George ‘Yorgi’ Bellio
Autobiography

dedication page

My village of Chereshnitsa – July 2012

Taken June 1930: My mother's sisters- My Teta Prosha Chicovsky (far left), and my Teta Tana Skembos (far right). My mother's brother- Elio (My Uncle Louie) Pappas in the center with me on his lap.

Family History

I was born Georgios Bellios on January 20, 1930, in the village of Chereshnitsa "Greek Polikeraso" (Aegean Macedonia), now under Greece. My father, Argir Bellios, was born in 1903 and my mother, Afrodita "Dita" Popoff, in 1910. My brother was born on February 16, 1939. My maternal grandparents, Dedo (Grandpa) Vasil Popoff was born in 1874 and Baba (Grandma) Vasilka Glavcheff was born in 1882.

Dedo Vasil came to America in 1924. In 1928, he brought over Baba and his youngest daughter Teta (Aunt) Stephanka Popoff, now Gosheff. Their other three daughters; Teta Prosha, married to Andon Chicovsky, my mother, Dita, married to my father, and Teta Tana, married to Boris (Shkemboff) Skembos, and their son, Vuiko (Uncle) Elio Popoff, all stayed behind because they were already married.

I do not know my paternal grandparents as I was still too young to remember when they both had passed. I do not know Baba's name but I do know she was from the Yotoff family. Dedo's name was John "Vane" Bellioff. During the Ottoman Empire, my grandparents and parents surnames were Bellioff. In 1913, the Greeks came over and they changed the name to Bellios. My Baba and Dedo had two daughters along with my father. They moved to Plovdiv, Bulgaria sometime between 1910

and 1918. At this time my Dedo changed his surname to Belliov in order to blend in and sound more Bulgarian. My father finished high school and two years of what they called "trade school" or "business school," in Bulgaria. While in Plovdiv they bought a farm and many cows for milk. They also opened a store, similar to a restaurant or confectionary. They sold things made from milk; such as yogurt, cheese, butter, cottage cheese, etc. When their oldest daughter, Teta Rina, fell in love with a Bulgarian man, my Baba and Dedo moved back to the village of Macedonia with their other children and changed their surname back to Bellios. They said they did not want to lose another child to Bulgaria. Teta Rina was married to the Bulgarian man (name unknown to me), who was a brutal drunk and later killed her sometime in the 1930s. Teta Dota was married to Vangel Nikoff until she passed away in 1939.

Education

I did not have much education. The only formal education I had was three years of elementary school in Greece. Whatever more I have learned was through life itself. I am a good listener, which has helped me absorb much of my knowledge. The rest I learned from reading books, newspapers, magazines, and watching television. I also credit my knowledge to the vocational schools I took in this country during my first five years in America. I was thirsty for knowledge. This helped me absorb all that I know today. I am a firm believer that education is only for those who have the ability and the desire to learn.

Living & Working Conditions

Most of Europe, especially our village in the Balkan Peninsula, was made up of farming communities. The farms were divided and subdivided many times throughout the centuries among the family's children until there was not enough ground to sustain life. In addition to farming we raised live stock such as sheep, cattle, horses, mules, donkeys, chickens, and hogs. We lived a very simple, primitive lifestyle. The modest Amish way of life known today is luxurious in comparison to ours in the village.

We spent our days working in the fields using oxen to pull a wooden plow. We gathered wheat, rye, corn, potatoes, beans, etc. all by hand. We did not have any machinery of any kind. We gathered wood by using an ax. We then loading it onto the donkeys to carry back. We would bring the wood home, dry it out, and then use it in the fire places in the winter. We also used it for cooking, baking, and for warm water to wash clothes. We often took extra wood four hours into the city on donkeys and sold it. Then with the money we made we bought all the things we could not produce including salt, sugar, coffee, soap, oil, rice, and macaroni.

Taken about 1935 (L to R): Myself (Yorgi), my mother Aphrodita, my cousin Pando Pappas, My Teta Dota and my cousin Eleftheria

We did not have a dishwasher, disposal, microwave, toaster, or even running water. In order to get water we had to walk 4-5 city blocks to the spring and bring it home in containers, one in each hand. Some houses were closer to the water than ours. We also had no chairs and only one table in our kitchen. The table was about 14 inches off the floor, when we sat around it, we sat on the ground. We did not have refrigerators, electricity, gas, central heat, clothes washers or dryers, air conditioners, cars, tractors, beds, pillows or sheets. We used woolen mattresses and pillows stuffed with straw to sleep on. We also used woolen blankets, one or two depending on the weather. We washed all our clothes in the river and then hung them on a rope to dry. We used a lantern for light only until we ate super then we went to bed. We did not have TVs or radios to listen to, we had to entertain ourselves. All of our clothes were homemade out of wool including our underwear. I wore a hand-me-down dress until I was six years old. If it had not been for my short hair I could have been mistaken for a girl.

While the men worked the fields and gathered wood for winter, the women took care of the house work. They cleaned, cooked, washed clothes, fed the animals, and in most cases also helped in the fields doing some of the simpler tasks such as chopping weeds, gathering the crops, cleaning the barns from the animal bedding and so on. We produced most of life's essentials including corn, wheat, cheese, milk, butter, meat, and wool. Our family also had bee hives, so we produced plenty of honey and sold the wax during bad times, and there were a lot of bad times. My mother and I would also use the wax to make candles and sell them to the villagers.

Once our farms became too small to sustain life, the men began looking for work elsewhere. This was the start of migration. The men first went to Bulgaria, Turkey, Asia Minor, and Odessa Russia. In the beginning they would be gone anywhere between six months to a year, but that was not enough time to make money so they began staying longer, up to two years. With the money they made they would build a house or barn, or perhaps buy some land, if there was any for sale. Others would invest in livestock, mostly sheep and goats or a donkey or mule. It worked for a while but little by little jobs started to dry up until work was no longer available in any of those places. However, there was plenty of work available in faraway places including Argentina, Australia, Canada, and the United States so the men started going overseas. The men were so far from home, they had no choice but to stay for longer periods of time. They would stay up to three to six years at a time while they sent money home to their families.

Before my father married, he went to France and worked as a waiter in a restaurant, until he became a cook. He also worked for a rich man as a gardener and a bee keeper, since he knew a little about bees. Eventually he was able to have his own restaurant and stayed in France for five years. When he returned home his parents contacted

Taken about 1938 when my father came from France. Uncle Louie (Vuiko) was getting ready to go the U.S. (L to R): my cousin Pando Pappas, his father Elio Popoff holding my cousin John Pappas, Teta Dota, my father Argir, myself (Yorgi), my mother Aphrodita and my cousin Eleftheria

the Popoff Family because they had four girls available for marriage. His parents convinced him to marry my mother in 1928. He then stayed at home for 2 or 3 years during which time he began to work the little farms that my grandparents had and I was born. The farm money was not enough to support the family, so again my father went to France. This time he was able to open a restaurant right away, since he spoke the language very well. He stayed there for six years. In 1937 he sold the restaurant and returned back to the village. My father brought me back a wonderful new Navy uniform from France. I put it on one time and all of the kids in the village made fun of me and called me all kinds of names. I came home crying, took it off and never wore it again. I traded the new clothes for my old tattered ones with patches and holes. Then, in 1939, my brother was born and World War II began.

In 1939 the Italian Dictator Mussolini, in alliance with Germany and Japan, demanded passage through Greece. The Greeks were close friends with the English so they said no to Mussolini, causing Greece to go to war with Italy. My father was drafted into the Greek army; however, our stool pigeon "informers" turned him into the Greek authorities as a 'pro-Bulgarian'. The Greeks and Bulgarians had been enemies for centuries, so my father was taken from the army and sent to a prison, on an island in the Aegean Sea, for those exiled.

In 1940, the Germans occupied Greece and let all political prisoners free, including my father. Bulgaria allied with Germany and sent a few Bulgarian organizers to Macedonia to get the Macedonians on their side. The organizers, in cooperation with Italians, armed some people in every village to work in the interest of Bulgaria, Italy, and Germany. In the mean time, a Greek partisan movement started against Italy and Germany. My father took the side of the partisans and began to organize the people against the occupiers.

In 1942, my father was in a hut with four other men from our village, including the territorial's organizer for the partisan movement. A shepherd from our village saw the territorial organizer pass by and informed the "Komitee" (the people who worked for the Germans and Italians). They, in turn with a few other Komitee members from different villages, came to the hut where my father and the others were, surrounded the hut and took them all as prisoners. They killed the territorial organizer on the spot and took my father and the others to our village where they locked them up. The next day the Komitee turned them over to the Germans as collaborators against the German army. The Germans kept them as prisoners and tortured them for information. My father told the other three men to stick to the same story: they were working in the vineyards when the February winter storm had kept them from returning home to the village so they were staying at the hut until the weather cleared up.

During this time my mother and the other three wives went to the Komitee in the village and begged for mercy. With much begging and bribery, the four wives got a petition signed by all the members of the Komitee stating that the men were innocent. After six months, three of the men including my father, were released. They kept the

man who owned the hut and later killed him. Upon returning home to the village, the three men were pressured into becoming Komitee members. However, the members of the Komitee did not trust them. Therefore, after a month, my father and the other two men left the village to again join the Partisans. In 1942, at age 12, I became the father, brother, and man of the house, since my father was not with us any longer. My brother, Nick and I, had a father in name only. In reality we were fatherless.

My father was considered a well educated man. He had completed high school and finished two years of trade school while he was in Bulgaria. He read the newspapers every day and was well aware of what was going on in the war. He did not believe that the Germans, Italians, and Japanese would last much longer against the allies, once the United States joined the war. The Macedonian and Greek Partisans decided to form a treaty called the Treaty of Varkiza. The treaty stated that after their liberation from the occupiers, Greece would become a Democracy under a federation with other provinces, including Macedonia. The provinces would all be Republics under one Federation of Greece.

In 1944, some Greek partisan officials met in secrecy with the Royalist Greeks and decided to amend the treaty they had made with the Macedonians. Since the Greeks did not keep their word, 40,000 Macedonians broke away from the Greek partisan's movement and took refuge in Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia welcomed the Macedonian partisans, since one of the six Republics of the Federation of Yugoslavia was Macedonia. My father crossed over with them and never came back to the village since the Greeks would have put him in prison or killed him. He changed his surname to Belevski, in order to, once again, blend in with the culture he was living in. After my father left, my mother and I had to fend for ourselves to make ends meet; raising my brother, working the fields, and taking care of the livestock. Until I was old enough to work the fields, my mother did it and I stayed at home. I cooked, cleaned the house and barn, cared for my brother, fed the animals, watched over the bee hives, and washed and dried the clothes. Just watching after my brother was a lot of work.

Since I was of age to remember, my father was with us from 1937 to 1939 and from 1940 to 1942. He was with us for a total of four years off and on. The rest of the time he was either in prison or a Partisan. He was a Partisan from 1940 until 1944 when he crossed over to Yugoslavia and never came back. The last time I saw him was in 1944 when he said goodbye to us. It was not until 1965 that I saw him again in Yugoslavia. I was 35 years old with a family of my own. I heard of my father but I never really knew him. My brother Nick, however, did get to spend nine years with him in Yugoslavia from 1957 until 1966. My mother resigned her Greek citizenship in 1957. She resigned her citizenship in order to be able to leave Greece and join my father in the Republic of Macedonia in Yugoslavia.

Installation of Royalty

In 1945, the Germans and Italians were chased out by the Allies. The Greek King, who had been in exile in Africa, was brought back to Greece against the wishes of the Greek Partisans. The Greek Royalists and the Partisans fought in the streets of Athens for over a month with much bloodshed. With the help of the British, the Royalists won in the end, and once again Greece became Royalist, instead of Democratic. The new government became very chaotic, very frantic and disorganized. The Royalist, now in power, started to terrorize the population by putting them in prison, beating some, and murdering others. This happened for the most part in our area of Macedonia. Therefore, in 1946, a second Partisan movement was formed. This movement was formed to fight against the Greek Royalist government. A civil war had begun, with the British supporting the Royalists. They supplied them with ammunition, clothing, and food. The partisan movement, however, continued to grow. By the time it reached its peak in 1947, the Partisans had began to receive help from Yugoslavia.

During this time the United States began sending food and clothing to those people who had been hit hard under the occupation of the Germans and Italians. The United States did not like Yugoslavia getting in the picture for fear that Greece might become a Communist country, since at the time Yugoslavia was part of the Eastern Block and under Communist rule and influence. The United States got involved more and more and the British less and less. The United States took over the task of sending supplies from the British. The United State sent arms, tanks, plows, guns, food, clothing, and a lot of money to the Royalists. The Partisans grew stronger and stronger. This all happened by the summer of 1947. That year I was drafted, against my wishes, to the Partisan movement because our area was under Partisan control. At the age of 17, I became a Partisan.

In 1946, my grandparents (under a certain quota in the U.S.) tried to bring my cousin Kuzo Skembos and myself into the United States. We were informed by the American Consulate in Salonika to come and be prepared for departure to the United States. We passed through an examiners board and doctor's tests to see if we were fit for the U.S. However, once the second Partisan movement started, we were unable to communicate with the United States Consulate. All the roads had been closed to civilians and no one from our area of Macedonia was allowed entry to Salonika. We had to stay where we were, causing me to be drafted to the Partisan movement. All my dreams of going to America went down the drain.

As a Partisan

As a Partisan in the Gramos Mountains, I was involved in many, many battles against the Royalist Army of Greece. From September 1947 to April 1948 (eight long

months) we were hungry. We were given one quarter of a small round loaf of bread in the morning and nothing else. Once in a while there would be soup or oatmeal without salt. I was given a long army coat and a pair of army boots. The boots were too tight and blistered my feet so I wore the boots on my back and made myself a pair of moccasins from an animal hide. Going through the snow up the hills of Mount Gramos was something not to be desired. I was given a rifle and 50 rounds of ammunition. I was told to either find someone that had been killed and get their ammunition and clothes, or to kill a Royalist and do the same.

It had to be December, around Christmas time, because we could see the candle light and hear the singing. At the end of a three hour battle my superior came over and gave me a grenade all soaked in blood. I refused it because I did not want to touch it. He took me by the arm,and led me down to the stream where he washed it and pinned it on my belt. A few weeks later we were in battle again. I was told to go to another hill. On my way I had to pass through a valley to get to that other hill. In the corner of my eye I saw a couple of black helmeted Royalists in the bushes. I pretended like I did not see them as I reached to my side and grabbed that grenade. I ran down the hill and hid behind some bushes, pulled the pin out and threw it. I heard them running towards me, but after the explosion they stopped. I got away. That grenade saved my life. The black helmeted Royalists were volunteers and they did not keep prisoners.

It might have been February as some of the snow had started to melt. We were in battle for 3 to 4 hours until there was silence from the other side. Our group of approximately 40 Partisans, had only one machine gun and I was assigned to help feed the ammunition through it. After our group took the hill we walked to the top to observe. We saw a man who had been killed by a machine gun. Our Machine Gunner turned him over and a billfold fell out of his pocket. He opened it and found his own mother's picture inside. He had killed his brother. At that point, he pulled out his pistol and ended his life, too. This was a very emotional event. We all trembled like leaves. Most of us were only 17 to 25 years of age.

Some time in March of 1948 we were on a small mountain next to a church, St. Elias, surrounded by big beautiful oak trees. The opposition started to shell us with their big artillery guns. One after the another we were all laying down in the trenches. We could hear the branches coming down off the oak trees and at one point a shell fell about 8 to 10 feet away from me. I was covered in dirt from my shoulders down. I was lying face down on my stomach and tried to move but I could not move a muscle. I yelled to the guy closest to me, Thanasi, "Help, I am wounded." He came over and lay close to me and told me that I was covered with dirt but he did not think I was wounded. After ten minutes or so, the shelling stopped. Thanasi uncovered me and during the uncovering we were asking each other how we came to be Partisans. I found out that he was from a village close to the Gramos Mountains and that he had a family in the village of Konitsa. He was drafted like I was. We became very close but I was suspicious that he might not be exactly who he said he was. It was almost the end of March, for most of the snow had melted. Through the eight months that I was up in the hills my mind was on America, and I wondered why I wasn't there.

Andreai Pantoff was my friend from our village. We grew up together and were taken Partisans at the same time. While "stationed" in a village called Furka at the top of Mount Gramos, we were going from house to house begging for food. As we walked all bundled up, along came this man with a Tommy gun under his coat. He saw us, thin, underage kids and asked us where we were from. We said from the Vicho Mountain area. He asked us what village we were from and we said Chereshnitsa. His eyes opened real wide as he asked us whose kids we were. We told him who we were and he started to cry. He said, "I am Yorgi Kalkoff." He was a relative of ours and one of the first Partisans in our area. We knew him as a big strong, very handsome man with red hair and a beard. Now he was thin and weathered from the wind. He said, "We did not liberate ourselves with men, now we will liberate ourselves with women and children." What he meant was that we did not win this war with our men and now we would have to send the women and children to maintain our forces. He told us, "Escape, you have no business here, you are underage and the Greeks will set you free." After he left we talked of escape, but my friend Andreai (who is now living in Bulgaria) said his father would be mad at him and that he would not attempt to escape.

As the snow melted fast, Greek airplanes started throwing leaflets down. I got a hold of one and it said. "Those that are not guilty of murder will be let free, if they surrender." With that leaflet in my pocket, I was encouraged. One night I was stationed as a moving guard with Thanasi Skordas, the one that unearthed me. It was pitch dark. For days I had been planning a route of escape. I had it all planned out. I passed him once and asked him how he was feeling but I did not have the nerve to tell him. The second time I passed, I took a grenade from the back of my belt and put it in the front, and straightened out the pin a little. When I approached Thanasi, I said, "Would you like to escape?" He said, "How long have I waited for someone to say that! Yes!" At that point we took off down the hill. I knew where we kept ambushes and stayed away from there. We finally came down the hill, and into the valley. We stayed there until it started to get light outside. Then slowly we went up to the other hill where the Greek army was. We approached the base surrounded by barricades of thorn fences. We yelled that we were Partisans and we were surrendering. For a while there was no movement of any kind. I was thinking to myself, "Oh boy, what if they left and there is nobody here." All of the sudden I saw a man, then another man, and then a bunch of them. We were asked to throw our rifles and grenades over the fence. They lifted the wire and we crawled under. They took us to their chief and we were given some food. They also sprayed us with lice powder to kill the lice. We must have had a million of them.

The captain asked us some questions. he wanted to know who we were and how long we had been Partisans. He also wanted to know where we escaped from, how many Partisans there were, whose command were we under, etc. From there they put us in a

pickup truck and took us to the city of Kastoria. It was a nice sunny sunday about 2 to 3 pm. As we approached the city I saw a group of six or seven young boys and my eyes stared at them. I recognized one of them and I yelled his name. They all turned and looked at me. They were all from my village, my cousin Kuzo Skembos was one of them.

We were taken to the 73rd Brigade Center in Kastoria. That's where they took all those who escaped. As we were questioned by a Colonel I was looking through the window and I saw Kuzo and a friend of mine outside the building. I was smiling at Kuzo and the Colonel saw me and asked if I knew one of them. I said, "yes, one of them is my cousin". He told me to go and see them and then come back. I went outside and we hugged and cried. They kept me one night in a hotel. The next day they asked me if I had a place to go, and they set me FREE!

Now I was on the opposite side of the fence. Now I was considered a Royalist. If I was to fall in the Partisans' hands my life would be over. The war's bitter fighting was still going on. The U.S. military came in with their own personal staff to conduct the war. Under the command of General VanFlit many officers and trainees began to show the Royalists how to win the war. The stronger the Partisans got, the more escalation grew on the Royalists side. It did not take long until all the young kids 18 to 20 years old were drafted to help the army. They would help by loading the mules with supplies and then take them to the front lines. They got me, Kuzo, Mike Skimos, and many other kids from my village, to be one of those on the front lines with a mule. They took us because all the men over 21 years old were in the army. They needed us to carry the supplies so the soldiers could go and fight the war.

In the meantime, the Americans went to Tito, the Yugoslavian leader, and offered him billions of dollars if he would close the boarders to the Partisans and stop supplying them with arms. In the late summer of 1948, Tito closed the boarders and the offensive attack began. The Partisan's supplies were exhausted and they started to retreat. The only avenue that was open to them was Albania. Those that were lucky and stayed alive crossed over to Albania. From there the Russians took them ain their ships to Tashken. Tashken is one of their provinces close to Siberia. Tom Bliznoff's father and mother were two of those taken to Tashken where their daughter, Dina Pentsos, was born. Now winter was approaching and the territory that the Partisans were holding was taken over by the Greek Army. There were some diehard Partisans who stayed behind trying to cause a disturbance to the army and the population. The Greek government then began forming a militia. In the spring of 1949, I received a letter from the Greek government telling me, and many others from my village, that we were being drafted into the militia. TEA they called it, which meant Regiment of National Security. These were ordinary people, armed civilians that worked their farms or businesses but also patrolled their territory, especially at night, in the event that some of the diehard Partisans did show up. I was in this militia from 1949 until July of 1951, shortly thereafter; I left for the United States.

My friends from the village – Taken about 1950 (l to R) Front Row: Lefteri Mangoff, Petreto Despin, Myself (Yorgi), Pete Pentsos, Koleto Skembos. Middle Row: Yorgi Tsinin,Goleto Popoff, George Mangos, Staseto Dzonoff, and Kocho Stasin. Back Row: Mike Skimos, ItsoBaroff, Sotiri Grancharoff of Kontorbi, and Goleto Mangoff

Divided Family

From 1948-1949 our family was divided into four different places. My father had been in Yugoslavia since 1944. The Greeks had taken my mother prisoner in exile on an island because the stool pigeons, "informers," from our village had told the Greek authorities that her husband was in Yugoslavia and she was not to be trusted. When my mother was in exile on the Island of Giura, she had to dig a new well every day because by the next day the water turned salty. My brother, at 9 years old, was left alone with people from our village that were all living together in another village. And I, being trusted by the Greeks, was armed by them to guard from the enemy and sent to another village. When I asked the Greek authorities to give me permission to go and visit my brother, I was denied. That is how trusted we were.

Displaced From Our Home

In 1949, my mother was released from prison. My mother, brother and I moved, along with our entire village, to the village of Kandorbi because our village had been partially destroyed during the war. Kandorbi was very close to Chereshnitsa. This is the village that our friends, the Sistevaris family, were from. They were kind enough to allow our family to move into Kosmos Sistevarises' grandmother's house. We were there for about ten months until we could repair and rebuild our houses in the village. While in this village, Kuzo Skembos and I got a job in the city. We walked two hours from the village to work 9-10 hours breaking stones with a hammer, down to 2" x 2" in

size so they could be used as a base for the road. Then we would walk another two hours back to the village. We would also stand guard every other night for two hour shifts. We were very young and ambitious at that age. Life had made us very tough and we had the will to survive.

George Bellio, Kuzo Skembos and Pete Pentsos April 1951 - Kuzo leaving for the U.S.

Pursuing America

During this time I sent letters to my relatives in America, mainly my Dedo and Baba Popoff, telling them that I had escaped. Dedo Vasil had come to America in 1924 and brought his wife and two daughters over in 1928 when the U.S. gave priority for wives and children. Dedo and Baba, with the help of Teta Fana Goshoff and Teta Prosha Chicovosky (my mother's sisters), again provided the necessary documents for Kuzo Skembos and I to come to America. This time it was easier because we qualified under The Displacement Act, since our village was destroyed and we had to live in another village until we could repair our houses. The papers came and again the American Consulate called us for examination and processing. In April of 1951, Kuzo's visa was approved, but mine was not. Kuzo left for America as I waited and waited... but nothing happened. In order to get a visa, one had to have a certificate of good behavior from the Greek authorities. They would not give me one because my father had left Greece and was living in Yugoslavia. My agent, Mr. Naum Kranias, was a good friend. He told me to go to the Consulate in person and ask why I was not given my visa. I went, and through an interpreter, explained my concern. The counselor pulled my file and asked, "Who is Argirios Bellios?" I said, "My father." "Where is he?" he asked me. I lied and told him that I did not know. Then I said, "Mr. Ambassador, I knew my father to be a good man but if he did something wrong why should I pay for it, when my father left Greece I was 14 years old." I told him how the partisans drafted me and how I escaped and surrendered to the Greek Army. I told him that the Greek Army Colonels trusted me, and drafted me into the militia and that I had been in since 1949, and that I was still in it. At that point he asked for proof that I did in fact surrender and that I was still in the militia. He was a tall man with a light complexion and he was smoking a pipe. He took the pipe out of his mouth and put it in a big ashtray. Then he reached over and picked up a stamp and started to stamp the papers in front of him. He handed me the papers, and said, "Good luck my boy." It was my visa that I had been waiting for all this time! I thanked him and took off excitedly back to my agent. Mr. Kranias was so happy for me. He said, "Go home, get your stuff together, you are leaving on the next Italian boat this week." I then went back to the village and told my mother and anyone else I saw, that I was going to America. My mother had a party for me, invited all my friends, and took some pictures. Two days later the agent and I, along with his wife, went to Athens and then to Pirea where the port was. The next day we departed on an Italian war boat that had been converted into a passenger ship. On the boat I ran into Pete Papagiannis and Nick Doulios. These were boys from a nearby village, and I knew both of them. So now I had for company for the trip. As soon as we crossed over to the Italian side of the Adriatic Sea, we all gave a big sigh of relief because while still in Greece, one never knew what could happen. Before I had left Greece I had heard that my turn was approaching to be drafted into the Greek Army. Fortunately, my age delayed me for the draft because there were people older than me still being drafted.

Our first stop was Palermo, Italy, then onto Lisbon, Portugal. From there we crossed the Atlantic Ocean. On August 4th 1951, we arrived in New York City. Once we arrived in New York, the agency had someone greet us and take all three of us to the train station. There they pinned a piece of paper on us with our names and destination. They then put us on the Pennsylvania Rail Road to Fort Wayne, Indiana. The sun was shining and all we could see were trees and lush vegetation along the country side and in the towns we passed through. My youth, my teenage years from age 9 to 21, were spent wasted in misery and poverty. When I came to this country, I was reborn. Just like a transplanted plant growing in an American garden.

Destination: Re-Born and Transplanted in Fort Wayne, Indiana

We arrived in Fort Wayne Indiana around noon. My aunt, Teta Prosha Chicosvky, and her son, my cousin Chris Chicovsky, picked me up from the train station. I recognized them from the pictures we had of them in the village. Teta Prosha called me by name "Djodje," meaning George. We hugged and left the station. We took Pete Papagiannis with us and dropped him off at Mr. and Mrs. Mike Kozmas house, they lived on Rudisill Blvd. When we stopped at the house, he got his suitcase out of the car and started walking across the road but cars were coming up and down the street. My aunt called out to him "Petre-ke-te-utepe" (Pete they will kill you!). Pete stopped and she explained to us that we should not cross the road unless there were no cars coming. We were never exposed to traffic in the village because we did not have cars.

It was a Sunday when I arrived in Fort Wayne and there was a Macedonian Picnic that day. My relatives wanted to show me off to all of their Macedonian friends. They gave me one of my cousin's suits, which was about four sizes too big, and we went to the picnic. My father's first cousin, Teta Mary Vasileff, was there. She found out that I was at the picnic and she came over to introduce herself. She gave me hugs and kisses. She then asked me, "Do you know how to dance Macedonian dances?" I told her, "Yes, I'd learned in the village". During the Partisan movement we would get together and dance at the school house and that's where I learned. She asked me which dance I liked the most and I replied, "Elleno Mome." She went to the band leader and ordered my dance. And then she put me in the front to lead the dance. Everyone was amazed

that I had come from Europe and knew how to do Macedonian dance, because the Greeks would never allow us to dance our Macedonian dances or speak our language.

My home for the next five years was my Dedo Vasil and Baba Vasilka's house on Robinwood Drive in Fort Wayne. Kuzo Skembos also lived with Baba and Dedo and we slept in the same bed until we both got married. Baba would cook, clean and wash clothes for us. They would not take money from us for food. But after a while we forced them to accept our money for our food since we both worked and did have some money.

When I met my relatives in America there was goose bumps all over my body. I trembled like a leaf because I was overwhelmed from happiness. These were people that I'd heard of but never knew. I had never seen them in my 21 years and they were all wonderful. They took care of me and taught me things that I should know. They supported me in many ways so I could overcome the difficulties adapting to this new American life. For instance, I could not eat American bread. So my aunts would bake homemade bread just for me. This went on for over a month, until I became more tolerable of American bread.

Back when I was in Macedonia and as soon as the roads were open after the war, Teta Fana Gosheff started sending us clothes. She mostly sent new things, such as shoes, sweaters, shirts, pants, underwear, etc. She also sent things like coffee, sugar, soap, and candy. I noted the shoes were a little tight, but the clothes we altered to suit us. I am very grateful to Baba and Dedo Vasil. I am also very grateful to Teta Prosha and Teta Fana Gosheff. They helped me when I needed them most.

I got comfortable with all my relatives, which took just a month. Now I wanted a job. My mother and I had borrowed money for my expenses. This included going to Salonika to see the consulate twice, pay the agent for his work and my ticket to the United States. This added up to over $1,500 dollars, which back then was a lot of money. My two aunts, Teta Prosha and Teta Fana Gosheff, sent me $700 dollars to pay for the ticket. Now, I was trying to pay them back and send money to my mother so she could pay off the money we borrowed.

I was thirsty for knowledge. My eyes were wide open, and I saw so many opportunities. So much knowledge was available to me now and there were so many ways I could make a living. The government offered immigrants schooling, to learn English and to learn the American constitution, its government, and American history. Along with this, I discovered that there was something called a vocational trade school. Twice a week I went to night school, to learn the language, about the US constitution and government laws. I also went to trade school. This lasted for five years until I became a naturalized citizen in 1956, with all the rights an American born citizen would have. Also, when I discovered the vocational trade school, I started taking auto-mechanics, basic electricity, basic electronics, machine shop, and wood working. I took these once a week for almost three years. I wanted to learn. I wanted to know what made a car work, how electricity ran, and the wonders of machinery. It was all very new to me and fascinating! Attending trade school helped me then and it still helps me in my everyday life. I am able to fix and repair things and work with electricity and to build things.

My first job was at The Lunch Restaurant on West Main Street. I washed dishes for two weeks. The restaurant was owned by a Greek. The cook was a Macedonian man, by the name of Jim Kostoff. My pay was ten dollars a week and one meal a day. The first day I worked, a couple of dishes slipped off my soapy hands and broke into a million pieces and I started to cry. The Macedonian looked at me and said, "I have broken a thousand of those dishes don't worry, nothing will happen." After those two weeks, my uncle Norm Gosheff, got me a job at Perfection Biscuit Company, "The Bakery." He used to work there for a long time and knew the manager personally. My first five years at Perfection Biscuit Company, I was in the cake department and worked with Ed Shaffer. He was the cake mixer. Jack Balbaugh was the oven operator and Don Jordan ran the other machinery. Then there was Louie, he was a short old man from Conway, Ohio and I still don't know his last name. Louie and I would grease the cake pans and take the cakes on the racks. When I needed two witnesses that had known me for the last five years to become an American citizen, Jack Balbough and Don Jordan vouched for me.

The job lasted for twelve years. I kept moving from department to department through the years, until my last two years when I was one of the highest paid. I was the dough maker and there was a new machine that would mix the dough, like making pancakes! When I started working in the cake department at the Perfection Biscuit Company, I began work at 10:00 pm and working until 7:00 am. My starting pay was $0.90 per hour. By the time I left, twelve years later, my pay was $1.96 per hour. That was a lot of money for me and I worked all the overtime they asked me to work. I never refused work of any kind; I took all that they would offer me. Within a year or so I paid my aunts the $700 and all the money we had borrowed in the village. I was a very happy guy with money in my pocket, something I had never had in my life.

Once I began working I also sent money to my mother and brother at the rate of about 30 to 40 dollars every month. When I got married, I would send 50 to 60 dollars every three months because I had other responsibilities. When my mother and brother joined my father in 1957 in what was then Yugoslavia, I continued to send money at least twice a year, about 50 to 60 dollars each time. I would also send a separate check of $10 to my brother each time. That was pretty good money in the 50's and 60's.

Meeting My Wife

In the spring of 1956, a play was being sponsored by St. Nicholas Church in Detroit, Michigan. The name of the play was called "The Bloody Wedding." The play was a true story depicting something that had happened in one of our villages during the occupation of the Turks during the Ottoman Empire. As the story was told, there was a wedding taking place and as the villagers were dancing and celebrating the marriage a Turkish Bay "Territorial Governor" came by, took a liking to the bride and wanted her as his own to be one of his many wives. The relatives of the wedding party and the whole village took up arms against him and refused to allow him to take her. They killed him and his crew. It was a very sad and emotional story. My aunt Mary had heard about the play and asked me to go and see it. Little did I know I would soon be meeting my future wife.

As I was watching the play, just like the Turkish Bay, I took a liking to the leading lady. After the play was over there was a dance. I went to the leading man, his name was Sotir, and I asked him to introduce me to her. He agreed and told me she was his cousin, Dimitrinka Doikoff. He took me to her, introduced me and then he left. Now it was just the two of us standing there. We began to talk and ask each other questions: who we are, where we live, where we were from, and so on. My Teta Mary must have been watching us because she came over and very diplomatically told Dimitrinka, "you are a very pretty girl, why don't you come to Fort Wayne, we have very good looking boys there." She responded, "if luck would have it," and I began to think that she might like me.

We continued talking as the dance went on. They had begun playing American music, so I asked her if she would like to dance. After the dance I asked for her phone number and the address of the restaurant that her father owned. She gave them to me willingly, but I don't think she thought that I would take them seriously. I began to write her letters, mostly in Macedonian but also some in English. My English was very rough. I did not receive any responses to my letters. Finally, after the third letter, she answered and gave me a different address to write to her. My letters were now going to her friend's house, and after a couple of months, I decided to go to Detroit to visit her. By now we had gotten to know quite a bit about each other, and I was beginning to like her very much. I took Kuzo Skembos and George Mangos with me in my brand new 1955 Ford Fairlane convertible with a red, white, and black top. We parked the car in front of the restaurant so she could see it, went inside and got a table near the front. She knew we were coming that day, but her and her mother waited in the kitchen. She came out once, saw us, and went right back into the kitchen. Then right away her mother came out, she also saw us, smiled and went back into the kitchen. This went on a few more times and I finally decided that since I had driven all the way to Detroit, I was going to talk to her father, George. He was sitting at the end of the counter, drinking coffee and smoking a cigarette. There was noone else in the restaurant at the time and I knew that had to be him because her mother had talked to him and he just sat there and shook his head.

George and Kuzo thought I was nuts, but I got up my courage, composed myself and went to talk to him. I introduced myself in Macedonian. He was a very rough spoken man and he asked me "who are you"? I told him who I was and he asked me where I lived. I told him I was from Fort Wayne, Indiana. He responded, "Never heard of it," so I mentioned my relatives in Fort Wayne and even mentioned my Dedo Vasil who he claimed he did not know. Finally, he asked me what I was doing there. I told him I had met his daughter at the play and dance and wanted his permission to see her. He glared at me and said, "My daughter is going to school and she is not going to see you or date you, you get up and go back to where you came from." So I put my tail between my legs and left. Kuzo and George were watching us the whole time and they said at one point they thought that he would throw me out of the restaurant. I paid the bill and just as we got up to leave, Dimitrinka and her mother came out of the kitchen and watched us as we left. I could see both of them watching us as we got into the car. I was convinced both she and her mother both liked me, so I continued writing to her.

It wasn't long after my visit, about three weeks or so, that her friend Noreen sent me a letter telling me to come over because her parents wanted to see me. The next weekend I asked my boss to give me Sunday off instead of Saturday. My Dedo and Baba, and my aunts all knew about Dimitrinka. I put on some clean clothes, got into my car, and went to Detroit. I signed into a hotel and called the restaurant. Her father answered the phone and I asked to talk to her. He replied, "George is that you? Where are you?" I told him I was at a hotel in Detroit. He asked me what I was doing at a hotel, told me to get my things and stay at their house. I hung up the phone and could not believe that this was the same man who had told me to go back to where I came

from just three weeks earlier. The two women must have given him all kinds of hell!

George Bellio and Dimitrinka Doikoff
Engagement photo - 1956

I then drove to the restaurant. He greeted me like an old friend and that was it, the ice was broken. I drove to Detroit many times after that and finally I suggested that Dimitrinka should come to Fort Wayne and meet my relatives. When she did come all of my relatives approved of her, especially my Baba and Dedo. They thought she was the one for me. She was very polite and had a good personality. After all, she was a Macedonian and spoke both the English and Macedonian languages very well.

The next time I went to see Dimitrinka her father came up with the idea that I should move to Detroit and help run the restaurant. However, I was not in favor of that idea. I told him that I was well established in Fort Wayne, all my relatives were there, and I had a job making good money. I noted that his restaurant was too small to make enough money to support us all. Their restaurant actually was a confectionary restaurant, mainly ice cream, milkshakes, malts, and sandwiches. I also found out that they had no relatives living there only a few friends. He did not go to church and was not involved in the Macedonian community there. Prior to bringing his wife and daughter over from Bulgaria in 1946, he worked in a factory. He was pretty much a loner, so I suggested that after we were married, that his family should move to Fort Wayne. His wife and Dimitrinka agreed. He said that he would think about it. In the mean time, we started looking for a small restaurant that he might want in Fort Wayne. I had a lot of work ahead of me. We got engaged and decided the wedding should take place sometime in December or January of 1957 in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Because of the weather, we set the date to be December 9, 1956, hoping for no snow. However as it turns out we had several inches of snow and many of her relatives from Toronto and Sarnia, Ontario could not make it.

George and Trinka Bellio married December 9, 1956
Wedding Party – Popoff Family

Trinka and her father, George Doikoff

We began to look for a house. I did not have much money saved so we purchased a National Built home. These were houses that were built after World War II ended in 1945. They were cheaply built and all the walls were only two inches thick with very little insulation between them. In the winter, even with the furnace blasting, there would be water running down the exterior walls. We did not know much about these houses at the time. We bought that home for $13,000. Prior to buying the house, I brought Dimitrinka to Fort Wayne to see it and she too *thought* it was a nice house. I put down $4,000 as a down payment and the balance I assumed on an FHA loan at 4% interest. As a wedding gift, my relatives Teta Prosha and Teta Fana, bought us living room furniture; a couch, and two chairs. Baba and Dedo bought us a kitchen table and four chairs. Uncle Louie Pappas from Toledo bought us a refrigerator. The only things we had to buy were a very inexpensive bed set and the covers. This house was at 4704 S. Park Drive. It was a three bedroom, one bath, with a full unfinished basement. It was on a nice sized lot with no garage.

Trinka's Profile

The name Dimitrinka was okay for the Macedonians but it was too long and too foreign for the Americans. So we agreed, before getting married, to have it shortened to just Trinka and after the wedding she came to be known as Trinka Bellio.

Trinka, was born in 1936 in Assenovgrad, Bulgaria. She had one brother, Traiko. He was much older than her, born in 1923 in the village of Statista, Aegean Macedonian, now under Greece. In 1921, her father was drafted into the Greek army to fight the Turks in Asia Minor. He became sick and while unconscious, a note was put on his chest to bury him. He was mistaken for dead. When he awoke and saw the note he was not able to read what it said because it was written in Greek. After having someone translate it for him, he found out that it said he was to be buried. At that point he escaped from Greece and went to Bulgaria. Soon after he managed to bring his wife and son to Bulgaria, though he did not have any property or money. He then went to Canada where there was plenty of work to support his family. He came back to Bulgaria many years later when he had finally made enough money. He bought a house and on October 6, 1936, Trinka was born. Again, decide to leave. This time to America specifically Detroit, Michigan. He worked in Detroit and sent money back to his wife. The family stayed in Bulgaria during World War II and finally in 1946, with the help of the Red Cross, he managed to bring his wife and daughter to Detroit. By this time his son, Traiko, was married and stayed behind. Traiko fell into a very different category. Since he was married he was in a different quota for immigration. The U.S. immigration laws would not allow him to come with the rest of his family. Once in the U.S., Dimitrinka started to be tutored in the English language. She was approximately 11 years of age. She started going to grade school and eventually high school. She continued her education into one and a half years of college at the University of Detroit. She did not want to go to school because she could not understand English very well. But her father insisted. He told her to just stay on the bench; you will learn something. Trinka's Father George passed away shortly after Trinka moved to Fort Wayne in 1958, at the age of 55.

Trinka's family home where she was born in Assenovgrad, Bulgaria

Passport photos of Trinka and her mother – Taken in Bulgaria in 1949. Yiordana Doikov and Dimitrinka Doikov

My Life in Fort Wayne

After we got married we found a small restaurant on Broadway Ave. next to the General Electric plant. Trinka's parents came over to look at it and agreed to move here. In the mean time, I discovered that her Father was not very well and that he had a heart problem. While they were moving to Fort Wayne he became ill and died. After the funeral, we brought my mother-in-law to Fort Wayne to live with us. She was very timid and very good with the kids while Trinka and I worked. She watched our two sons, John and George Jr. She loved the boys and would sit and rub both of their backs at the same time. We discovered that she had diabetes and we had to watch her sugar intake very carefully. I used to give her a shot of insulin every morning. Her diabetes was very bad and she had to have one of her legs amputated in 1968. She lived with us and helped raise our boys for well over ten years until she passed away in 1969.

I worked at Perfection Biscuit Co. from 1951 to 1963. I made good money but an opportunity came up to work at Zollner Pistons. The job paid $.90 an hour more to start and after 30 days I would make a $1.50 more than I was at the Biscuit Co. for a total of $3.40 an hour.

In 1963, my mother came to the U.S. from Skopje to visit all of her relatives. She came with her sister, my aunt, Teta Tana (Skembos), who was living in Greece. I hadn't seen my mother for twelve years. My mother had not seen her father, Vasil Popoff, since he came to the U.S. in 1924 and her mother, Vasilka, since 1928. Her parents and her sisters Dota Popoff, Prosha Chicovsky, and Stephanka Gosheff were all living in Fort Wayne. The reunion with all of their relatives was

My sons George Jr. and John, with my mother (their Baba Dita) February 1963

something to enjoy and remember for a lifetime. She lived with us, her sisters, and her parents off and on. She was able to visit with her brother in Toledo, and her niece in Rochester, New York. When my mother came here, her mother insisted that she dress like an American. We bought her new clothes and her mother took her to get her hair cut. When my grandfather came to this country he worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad. He was stationed in Crestline, Ohio but was moved to Fort Wayne to work for the Fort Wayne Foundry, where they made rails and wheels for the railroad. Sometime in the 1930's he opened a grocery store called Boston Grocery. My Uncle Louie worked with him there. During their visit, we found out that there was a major earthquake in Skopje. My parents were the only ones in their neighborhood who had a telephone. We were able to call my father and brother, who told us they were living in a tent for a couple of weeks until their building was declared safe again.

My mother Dita, my brother Nick, and my father Argir - taken about 1964

After two years of working at Zollner Pistons, my friend George Mangos convinced me to go into a partnership with him on a restaurant that was owned by a Greek man. The building was owned by George's wife's uncle. I was very ambitious at the time and I wanted to make money regardless of what it was I had to do. Work did not frighten me and so I quit my job and we bought the restaurant. We eventually decided it was too hard to work with friends as partners so we divided all the food, liquor, beer and wine between us, at their request, and left the restaurant to them. With the help of their uncle, they found a new partner.

In the mean time, we found out Pete Papagiannis owned a tavern on Pontiac Street and that he wanted to sell it. When we talked to him we found out he wanted $15,000 for it. We only had about $6,000 of our own money, but Pete said, "If you give me $10,000, I will carry you for the other $5,000." It was then that I went to Uncle Norm Gosheff and told him the story. He gave us $5,000 at a 6% interest rate and we bought the tavern. Uncle Norm was always very good to me. He was a hard working, good hearted man who believed in me and trusted me.

In 1965, before we opened the tavern, we decided to take off a week to see my family in Yugoslavia. We went to Skopje to stay with my parents. It was an emotional day for me. That was the first time I saw my father since I was fourteen years old. That first day my father took me to see where my brother worked at his office job. It was a short visit, but very emotional. We had a lot to talk about after not seeing each other for 21 years.

When we returned, both Trinka and I worked at the Pontiac Rib Bar (The Tavern). We had one car so Trinka would take the car to work in the morning and open at 11 am. We had one Korean waitress and she would come in around the same time. Then my uncle, Andon Chicovsky, would come in around noon and the three of them kept the place running until 5 pm. I took the bus to work and at 5 o'clock Trinka and Uncle Andon would take the bus home. We had another Korean waitress who came in at 7 pm to replace the first waitress. She and I would close the place at 3 am the next morning.

With this arrangement we managed to pay Uncle Norm and Pete in a year with some interest. We bought the tavern in 1965 and we sold it in 1971. In the five years we owned the tavern, we bought a new house on Calhoun Street and I remodeled it and rented it out to three tenants. We also bought three acres of land with two houses on it on South Anthony Blvd. and Tillman Road. This was to be the site for our new tavern. It was about two feet below street level. There was a house that had three acres of land that we bought about two blocks away. We remodeled it, added on and then moved in. The other house we tore down. I cleared all the brush and a number of small trees that was on it. In the meantime across the street, Marathon was preparing to put in a gas station. The ground was high and as they started to move the dirt to lower it, I went and asked them if they would dump the dirt at our place. Not only were they willing to place the dirt on our land, but they also offered to level it for me. Of course the few cases of beer I brought helped out a bit! After the land was leveled, we were ready to build.

At the Pontiac tavern, the 'old tavern', we had many Mexican workers that would come every Wednesday to cash their paychecks, eat and have a few beers. One of these workers was Pete Trevino. He heard that I was going to move to another place and said that he would like to open a Mexican restaurant. He asked me if I would build the place bigger so he could serve the food and we could serve the beverages. I told Trinka about this and the idea appealed to both of us, because making food takes a lot of work. I told Pete we would agree. He, along with his three brothers made the deal. We redesigned the building to accommodate them and so the Bellio Lounge and Don Pedro Restaurant was built.

In 1971, while the new restaurant was being built, we took three months off and spent the summer in Europe visiting relatives. We ordered (bought) a car here, then picked it up in Luxemburg. We drove all the way down through Germany then through Austria, over the Alps, into Yugoslavia. We visited with my family in Skopje for a few weeks. My parents lived in an apartment with just one bedroom and one bathroom. My parents slept on the couch, while the four of us slept in the bedroom. During our visit, I took Trinka and the boys to see my village for the first time. My father and

Trinka and her brother Traiko (far right) Myself and Traiko's wife Rusko (far left)

mother were with us and it was a very emotional reunion for me and my family. We then took my parents with us to Assenovgrad, Bulgaria to see Trinka's brother. We stayed there with his family for a few days. Then all of us went to Varna for a family vacation. The boys had a great time with their cousins. We swam in the Black Sea and Johnny learned to swim there. We left there with my parents and went to Istanbul, Turkey. We shopped and went to many wonderful restaurants. Turkey is known for fine cuisine and gold trinkets. We drove back to Skopje the same way we had come, avoiding the countries that required visas. We had the van shipped back to Toldeo, from Frankfurt, Germany and then flew home from there. It was three months of many new experiences. The boys learned new languages, got to know their European family, and learned to play soccer!

When we returned home, it was time to work. We had to purchase all of the necessities for the new bar and oversee the final phases of construction. We went to Minnesota to purchase the refrigerators, furniture, and everything we needed for the bar. We rented the dining room to the Trevino brothers and they finished and furnished it all. The arrangement worked out well. The waitresses would take food orders and they would provide the food and we would serve the drinks. At the end of the day, we would total

Bellio's Don Pedro's – 1971

the food and drinks and take our share. We did some advertising and the place was jumping on weekends. After about six months, when one weekend two waitresses did not show up, Trinka and I were running like horses. At the end of the day I was sitting at the bar having a drink and relaxing when Pete came over and joined me. At that point I said to him, "I am going to sell this place, I have had it with the waitresses." He asked if I truly meant it and I said, "yes." He said, "Let me talk to my brothers and maybe we will buy it." I told Trinka about it and she agreed provided they would give us enough money. Pete's brothers agreed and we began to think on a price.

I subdivided the land giving it enough space for parking. I totaled up the expenses for the building, bar coolers, inventory, and liquor license. Then I added an additional one-third of the cost and gave them a price. After a week or so, they came up with a price, which was about $10,000 less. We split the difference and the deal was made. However, they did not have enough money to buy it. Trinka and I agreed to take $50,000 cash upfront and the rest in monthly payments plus 8% interest on the balance. It took many years but they did pay us off. The place is still there today, under the name of Loredo Restaurant, and only one brother owns it.

Real Estate and Building

After we sold the restaurant, Trinka wanted to go into real estate. She began studying to get a real estate license. I looked around and found an apartment building that was for sale. We contacted the owner, made a deal and bought the apartment complex. There were 20 units and one shop, where they kept parts and did repairs. I took the shop and turned it into another unit, so we now had 21 units. I did all the work on the 21st unit myself. I divided it into one bedroom, a living room, kitchen, dinette, and one bathroom. I took the parts that they had in it and brought them to my garage to work from the house.

After a year Trinka got her real estate license and started working. In the meantime, she convinced me to get my real estate license as well. Once I got my license, we started working with Graber Realty. After working there for a year, we decided to sell the apartment building through Graber Realty.

We purchased the apartments on a contract and assumed the mortgage that the owner had at a 4% interest rate. We sold the property for about $100,000 more than we bought it and on a contract with 8% interest. It took over 10 years before the new owners paid it off. We made 8% interest on our profit plus 4% on the mortgage money. It was a very good deal for us.

After two years in real estate, I decided that I did not like selling. Trinka, however, loved it! I decided to learn how to build houses. I took some courses and went to a couple seminars. In the mean time, Carl Graber's brother, Allen, was building houses so I watching him. I took in what he did, how he did it, and who he employed to build

for him. One day I said to Trinka, "I can do this, I can build a house." With the help of my friend, Joe Christoff, who knew the building commissioner, I got my builders license. In 1976, I started building houses under the name of Bellio Builders, and kept building until 1994.

Being in the Real Estate business, Trinka and I knew a lot of Realtors. We began offering Realtors 7% commission if they would bring us a client to build them a house. With this incentive, in 1978, I was building 17 different houses at the same time. They were each in a different stage, and it was too much for me. From then on we were more selective of the houses we built. We decided to build only 6 to 8 houses per year.

During this time, in 1980, I received a call that my father had passed away from a heart attack. My brother and I went to Skopje so we could attend the funeral. We flew into Belgrad, Yugoslavia, and I recall, it was very foggy. We could not trust a taxi car to drive us so rented a car. We drove through the worse fog all night long at a very slow pace. We arrived early in the morning, just in time for the funeral. We were so fortunate to have good friends there, who took care of everything for my father and for us. We only stayed a few days and then returned home. Almost a year later, in 1981, I brought my mother back to the states to live with us permanently. She didn't understand the language and had a very hard time. Although she loved being with us, she was unhappy because she could not communicate with anyone other than us. The kids would go to school and she would spend the day all by herself. She lived with us for about a year and then decided she wanted to go home. She flew from Detroit to Frankfort with a note pinned to her lapel that included her name, destination, and my phone number.

Front row: My Vuiko (Uncle) Elio Pappas and his wife Dota, Teta (Aunt) Prosha Chicovsky
Back row: My mother, My Uncle Norm Gosheff and My Teta Fana Gosheff

Just before Christmas in 1989, we got a call from a friend letting us know that my mother was very sick. I flew over to Skopje and took her to a doctor and then to a nursing home. The nursing home was equipped with a doctor and a nurse at all times. After Christmas Trinka joined me. My mother recovered well and decided she liked the nursing home. She said, "I like that I don't have to do anything, they do it all for me." The government took care of most of the cost, which was very reasonable since she was over 65 years of age. Mother insisted that we go home, saying there wasn't anything we could do for her, but I didn't want to leave her just yet. That winter was very cold. We would go to see her every day. We had to walk to the bus station and we would transfer to a second bus while waiting in the freezing cold for 15 minutes. Then we walked to the nursing home two more blocks. I remember that we were freezing!

One day on the way back to mother's apartment, I saw a sign that read, "Cyprus." We stopped to inquire about it. It was a trip from Belgrad, Serbia (Yugoslavia) to Cyprus Island, off the coast of Turkey. The cost was $400 for transportation and hotel for two people. Of course, we took the trip and it was heaven. It was nice and warm, perfect for relaxation. I could communicate with the people there too, as they spoke Greek, but in a local dialect. On the way back, Trinka thought we should go see her brother since we were so close. Her brother, Traiko, lived in Assenovgrad, Bulgaria. We did not have a visa for Bulgaria, but they gave us a transit visa at the border. My brother-in-law and I went to the local Police Station because we could not stay without visas. I explained to the officer why we were there and that my wife was born in Assenovgrad. He asked me how long of a visa I wanted and told him two days. To my surprise, he gave me a whole week!

From Bulgaria we came back to Skopje to see that my mother was doing very well. We had been there about two months. Again, she insisted that we go home. About six weeks after we came home, I received a call from our friend that my mother had passed away. We couldn't believe it and we were saddened to hear this. Trinka and I flew back to Skopje just in time for the funeral. After the funeral, we had a dinner for everyone that was there. It is Macedonian tradition that on the 9th day after burial, we hire a priest and go back to the cemetery for a memorial service. The priest said a prayer over her grave and a cross that was made from wheat, powdered sugar, raisins and other ingredients was placed on it. I believe this has something to do with feeding the soul of the person who has passed away. There was about twenty of us there and we ate the mixture, and drank whiskey in her memory. After that, we went back to my mother's apartment and had a fish dinner.

We cleaned out my mother's apartment and gave away all her possessions to her neighbors and friends. We paid for the funeral expenses and all her bills from her savings kept at one bank that were in Dinara (Yugoslavian currency). While paying her bills, we discovered that she still had $650, American money, in another bank. This was money I had sent to her over the years. We went to take it out, but found out that this was not possible without a court order. We heard that a friend

Gravesite of Argir and Aphrodita Belevski (My parents)
Skopje, Macedonia – Taken in 2011

of my father's use to work for a judge. He went with us to see this judge. I explained to her who I was and the situation and that we needed the money to help pay for my mother's bills. She was very sympathetic and gave us written permission to get the money. However, the bank did not have enough American dollars to give us. I wanted American dollars so we had to wait another two weeks until the bank had accumulated enough dollars. I kept an account of what we spent for her funeral. When we came back, I showed my brother and gave him half of the money I had gotten from the bank.

I was still building custom homes at this time, and luckily, it was with the owner's money, not one penny of my own money had to be invested. It was just my hard work and effort that went into each house. In 1991, two men came up from Georgia looking to rent an office. We had put a sign up on our office park on Maplecrest Road. They stopped by to look at the office space and not only did they end up renting the space, but they gave us a contract to represent them and manage the HUD homes in the area. Trinka and I managed the government HUD contract for three and a half years. It turned out to be a very good arrangement. Trinka ran the office, while our oldest son, George Jr., was cutting grass and winterizing the properties. I took care of the inspections and gave HUD the estimated damage that the house had and what it would cost to repair it. I also managed to build a few houses each year in my spare time.

Trinka's Illness

In March of 1994, we found out that Trinka had cancer. She was diagnosed with ovarian cancer, but the cancer was not present in her ovaries. By the time the cancer was discovered, it progressed into her bone marrow. We were told by an oncologist in Indianapolis, Indiana that there was not much they could do for her except try and prolong her life. After a few chemotherapy treatments she decided not to continue with them and she began to lose her hair. She was put through alot. She had fluid drained from her abdomen several times. She became very ill during the summer of 1994 and I took her to Indiana University Medical Center in Indianapolis in hopes that they could help her. She slipped in and out of a coma over a few days time and on July 23, 1994, she passed away.

Trinka was a good wife to me. She was a good mother to our kids and she loved her two granddaughters, Erica and Jennifer, very much. After Trinka died I lost interest in life. I quit the business, took my social security benefits and retired at age 64. Life was very lonely now after being married for almost 38 years. I am very fortunate that my son John was so supportive. He, along with his wife Terri, and the grandchildren, helped life continue on.

Serbia/Kosovo Conflict

In the spring of 1999, I was in Florida when I received a call from Carl Lebamoff. His son, Craig, was working for the State Department, stationed in Uzbekistan. Carl's son asked him if he knew anyone that could speak Greek Macedonian and English. Carl thought of me and asked if I would be interested in being an interpreter for the Americans during the Kosovo War. Without hesitation I said, "Yes." The State Department checked me out and found me to be trustworthy. The next day I received a call from the State Department telling me to pack some clothes and come to Washington D.C. I wasn't quite sure what I was getting myself into, but was confident I could help. Sure enough my electronic ticket was waiting for me at the desk of Delta Airlines.

When I arrived in D.C., I was given a test on the Greek Macedonian and English languages. That night they put me up in a hotel and the next day I was in Budapest, Hungary. From there I went to Skopje, Macedonia. An army sergeant picked me up and took me to a warehouse and gave me a pair of army boots and a uniform. They also gave me one hundred dollars and put me in a hotel for the night. The next day we went through the Greek border into Salonika (Thessaloniki). I was assigned two gentlemen that worked for American Army Intelligence and found out they were Army Officers. They were stationed in Kaiserslautern, Germany, but were working in Salonika with the American forces during the war. George was a Captain and Kevin, a Second

Lieutenant. The American Army Base was at the Port of Salonika along with those of the English, French, Germans and Italians. The port was guarded and both gates were closed at night, but the Americans would not depend on the Greeks for safety. The port was walled and was also surrounded by big shipping containers to help with security.

Our job was to make sure that the road from Salonika to Skopje was clear with no resistance. All the ammunition and supplies came to Salonika then to Skopje and on to Kosovo at the war zone. I was there to be an interpreter for the American soldiers with the Greek authorities. In Greece, there was a very strong Communist Party that was opposed to the war. The Greek Church was opposed simply because Serbia was an Orthodox country. Every day I would drive the streets from Salonika to Skopje with George and Kevin, acting as "tourists." We were dressed as civilians and would keep an eye out for trouble. When we encountered problems we would report it to the American Army Base, who would pass it along to the Greek Police. I also would attend meetings at all hours of the day and night to interpret between the Americans and the Greek Police. Only once did I get called to interpret in Macedonian. Three Macedonian men were having trouble getting into Greece at the border. I had to make sure they were okay. One of the men said, "Well, that was interesting." I told them if they had any more trouble to let me know. The next morning the man who made the comment called me and asked me to go to breakfast. He wanted to know how I learned both the Macedonian and Greek languages. I told him when I was growing up, we all spoke Macedonian and that I had learned to speak Greek when I was in school. He was very impressed and it made me feel very good to be able to use my skills and to boast about them.

I saw demonstrations taking place every day against the war. The Communists were protesting with their red flags and waving their symbol of the sickle and hammer. Never in my dreams would I have thought that the Greek Police would be protecting the Communists. They were marching through the main streets, using red paint and writing graffiti, in opposition to the Americans and NATO, calling us Fascists and Imperialists. At one point, George and Kevin wanted me to infiltrate the demonstrators to make friends with them and gain information. Of course I said, "No way." I was not there to put myself in more danger than I was already in. George and Kevin were with me at all times. As a civilian employed by the American Army, I was their responsibility. George was a very serious person and Kevin was much more personable. He gave me a coin as a memento of our time together. It is the symbol of their Army Base in Germany.

This is the coin given to me by Kevin (my protector). The one side says, "Always Out Front", and the back is the symbol for their army base in Germany.

My assignment was for two months. While I was there, the U.S. Government paid for my hotel, food and transportation. We stayed at the Electra Palace Hotel in Salonika. When my assignment was over they wanted me to sign up for three more months. They wanted to send me to Kosovo because Kosovo had a Greek Army that belonged to NATO. The Greek Army was in need of an interpreter. I declined the assignment because I knew that Kosovo was very dangerous at the time. I also wanted to get home and see my family. Since I was already in Salonika, I thought I should go to the village where I was born. I had one more day before I was to leave for Washington D.C. The Americans, whom I was helping all this time, would not give me permission because I was their responsibility. I managed to persuade them. I said it was such a shame not to be able to see the place I was born since it was just two hours from Salonika. They ended up giving me twelve hours of free time. I rented a car and went to see the village. By the way, when I got home, I discovered I had been insured by Lloyd of London for $1,000,000 by the American Government!

During my time meeting the Greek authorities, I was very proud. Here I am, the peasant that they terrorized all those years before, along with my family, beating and imprisoning us, using us like slaves and I was there doing business on an equal basis as an American. When I was working on those streets of Salonika I felt ten feet tall. I felt even taller when I met with the Greek authorities. This was an emotional journey for me. Using my language skills, I was able to make a big contribution to my country, the United States of America, and all the while I was so close to my youth and my memories. The experience was one I will always be grateful for. In addition, I got paid at the end of my assignment. I don't remember the exact amount, but it was over $10,000.

Meeting Millie

In 1998, with the help of my friend Clem Labamoff, I met Millie Damianov at a Macedonian convention in Cincinnati Ohio. She lived in Akron Ohio. We seemed to like each other, both being of Macedonian descent and both more or less knowing the same people. We kept seeing each other more and more. We also went to Florida together for months at a time. We've gotten to know each other's families and Millie has become very close with my family, John, Terri, and the kids. I have become very fond of Millie's son Bill and his wife Elizabeth. After ten years of marriage, they finally had two daughters, Eleanor and Madeline. It lights up my day when I hear Eleanor's little voice call me "Dedo" again!

Chereshnitsa 2012

I have always wanted to take my granddaughters to see the village and show them where I was born and raised to the age of 21. In July of 2012, we finally got the chance. We flew into Thessaloniki, Greece, and stayed at the same hotel I stayed at during the Kosovo War. We wondered around the waterfront area surrounding the hotel and spent a day and night reminiscing. The next day we rented a big Mercedes van and headed out to find Chereshnitsa. On the way, we stopped and I showed my family many other villages where my friends grew up. These are friends and relatives who were now living in or around Fort Wayne. The kids knew each person and it was nice to be able to explain all that I knew about where our friends and relatives had been born.

When my village came into view it was a very emotional moment for me. I was relieved and happy to finally be here with my family. We got out of the van and took many pictures and video of the scenery surrounding the village. The village has changed some during the last few decades. As we drove and walked around, I explained to them how we lived. There were many tears shed by my granddaughters and my daughter-in-law. The church and old school (now a hall) had been refurbished since the I lived there. The old church was just a plain building with walls and a roof. The roads were paved now with some sort of a stone material. We went to the house where my Dedo Popoff was born and we were all overwhelmed with pride. It was abandoned and has been for a long time, but it brought back so many memories for me and I shared some of them with the family while we took many more pictures.

I would guess only a dozen or so permanent residents live in Chereshnitsa today. We stopped and talked to a man I knew by the name of Kuzo Stasin. Kuzo and I grew up together and he has lived in the village most of his life. His wife had passed the year

My village of Chereshnitsa – July 2012

In front of My Dedo Vasil Popoff's house in the Village of Chereshnitsa.
Erica, George and Jennifer Bellio – Taken in July 2012

before and he seemed to have early stages of dementia, not remembering me right away. We spoke about old times and he wanted to know about some of the other Popoff Families. We also met a couple that was familiar with my family and they were so kind. I knew him when he was very young. His name is Pando Vouliotis. Vouliotis is his Greek name, but I knew him as Pando Ingeloff, which was his mother's name. They live in the village during the summer months now. They invited us to their home where we sat outside and drank Turkish coffee, had sweets and reminisced with them in Macedonian. Of course, I had to stop and interpret to the girls and my daughter-in-law all that was being said. In truth, they were on the edge of their seats wanting to know all they could about their Dedo and where he came from.

There were many other abandoned homes and the old small medical building was still standing. To the girl's surprise, there were a few newer homes in the village, too. These were owned by people living in Thessaloniki for use as summer homes. It is normally cooler in the village areas during the summer, although it was over 100 degrees the day we were there. The girls were surprised to find out there is electricity, running water, indoor plumbing, and even television in the village. It was good to see the village now had these simple things that we take for granted every day. As I told the girls more stories of my childhood, we talked about how we could stay in the village for days, just reminiscing. We even joked about building a home there, where all our family members could come and visit. Wouldn't that be wonderful!

The church, which was built in 1845, was still so beautiful today. There was a woman who lived near the church and she opened it for us so we could take more pictures. The interior still had most of the original woodwork and artwork, but it seemed to us that it was being refurbished again. It brought back so many memories for me. I relived them while explaining all I could think of to my family. Up a hill and behind the church, was the cemetery. That was very emotional too; reading what was left of the names and words on the tombstones. We saw other houses that belonged to relatives of friends and family members back home in Fort Wayne.

St. Nicholas Church, Village of Chereshnitsa – Taken in 1972 and July 2012

As my daughter-in-law and I were walking down the street, I looked and she had tears in her eyes. As she laid her head on my shoulder, I told her that if I died that day, I would be a happy man! It meant everything to me that my family was finally able to see where I was born and raised. They've heard many stories over the years and they were so happy to finally be able to fully appreciate all that their Dedo has been through. Their heritage has always meant a lot to the girls, but now they really understood my life. We were all humbled and proud as we drove away that day. This experience definitely changed all of our lives! I think we even made a believer out of Millie that the village of Chershnitsa is, in fact, four hours by foot from the city of Kastoria. We stayed in Kastoria that night and met the owner of the suite we rented. Her sister married Kuzo Pappas who is from my village. She knew my mother, brother, and all about my family. She was so happy to have met us and we talked quite a bit about old times. She was so sweet and she opened her bar to us at no cost. It was nice to end our trip with such a warm welcome from an old family acquaintance. We can't wait to go back!

In Conclusion

Now, in the year 2014, at the age of 84, I am reading this manuscript and I am amazed at how I managed to stay alive from 1930 to 1951. I am very lucky that I was able to come to this wonderful country. America has renewed my life. It gave me purpose to live and enjoy the wonderful things that it had to offer me. This country made a human being out of me and gave me the opportunity to live like one. With all its faults, there is no other country on earth like this one, nor is there any other country that I would rather live in. God Bless this country, the USA.

I am writing this, my autobiography, for my family so they can know where I (and they) came from. It is especially for my granddaughters, Erica and Jennifer, and for their children. I want them to know: who is this man they call Dedo? Where did he come from? What is his profile? What is his background? How did he come to be who he is? This is my story and I want my family to know just how much I love them and how blessed we all are!

Identification Card of George Bellio issued April, 1948 – Every adult in Greece must carry, on their person at all times, an identification card with a photo and their personal profile. This one was issued to me right after I surrendered to the Greek Army from the Partisans.

Proof of Surrender as a Partisan – Issued April 20, 1948. The certificates reads:
23 Brigade Army
This certifies that the Partisan George Bellios, son of Argirios, drafting age 1951, form the village of Polikeros, Kostoria surrenders to us today along with his arms and he is hereby free. He belongs to the Paritsan group GKOTSEF. He is to remain under the security of the authority. 20-4-1948.

ΜΟΝΑΣ Β.Σ.Σ.

ΦΥΛΛΟΝ
ΑΤΟΜΙΚΗΣ ΠΡΟΣΚΛΗΣΕΩΣ

Δυνάμει τοῦ Νόμου περὶ Στρατολογίας τοῦ κατὰ Γῆν Στρατοῦ καὶ τῆς ὑπ' ἀριθ. Α.Π. 6319Α]Φ4(56) ΑΙ]ΙΙΙ 17-7-48 Διαταγῆς τοῦ Ὑπουργείου Στρατιωτικῶν (Γ.Ε.Σ.)

ΚΑΛΟΥΜΕΝ

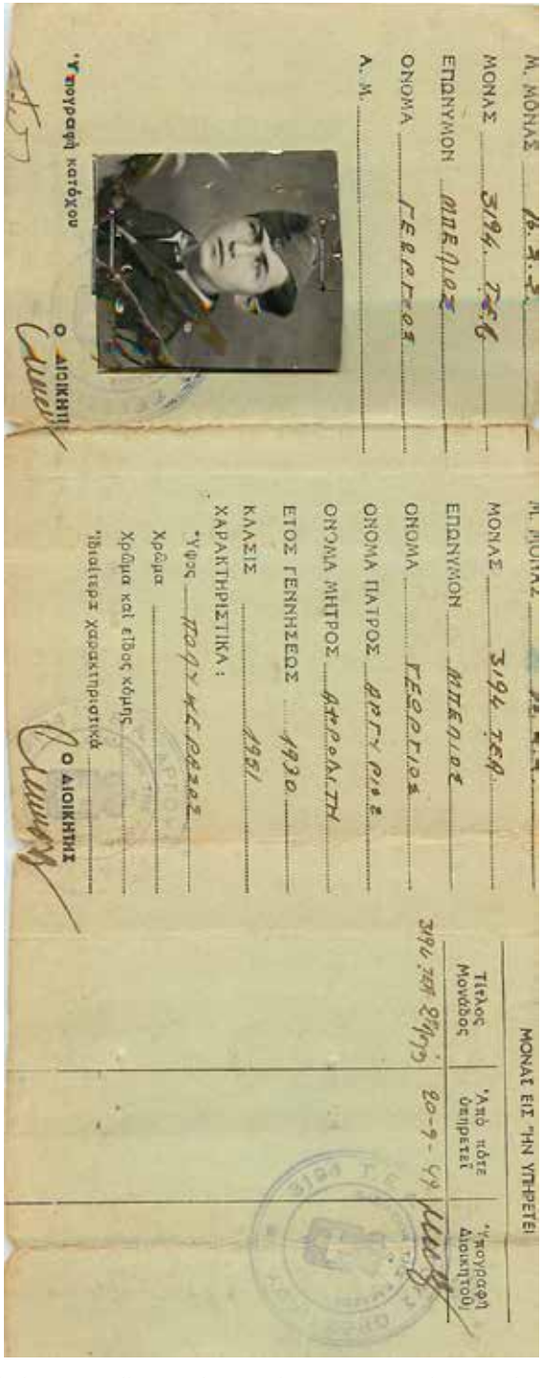
Τὸν Στρατ. Μπέλιον Γεώργιον τοῦ Αργυρίου
ἐκ Πολυκεράσου τῆς ἐπαρχίας
Καστοριάς κλάσεως 1951 Ὅπλου
Α.Σ.Μ. Ἀριθ. Γ.Ε.Σ.
Ἀριθ. Μ.Ε.Ε. κάτοικον
Πολυκεράσου Διεύθυνσις κατοικίας Πολυκέρασον
ὅπως παρουσιασθῇ ἐντὸς 24 ὡρῶν εἰς (Μονάς τόπος) Διοίκησιν
Χωρ. Καστοριάς Λόχον

Ὁ μὴ συμμορφούμενος ἔφεδρος, κηρυσσόμενος ἀνυπότακτος, ὑπέχει τὰς ὑπὸ τοῦ Νόμου προβλεπομένας ποινὰς καὶ ἐπὶ πλέον πρόσθετον ὑπηρεσίαν δύο ἐτῶν μὴ ἐξαγοραζομένην.

Αἱ κατὰ τόπους Ἀστυνομικαὶ Ἀρχαὶ ὑποχρεοῦνται νὰ διευκολύνωσι τὸν ἔφεδρον διὰ τὴν ταχυτέραν ἀναχώρησίν του τῇ ἐπιδείξει τοῦ παρόντος.

Ἐκδόθη Ἐν Β.Σ.Τ. 901 τῇ 15/9 1949
Τὴν 19.9-1949 Ὁ Διοικητής
καὶ ὥραν 7 π.μ.
Ὁ Ἐμφανής

This is a document giving me permission to travel so I could present myself to the local authorities to be drafted in to the Greek Militia. It was referred to as a "Drafting Notification" and was issued to me September 15, 1949.

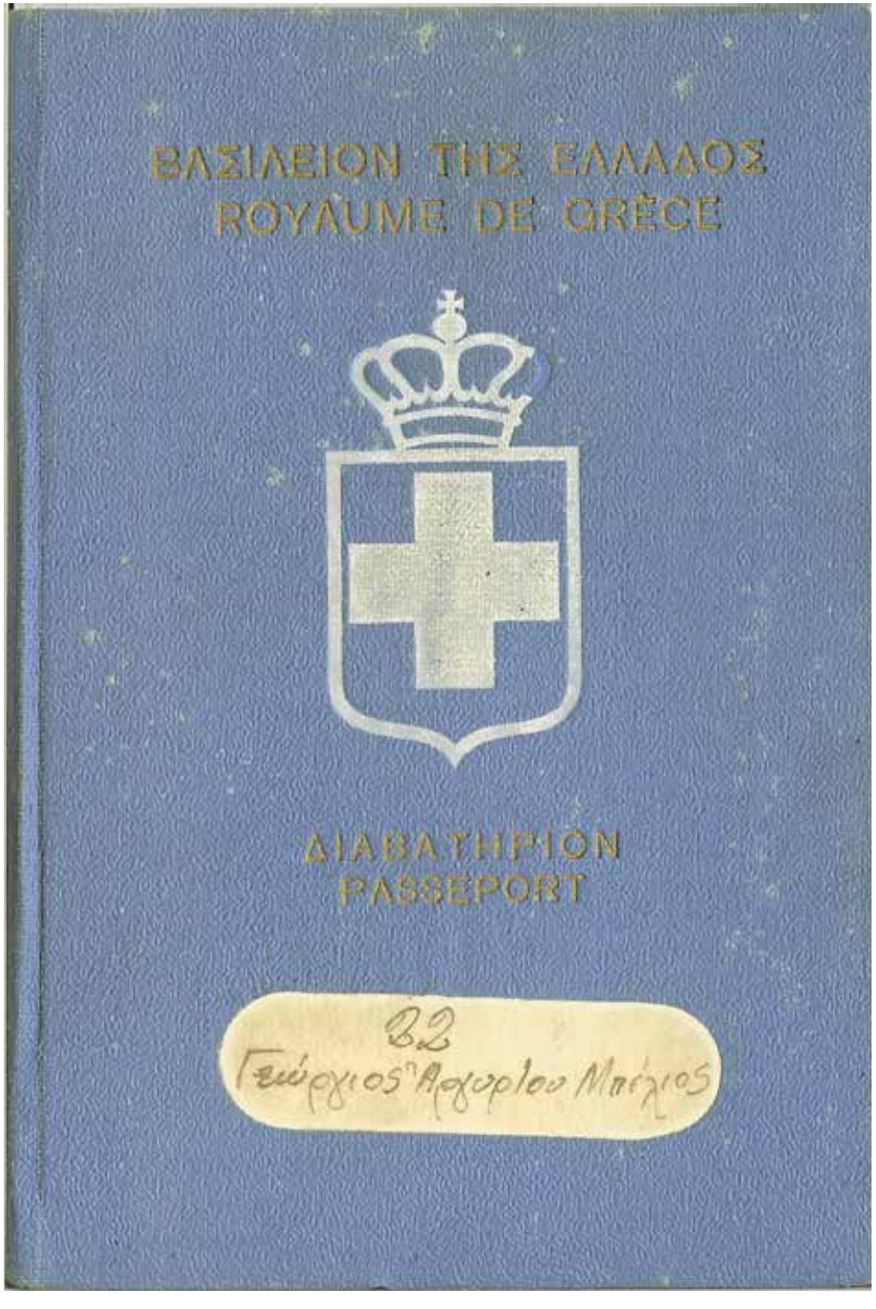


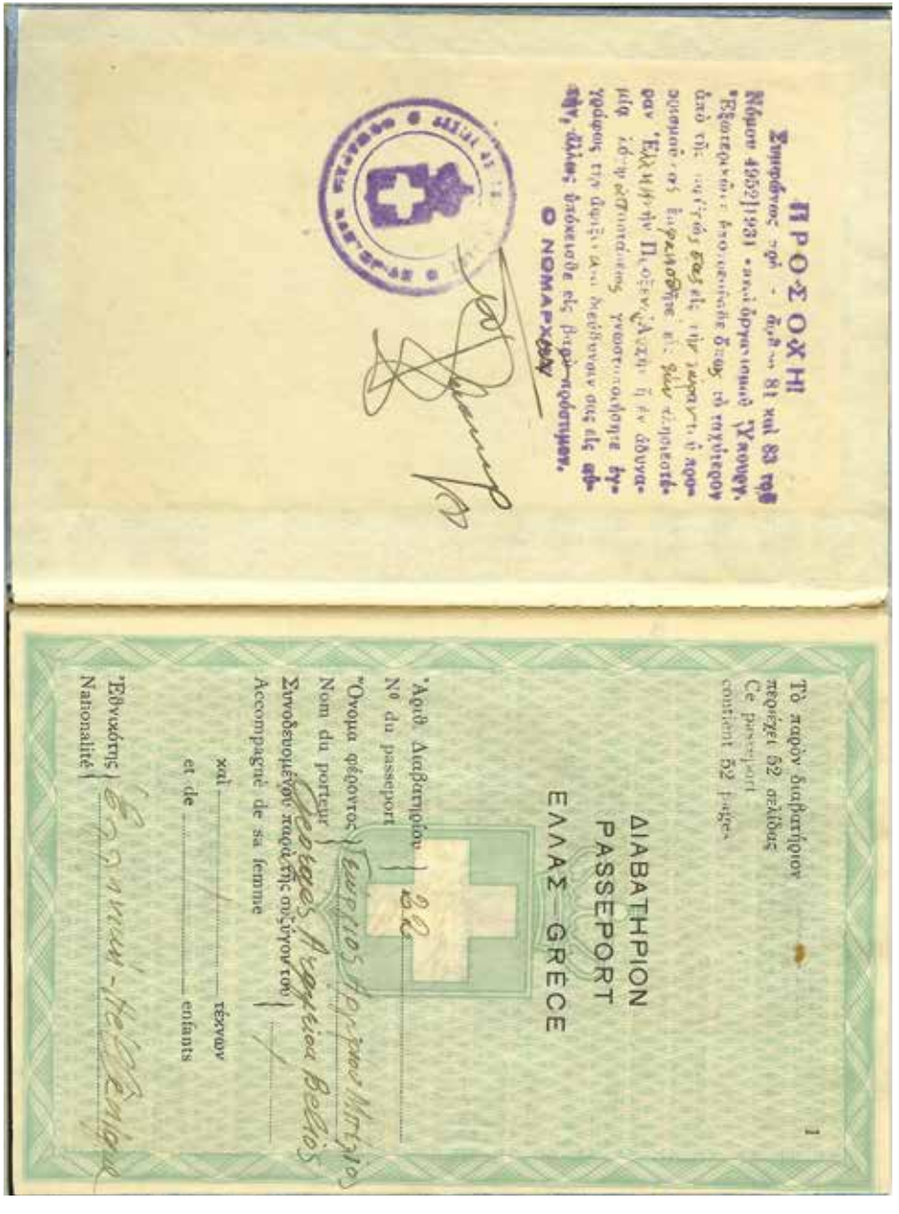
Identification Card of George Bellio issued September 20, 1949 – This was when I was drafted in to the Greek Militia. Identification cards include name, citizenship, address, service unit, army class (mine was 1951-the year I was to turn 21years of age), names of mother and father, etc.

This is a release of military duty and authorization for travel. This was issued at my request for the use of immigration. Issued November 1, 1950.

My Passport

This is my passport issued to me by the Greek Government, June 29, 1951. This is the document that allowed me to enter in to the United States of America - New York City, on August 4, 1951.





4

Χῶραι δι' ἅς ἰσχύει τὸ διαβατήριον
Pays pour lesquels ce passeport est valable

Ἡνωμέναι Πολιτεῖαι Ἀμερικῆς

Etats-Unis of Amerique

Τὸ διαβατήριον τοῦτο λήγει τὴν: 24-6-952
Ce passeport expire le:

ἐκτὸς ἄν ἀνανεωθῇ
à moins de renouvellement

Παραδοθὲν εἰς / Delivré à: Καστοριᾶ / Kastoria

Χρονολογία / Date: 25 Ἰουνίου 1951 / 25 Juin 1951

ΑΝΑΝΕΩΣΕΙΣ — RENOUVELLEMENTS

1º ....

2º ....

3º ....

4º ....

ΘΕΩΡΗΣΕΙΣ — VISAS 5

Εγκρ. Έπιτρ. ἀδειῶν ἀναχ. δι' ἐξωτ.
ἀριθμὸς 69
Χρον. ἐκδόσεως 22-6-51
Χρον. λήξεως 21-9-951

25000 ΔΡΑΧΜΑΙ

25000 ΔΡΑΧΜΑΙ

2

ΧΑΡΑΚΤΗΡΙΣΤΙΚΑ
SIGNALEMENTS

		Συζύγου — Femme
Ἐπάγγελμα / Profession	Γεωργός / cultivateur	
Τόπος καὶ χρόνος γεννήσεως / Lieu et date de naissance	1930	
Διαμονὴ / Domicile		
Πρόσωπον / Visage	κανονικόν / régulier	
Χρῶμα ὀφθαλμῶν / Couleur des yeux	γαλανοί / bleux	
Χρῶμα κόμης / Couleur des cheveux	καστανή / châtaine	
Ἰδιαίτερα σημεῖα / Signes particuliers	—	

TEKNA — ENFANTS

Ὄνομα / Nom	Ἡλικία / Age	Γένος / Sexe

3

Femme

Ὑπογραφὴ κατόχου / Signature du titulaire: Γ. Μ...

καὶ τῆς συζύγου / et de sa femme

ΥΠΟΓΡΑΦΗ ΤΟΥ ΧΟΡΗΓΗΣΑΝΤΟΣ ΤΟ ΔΙΑΒΑΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΥΠΑΛΛΗΛΟΥ:
SIGNATURE DE L'AGENT DELIVRANT LE PASSEPORT:

Ὁ Νομάρχης Καστορίας / Le Préfet de Kastoria

8 ΘΕΩΡΗΣΕΙΣ — VISAS

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ
ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΑ ΠΡΟΣΤΑΣΙΑΣ ΕΘΝΙΚΟΥ ΣΥΝΑΛΛΑΓΜΑΤΟΣ
ΠΕΙΡΑΙΩΣ

ΑΔΝ ΦΕΡΕΙ ΣΥΝΑΛΛΑΓΜΑ

Πρ. 22/7/51

ΘΕΩΡΗΣΕΙΣ — VISAS 9

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ
ΚΙΝΗΤΟΝ ΕΠΙΣΗΜΑ
5000 ΔΡΑΧΜΑΙ

ΔΡΧ 1000 ΔΡΧ

ΕΛΕΓΧΟΣ ΔΙΑΒΑΤΗΡΙΩΝ
ΠΕΙΡΑΙΕΥΣ

ΕΞΟΔΟΣ

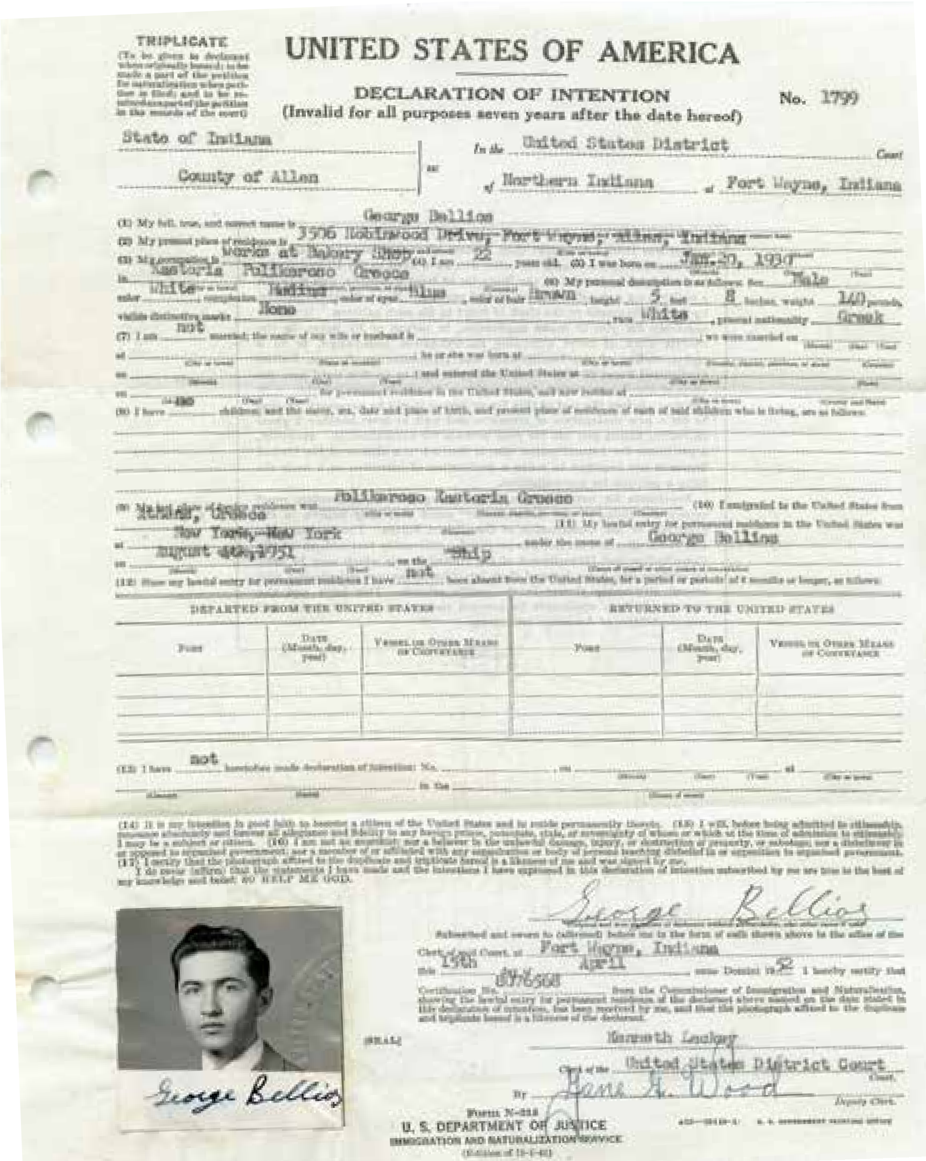
6 ΘΕΩΡΗΣΕΙΣ — VISAS

ΘΕΩΡΗΣΕΙΣ — VISAS 7

Nonquota Sect. 3(b)(4) DP Act — Immigration Visa
Quota GREEK — No. GR 253/1987
Dated JUN 29 1951
Issued to George BELLIOS
(Name)
John J. White
Salonika, Greece

U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE
ADMITTED
AUG 4 1951
NEW YORK
N.Y.
IMMIG. & NAT. SERVICE

3(b)(4) DP Act



TRIPLICATE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DECLARATION OF INTENTION
(Invalid for all purposes seven years after the date hereof)

No. 1799

State of Indiana, County of Allen — In the United States District Court of Northern Indiana at Fort Wayne, Indiana

(1) My full, true, and correct name is George Bellios
(2) My present place of residence is 3506 Robinwood Drive, Fort Wayne, Allen, Indiana
(3) My occupation is Works at Bakery Shop (4) I am 22 years old. (5) I was born on Jan. 20, 1930 in Kastoria Polikarono Greece
(6) My personal description is as follows: Sex Male, color White, complexion Medium, color of eyes Blue, color of hair Brown, height 5 feet 8 inches, weight 140 pounds, visible distinctive marks None, race White, present nationality Greek
(7) I am not married
(8) I have no children
(9) My last place of foreign residence was Polikarono Kastoria Greece
(10) I emigrated to the United States from Athens, Greece
(11) My lawful entry for permanent residence in the United States was at New York, New York under the name of George Bellios on August 4th, 1951 on the Ship
(12) Since my lawful entry for permanent residence I have not been absent from the United States, for a period or periods of 6 months or longer, as follows:

DEPARTED FROM THE UNITED STATES			RETURNED TO THE UNITED STATES		
Port	Date (Month, day, year)	Vessel or Other Means of Conveyance	Port	Date (Month, day, year)	Vessel or Other Means of Conveyance

(13) I have not heretofore made declaration of intention

(14) It is my intention in good faith to become a citizen of the United States and to reside permanently therein. ... SO HELP ME GOD.

George Bellios

Subscribed and sworn to (affirmed) before me in the form of oath shown above in the office of the Clerk of said Court, at Fort Wayne, Indiana this 15th day of April anno Domini 1952. ... 876568

[SEAL]

Kenneth Lackey
Clerk of the United States District Court
By Gene G. Wood, Deputy Clerk

Form N-315
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

This is my application for citizenship to the United States of America. I applied for citizenship on April 15, 1952. I was sponsored by my Dedo Vasil Popoff, as his grandson. Due to the fact that he was retired, someone else had to guarantee my support to the American Government. My Uncle Norm and Stephanka (Teta Fana) Gosheff, provided that for me.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ORIGINAL
TO BE GIVEN TO THE PERSON NATURALIZED

No. 7682390

CERTIFICATE OF NATURALIZATION

Petition No. 2236.

Personal description of holder as of date of naturalization: Date of birth January 20th, 1930 sex Male complexion Medium color of eyes Blue color of hair Brown height 5 feet 8 inches; weight 140 pounds; visible distinctive marks None
Marital status Single former nationality Greece
I certify that the description above given is true, and that the photograph affixed hereto is a likeness of me.

George Bellios
(Complete and true signature of holder)

State of Indiana
County of Allen ss:

Be it known, that at a term of the United States District Court of Northern District of Indiana held pursuant to law at Fort Wayne, Indiana on January 29th, 1957 the Court having found that GEORGE BELLIO then residing at 3506 Robinwood, Fort Wayne, Indiana, intends to reside permanently in the United States (when so required by the Naturalization Laws of the United States), had in all other respects complied with the applicable provisions of such naturalization laws, and was entitled to be admitted to citizenship, thereupon ordered that such person be and (s)he was admitted as a citizen of the United States of America.

In testimony whereof the seal of the court is hereunto affixed this 29th day of January in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and Fifty-seven and of our Independence the one hundred and Eighty-first.

Seal

It is a violation of the U.S. Code and punishable as such to copy, print, photograph, or otherwise illegally use this certificate.

Kenneth Lackey
Clerk of the U.S. District Court
By Gene G. Wood, Deputy Clerk

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

This is my Proof of American Citizenship issued to me January 29,, 1957. This is my application for citizenship to the United States of America. I applied for citizenship on April 15, 1952. I was sponsored by my Dedo Vasil Popoff, as his grandson. Due to the fact that he was retired, someone else had to guarantee my support to the American Government. My Uncle Norm and Stephanka (Teta Fana) Gosheff, provided that for me.

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