freshen up in the washrooms. Tony purchased coffee, buttered rolls and hard boiled eggs from the canteen. Soon the train pulled in that would take them to the city of Ternopil, which was north-west of Kopychyntsi.

Tony and Piotr chatted about their villages and what they were hoping for in Canada. Tony revealed that he had been orphaned and that he was glad that he would soon see his three brothers in Canada. Sam had become a father-figure in the family, while John was more the protective “Big Brother”. Pete being three years older than Tony was more his age and they had hung around a lot when Pete was still in Szydlowce. They talked about the war and how it affected their families. The Melnyczuks' village, Lychkivtsi, had received some damage but nothing compared to Szydlowce, where at one

point only two houses were left standing. It took a few years before most of the houses were rebuilt.

The excitement of traveling to Canada helped to dull some of the pain of leaving his other brothers, Michael, Paul and Nick behind—but he knew that they would in a few years all be reunited. Soon the train pulled into a larger town of Terebovlia, which was mid-way to Ternopil. Here about twenty more passengers, loaded with suitcases climbed aboard. They also were headed for Canada. After a few more stops, the train finally arrived in the early afternoon at the Ternopil Station.

## **Ternopil**

The Ternopil train station was built during the height of the Austro-Hungarian period. It had a main entrance in the centre with two wings on either side of the main entrance which accommodated waiting rooms, ticketing offices, bars a restaurant and the administration of the station. The Ternopil Station was a major hub with lines radiating to the major cities of Ukraine. Here, Tony would have to transfer to the train heading west to L'viv. Unfortunately, he would again have to stay over, this time in Ternopil and catch the next train to L'viv, which was due to leave at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday. Fortunately, his pre-paid ticket included the cost of a hotel room, which was situated a block away from the train station.

Tony and the others trekked to the hotel where they would get a meal along with their overnight accommodation. Luckily, he got a very small room to himself. This was a new experience for Tony. It was the first time that he would have a room to himself. He had always shared a bedroom with a brother or a cousin. He freshened himself up before meeting the Melnyczuks for supper. After supper they took an evening stroll through the downtown core of Ternopil. They were amazed at the ornate architecture of the buildings and how much bigger the buildings were than in Husiatyn. Instead of dirt roads that they were used to, they saw streets paved with stone bricks. They also had to stay on sidewalks for fear of getting hit by the cars and trucks. Seeing a car or truck was a rarity in Szydlowce. Before turning in, they made sure that someone would knock on their hotel room door for 6:00 a.m. the next day.

Tony was already up and about when someone knocked on his door. He quickly washed himself, put on some fresh clothes and carefully repacked his suitcases. He double-checked his papers and money and reviewed where the train would next take him. He lugged his suitcases to the hotel restaurant where he met the Melnyczuks. Tony remembered the advice of the ticket agent who looked like Taras Shevchenko, and Tony stuffed himself. He had three eggs, two rolls with lots of butter, a large piece of sausage and two glasses of milk. Piotr, likewise ate to his heart's content.

At the station, they got their bearings and found out where they would board the train to L'viv. Tony recognized many of the people who were on the train from Kopychyntsi. Someone suggested that all those going to Canada get together for a photograph on the platform. This would help cement camaraderie throughout the following days among those going to Canada.

These future Canadians boarded the train together and get seats near each other. One of the passengers brought out a small accordion and another brought out his mandolin and soon there was music to accompany their trip. The time passed quickly as everyone joined in singing both happy and sad folksongs. When they played the happy songs people shouted, "Here's to Canada!" When they played sad songs people would become quiet and think about the people they were leaving behind. Then someone would shout, "Enough of this sadness, play a happy song, so we can all sing together!" This alternating happy then sad music would accompany their trip to Canada.

## **L'viv**

After many stops along the way, the train finally pulled into the L'viv Railroad Station. It was 5:00 p.m., Thursday, November 22. They would once again have to transfer trains. The next one would be going directly north to Kovel where again they would change trains. The next train to Kovel, would be leaving the next morning, at 8:00 a.m. To get to Kovel would take a full days travel.

They again would have to spend the night in a nearby hotel. This one was much larger than the one in Ternopil. They would also eat in the hotel restaurant, followed by some site seeing. L'viv was a bustling city, much larger than Ternopil and the buildings appeared grander. The streets were

much wider and the cars seemed to rush by at a faster speed. Was this a foretaste of what to expect in Toronto, Tony wondered? While wandering the streets, they would bump into other clusters of fellow travellers and exchange greetings.

The next morning, Tony and the Melnyczuks entered the train station around 7:00 a.m. and headed to the platform where the train to Kovel would be arriving. Slowly the platform was filling with the now familiar passengers who were heading for Canada. Pleasantries were exchanged and the group was now more relaxed with each other. The children from the various families were already playing together. Soon the train pulled up and the Canada-bound group squeezed into two adjacent cars.

This leg of the journey would be longer than from Ternopil to L'viv, but there would be fewer stops and they would arrive in Kovel in time to catch a connecting train going to Warsaw. On the way to Kovel the children played games which involved running from one car to the next. The men started to mix and congregate based on their destination. Most were headed to Winnipeg and work in Manitoba. A smaller group was headed for Saskatchewan. There were seven going to Toronto. Five were headed to Montreal and a few were headed to northern Ontario.

Each group was comparing notes on what they had heard or read about their destination. Some had family members waiting to greet them. Others were destined to work on a farm. Each person in the Toronto group was being met by some family member. They discussed how Toronto was a bustling city which needed workers. It also had a growing Ukrainian community with support groups such as "The Ukrainian Labour and Farmers' Temple Association." There were cultural and social groups which brought together new Ukrainian immigrants and made them feel at home. They were particularly happy that there were many restaurants which offered Ukrainian cooking. There was even a school for newcomers to learn English. The Toronto group grew more excited as they compared notes. They all vowed to maintain contact with each other by joining The Ukrainian Labour and Farmers' Temple Association, which offered a means of maintaining social contact. Before they knew it they were pulling into Kovel. Here they would have an hour wait until their next transfer to the train heading west to Lublin and then the Polish capital Warsaw. The Kovel station was milling with dozens of additional passengers heading to Warsaw.

## On to Warsaw

The excitement of going by train from Husyatin to the Capital City of Warsaw helped to dull some of the pain of parting. But nothing went fast enough for Tony. There were far too many hold-ups and too many days changing trains. He had left on Tuesday, November 20 and it was now only Friday. There would still be two more full days of travel before reaching the port city of Danzig, where he would now switch to a passenger boat. This would be a whole new experience for Tony. He had heard about rough seas and how people got sea-sick. This concerned him and while looking forward to his first ocean voyage he didn't relish the thought of getting sick.

Tony also realized that once he arrived in Canada, he would again board a train, this time traveling a much greater distance than the distance he would travel in Poland.

The train that would take Tony to Warsaw was newer and had more cars than the Kovel train. Tony's group stayed together and boarded the Warsaw-bound train together. Soon they were headed in a westerly direction towards their next major stop at Lublin where the train took on more passengers. From Lublin they would head in a north-west direction until they arrived at the Warsaw Station, around 8:00 p.m. They didn't get off this time. This train would carry them all the way to Danzig. They waited on board while additional sleeping cars were attached. However, the train would not leave the station until the next morning, when additional passengers would arrive from other parts of Poland. The Warsaw Station was the major hub for all of Poland with rail lines radiating in every direction to all the major cities in Poland.

While waiting for the sleeping cars to be readied the passengers were allowed off the train to explore the station, so long as they were back by 9:30 p.m. Tony took advantage of this break and along with Piotr wandered through the cavernous depot. Sounds echoed through the station with each announcement. They looked at the many Kiosks offering various items a traveller may require. However, most of them were closed for the evening, except those offering food to both passengers and railway staff. These remained open throughout the night. Tony purchased tea and biscuits for Piotr and himself. They soon returned to their train and were shown where



they would sleep. Tony was exhausted from the ordeal of train travel. He was soon fast asleep in a small but comfortable berth bed.

At 6:00 a.m., the next morning, a porter woke the passengers. They had breakfast aboard the train while additional passengers were boarding and soon they were off headed towards the port city of Danzig. This final leg of the journey through Poland would take seven hours to travel the two hundred miles, again due to the many stops along the way. The passengers grew more excited as the train approached Danzig. They were weary from the constant clackety-clack sound the train made as it lumbered along the tracks. Soon these railroad sounds would be replaced with the sounds that ships made.

## **Danzig**

The train pulled into the Danzig Station around 4:30, Saturday afternoon. The passengers were eager to leave the train and see the boat that would take them on their next leg of the journey. They were ushered to a nearby barrack where there were already more than a hundred others who had arrived earlier. Here they would be processed before boarding the ship. It was a large hall with only bunk beds to divide the families. There was no privacy, no place to go, nothing to do but wait 'patiently' until all were thoroughly examined by the doctors. Tony wondered why he had to again be examined. It was common for people to be examined before boarding their train, before boarding their ship and upon arrival in their new country. This was to ensure that there would be no contagious diseases spread along the way.

Tony would wait in the Danzig barrack for almost a week until everyone was processed and their ship had arrived. Food was cooked in large quantities and all had enough to eat. New friendships were struck with the new and older arrivals as they got to know one another. The kids played games between the bunk beds. The older young people also got acquainted and played games while the older people sat about and visited. The two musicians who had entertained aboard the train were now joined by a violin player. They would help maintain the passenger's spirits throughout their wait.

## On To Antwerp

Finally, on the afternoon of Thursday November 29, Tony would board a small single-funnel ship that would take him to Antwerp Belgium where he would later board a much larger ship which would take him to Southampton, England and eventually to Canada.

After settling in and having his first meal aboard the small ship, it was ready to cast off. Tony, along with hundreds of others went to the main deck to catch their last view of Poland. The ship's engines rumbled into action and black acrid smoke belched out of the funnel. The new sound and vibrations of the ship's engines were going to be Tony's constant companion for the whole voyage, quickly replacing the clinkety-clack sound that he endured travelling the rails.

The ship slowly picked up speed as it made its way out of the Gulf of Danzig into the Baltic Sea. The ship would proceed due west for 250 miles when it would then head due north. They would then proceed through a straight leading past Copenhagen. The next morning they reached the Kattegatt Strait. It would take a full day to travel the Kattegatt before reaching the Skagerrak Strait. From there the ship would turn in a south-west direction and head into the North Sea.

The North Sea is not very deep and therefore subject to violent storms. The passengers experienced a brief storm. The waves went right over the deck. Most of the passengers were sea-sick except for a few, including Tony. To get to the dining room from the cabins one had to cross the deck. He managed to get there and came back with some rolls, but everyone else was busy "bringing their offering to the gods of the sea". When the storm was over, the sea was perfectly calm leaving some debris floating on the water. Tony wondered where that debris came from.

They would continue going south past Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands heading towards Antwerp, Belgium. The voyage aboard the small ship would last three days before reaching the Scheldt River, on Sunday December 2 at noon. This waterway would lead to the port city of Antwerp.

## **Antwerp**

‘Antwerp owes its existence to the Scheldt River’ is a popular saying that shows how important the river Scheldt is for the city of Antwerp. Thanks to this wide river, Antwerp would become the second-largest harbour in Europe (after Rotterdam), and the fourth largest harbour in the world. The river is so large that sea-going vessels and large tankers can sail to deliver their products in the vast port area of the city. Until the 19th century, the harbour was situated right at the entrance of the city. The port was enlarged in the 19th century with an artificial dock, the so-called Napoleon Dock.

Before proceeding up the Scheldt, the ship anchored until a small boat ferried a pilot aboard to steer the ship to port. Tony observed a great deal of marine traffic with all kinds of freighters, passenger ships and several ferries. Tony thought that their ship seemed to be the slowest ship on the sea as it carefully made its way to port. The small ship finally docked alongside many, much larger vessels, some with three funnels. They would live aboard the docked vessel for three more days until the arrival of the SS MONTROYAL, which was scheduled to arrive on December 4. This new ship would carry Tony to Canada. They would transfer to the larger ship on the afternoon of December 4 along with passengers from other countries, including Germany, Italy, Hungary and Russia.

## **The SS Montroyal & Southampton**

This ship, the first of Canadian Pacific's three ships, originally named ‘Empress of Britain’, was launched in 1905 and made her maiden voyage from Liverpool to Montreal on 5 May 1906. She was 570 ft long and 65.7 feet wide (173.7 x 20 metres). Top speed was 19.8 knots and she could cross the ocean in 6 days at full speed in good weather.

Later in 1906, and again in 1908, she set eastbound Canada-England speed records. During World War I, the Empress of Britain served as an armed merchant cruiser and a troop carrier. She returned to Liverpool-Quebec service in the fall of 1920, and moved to Southampton-Quebec in 1922. After conversion to cabin class accommodations in 1924, she was renamed Montroyal and placed back on the Liverpool-Quebec service. In 1927, she was placed on an Antwerp-Southampton-Cherbourg-Quebec service and was on that route when she made her final voyage in September 1929.

The Montroyal was a large ship with two funnels and could carry 1580 passengers. There was first, second and third class accommodation, with the majority of the passengers in the third class. It had three levels, with steps on both inside and out leading up and down. Each level had its own deck. The third class accommodation provided cabins for each family. There were also large rooms or dormitories containing many beds, where single people were placed. There was a huge dining hall, and another of about the same size for the third class passengers to gather to socialize. Here, later in the voyage, would be held singing and dancing performances by those who played and carried their instruments with them: violins, mandolins, wind instruments and so on. Also, there was a piano and many people would eventually join in.

When Tony first boarded the ship and his papers had been accepted, he was asked to go down to the lowest level, which was third class. Here he was allotted a bunk. Tony's bunk was next to the hull and he could feel the coolness of the water when he touched the steel wall.

Early, the next morning, on December 5, tug boats would take the Montroyal out into the harbour, and then cast off as the ship's engines took over. The sound and vibrations of those engines was more powerful than he experienced in the smaller vessel. The new sounds were a distinctive background to the overall atmosphere, like a tune linked to a memory.

Heading out into open water, the ship slowed momentarily to let off the pilot, then continued steadily as the land fell back gradually, until it became only a faint line on the horizon, finally to vanish. The Montroyal headed off into the English Channel, picking up a rhythmic movement from the waves, smoothly, up and down, with a gentle rocking back and forth and a slight roll side to side. Tony would wonder if this perpetual rocking and rolling would ever ease up. Heading west away from the land, Tony noticed that the waves grew larger along with the swells. A number of passengers started to feel queasy and became seasick. However, Tony was perfectly fine. In his youthful cockiness he presumed that he wouldn't get seasick.

The ship travelled west, along the south coast of England and then headed past Isle of Wight up the River Itchen towards Southampton. Here, they took on more passengers who were both English and French. The ship was loaded with supplies for the ocean crossing. Passengers would again go through a

medical check before being allowed to make the crossing. The next morning, Thursday December 6, the Montroyal would cast off for North America.

## **Crossing the Atlantic**

Again the tug boats would take the Montroyal out into the harbour, and then cast off as the ships engines took over and the ship would pick up speed as it headed past the Isle of Wight into the English Channel. Soon they would be in the Atlantic Ocean and arcing to the North. After a few hours on the Atlantic, the ship encountered some rough December weather. The movements of the ship which had started so deceptively gentle, with the gentle rocking back and forth and the slight roll side to side changed dramatically. The ship's bow would lift high and higher, to slam down with a loud boom into the wind-swept sea, whipping the water into white spray while the stern would follow with an equally high lift. Sometimes, even the propellers were lifted out of the water, causing them to race, shaking the whole ship. Mixed in with this motion, however, was the insidious rolling. After holding off as long as he could Tony finally decided to join the other "queasy" passengers and got seasick. No matter where he went he could not find a place that was quiet and without movement. Everywhere was the constant up and down, up and down, accompanying the never ending sound and vibrations of the engines. Would it never end?

Since almost all of the other passengers were quite sick as well, the dining room was largely deserted. Tony would follow the advice of the ticket agent who told him to get plenty of food en route. He ate two rolls and immediately felt better. The few that showed up showed little interest in their food and were only nibbling. The notable exception was a grinning lout, who seemed to delight in the misery of the passengers. He hailed from Hungary and was having second and third helpings and nobody seemed to care. Tony now joined the grinning lout and he too began to grin, knowing that his sea sickness was gone. Tony would make good use of the dining room throughout the rest of the voyage. After a few hours the seas calmed down and the passengers would now begin to enjoy their voyage.

The dining room was a luxurious place and the food was beyond anything Tony had yet encountered. He managed to save a Third Class Breakfast Menu from the Montroyal to show his brothers in Canada. The menu included Compote of Figs, Oatmeal Porridge with New Milk or Syrup,

Grape Nuts, Fried Fillet of Hake, to order—Boiled or Fried Eggs, Broiled Wiltshire Bacon, Broiled Pork Sausage, Breakfast Rolls, Toast, Jam, Marmalade, Tea, Coffee. Each morning Tony would try something different. Lunches and Dinners likewise provided a great variety of choice. The ship even had a small movie theatre. Tony remembered seeing an early version of Mickey Mouse starring in ‘Steamboat Willie.’

Among the third class passengers were many lively types. The Italians, Hungarians and the Ukrainians were the liveliest. One time, when Tony stood watching a group of Italians dancing their national dances with others accompanying them on their mandolins and other instruments, he was approached by one of the dancers and asked, why was he not dancing? He really thought that Tony was Italian.

Although the rules required that each class was to stay on their own level, the attendants said nothing when the passengers from third class mingled with passengers of second and crossed to their quarters to see what they were like and chat a little with each other. There was a great difference in accommodation between first, second and third class. The third class was the largest one and had the simplest furnishings. Naturally the third class passengers were curious to see how the other half lived. The deck for the second class was attractively arranged with deck chairs for each passenger and other comfortable furnishings set out for them. Whereas the third class passengers were lucky to find a low bench on their deck, and most of the time they had to sit on the floor. First class was luxurious beyond words. One sank into plush carpeting and the very atmosphere was magical. At the same time, guests from both first and second class came down to the third class deck and assembly hall for fun and interesting times.

Singing, dancing, joking went on from morning ‘till night. The eight days it took to cross the Atlantic, went by quickly as the passengers entertained each other. Soon they would catch their first glimpse of North America and Canada. Tony and the other passengers were thrilled to see the Canadian coastline; at first it appeared as a thin black line on the horizon which, as it got larger, turned a beautiful rich green, even though it was December. That rich colour was very noticeable after having seen nothing but the grey of the sea for over a week. Finally, On Friday December 14, after eight long days on the ocean, Tony and the other passengers approached the Port of Saint John, New Brunswick.

They could see a unique housing which struck Tony as very strange with its many random colours and with different shades on the roofs and the sides. He was used to seeing houses of more uniform appearance, with roofs all thatch-covered and the sides either wood or white-washed. Nearing Saint John, the country side came closer and closer, and Tony's anticipation heightened. Coming into the harbour, he saw lots of boats of all sizes and the beautiful sight of the city.

## **Saint John, New Brunswick.**

After picking up a pilot, the Montroyal would be attached to tugs and the engines finally shut down. The ship was moved to the piers where there was another large passenger liner with twin funnels already tied up. There was a large sign near the top of the pier building which Tony could not read. Another passenger who could read English, told Tony that it said, "Welcome to Canada." Despite the December weather the eager passengers were all crowded on the deck to look at their first views of the New World. Tony was anticipating what all might lie ahead!

After docking, the passengers disembarked in groups to be checked through the official process. After verifying his passport and visa, the rather stern looking immigration officer asked Tony whether he had come to stay in Canada permanently. Tony didn't understand until someone asked him in Ukrainian. He said yes and that his brother John was waiting for him at Toronto. The immigration officer finally stamped the passport with "Landed Immigrant", while Tony's heart was beating nervously. His passenger papers indicated that a brother had paid his passage. It also indicated that his destination was to his brother John, who lived at 120 Hope St. in Toronto. Tony had \$14 in his possession.

The trains were adjacent the pier, and each group of passengers depending on their destination, were directed to certain cars. Tony noticed that the Canadian train cars were larger than the cars in Poland and they were newer and more comfortable. Eventually, everyone was off, heading west. As the train headed towards Toronto, Tony studied the different countryside's of New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario. He marvelled over the size of the farms and how large the farm structures were. The coaches had wooden seats and large, hinged luggage compartments which the passengers slept on

during the night. There were intriguing items Tony hadn't seen before such as paper towels and paper cups in the washrooms.

The train stopped over in Montreal where the passengers were let off for a brief period. Walking around the downtown sections near the station, Tony gawked at all the beautiful cars and buildings and determined that he would soon own his own car and home.

## **Toronto**

According to his passport, it took 26 days from the day he left his village to the day he landed in Canada. On Sunday, December 16, after travelling for two days by overnight train from Saint John, Tony would be greeted at Toronto's Union Station by his brother John. The weather was clear and mild (34-40 Fahrenheit) for this time of year and the forecasters were wondering if Toronto would face a green Christmas. His oldest brother Sam was still working and living in Worcester, Saskatchewan and Peter was working in Osage, Saskatchewan.

After Tony settled in and freshened up, John took Tony on his first streetcar ride. They rode along St. Clair Avenue to Bathurst where they switched to the Bathurst car going south. They would get out at Queen Street, in the heart of the Ukrainian community. John took Tony to a local Ukrainian restaurant on Queen Street near Bathurst, for some home-style Ukrainian cuisine. John introduced Tony to the Ukrainian-speaking clientele and they would exchange stories about their voyage to Canada and offer tips on how to get along in Toronto. John had recently joined the *Ukrainian Labour and Farmers' Temple Association* and would later introduce Tony to this group which was organized to assist and protect new Ukrainian immigrants. It also provided a gathering place for socializing and cultural activities.

## **End of Part One**