I LEFT THE VILLAGE TO COME TO AMERICA



THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

TO MY FAMILY.

KOSMAS SKEMBOS

I write this book for my family for my son Vasil, my daughter's Olga and Nancy. I write it for my daughter-in-law Sue, and son-in-laws Jerry and Herbert, and for my grandchildren John, Lindsey, Billy, Christie, Jessica, Stephanie, Michael, Paige, Thomas and Dirk.

Especially I wrote this book for my wonderful, loving wife Milka.



Kosmas Pereklis Skembos

I remember the history of my life and this is the truth, no lies. What I passed and what I suffered and I am now happy with my family. We all have good health and have God first in my life.

This is the book I write. I only finished 3rd grade. I had to write it in Greek first, and then I wrote it using English letters in the Greek language. Then I translated it to my daughter Nancy, so that she could type it on the computer. This is a sample of my writing:

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Ego ta Thimame ti History apo ti Zoi ine A lithina Tiperasa Kai Ti Travixa Kai ti ida ego ime Haroumenos Meti ikogenia Kai igis Me to theo Prosto Ellenika to onoma ine Kosmas Pereklis Skembos kai Pote irtha sti United States Kai Alaxa to Skembos afti ine dikio ikogenia Patera Pereklis Mitera Sultana Aderfo Nikola cgo genithika sto horio Polikeraso 1931. Periferia Kastoria to Palio onoma Makedonika to lene Tseresnitsa Kratos Ellas Makedonia imasta this ikogenies o Pateras Kai othios Gianis sto Spiti tou Papou Kai giagia imastan Poli se ene Speiti Kai etsi Horistikame Koi emis Pigame ste Papou Kai giagia to Papou then Ton ixera Pethane Prin Apoti giagia ti giagia Tithimame Pethane Kai afti Miname emis sto Spiti une sti mesi Sto porio sto horio itan Kosmo. Pano Kato Triakos Peninda atoma imastan Poli sto horio then the Doulin Perisoteri Pigenane se alo Meri Na Doulevour sti Astralia sti Ameriki Kai sto Kana Kai sti Kostandinopoli o Papous Kostandinos Kai i gragio Dofia Kai othios Gianis Kai oPatera Othios Athonase Kai thia Dana o Papous Pige Sti Kostandinopoli Na Doslevi Koi Pere oti ikogenia eki Afto To grafo gia ti ikogenia gia to gio Vasil Kore olga Kai Nensy Kni gaproe Kai Nifi Kai Angonakio ine se Aglika granata L

Transcription from Greek to English

My name was originally Kosmas Pereklis Skembos and when I came to the United States, I changed it Skembos. This is my family. My father's name is Pereklis Kostas and my mother's name is Sultana Vasil. My brother's name was Nickolas.



Kosmas, Pereklis, Nikolas, Sultana

I was born in the Village of Polikerasos, Kostoria, in Greece, Macedonia in 1931. The old name of the village was Tseresnitsa. The new name is Polikerasos which means represents the Cherries that grew in the village.



The Village - Polikerasos, Kostoria -Greece

We had two families living in the same house, my father's family and his Brother John's family. We had so many people living in the house that we decided to leave and went to live in my great-grandfather and great-grandmother's house. I don't recall my great grandfather's name but my great grandmother's name was Illeana. She was still living at the time. He died before we lived there. My Baba Illeana lived with us. She died shortly after we moved in and left us the house.

The house is located in the middle of the village. The village had close to 350 people living in it at the time. It was a very close community, but there was not enough work to go around.

At that time the young men left to go find work in Argentina, Australia, the United States, Canada and Constanopole Turkey. My father Pereklis, my Dedo Konstandinos, Baba Sophia, Uncle John, Aunt Donna, and Uncle Tanas, all went to Istambol, Turkey. (Note: I had one other Teta Maria who died in labor). Dedo Konstandinos and Baba Sophia left Istambol and traveled to Bulgaria to be with his son Thomas and daughter Donna. Uncle Thomas and Aunt had two boys, Boyoncha and Deano who are still in Bulgaria to. Dedo and Baba died there.

My Uncle John left Istambol to join the Greek Army. When he grew up my father left and went back to the village. He met my mother Sultana Pappa, and they got married in the village. My mother at the time was 16 years old.

My mother's parents were Vasil and Vasilka. My mother had three sisters named Teta Prosha, Teta Deta, and Teta Fana. Her brother's names were Louie and one who passed at a young age. I don't recall his name.

My Dedo Vasil made papers to come to the United States. Dedo came to the United States first to save money and bring over the rest of his family. Baba Vasilka who was still in the village approved an engagement between my mother and father. Dedo Vasil got upset with my Baba because she made the decision without him. He was already for the family to come to the United States. My mother and father got married in the village, and they stayed there. Later, Dedo Vasil made the papers again and brought over my Baba Vasilka and her sister Teta Fana. The rest of the family stayed behind (Teta Deata and my mother). Gradually, Teta Prosha and Uncle Louie came to the United States with their families. Dedo Vasil worked hard to bring over everyone.

Chapter 1

I went to school in the village until 4th grade in elementary school because of the war. They didn't have a high school in the village. The boys in the village wore dresses back then because they felt it would keep the boys cleaner. We looked like girls



Kosmas at around 2 years old

We went to St. Nicholas Church where I was an alter boy. My family and I went to church every Sunday. We are great believers in God and Jesus and Holy Spirit in our Church.

My mother told me as story about when I was four years old on New Years Day they had a music festival in the village. She said I went to the house and found two sticks of wood and a pan. I attached a string to the pan and hung it around my neck like a drum. I went in the middle of the musicians and started to play my drum. The whole village laughed at me being so small to hit the drum. My mother was embarrassed. She took me home, and I got very sick with a high fever. Superstition says that if people look at your child too much the child will get sick. This is what happened to me. I did

recover.

When I was six years old I was playing outside with my cousins Pando and George, and we were chasing a dog. We were in an alley and Pando was throwing stones at the dog. He missed the dog and hit me in my mouth. He broke two of my teeth and gave me a scar on my mouth. At the time there was no doctor. I still have that scar from my cousin Pando.

We were very happy in our home. My parents farmed the fields. They left me to watch my brother Nicolas a lot of the time. He was four, and I was 8 years old. .

In the summer time I was cooking beans over a stone stove. I filled the pot with water and filled the stove with wood. I took care of the chickens and the cows and bulls and I had a lot of responsibility at a very young age of eight. I even made manja. We had two bulls, one cow and one calf. We also had a mule. We kept the animals in the house. We had one room for cooking, one room for the animals and two rooms upstairs where we slept.

In the barn we kept the hay and straw to feed the animals. I used to take the bulls and cows from the house to a man who took all of the animals from the village to a pasture to feed. He would bring them home at night.

I remember our mule died, and we didn't have any money to buy another one. The mule was very important for transportation and farming. The fields were far from the village, and we did not have a mule anymore.

We borrowed a female horse from my Aunt Catarina one day who only had one eye. We loaded her up with Rye in two bags, and I sat on top. We also took our two bulls and a plow. My father and I went high up into the mountains above the village. We went to plow and seed pasture and it was in September 1939. We traveled a very narrow road, and my father was pulling the two bulls and the plow in front of me. I was riding on top of the horse when suddenly the horse slipped with me on top. I rolled down the mountain with the horse into a ditch twenty feet down. My father couldn't reach me. My body was black and blue. My hands and feet were scratched badly, and I couldn't move. Somehow, my father got me out, and we turned back home. We didn't know what to do. My parents found a lamb skin and covered me up to warm me so that I wouldn't go into shock. We still didn't have a doctor in the village. Later the lamb skin started to smell because it was so hot. I was in so much pain I will never forget it. Thank God I survived.

Chapter 2

On October 28, 1939, everything changed. The War started with the Italians. The army first drafted all of the men and boys from the village. They took all of our horses and mules. All that was left were the donkeys and any maimed horses. We could here the artillery all night long. It was only about 20 miles from our village. One day I remember my cousins and I were playing outside. We looked up and saw an airplane which had been hit. It flew over our village and crashed down in a nearby village. The pilot was killed.

The village was very worried because all of the men were taken. The only ones left to work were the women, older people and the children. The women started to farm the fields. We didn't know how to plow, and I was still only eight years old. We had

another boy to help us until we finished our plowing. We did the best we could. The war did not stop.

We heard that the Germans were coming and this was now 1940. The Greek infantry came through our village. That had over 300 horses with them. They told us that they were going to wait for the Germans in our village to start a war. We found out that the Germans were in Kastoria, Greece, which was only 10 miles away. The Italians were also still fighting in Albania where my father was.

The war between the Italians and Greeks and Macedonian finally stopped. The men were finally allowed to go home. They arrived one night and everyone was home safely. No one was killed. Shortly after, the Calvary left our village and went to another village 10 miles away. They left all of the animals behind. All of the men from the village went to the fields to collect the horses that were left behind. My father came back with a female horse. She was so tall that we couldn't load her with packs. My father decided to trade her. He found a man in the market who wanted to trade the horse. My father agreed to the trade and we ended up with a donkey. The donkey was better suited to carry wood and food.

We used her to carry wood to Kastoria in trade for food and clothing. It would take us 3 hours to go to market and 3 hours to come home.

The Italians and Germans joined forces and took over Kastoria. The Italians came to our village. After two months they gathered us together and said from now on the village would supply wood to them three times a week without pay. The village decided to have three shifts to get this done. Plus we had to gather wood for our own survival.

My father became very sick because of the war. He could no longer work, and I had to work for him. I was 12 years old at the time. I had to travel to the mountains to cut the wood then bring it home. I remember that the trees were so thick that I couldn't cut them. I climbed to the top of the tree and started to cut the branches. Then I would cut them into four foot lengths. I loaded the donkey and came home.

Together with others we decided to have the older men cut the wood and I would load the donkeys, take them back to the village and the women would unload the donkeys. I traveled three times a day back and forth.

Chapter 3

The Germans and Italians stayed for 1-2 years it seemed like forever. The Greeks and Macedonians decided to start a war against the Germans and Italians. It was like a militia called Partazons or Andartes. It was a Gorilla war. People in the village were very scared of the Italians.

One day I was up the mountains with my father who was teaching me how to farm. From the mountain we could see smoke from another village about 15 miles away, and we learned that the Italians were burning the houses so that they couldn't help the Gorillas.

The village was scared of the Gorillas because they were causing trouble with the Germans and the Italians. About 16 men from our village decided go to Kastoria and ask the Italians for guns, so that they could defend themselves against the Gorillas. They gave us the guns and returned. The 16 men were called themselves Komiti. Some propaganda came from the Bulgarians lying to the Komiti. We didn't know exactly what they discussed but the village got worse. It was like the Komiti were fighting against the Gorillas. The Germans and Italians came back to the village. They took all of our chickens. The Germans also came and killed our dogs by giving them bread with poison on it. They did this so that our dogs wouldn't hurt their dogs with diseases.

The Italians then started to take all of the bulls from our village. We couldn't work the farms without the bulls. So, men from the village decided that each house would give one of their bulls to the Italians. Some gave calves. The village started to share the bulls they had left. One day they would plow one family's farm and the next day they would farm another family's field.

The Komiti in the village decided to give their guns to the Gorillas to make peace. We aren't sure what happened, but the Gorillas got scared and wanted to take the Komiti to court because they had guns from the Italians. The Komiti were scared, went back to Kastoria, and asked for more guns from the Italians. The Komiti and the Germans/Italians came back to the village with the guns and said that from now on everyone in our village will have guns. Some people were very upset about this but they were forced to carry them anyway.

My father was still sick and people from the village told the Germans to not give him a gun, so they left him alone.

The Komiti surrounded the village and guarded it from the Gorillas. The Germans and Italians left us alone after that. Now we were scared of the Gorillas. We weren't allowed to work too far from the village because they couldn't guarantee our protection.

The Germans and Italians left Greece because they were losing the war. The Komiti were scared and didn't know what to do without their protection. The Gorillas decided to take the village. One summer night a Komiti was going to work and a Gorilla stopped him and wanted his gun. The old man wouldn't give-up the gun, and they killed him. The village was scared and found out they were surrounded by Gorillas. Three ladies brought the dead man's body back to his home. The Gorillas were fighting another village called Prokopi. They took over the village and killed many of the men.

Around noon that day my Aunt went to view the body of the old man. The Gorillas started to attack the village with machine guns and rockets. One of the shells hit my Aunt

and killed her. The Gorillas burned two houses and a few barns. One house was my Uncle Argie's house. He was actually on the Gorillas side, and they burned his barn by mistake. My cousin's George, Nick, and my Aunt were in their house when the fire spread from their barn to their house. Everyone else came to our house because it was in the middle of the village. There was so much smoke and the Gorillas took over the village.

Only two Gorillas were killed. Some Komiti surrendered and other's hid. Two Komiti came to our house to hide. One was wounded. We put both of them in the room where we kept the animals and hid them under the hay. The Gorillas were yelling for everyone to come out of their homes and give up their guns. My father was still ill in bed, and we all came outside except for him.

A spy told the Gorillas that two people were hiding in our house. They started shooting at our house. I saw a grenade hit the window and blow up right outside the house. The Gorillas found the two Komiti and my father and brought them outside. The Gorilla shot the wounded Komiti in the head. Then they were ready to kill my father next. One of my cousins stood in the way and told the Gorillas that my father wasn't a Komiti. He told them not to kill my father, and that my father didn't have a gun. They let my father and the other Komiti go. The Komiti that was shot in the head was moving around and everyone was afraid to help him. Finally, at night the villagers took him inside and he was dead.

We heard later that day that another Komiti shot himself in the head. Komiti still hid and the Gorillas couldn't find them all. Finally, the Komiti came out of hiding and gave up. The Gorillas took them from the village. They lied and said they wouldn't hurt them. The Gorillas killed the 12 Komiti in another village. Everyone was crying because these men were family and they were killed.

Chapter 4

When the Germans and Italians left, Greece didn't have any police or army left. This was in 1945. People didn't know what to do. We heard in our village that looters were stealing from nearby villages. They were coming to our village next. At that time we started to hide our animals in the mountains. We even had to hide our clothes. We put them in two chests and loaded them on the donkey. We took them to the pasture to bury them at night with a lantern.

The next day we plowed the rest of the field so that it didn't look like anything was buried. After some time things were changing. The government started to take over and they brought in police. The looters stopped and went back to where they came from.

We went back and found our clothes and brought them home.

People started to celebrate. In 1945 we had about 15 engagements happen. Because the war lasted almost 5 years, no one could get married. I remember all of the boys and the girls in the village dancing and singing.

Me and my cousin George found a dead sheep, and we skinned it. We found a sifter and a round piece of wood. We shaved the skin and made a drum. I played a flute and George played the drum. During that time another boy came with a smaller drum and another with a flute. We made music and everyone started to dance in the village.

That winter we were playing on the playground outside the church. It was covered up, so we would not get wet. Everything was good.

In 1946 things changed again. The Gorillas wanted a democracy. They started to fight with the government without the king. This happened in Athens. I remember the boys and girls were given play guns, and we all went to march in a parade in Kastoria. We all chanted that we wanted a democracy and not a king.

In two months the Gorilla war started again fight the government this time. It was like a Civil war father against son against family. Our village didn't know what was going on.

On night in March 1946 the Gorillas, Andartis came to our village and started singing songs. The songs said that they wanted to be free and if anyone wanted to come with them they could. They are at some of the homes and left the next day.

A spy from our village went to the police in Kastoria and said that Andartis were in our village. Then the police came to our village. The Andartis saw the police from the mountains and started to shoot the police. Then the police left. After one week the police came back with an army and surrounded the village. They told everyone to come out of their homes. They gathered us by the church. They separated the men from the ladies and we didn't know what to think. They took all of the men with them to another village. They took my father and all of the men and marched them to another village. They put them in big trucks and took them to Kastoria. The soldiers told the people of Kastoria that they captured the Andartis. Someone from the market told the soldiers that they recognized these men who sold wood to them, and that they were not Andartis. The police were lying and put all of the men from our village in jail. They were beaten. My father told me this story. The women went to Kastoria to find out what happened to their men. They found out that they were in fact in jail.

The next day there was a trial and those who had guns went to court. Those men and boys who didn't have guns were let go. The men who had guns were sent to a Greek Island and were kept there for two years before finally letting them go. Those who were in jail were the lucky ones. Those who came back to our village were recruited by the Andartis. The police from Kastoria were not allowed to come to our village because the Andartis wouldn't let them come. The police were scared because the Andartis grew larger and larger. They took over the village and told everyone they had to obey. From now on the Andartis used propaganda to recruit more and more men.

I remember that an 18 year old boy asked his mother to bring him peta to the farm and she wouldn't do it, so the boy volunteered to join the Andartis because he was angry with her.

The Andartis went to the schools and talked to the children. They started to use the children to deliver propaganda and used them as spies to deliver important documents. They threatened the children if they didn't obey. When they did this they turned into communist. They were getting very bad. The police and Greek Army were in the towns, but the Andartis controlled the villages and the mountains.

CHAPTER 5

One day in April about 20 Andartis came to our village with donkeys and mules loaded with wheat and rye. They left their supplies in our village and left. They told our village to take the wheat to another village.

A group of us took the donkeys from our mountain to another village called Platsa a mountain away. I got to go with them with my donkey loaded with two bags of rye. I was about 14 at the time. They gave me a needle and patch in case my bag broke open. We started in the afternoon and traveled threw the nights. It took 2 days and three nights. We traveled at night to hide from the Greek army. We didn't want them to find us because we didn't want to start a fight. Thank God we came home safely.

CHAPTER 6

In the spring, the Andartis used our village for supplies and food. A Shepard said he saw the Greek Army traveling by river and the Andartis were coming down from the mountains at the same time. They met near our village and started a war. I remember hearing machine guns for over an hour. The captain of the Greek Army was near the front and entered our village. The Andartis captured him and his horse and the army left without him.

I saw the captain in the middle of our village and remember seeing the Andartis leave with him.

In the winter of 1946 the army came back to our village. It was around November. Everyone in the village was scared. They were scared because they couldn't tell who was with the army and who was an Andartis. They spoke the same language, had the same clothes and guns.

One man in charge of our village told me and another boy named Gregory to go to another village called Prokopi. They wanted us to tell the people of Prokopi that the army was not coming to our village. The army was near our village in the mountain. We tried to leave that night but there was almost two feet of snow on the ground. The army

saw us and started shooting rockets and machine guns at us trying to force us to return to our village. We were scared and didn't know what to do. We hid in a ditch and moved slowly toward the next village down the other side of the mountain. I didn't have anything but a small coat to wear. It was very cold.

A Shepard from Prokopi village was in the mountains near us and Gregory knew him. We went near him and yelled for him. His dog started barking at us, but the man couldn't hear us. He finally saw us as we drew closer and went into his camp. It was warm in his cabin, and we warmed ourselves by his fire. He fed us what he could spare. There was no hot water, and he was still far from the village. We spent the night. When we were sleeping, we realized that there was lice all over the place. So we didn't sleep very well. At daybreak the Shepard told us he didn't have anymore and he fed us potatoes.

We hid with the Shepard, and he told us that if the army came we were to tell them that we were all Sheppards. My village didn't know what happened to us. We did not know what was going on in either of the villages. We stayed with the Shepard for three days. We decided to go to the village Melisotope to hide. We left early in the morning and walked for an hour. When we finally got to the village and we knocked on doors, but no one would let us in. We decided to go to the monastery to rest. The doors were locked there too. We knocked on the door and the caretaker let us in. There was an old lady there from our village. We told her what happened to us and told her about the Shepard and the lice in his cabin. She took both of us to a corner and gave us blankets. She took our clothes and boiled them. We stayed in the monastery, and they fed us and took care of us. Three to four days later about 10-15 men from our village came to the monastery where we were staying. They were trying to hide from the Army and the Andartis too.

We posted guards two at a time to watch for the Andartis or army who might be coming. We were there another two days. The men decided to go to a camp nearby where they kept our sheep during the winter. There was no one there, so they walked another hour away to another camp called Grebonsa. We decided to follow them. We went to the first camp and didn't see anyone there either, so we also went to Grebonsa.

Gregory and I found the men who were with us in the monastery in these two houses. They hadn't eaten for a week. There was no wood for a fire. We were all cold and hungry. They wanted to leave again. They decided to go to Metamorfosi. Gregory's family owned a place called Lapka. This is where his sheep were. We decided not to follow the men. We went to Lapka and there was no one there. We rested and then decided to go back home. In case the army caught us we decided to tell them that we were Shepard's coming down from the mountain to get food supplies. We traveled through the mountains again and we were close to our village. The army saw us and told us to stop. They asked us where we came from, and we said Lapka. They took us to our village and asked us about our families. We told them we had a father and mother, and we were from the village. They took us to the village and everyone was happy. We had been gone for almost two weeks.

The army was at our village and stayed until almost March. They left and the Andartis came back. Everything started all over again. It was now 1947. My father was still sick.

I worked on our farm which was very far away. The Andartis were very powerful at this time, and the army wouldn't come to the villages anymore. They mostly stayed in the towns.

CHAPTER 7

In the Spring I took our two bulls and their yolk to a valley called Louta near the mountain. I went to plow one of our acres. I was at a high spot on the field and the army saw me. They started firing artillery shells at me. I didn't know what to do. After a while they stopped. I took my two bulls and plow and went home. I told my father what happened and he told me not to tell anyone. The army thought I was digging a ditch for the Andartis.

CHAPTER 8

The Andartis were in our village and were still using the children to deliver information to the other villages. One day an Andartis on horseback came from another village called Tihio. The man in charge of our village, Antanas, told me to take the Andartis' horse back to Tihio. I had to go. I climbed onto the horse and rode him and hour and a half down to the valley. The Greek army saw me and started shooting artillery at me. There were shells exploding all around me. I got down off the horse and held him by his bit. We hid in a ditch. I decided to leave the horse and headed back to my village. It took me two hours to walk back. I lied and told them that I had delivered the horse to Tihio. I don't know what happened to the horse.

I told my parents what happened to me. They told me to not tell anyone what happened to me.

CHAPTER 9

The next summer things were not going very well. One hundred twenty men left the Greek army and came to our village to join the Andartis. They all left the village together to go up into the mountains. One week later from the village Litsista men over 60 came to our village, and they joined the gorillas and they left with them.

One morning I went to my Dedo Vasil's house. My Teta Deta, and cousin's George and Nick were there. We heard an airplane flying over head. It started to bomb our village. I heard machine guns and rockets all around us. I heard one bomb drop but it didn't explode. My Teta Deta hid us all in the kitchen. She started praying that Saint Nicholas protect us, and she will donate two candles in his honor. (Later on in life I reminded my

Teta that she never lit the candles and she couldn't believe I remembered this, so she went and lit to candles in the church.)

My mother was looking all over the place for me. I went back to my house and she told me that seven shells from the airplane hit our house. I saw the markings. I saw a red blanket nearby, and I believe that the airplane thought we were Andartis.

The boys from the village went to where the unexploded bomb was, and we covered it with wood. We started a fire and the bomb exploded from the heat. Boys will be boys.

CHAPTER 10

My father was still ill. We took him to Kastoria for medication. They left me and my brother Nicholas behind. When my mother returned, the Andartis started drafting the men in the village. Some of the men left and hid in the mountains. They didn't want to get drafted. Then they started drafting the girls. Everyone was scared. The Andartis surrounded the village and wouldn't let anyone escape. They drafted children as young as 16 years old. They took my cousin George.

My mother, brother and I were working in the fields. We tried to work anywhere we could. We started digging the potatoes to sell in the other villages.

One Andartis came to our village to our house. He was a relative and told my mother that the Andartis are going to start drafting 15 year olds. He told her to send me to Kastoria. We didn't know what to do. My mother talked to her sister-in-law Strina Rena to see if she would take me to Mavrovo with her to sell potatoes with the other older people. It was a trick to get me out of the village.

We left the village to go to the road. I followed behind the other adults almost a ¼ of a mile with my donkey. I stayed way back just in case there was a blockade, so that I could still turn back. We told my Aunt to yell, "Kosmas, where are you." Then I would answer, I'm right here. This was a signal that there wasn't a blockade and if it was safe.

We got to Mavrovo and tried to sell the potatoes. I was scared the whole time. We sold all of the potatoes. My father had sent a man, Vasil Partsanis, from Kastoria to see if I had made it to Mavrovo. This man came up to me and asked who I was. I told him I was son of Pereklis Skembos. My Strina Rena started talking with him. When everyone was ready to leave, I told them I wasn't going back. Everyone started yelling at me. My Strina started to cry. Vasil Partsanis took me to a small boat that was going to Kastoria. We left the village and went to Kastoria to the police station. I told them I left the village and wanted to stay with my father so that the Andartis wouldn't draft me. The police took me to my father, and he was happy to see me. He worried that I left my mother and brother alone in the village.

There were many people in Kastoria from our village. There were army and police. Everyone was celebrating. I was confused.

I went to the house where my father was living. There were three rooms. One room was for the owner. One room was for another family and my father had the third room.

Three more families came to the house to live. My cousin George left the Andartis and he followed me to Kastoria. There were 30 people living in the house now. They separated the men from the ladies. We had 10 men in our room. There was a small kerosene stove to cook on. No one was coming to Kastoria anymore to sell wood from the villages. We had to go outside to wash our face. There was only one toilet outside. There was a hole 3 foot deep and 3 foot wide of raw sewage. We didn't know what to do. We decided we had to empty it. We buried the sewage in the back yard. When summer came the heat made the sewage smell. Everyone wanted to know where the smell was coming from.

We stayed there for three years, and the owner didn't like us. We decided to give him some money. There was no work and the law said you had to let refugees stay with you. The government would supply some Sardines in cans and flour. There was never enough to eat. I was hungry all of the time.

CHAPTER 12

In the village, between 1940 – 1947, we had a little bit of money saved. We started to hide the gold pieces in the house. At that time, the gold pieces were the only currency. People would come and steal anything of value from your home. My mother had a gold piece necklace and Teta Deta had the same type of gold piece. My Dedo Vasil and Baba Vasilka would send the gold pieces from the United States. My Teta and mother were scared to wear the gold pieces for fear someone would take them.

We decided not to hide the gold pieces in the house. We decided to hide the gold pieces in the barn. We still did not think the money would be saved because they had a medal detector and could find the gold. My father decided to make a hole in front of the chicken house door. We made a hole and my father told me to burry it. He told me to remember where the money was hidden. We hid it there for 3 years. My brother was too young to remember. My mother, father and I knew where it was.

When the Civil War started in 1946, everyone started leaving the village to join the different organizations. My father was sick in 1947 and the doctor told him to go to Kastoria to stay there for treatment. When he left for Kastoria in June, 1947, he had a talk with my mother and told her he was going to take the gold to Kastoria. We had relatives there from Tsorilovo. They were living in Kastoria. They had a restaurant there. Their names were Spiro, and I don't recall his wife's name. My father told them to take care of our gold until the war ended. My father gave him everything including my mother and Teta's necklaces. There were not any witnesses or any

documentation when my father gave them this money. His wife started to have an affair with a police officer, and they left Kastoria. We didn't know where they went. My father went to Spiro to get his money back, and he denied ever having it. My father told me to never trust anyone without and documentation ever again.

CHAPTER 13

One day, in Kastoria, I was looking for some type of job. I saw a man doing a shoe shine. I watched how he did it and I asked him where he bought the polish and the brushes. I went home and told my father I wanted to be a shoe shiner. I was about 15 years old at the time. He told me to go ahead and try it. I found a wooden box, and put some rags, polish and brushes in it attached a belt to it to carry it. I also had a stool.

I went outside to a busy corner, and I started to shine shoes. There were a lot of army men walking around. One soldier came up to me to shine his shoes. I did a good job, and he gave me some good money. Then more and more soldiers and civilians came to me to shine their shoes. I did this all day, and I was making good money. I made my father proud since he still couldn't work.

When winter came and it was cold I stayed home. As soon as the weather was nice I was right back out there shining shoes. I did this for 6 months until March 1948.

CHAPTER 14

One day a man came up to me and asked if I was interested in working for a rich man doing work around his house. I cut grass, wood, trimmed bushes and did odds and ends. He also had a small factory with around 20 people working for him making fur coats. I also clean the factory. He paid me good money and he fed me. He had couches and chairs and carpet. One time I thought some day I want this if it's God's will. I remember this because I now have what he had thanks to God.

The rich man asked me to prune the grapes and till the soil in his orchard. I would dig and prune for hours and hours every Saturday and Sunday. I couldn't leave Kastoria on my own. I had to get permission from the police and the army to leave the city and go to the orchard. A general and the military police stayed in the rich man's home. The rich man whose name was Alvanos asked the general to give me permission to do this. He gave me the papers to go anytime I wanted. No one else was allowed to leave the city but me. A blockade was setup that I had to check in and out of. I could leave any time I wanted.

I started to collect the wood into bundles that I could carry from the pruned grape vines. Every time I left to go back to the city, I would bring wood home. It was 5 miles. The

women would use this wood to cook with outside. They were very grateful to me. All that was left was green wood. I had used every thing else.

CHAPTER 15

My cousin George, a friend Kosta, and I were all living in the house. There was a lot of brush around the city. They were covered with thorns. We took 3 axes and cut through it, and we made bundles again and took it to the city. The people from Kastoria didn't like this and told the guards about what we were doing. So the soldier stopped us and took our axes.

We then decided that there were a lot of rocks around the city. We decided to use the rocks to cut the brush. One of us would bend the brush over the stone and the other guy would hit the brush. We made bundles again and carried them back to the city. The same soldier stopped us and said how did you cut this wood, do you have another ax and we told him no, we used rocks. He left us alone after that. We took the wood back to our house to cook peta with.

CHAPTER 16

In 1948, I was ready to work for the city. I asked the rich man, Alvanos, to help me. He had a lot of power in the city because he was a rich man. He told me he would ask for me. He got me and a friend Illia jobs in the city. I started picking up garbage. I did all types of maintenance work around the city. We would work from 8 in the morning until noon. We would have a 2 hour break and then work until 6:00.

A man with a truck asked us if we could go to the river and get sand so that he could make cement. He wanted us to load his truck with sand. We did this during our 2 hour break every day. He paid us good money.

CHAPTER 17

The war was still going on and one day the government wanted 5 men from each village to work for the army. I was seventeen at the time. They took me, my cousin's Mike and George, and Kostas and Anatanas. They told us to go to the army base in the morning. We went there and they put us in an army truck. They took us to another village name Agia Kiriaki. This was August 15, 1948.

The place they took us to was called Mali Moddy, there were three mountains together. We were at one of the mountains. I was in a battalion of about 500 men. They gave us each 2 mules to watch and take care of. They told us that from now on we would be carrying ammunition, food, shovels, bread, and water to the soldiers. We would load and



Kosmas on a horse

take the supplies to the front lines of the war. We had to do what they asked. There was one mountain where a war was going on with the Andartis. It would go back and forth between the army and Andartis, both wanted control over the mountain.

We did this for 2 ½ months. The gorillas fired at us with machine guns and rockets trying to prevent us from supplying the soldiers. We had to continue do this even though we were in danger. We would load and unload the supplies from a village that was 4 miles away.

We had to pull 2 mules at a time this distance. I was one of them.

One night they took us and our mules 2 miles from the village to a low place where the gorillas couldn't see us. We left the mules there tied to some trees. They gave us one tent for every two people. We stayed

there for two nights and three days. It started to rain. There were about 30 of us. The rain wouldn't stop so we went back to the village, but the artillery was still firing in the mountains all day and all night.

One morning the Andartis starting firing on the village, the army was pulling back. They told us to get our mules ready to leave. Around 6 army airplanes started attacking the Andartis near our village. They started firing machine guns and dropping bombs. The Andartis retreated. The army took the mountain back. Many of the Andartis and army were killed and wounded. The army took the wounded mainly on their mules but gave a few to us. After 2 ½ months, the army sent replacements for all of us. We finally got to leave, all 500 of us and our mules. We thought we would be able to go home to Kastoria.

We drove passed Kastoria and didn't stop. There were 6 mules, 2 civilians and one army man per truck. They took all of us and our mules to another base. We thought we were going to another mountain to fight, but they took us to a farm called tsifliki. They told us unload here.

The next day they gave us cooked fish to eat. We saw a truck come with ladies and men. They were entertainers. They played music and the ladies danced. They gave all 500 of us wine and we had a good time.

There was a little mountain called Bikovik nearby. This was a mountain that the Andartis always wanted to take over. While we were having our party that night the Andartis took over Bikovik. The army pulled back. They were yelling at all of us to get our guns and our mules and get ready to fight since it was so close to us. The Andartis didn't know we were right there in the valley. We started to fight the Andartis. The Andartis retreated.

They took us to another village close-by called Aposkep. We started all over again carrying supplies to the front line. We stayed there for 2 weeks. They continued firing on us and now they decided to allow us to go back to Kastoria. Our replacements came. We loaded the mules and people back in the trucks. We drove passed Kastoria again.

We went to another place called Kozani. The highway we took was ambushed by Andartis. We got through it. They drove us to Kozani and unloaded. There were a lot of army men there and mules. We ate there and saw that they were taking our mules. They told us they were taking us back to Kastoria. We stayed in Kozani one week by a mountain.

There was a sergeant cleaning his machine gun, tombstone American made. At that time the Americans were helping us with artillery and ammunition and everything. We were watching the sergeant clean his gun when suddenly the gun went off. It was loaded and he didn't know it and it went off and hit his leg and shot off two of his fingers. My cousin Mike was hit in his heal. It could have killed us all.

The captains asked us what happened in a court. They took us individually into court to tell our side of the story. They were asking us questions about the incident. We told them what happened. They were sure if the sergeant did it on purpose or not. We don't know what happened to the sergeant.

The army paid us for the services we finished and we went to a restaurant in Kozani ate really well. The next day we got back on the army tucks back to Kastoria. For three months no one knew if we were dead or alive because we weren't aloud to write. My dad was so glad to see me again.

CHAPTER 18

I went back to work for the city. Winter came, it was 1949. We didn't know what was going on in our village. We couldn't go to see what was happening to my mother and brother. The Andartis wouldn't let them come to Kastoria.

It the spring, things didn't look right again. The army was planning another war with the Andartis. The Andartis had taken all of the children from our village; all that was left were old people and the women. This was 1948. They told the villagers to give their kids from 2-14 years old to the Andartis to take them to a safe place. Some gave their children to the Andartis. They had to have signatures from the mothers. My mother, Teta Deta, Teta Rena and cousin Fanie wouldn't give their children to the Andartis along with 4 other families. The Andartis took the kids from the villages and took them to the Communist countries, Yugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania and others. Most of the women left shortly after. Some went with the Andartis and some were left behind.

The Andartis and army started war again. They took all of the livestock from the village and any clothes they could find. Those left in the village like my mother were very scared. The few that were left behind went up into the mountains to get a way from the army. They saw an Andartis from a nearby village in the mountains who told them not to go any further or the next mountain the Andartis would take them. They decided to go back home. When they went back the army took them to another village. We learned that my mother and brother were coming to Kastoria. We also found out that Teta Deta and a few other ladies were sent to prison on a nearby island because Uncle Argie was a Patisan and it gave her a bad name.

My mother and brother finally got to go to Kastoria. I wasn't home because I was drafted again. My mother told me about all of this when I saw her.

CHAPTER 19

In 1949, before they started the war against our village, one night the military came into our home in Kastoria at 12 at night. They took my father and two other men, one named Demetre from our house. We didn't understand why. That morning I went to see what happened. They put my father in jail. I went to see Alvanos, the rich man, and I started to cry. I told him that last night the military took 3 men from our house including my father. Alvanos asked the general what was going on.

The general told me not to worry that he would let my father go. He told me to come back that night, and the military would take me in a jeep to where my father was. They called out his name along with Demetre to let them go home. They wouldn't let the older man that lived with us come home. He was 65, and I didn't understand why. He was a good man. He never came back, and we learned that they killed him. He never caused any trouble. He had 3 girls, and 2 grandchildren. One of his girls was married to a man from my village. We had all lived together.

I went to work in the city. The military police took my identity card. They told me that tomorrow morning I was to go to the army base. I went there and they put me in an army truck. There were people and kids and we were taken to a village called Nestorio. This was July 30, 1949.

They unloaded us at the village and they started to separate us. It was summer and I always wore a hat, even when it was so hot. A sergeant looked at me and said are we going to fight a war with a bunch of kids. They didn't take me at this time. I was only 17. They took the older kids and men with them. They told us we were going to deliver ammunition and artillery shells to the front line for one month.

When the war started in the mountains, Gramos, it was very cold. I only had a small jacket. We were working very high in the mountains and it was cold. An army man came up to me and gave me a trench coat where I unloaded at night. I didn't know if it had belonged to a dead soldier or not, but I took it anyway. I had that coat for two years and left it behind when I came to America.

When we went back to Nestorio, we found out that the war started again with the Andartis. The Andartis were losing the war. We came back in a truck at night and they started shooting rockets into the air. Machine guns and fireworks were going off everywhere. The army was celebrating. Many Andartis were killed or gave up. The next day we stayed two days and they told us that the war was over and we could go back to Kastoria. Thank God it was over.

CHAPTER 21

The government talked about building a highway and they wanted people from our village. They took me, and my cousins George, Mike, and Pete to a village called Gabris. We started working and the fields were filled with mines.

We stayed for one week and an army truck drove past. Someone from the truck started yelling for us to get our clothes and get in the truck because they were going to take us to Kastoria. We were all scared because we thought we were going to prison because they were only calling out our names. They took us to the police station and gave us papers. The papers told us we were now in the National Guard. They gave us dirty old German made guns. They also gave us 50 shells each. They told us to take our clothes and go to the village Visienia. We were told we were going to work at the police station and protect the village from the Gorillas.

There were about 10 of us from the village. They gave us one house to live in. It had two rooms upstairs and we slept 5 to a room. The rooms didn't have beds so we had to sleep on the floor. We started to guard the village in 2 hour increments.

We slept one night and in the morning we went to the police station to eat. They told us that they didn't have food for us. They told us to fend for ourselves. We didn't understand. We stayed there for three days and starved. All that was left in the village were old people. We visited one of our Aunts who was living in that village and asked her for some bread. My aunt gave us some bread, and we explained what happened. We decided to go back to Kastoria to get some food macaroni, spaghetti, and beans. We didn't get any meat. We went to Kastoria and told our parents what had happened and they did not believe us. We told them that we needed food to take back.

My father wasn't working and only got flour, sardines and cheese and he could only give us a little bit. We decided to have a cook. My cousin George volunteered but in exchange he didn't have to guard at night. He had no idea how to cook, but learned quickly.

At the police station there was a lady, named Mitsa Petrefska, from our village who cooked for the others. She would make more than she was suppose to and gave us the leftovers. She helped us so much. We did not know what to do in the village at the police station until one day we decided to go to the mountains to see what the Andartis might have left in the bunkers. They left a lot of ammunition, and grenades from England, Russia, German and US. We decided to play war for an hour since, we found so much ammunition. When we got back to the police station they asked what had happened. They thought we ran into the Andartis. We started laughing and said we were just playing.



Kosmas, Athomas Pappas, George Bellio

The next day we took 4 donkeys to the mountains loaded with ammunition and grenades. We were taking them back to the police station and we divided it all up. It was October and we were scrounging around for nuts and fruit left on the trees to help us through the fall.



Kosmas' Group in the National Guard

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Kosmas National Guard ID Card

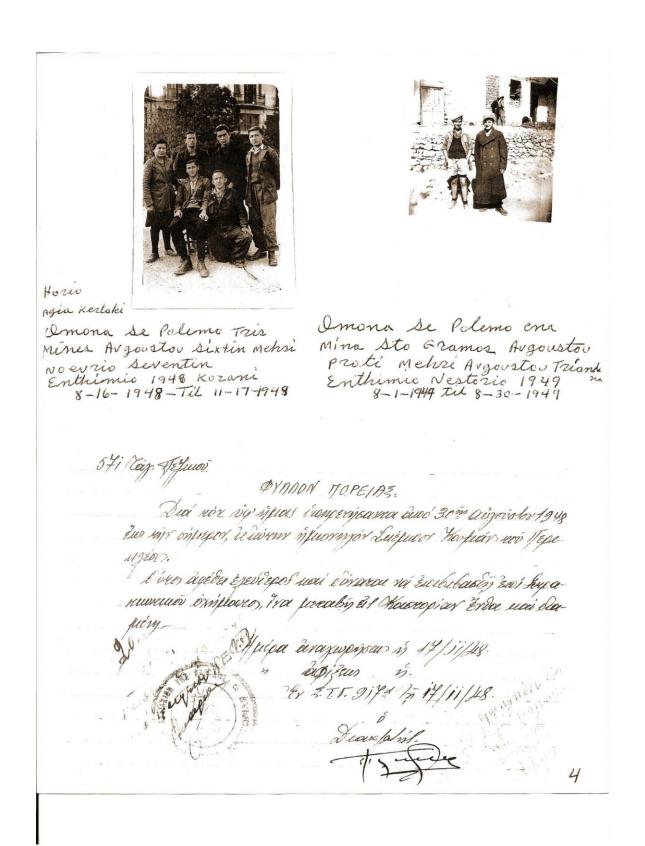


Figure 1 Kosmas, George Bellio, Mike Skimos, Athomas Pappas, Kostas Miloshi, when they were first drafted – Figure 2 Kosmas 2nd time drafted – Figure 3 Discharge Papers

One night a man came from another village called Oxia to the police station, and he told us that two people came to his field and stole a bull. They took the bull to the mountains. The police told us to get our guns because we were going to go to Oxia that night. It was about a ½ hour away. We surrounded the village and called everyone to come out. Everyone gathered together and we asked who stole the bull. They claimed it was the Andartis. We took our guns and that night went up into the mountains. We stayed all night and the next day army trucks showed up because they heard Gorillas were there. They went up into the mountains, too. We learned that the Gorillas had butchered the bull because the army saw their fire from a far. When the Gorillas scouts saw the army coming they left the bull and snuck away.

We went to a nearby village called Metamorfosi. There were two Gorillas from that village who gave up and they told us what had happened about the bull.

CHAPTER 23

That winter at the police station we went to a village called Tihio to have a good time. They had many young people who did not go with the Gorillas.

Then we went to Visina we stayed there for 7 months from April of 1949-1950 with the police station. Then the police sent us to Metamorfosi. At that time everyone came from Kastoria to temporarily live there. My father, my mother and my brother were finally together again. I hadn't seen my mother or my brother for three years.

CHAPTER 24

Metamorfosi did not have any work for us. They had us in a station, and we again had two-hour watches at night. My cousin George and I decided to go back to Kastoria to find jobs. We used sledge hammers to break stones down to one inch stones. The government paid us for the stone to make gravel roads. We had broken one ton in 8 hours. We would then walk back to Metamorfosi at night and it took two hours to get home. Then we would do our nightly watch. We did this for 6 months.

The next summer one of the men from the village didn't come home. His wife came to the station and told us she didn't know where he was. We started to look for the man. We went up to the mountains and started firing into the sky to see if we could scare the Gorillas away since that's who we thought had the man.

Somehow I hurt my leg and I didn't know what had happened. My leg started to swell up and it got worse. It was infected and I was told to go to the doctor. I went there and saw the rich man Ahilea Alvanos that I used to work for. He still had the army staying there. They took me to the hospital and the doctor asked me what happened. I told him I didn't know. He gave me two shots in my leg and I stayed there for two days until my leg felt better. My family came to Kastoria to shop and I climbed on to our donkey and went back to Metamorfosi.

We heard from a man from the village of Fotini that he had killed the man we were looking for because he had two gold pieces. He threw the man in a ditch. The police found him and asked who helped him. They found him and he admitted he killed the man for the gold. They brought him back to the village and put him in jail.

CHAPTER 26

We told the police we were going back to our village Polikerasos to visit. We had been there in 1949 when we worked in Visinia. We went with guns on our arms into the village. The grass had grown so tall that we couldn't even see the street. It was deserted. We started going from house to house to see what condition they were in. As soon as we came to my house I noticed they had used the wood from the floors to heat the house. It brought tears to my eyes. What had happened here? We heard dogs barking and realized they had been left behind. I saw my dog Mourjo. I yelled at him to come, but it was too late he had become wild. That broke my heart.

We chose a house on the side of the village to spend the night in. The steps were broken and we used another board to use to walk over the steps. It was my watch that night and I saw my cousin George walking toward me across the board. He told me he was going to relieve me. He had been sleep-walking. I gently woke him up and told him what happened and we laughed about it.

The next morning we got up and went back to Visinia. We told our people what had happened to the houses. We had to fix them up before we could return. The United States came and helped us rebuild the houses. We finally returned in October of 1950. Winter came and we didn't have any supplies to get us through. The village was stripped of everything cows, bulls, chickens.

In 1949, my father started to get better. We suffered for a long time from the war. My mother and brother suffered more than my father and me. My father lived for 79 years, and then he died. Remember to never give up. What happens to you in your life will pass, just remember to hold on like we did.

CHAPTER 28

I remember when all of the young men came back to our village. There were about 30 boys and 10 girls. We were going to have a dance. The girls acted like they could have anyone they wanted. We went to other villages to get different girls. Those men with guns went to other villages during the day and coming home at night.

CHAPTER 29

My father served in the Albanian war from 1939 to 1940. He was honored with a medallion by the Greek government in 1960 after the Germans and Italians left and the war was over.



Periklis Kosmas Skembos Medallion/Certificate

After WWII, everyone in our village had cock roaches. They couldn't sleep at night. They only came in the summer when it was hot. We couldn't kill them. Someone said to put leaves from beans around the house on the floor. They would eat the leaves and leave us alone. Many people would sleep outside so that the bugs wouldn't bother them.

After WWII, the Germans and Italians left. The United States sprayed the houses with DDT to kill the bugs.

CHAPTER 31

My relatives made us papers called Kota to come to the United States for me and my cousin George. You had to wait until your Kota was up to come to the states. They told us if we migrated from our village we could go to the United States if someone from the States applied for our papers. Our relatives did this and sent the papers to the councilet. The councilet sent us letters to go to Thessaloniki. They found our Kota and said do you want to go with Kota or papers from the states. We said we didn't care.

They told us to go to the doctor to get our physicals done. This was a part of the process to get to the states.

My cousins Sofi, Argie and I went to the doctor. We were walking on the street. There were two men coming toward us with a bottle in their hands. They hit us with the bottle then claimed that Sofi broke it. They were gangsters. Everyone started to yell. The police came and the men ran away.

We took our passports, and paperwork and we were ready to come to the United States. I left my father, my mother, my brother, and my village on March 24, 1951, to come to America. Something happened to my Cousin George's papers. Sofi, Argie, and I left the village and we said good-bye to everyone. My father came with me to Kastoria and the next day I left with my cousin Sofi and Argie on a bus to Athens. We stayed for a week there. We were getting ready to take the cruise on April 2nd. We were in a cabin with 12 other people. One guy came to our cabin and called our names. They told us to get our clothes and go with him. We were scared that they were going to send us back. They took us to a cabin with 6 people and told us we had to come up with \$20 more dollars. I had \$25 in my pocket and gave the man \$20 and it left me with \$5. I had a small suitcase and a red blanket along with some underwear. I still have the suitcase and the red blanket in my house today.

We left the port in Perea. My voyage was to New York, USA, Fort Wayne Indiana. Italian Express 1951 Mediterranean, New York. It took us 17 days from Greece to New York.

We made it to New York April 19. My uncle Lewis came to New York to get us. He took Sofi and me. Argie's uncle was also there. We went to a hotel for a night. The next day we took a train to Toledo, Ohio to my uncle's house. I saw my aunt Dota, cousin's Lefteria and Pondo and John. I was so happy to see them. I hadn't seen them for a long time. Later came my Aunt's Fanie and Proscha from Fort Wayne. They brought me to Fort Wayne Indian. I saw my Dedo Vasil and Baba Vasika, Uncles Andono, Naum, and cousin's Chris, Nada, George, Boris. I was so happy to see them after many years.

My Aunt Procha told me that I was going to stay at her house. I stayed there for three months and I thank her and my Uncle Andono for that. I found out that my cousin George was coming. It was August 1951. My grand parents took us both to their house to stay there. They wouldn't let us live in an apartment until we got married. We stayed there for $4\frac{1}{2}$ years.

CHAPTER 32

My Dedo Vasil and Baba Vasilka had a small house, one room for them and one for me and George. I started working days and George worked nights. We made money and bought a single bed so that each of us had one. After a few years, George said he wanted to be a mechanic on one side of the room. I bought a saxophone to play music on the other side of the room.

We lived very well there, but we were boys and wanted to go out, but we didn't have a car. My cousin George learned to drive in 1952. George Mangos and I decided that George would drive us to a dance in Gary, Indiana. It was 4 hours away on a Saturday night without telling my grandparents. We took highway 30 and it was raining very hard. There were floods everywhere. We couldn't see the highway. A big truck passed us and went through the water. George decided to follow him. All of the sudden water started filling up the car. The breaks wouldn't hold because they were wet. Then they started to work.

We went to Gary, Indiana to a dance. The time went past and I told them we should go home. The two Georges said we had time. It was 2 a.m. when we finally started home. We got home and Baba and Dedo were waiting up for us around 7 a.m. My Dedo pulled his watch out and said did you bring the milk in Greek. My Baba said to leave them alone they made a mistake. My Dedo asked us where we were and we told him. Then he wanted to know why we didn't tell them. I told Dedo it wasn't my fault because I told them we should of left earlier.

Note: My son Vasil did the same thing to me. One day he went to Ohio when he was older. They ran out of gas and had to wait until the morning when the station opened. My wife woke me up at 6:00 am and said your son is not home. Then Vasil came and told us they ran out of gas. I told him to come inside and told him of this same story and I let him off the hook.

I've been in the United States for one month, I was 20 years old. They told me that I had to go to Indianapolis. I was told I had to register for the army. They gave us papers to fill out and it showed where plains landed and how to use artillery. I didn't understand English. The sergeant took my papers from me and wrote something down and they let me go. Some of the men were drafted but I was let go with older men and those who didn't pass the physicals. The US was fighting Korea in 1951. They could have taken me without even being a citizen because Greece was Neto. Two months later I was sent papers again to go back to Indianapolis. I went back and they wanted me to fill out papers again. I still didn't understand English. A week later they put 4F on my papers. They didn't take me again. Thank God the war stopped in Korea.

CHAPTER 34

In 1951 when I came to the United States I started working and sent a lot of money to my parents and brother until they got old. My father lived to 1985. My mother lived to 1996. I never let them down. I always sent them money no matter how much they needed. My wife and I were happy that we helped them.

CHAPTER 35



Kosmas Busing Tables

I started to work in a restaurant to learn to be a cook for my Uncle John. They had me wash dishes, cut up potatoes and onions. I did any job. After a while I was a bus boy.

I learned from a Greek man how to speak English. I worked 7 days a week and my Uncle paid me \$25/week. He would drive me back and forth from my house. My cousin Mike started to work at the restaurant too. He paid him \$25 too.

My Uncle told us that at night we were to learn English. We went to South Side Central High school twice a week.

We weren't making much money, so I told my cousin George to get me a job at the Bakery. He was making more

money than me. I went to the Bakery and put in my application.

I told my Uncle I didn't want to be a cook anymore. The bakery hired me the next day. I stayed at this small baker for a month. Then I got a call from Holseum Bakery. There were a lot of Greeks working there.

It was October 2nd, 1952 when I started working nights there. I worked from 6 p.m. until the morning. I slept during the day and couldn't go to school. I started working at the ovens to bake bread. I was putting a pan on a door and a bar would come down and hit the pans in. They told me to watch the bar, but I didn't understand him. I had my thumb there and the bar hit my thumb. I didn't know what to do. I didn't tell anyone. My thumb was hurting and it turned black. I didn't want to get fired so I didn't tell anyone until I got home that night. I told my Dedo what happened and he asked why I did not tell anyone.

I would walk three miles to go home because there wasn't a bus at that time of the day. They started putting me in other jobs but the language was hard. It took me time to learn the jobs. I started to make friends and we were like a family. I was paid \$1.25/hour. I worked 6 days a week. I didn't work on Saturday. I didn't want to work holidays and Sundays, but I had to do anything they would give me.

CHAPTER 36

I saved money and I bought a car. It was a Belair 1954 Chevy. I took the driving test and passed and I started to drive all over the place. When I went on vacation to Tennessee I got lost. I couldn't find the highway. I stopped at a restaurant. One person said turn left, the other said turn right. One person said to go a certain way. I found the highway but I didn't understand the signs North or South. I found 75 Highway. When I came home, I started to learn how to read a map. I learned the directions and decided to learn where all of the states are.



Kosmas and his first car

One day I took my car and went to a Macedonian/American dance. I knew some people from the village there. I liked the music. I mentioned it to a friend of mine George Mangos and I asked him if he wanted to make music. We bought a trumpet and a saxophone and I talked to my cousin Bill who knew a little bit about the clarinet. Then we found another friend who played an accordion. Another boy who came from our village and we told him to play the drums. He had just come from the village and didn't have any money to buy the drums, so I bought them for him. They were used drums, but they worked.

We started practicing but George decided he didn't want to play anymore after two months. I didn't know what to do so I found another trumpet player, Leon. The boy's grandmother was from our village, but his he and his mother were born here. I asked him to come play with us. At that time, I started to learn how to play the saxophone. Leon's house was in the country. His mother was Leana and father was Bill Gianakeff. We practiced at his house.

One day I bought a phonograph and Macedonian, Greek and American records. We would play them and learn how to play the songs. Leon was educated and he taught us. The accordion player George Nacelaris and my cousin Bill Skimos knew how to play from school also. We started playing music November 6, 1954 and it was time to perform in front of an audience for the first time. We started to play for the Greeks on Greek Independence Day. They had a dance March 25th, 1957. At that time my daughter Olga was 4 weeks old. We put her in a basket and brought both her and my wife with us. The band included Kosmas Skembos, Saxophone, 23; Bill Skimos, Clarinet, 16; George Rongus, Drummer, 17; George Naselaris, Accordion, 16; and Leon Gianakeff, Trumpet, 15.



The Band Starting Out

When we walked up on stage everyone got scared. I told them not to be scared. We stared playing and everyone started dancing. When we were done playing everyone clapped their hands. We played for a while then stopped for a break. I told the band that we were playing good. I told them not to be scared or ashamed. We started playing at weddings, engagements, graduations, anniversary parties, and picnics.

I was playing Clarinet when Bill went to Old Country for a month. We had to play a Romanian and a Greek wedding while he

was gone. I had to play the Clarinet and I played for both weddings. We made it.

One day we played for a wedding for my nephew Chris Pentsios, and I was playing the drums because the guy playing the drums did not show up. I couldn't find anyone else to do it. So, I had to play the drums too, and I did it. We started to play music. It's a good thing to do to play music because it makes people happy, and they sing and celebrate. We always had to have a little whiskey or beer because it made the music. I remembered that I always had to do a job, so I never drank too much.

I started when I was four years old playing a pot or a flute, now my dream came true to play music in Fort Wayne Indiana. I learned Macedonian, Serbian, Greek, Bulgarian, Romanian, American, and German music.

People would come and go in the band. They would quit and another would join. We had 5 different accordion players and 5 different trumpet players. We had 3 different drummers. Bill and I were always the same ones. It was difficult to teach the new ones from scratch.

We played in Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky and Canada in different towns. The band also played in Washington DC once.



Kosmas when he first started playing



Kosmas on stage at a wedding

I left the band after 25 years. The group continued to play but because of my job I couldn't play anymore. Bill continued and now he has his son, and nephew playing with him. I don't know how I put up with these people for 25 years. It was a lot of work. Everything went through me.

On our 50th anniversary, the band was playing at the church ball. They played a special dance for me and my wife. They came out on the dance floor and played while I lead the dance. I almost stared to cry mainly because I started the band. They played for my children and my grandchildren. I see all my kids and my grandchildren dancing and it brought me such joy. Two of my grandchildren are in the Dance Group Jessica and Michael. William is playing saxophone, Jessica is playing clarinet, and Michael is learning the saxophone. Stephanie

tried to play trumpet, but instead is doing color guard. William is also the drum major at Snider. Tommy and Dirk copy William and they try to conduct the band too and they are just $1\frac{1}{2}$ and 2 years old. My music legend lives on.

I wrote two songs one dedicated to my wife, "America Majka America" and the other song was "Now I Know" was for my wife and the people who worked nights at the factory.

America Majko America – Slow Waltz – April 1976 Slavic & Macedonian Language

America Majko America America mother America

Tuka sum mnogu vesela Here I'm very happy

Tuka go naidov libeto Here I have found my love
Vo Americančite Štati In the United State of America

Ljubovna Pesana Da Pejam

Love Song to sing

Mueto Libe da Ljubam

My love to love

America Majko America

Tuka e mesto da živejam

America mother America

Here is the place to live

Tuka e mesto za lubov

Tuka e mesto za mene

Here is the place for love

Here is the place for me

Love Song to sing

Mueto Libe da Ljubam

Love Song to sing

My love to love

American Ličhna America America beautiful America

Što mi si Ličhna se ipoličhna Why you are so beautiful and more beautiful

to me.

Zašto imaš devojki ubavi Because you have the prettiest girls to love

Dalubat site ergeni all the boys.

Ljubovna Pesna Da Pejam

Love song to sing

Moeto Libe Da Ljubam

My love to love

America Majko America

Tuka moe libe da Ljubam

Here my love to love

Tuka so Libe Dabidam

Here with my love to be,

Tuka so Libe Daživejam

Here with my love to live

Ljubovna Pesna Da Pejam

Love song to sing

Moeto libe da Ljubam

My love to love

America Majko America

Vo Parva štata se zaljubiv

American mother America

In the first state I fell in love

Na ftora štata se sfarišivIn the second that I got engagedNa treata štata se o jzenaIn the third state I got married

Liubovna pesna da pejam Long song to sing,
Moeto libe da ljubam My love to love

^{*}This song I wrote for my wife. I love her all of the time, and it's a love song. It is also dedicated to my mother, father, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother, sister-in-law, sister-in-law and brother-in-law and their families. It is also for my children and their families. I love you all. God bless America by Kosmas Skembos.

Now I Know

By Kosmas Skembos Dance step is 1, 2, 3, kick left kick right. April 1976

Now I see your eyes In the Dark of Night Now I can't sleep Want your love tonight

Love me honey, honey, Love me baby, baby In the dark of night

Kiss me honey, honey, Kiss me baby, baby, In the light of day

Now I know you love me, In the dark of night Now I want to love you, In the light of day

Love me honey, honey, Love me baby, baby. In the dark of night

Kiss me honey, honey, Kiss me baby, baby In the light of day

Now I know you'll kiss me In the dark of night Now I want to kiss you, In the light of day

Love me honey, honey, Love me baby, baby, In the dark of night

Kiss me honey, honey Kiss me baby, baby In the light of day Now you make me happy In the dark of night Now I'll make you happy, In the light of day

Love me honey, honey Love me baby, baby, In the dark of night

Kiss me honey, honey, Kiss me baby, baby, In the light of day

Now I know you'll give me All you love of night Now I'm going to give you All my love of day

Love me honey, honey, Love me baby, baby In the dark of night

Kiss me honey, honey, Kiss me baby, baby, In the light f day

• This song was written for the old and young people. Those who work nights missing their wives and the sacrifices they made. This was written for my wife Milka. I love her so much.

CHAPTER 38

I am now 24 years old and occasionally I went on dates, and I was looking for my luck. Which girl was for me? One Sunday my Strina Rena and Uncle John went to Detroit for a wedding. They came back from the wedding and my Strina told me that they saw one girl named Milka and she was 19 years old. She was a bridesmaid in the wedding. She came from Yugoslavia, Macedonia. My aunt told her that we have a boy in Fort Wayne if you want to meet him sometime.



Kosmas Courting Milka

My cousin Sophie in Toledo told Milka when a picnic was in Detroit on August 3, 1955 and asked Milka if she wanted to come.

I drove from Fort Wayne to Toledo to pickup Sophie and John and we went on to Detroit.

Milka and her Sister Ilanka and father Tamy came to the picnic.

We started dancing Macedonian, and we both looked at each other. Then they started to play a tango dance. I went to ask her if she wanted to dance and she said ok. We danced together and she was dancing just like me. We stopped dancing and started talking outside with everyone. I asked her what her name was and told her my name was Kosmas. I remember that I had my saxophone with me. I started showing off and played for her and the day passed. Before we left I asked her for her address and phone number and she gave it to me. I also gave her my phone and address.

I came back to Fort Wayne and wanted to send her a letter. I didn't know how to write in Macedonian. I asked my Dedo Vasil if he would write down the Macedonian alphabet. He asked me what I needed that for, I should be learning English. He wrote down the

alphabet and I started to write a letter to Milka. She understood it a little bit, but I didn't understand her.

One day I went to my Uncle Andone and asked him to read the letter Milka wrote to me. He didn't understand it either. I was printing and then I changed it to hand writing and Milka understood. My Uncle then said, "Why don't you call her and see if you can understand her better?" At that time we started calling each other and understanding each other.

I wanted to go visit my Agapy (love) Milka. I asked her where she lived. I called her and asked her if I could visit her at her house. She told me yes. I drove to Dearborn, Michigan. When I was driving, I found out there were 2 Dearborn's, East and West and I was in West Dearborn. I stopped off at a restaurant and asked where I was. They told me that I had to go to East Dearborn, 5 miles away. There was a lady at the restaurant selling plastic horse shoes for a dollar. I bought one and she said good luck. I still have horseshoes hanging in my house today.

I left the restaurant and found her house. I met her father, sister, uncle, aunt and cousins. They were all there. They made me peta and manja. I asked her if she wanted to go to the Cinema so we could be alone. But, her sister had to come with us every time. After the movie we went back to her house. I asked her where the nearest hotel was. They told me I could stay at their house. I slept there and left the next day at noon. I had to be back to work that night at 6:00 pm. It was a 4 hour drive home. When I came home I told my Baba and Dedo that I met the girl and I wanted her. She had a good family.

My Baba and Dedo had learned from the wedding that Milka had a limp. I didn't know what to do. I told them that Milka seemed fine to me and I didn't see her limp. The next week I went back to Dearborn. I took Milka and her sister out again to the Cinema. They were walking ahead of me and I watched to see if she limped or not, but I didn't see anything. I told her it was time for me to drive back home. I talked to my Baba and Dedo and told them that I had a good time and she was not limping. We found out later that another bridesmaid in the wedding was limping and it wasn't Milka.

CHAPTER 39

Weeks passed as I drove back and forth from Fort Wayne to Dearborn, and I decided that Milka was the girl for me. She was a sharp, dark-haired; brown eyed, 5 foot tall, beautiful women. She loved to dance, and loved to sing. She made me so happy.

I called her to meet me at an MPO Convention in 1955, in Cleveland, Ohio. She said yes. It was September 2nd, Labor Day weekend. I told her to meet me at my Cousin Sophie's house and we would all drive together from there. I told my Dedo and Baba that I was going to ask her be engaged to me and I would call them if something happened.

I went to Toledo to Sophie's house because that is where we were supposed to meet. Milka and her sister were hiding and Sophie told me that they didn't come. I started to worry. They told me to hang my coat in the closet. When I opened the door I saw my Agapy, Milka. We both started laughing and hugging. That is when I told her I loved her. She told me that she loved me too. When we came out to the living room, we told Sophie, John and Ilanka that we were engaged.



Kosmas & Milka's Engagement

I called my Uncle Louie, Vuina, Baba and Dedo and told all of them that we were engaged. We did not call Milka's father because we wanted to tell him in person. I told my Uncle Louie that I wanted to buy a ring for Milka. Uncle Louie gave me some money to buy a ring, and I paid him back.

We picked out a ring together. It was white gold with diamonds and it fit her perfect. Then we went to the Convention in Cleveland. We went to the hotel and I got two rooms. One was for me and the other one was for Milka and her sister. We went to the Convention and saw Pando, Rea, John, Sophie, Connie, Michael, George, Nada, Johnny, Teta Fana, Uncle Naum, George, and Butch. Milka told them all that we were "Sfarsime". Everyone started to laugh because in

Macedonian it meant we were done. We call it Aramasame. We went to the dance and everyone went outside to a restaurant and we all celebrated that night. The next morning, Monday, we drove back to Dearborn to tell her father that we were engaged. He wanted to know why we didn't' call him and we said we wanted to tell him in person and apologized. We told Milka's Aunts, Uncles and Cousins and we were all happy.

The next day I came to Fort Wayne and told the rest of my family. I was sad that my parents were not in Fort Wayne to tell them. I wrote them a letter, since they didn't have a telephone. They answered me back that they were very happy for me.

CHAPTER 40

I was driving back and forth and Milka had a cousin, Vicki Naum who asked Milka to be a bridesmaid in her wedding. Milka said yes. We went to the wedding and I took my saxophone with me. Milka's cousin Nick Vangoff played the trumpet. They told us to go outside and play when Vicki came out of her house. The weather was good. We played when the bride came out of the house. Then, it started to rain really hard. We played in the rain and Milka stayed under the umbrella. She was telling me something and I didn't understand what she was saying. She said here is the Shatar, the umbrella. I told her that we called it a shemche or ormbrella. We laughed. She asked me why I was laughing.

We went to the wedding and danced at the reception. The next day I left. I told her that it was her turn to come to Fort Wayne, Indiana to meet my relatives. She said yes. The next week I picked her up and told her it was 180 miles. There weren't good highways at the time and it took us 4 hours. We drove passed Toledo and Defiance, Ohio. We stopped at the Maumee River. There were some benches. We rested and Milka asked how much further. I told her we were half way. She wondered what I had gotten myself into.

We got to my Baba and Dedo's house and met all of my relatives. Everyone gave her gifts, my Dedo Vasil, Baba Vasilka, Uncle John, Strina Rena, Teta Procha, Uncle Andone, Teta Fana and Uncle Naum all gave her gifts. Milka was so happy. She told me that I have a good family.

At that time there was a Macedonian wedding and I didn't go. I could not get a day off from the bakery, but I told Milka to go with my Strina Rena and Uncle John to go to the wedding. They went to the wedding and the next day I took her back.

We talked with Milka's Father and sister and told them that we wanted to have the wedding sooner. Then we needed to pick a date. We told them November 20th, 1955. I came back and told my Dedo Vasil and Baba Vasilka the date and they said let's check with the church and find a hall and band for the same day and everything was just right. I called Milka and told her the day was good and she told her father and sister the date.

CHAPTER 41

Before the wedding Milka came to Fort Wayne. I took one week off vacation so that we could look for a house. We found a house that we both liked and we bought it. Then Milka went back to Dearborn. The basement was very dirty and I asked my cousin George to help me paint it. We didn't know how to paint, but we did it anyway. We didn't open the windows. We started singing. My Aunt's sister lived across the street and came over. She knocked on the door and she started yelling us to open the window or we would get poisoned. We laughed and did what she said.

CHAPTER 42

The wedding date was drawing near and my Dedo Vasil and Baba Vasilka bought us a kitchen table. My Uncle John and Strina Rena bought us a refrigerator. My Uncle Louie and Vuina Dota bought us a stove. My Uncle Andone, Teta Proscha, Uncle Naum and Teta Fana bought us a coach and chair. My cousin George bought us another chair. Milka's father bought us the bedroom furniture and bed. Her sister Ilanka bought us a suitcase. Everyone gave us money and our home was full. I thank my family, father-in-law and sister-in-law for everything.

I went to pickup Milka in Michigan with my cousin Vasil. It was a Friday. I was driving a little bit faster. I looked in my rearview mirror and there was a police behind me. He told me that I was driving 5 miles over the limit. He looked in the car and saw that we had the Kolach (bread) and Wine. I told him that we were on our way to a party and we were late and I apologized. He told me that if I drive too fast, I wasn't going to get married. I told him that I was going to get married Sunday. He let me go with out a ticket and wished me luck.

We went to Milka's house and all of the relatives were there. They wanted to make a Kolack themselves. I was upstairs and the ladies were downstairs making the bread. My cousin Vasil went downstairs to check on them. They yelled for me to come downstairs. I went down there and they covered me with flour for luck.

We left Saturday morning to come back to Fort Wayne. Her father and sister came later that day. When we went to the house she saw all of the gifts and her heart was full.

CHAPTER 43

We got married November 20th, 1955 at St Nicholas Church on Oxford and Warsaw Streets. The priest was Kiril Yunchev. He is now the Bishop. I was worried about my father, mother and brother because they couldn't come and I didn't have the money to bring them here. We had a big wedding and everyone came to the wedding.

George Bellio was the Nunko and Ilanka was the Nunka. The groomsmen were my cousins John Pappas, Bill Skimos, George Rongos, George Mangos, and Butch Gosheff was the ring bearer and the bridesmaids were cousin's Nada Checovski, friend Rosey Kosma, Shirley Popoff, Elefteria Chucas, flower girl was Patsie Vangoff.

When I saw Milka walk down the isle my heart stopped. I couldn't breathe. All of my prayers were answered. It was 2:00 pm on that Sunday and it was like time stopped just for her.

We went to the reception at a hall on Warsaw Street. We had a band and music from 5pm until 12:00. The dinner was ½ chicken, mashed potatoes, corn. We had wine and wine. The band was Elo Kalkoff. When they retired we took over. We danced all night long. Milka loves to dance and sing! Our family and friends all gave us so many gifts

and money, we were so grateful.



Kosmas and Milka's Wedding Day

We left at midnight and went on the honeymoon. The bakery gave me 5 days off. Two days were to go and get Milka and three days for the honeymoon. We went to a hotel in Huntington (each) and then we went to Indianapolis for two days. Then we came back.

We came home and saw all of the presents that everyone gave us. We thanked everyone for the beautiful wedding. We will never forget it, Love Kosmas and Milka.

CHAPTER 44 Milka's Story



Milka in her early 20's

Naum, Thomas and Dafina was their daughter. They came from Zelevo to live in the village of Porodene.

My name is Milka Vangov. My father's name was Thomas, my mother's name was Olga, and my sister's name is Ilanka. I was born in the village of Porodin, county of Bitola; country was the Republic of Yugoslavia, Macedonia. I was born December 12,1934.

We stayed in my Dedo Tarpo and Baba Valinka Vangov's house. The house had two rooms and a kitchen. My Baba and Dedo got married in the village of Zelevo, Macedonia in the country of Greece. They had three boys and one girl. The boy's names were Vasil, They came from Zelevo to live in the

My mother's family was my Dedo Stase, Yaya Marda Ognenovi. They got married in the village of Konomaldi. They had one boy Ondone and two sisters, Letsa and Olga. They left from Greece Macedonia and came to the village of Porodena.

Note: President Clinton recognized Macedonia, and President Bush now recognized Macedonia as a country.



Milka, her mother Olga, & sister Ilanka

My Dedo Tarpo came to America to work in 1916 to Detroit, Michigan. He left his family to make some money. He left his wife and children. Later he brought two boys when they grew up Vasil and Naum came to America. Then my Dedo Tarpo left the two boys in America and went back to the village.

Later the two brothers brought my father to America in 1939 before WWII. My father left my mother, sister and I in Macedonia. I was 5 years old and my sister was one year old with my DedoTarpo to live. The war with the Germans started. My father would send us money and clothes. After the war started he could not send us anything.

When I was twelve years old I was going to the village to sell fruit on my donkey. We went to the village Krimintsa with my Uncle Andone and another man from the village. That village was filled with Turkish people. Then men would only buy fruit from the men and the women would only buy fruit from the women. The Turkish people believed that when a girl was twelve years old she must cover her face until she got married. My face was open and when the men would come by I would cover my face. When the communists came they told the women to not cover their face. A lot of countries still do this.

My Uncle and the other man left me by myself....they forgot about me. They went back to the village and my mother asked where I was. They didn't know what to tell her. When I was looking for them, I learned they had left. I knew the way back and so did my donkey. My mother was so happy to see me.

When I was twelve years old, I always loved to climb the fruit trees and hide from my mother. I was a wild girl. We didn't have any toys. I would take a rag and put a ball in the top to make a pretend doll. We had to sleep on hey on the floor. We only got meat once a week, sometimes once a month. Our vitamins came from raw eggs that we had to eat. My sister was always very sick and my mother always gave her milk and not me. I wanted milk so bad.

In the village we went to church. When the communist came, they wouldn't let us go to church. My mother was going secretly with us to go to church. My mother started working leaving me at home with my sister and Baba and Dedo in our house. She was working for the Government when the communist came. Everyone in the village was working men, women, and boys. The country paid them for their work. She worked on a farm. The more you worked the more money you got. It was enough money for us to live.

My Baba and Dedo passed and left us their home. Later, after the war, letters, clothes, and money came from America and we were living well.

I was going to grade school in our village. I finished 6th grade. Then I went to the high school in another village. That village was called Veloshena. We would walk 5 kilometers there and back. We would walk back at night 5 times a week. Our village didn't have a high school.

I was in a singing and dancing group in high school, and we would dance and sing in different villages. I finished three years of high school in the village of Veloshena.

I started working in the fields planting peppers and tomatoes after I graduated. I took any job the government would give me. In my village my cousin Nevena taught me how to sew.

Time came and my father was going to bring us to America. He made the papers on August 14, 1954. Something terrible happened. Right before we came to America, one woman was going to America from our village. My mother and I went to see her to say goodbye. We were in the back of a truck, made like a bus. There were about 50 people on the bus. The driver was drinking whiskey, and he was drunk. He tried to pass a horse and buggy, and he swerved off the road and into the ditch. Fifteen people got killed and many more got wounded. I was close to the door and the truck flew me out the door. My mother was in the middle and she got killed. I didn't know what happened to her because I was unconscious. When I woke up I saw my mother dead. Then they took the dead to the village.....everyone in the village started crying and screaming. A lot of the people on the bus were from the village it was Easter April 25, 1954.

Three and a half months later my sister and I came to America. We came on an airplane. We hadn't seen my father in 15 years and we didn't recognize him. My Aunts, Uncles and cousins met us there, but my sister and I were disappointed because we weren't with our mother. My father had bought a house and we saw the house. I was 19 and my sister was 15 years old. I went to school at night 2 nights a week and then I took a job doing tailoring that I learned from my cousin at Federal Tailoring. I worked all year and only saved \$125. My sister went to school every day and finished high school and she got a diploma she became a beautician.



Figure 1Ilanka and Milka in Authentic Jelevo Attire

Note: When I got married I used my \$125 for two storm windows.



Milka, Olga, Tamy, Ilanka, Vasil

I lived with my father for 1 year and 3 months. One Sunday there was a picnic in Detroit. I went with my father and my sister. I saw one boy named Kosmas at the dance. We danced the tango and the waltz. I asked him his name, he told me Kosmas, and I told him my name was Milka.

CHAPTER 45

After the honeymoon it was time to go back to work from 6:00 pm until 6:00 am. I left my navesta Milka at home alone at night because that's the way my job was. One night it started raining and thunder and lightning. My wife called me at work to come home because she was scared of the rain. I asked her if she wanted me to come home and she said no. I told her the rain would pass away.

CHAPTER 46

Time passed and God gave us a girl born February 27, 1957 and we were so happy. We became a mom and dad. We named her after my wife's mother Olga. Olga made the time go fast. After 2 ½ years we had a boy named after my Dedo Vasil and his middle name was my name Kosmas. He was born December 2, 1959. We were happy because he would carry on the Skembos name. After 4 years we had another girl born August 13, 1964. We were so happy we had another girl. We decided on an American name Nancy. Then we became a family.



Milka, Nancy, Olga, Vasil, Kosmas the early years

them, because I was working nights and sleeping days. I always worked a lot of hours and I would help when I could. My wife told me that she wanted to go to work, but she couldn't until the kids grew up. She stayed home for 15 ½ years to take care of the kids. When Nancy was still young, my job changed and Olga and

My wife had a lot of work watching all of

I helped Milka take care of Nancy and Vasil.

Milka started working sewing clothes and fabric to make suits. She knew how to do this from the town Bitola. Now I changed too and I had to watch the kids, cook and clean. My wife and I shared more and things were good in the house. We had good health and love.

CHAPTER 47

In our backyard we had a lot of trees. They all started drying out from some type of disease. We decided to cut them down. They wanted too much money to do and we didn't have the money to pay. So, we decided to cut them down ourselves. We used a hand ax and a saw. Little my little we cut them down. We still had to pay someone to take it away. We didn't have anyone to help us.

The house we bought had a crack in the basement and water was coming in. We couldn't stop it. The man who built our house didn't put tile around the basement walls. We started asking people what to do and everyone told us to dig a ditch around the basement eight feet deep and 4 feet wide. We asked some people to come and give an estimate and they asked for a lot of money. It would have taken every cent I made for a year to pay them.



Kosmas & Milka's first home 4315 Avondale Drive

We didn't have any family to help us with money or with digging. We didn't have our parents here either. I told my wife that I was going to start digging. She told me it was too much work for one man to do. I took one week vacation in the summer. The weather was good and Monday morning I took the shovel and pick and started digging. I had to dig eight feet down and four feet wide. It was 25 feet by 24 feet by another 10 feet. All together it was 59 feet. I dug for 12 hours a day for eight days straight. I did the job all by myself with no help.

I had to go by tiles to put all around the basement to connect with the sewer, so that the water would go around the house. I did that and then I had to fill the ditch with gravel over the tile. I bought it and they brought it to my house. They unloaded a ton and a quarter. I used the wheel barrel and started moving it and I filled the ditch all around the house and finished it with dirt. It was a lot of work. It was the hardest job I ever had to

do in the United States. Thank God he gave me the strength to finish it. I will never forget this job as long as I live.

CHAPTER 48

Olga was ready to start school and she didn't know any English. She started talking to the other kids in Macedonian, but the kids didn't understand her. Milka and I didn't know English enough to teach her. Olga had such a hard time with the other kids. One day the teacher sent us a letter. She told us to come in and meet with her. Milka went to the school to see the teacher. The teacher told her that there is something wrong with your daughter. She didn't understand anything. She didn't know how to pronounce dog or cat in English. Milka asked Olga how to pronounce dog and Olga said Kutse and then Milka asked her to say cat and Olga said Matska. The teacher didn't realize that she was talking a different language and apologized. From that day on, Olga never spoke Macedonian again.

CHAPTER 49

One winter when Vasil (Bill) was about two or three years old, there was icicles around the house and the garage gutters, and he took a hoe and started knocking all of them down. He put holes in the aluminum siding all over the garage. What a mess he made.

Then as he got older he started playing hockey. He always carried the hockey stick forward and he always walked right into the side door breaking the glass right out to the door. He did this three or four times before I finally decided to replace the door window with plastic. He couldn't break that.

Vasil then started playing baseball. In school he was in cross country, soccer and wrestling.

One day Paul Rongos, John Skimos and John Kaplanis came over and the boys were playing baseball in the backyard. They kept breaking my basement windows in the house. Then I finally decided to buy some board to cover the windows. That passed.

CHAPTER 50

One day my cousin George asked us to go to his house. They were going to roast a pig outside for us all to eat. We started roasting the pig and the boys and Nancy were playing outside. George Junior was up in a tree and Nancy was right below him. He was using a hatchet and he was cutting the branches. The hatchet fell and landed right on Nancy's

head. Blood was everywhere. We took her in the house and cleaned her head. Milka took pepper poured it on the cut to make it stop bleeding. Then we bandaged it and took her to the doctor. We told him what happened. He asked us where we came up with that idea and we told him we knew it from old country. The pig was still roasting and we put it in the oven. We ate dinner and then we left.

When Nancy was very young she went across the street to an old Baba's house. We looked for her everywhere. Then we saw her walking down the street after about an hour. We asked her where had she been and she said to the Baba's house.

One day we were at Bill's game and there was a slight breeze. I was holding Nancy in my arms and I could smell something rotten. I asked my wife to smell Nancy and she could smell it too. We looked up her nose and there was some kind of shell with cotton in it. We pulled it out and washed her nose and when we came home we laughed about it. She was always putting things in her nose. I didn't understand that.

CHAPTER 51

I was very proud to be married to Milka. She always dressed up for me every time I came home from work. She would never let me see her dressed sloppy. She always made me coffee and a good breakfast. She always cooked wonderful meals for me and the kids. This made me proud that she was my wife.

I always wanted to buy her things to show her how much I appreciated her. I bought her jewelry and cards and presents. I never forgot her birthday or our anniversary. This was the right thing to show her how much I love her. She is the most important person to me. She is the best wife in the world, the best mother and best Baba and that is why I love her. We always went with God first.

If you think you have problems then read this. We didn't understand each other because of our languages. She went to Macedonian school and I went to Greek school. I didn't know how to write Macedonian. We came to America and got married here and our kids were born here. We talked to them in Macedonian. Neither of us could speak English. Milka wrote to me in Macedonian and I didn't understand that either. We can now speak three languages and still have trouble understanding each other. Then started writing in Latin. We wrote how we talked. Every time we went out my wife would write me a note and I would answer her.

CHAPTER 52-Our 3 Month Vacation

On May 30th, 1969, we went on a three month vacation home. We wanted to take the family back to Old Country Greece Macedonia to see my father and mother in Polikerasos. We also were going to Macedonia, Bulgaria to see my Uncle Argie and my Teta Deta in Scopia. We also went to Porodin Village in Bitola to see her cousins and aunts and uncles. I had to get a leave of absence from the bakery and Milka wasn't



Visiting Home

We took the train from Fort Wayne to New York. Olga was 12, Vasil was 8 and Nancy was 5 years old. When we started on the train and Nancy was scared and asked when we were going home and we started laughing. We went to New York and took a cruise ship called the SS France to Europe.

From the train station, we took a taxi to the ship the kids couldn't believe how big it was. The weather was good and we were on the ship for 5 days. We could never find Vasil on the ship. He found a lot of things to play with. No one got sea sick so that was good. We arrived in a harbor in France. They took us on a train again and we traveled

through France, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, and arrived in Yugoslavia.

We got off at Scopia Macedonia. When we got off the train, we went to see my Uncle Argie and Teta Deta. We took a taxi to their house and spent the night. The next day we left for my wife's village in Porodin, Bitola. The next day we left for Macedonia Greece to my village with a taxi. We went to my village Polikerasos. We went to my house and sent the kids in first to surprise their Baba and Dedo. They were so happy to see us. I hadn't seen my mother and father in 18 years. The whole village came to see us. We all cried and hugged we were all so happy.

The next day we walked around the village to see how everyone lived. At that time there was school. I took the kids to my school to see the classes and the teacher. When they saw all of the boys and girls they were happy. My parents owned two bulls, cows and some calves. Every day we would bring all of the live stock to a man and he took everyone in the village's cows up to the pasture to graze in the morning and back in the evening.

The kids every morning would take the cows to the man and bring them home in the evening. They liked doing this every day. They knew which cattle were ours.

Vasil liked my parent's donkey. He road on it all over the village. Every day he would jump on the donkey. The donkey would walk right up to the mountains because we always went to a spot to chop wood and bring it back. The donkey always knew the way. One day Vasil didn't know where the donkey was taking him. One lady saw Vasil on the donkey and told us that the donkey took him up to the mountains. We ran there to see where he was and it started to rain. We found him and brought him home. He was all wet. We dried him off and that was done.

The kids loved the village and one day we all went to the pastures to cut the grass with a sickle. I had one and my father made a small one for Vasil. I was in the front and Vasil was behind me. I was afraid Vasil would cut me. I stopped to sharpen my sickle and Vasil did too. He cut his hand and he didn't tell me. He was wearing a white shirt a walked back. He had blood all over.

Olga and Nancy and some girls were playing with some huge moths called Suzellia. They tied strings to them and flew them around. When they saw Vasil walking toward them they yelled for their mother to come outside. Baba came out and asked what happened. Vasil told her that he cut his hand with the sickle. He never told me that he cut his hand.

When my wife came out to the pasture to bring us lunch, she told us that Vasil left because he cut his hand.

The next time the whole family went to the pasture we made huge bails of hey. Then we made smaller bails and loaded the donkey to take the hay back to the house. The kids walked back and forth with the donkey and Milka. One time my wife went with them. She was on her donkey and the dog stared barking. She got down from her donkey to make sure that the dog would bite the kids.

CHAPTER 53

One day we went to a monastery and there was a church called Argie, Damion, and Kosmas. The monastery had a lot of rooms. Each village had their own room to celebrate in. My father came with us. We had two donkeys and one mule. They were having a festival and people came from all of the villages. We were dancing until night time. We left at midnight to go back to the village. It was an hour away. The two girls were on the donkeys, and Milka was on the mule. Me, my father, and Vasil walked behind. We were high in the mountains and the path was very narrow. The kids were very scared.

The next day we took the bus from Kastoria and went to Athens which is the capital of Greece. It took us 9 hours to get there. We took a taxi to the hotel I slept in, in 1951. The taxi driver asked me if I wanted THAT hotel and I said yes. He shook his head and left me there. When we got to the hotel it was so old. We got our room and found out that the toilet was far away. The kids started yelling saying they didn't want to sleep

there because it was an old hotel. We left and went to a newer hotel. We slept overnight and the next day we took a taxi to see Acropolis. We went to the coliseum where the Greek's fought and competed. We stayed there for 3 days and saw all of the ruins. I wanted to find a babysitter for one night, and asked a lady. She didn't understand English, so I decided not to.

After 3 days, we took the bus to Thessaloniki, which is the biggest city in Macedonia. It has a port and the 2nd largest Macedonia/Greek city. There were 3 teachers on the bus and they were asking me what language Nancy was talking, because she never stopped talking. I told them that Nancy was speaking English. The teachers started laughing because they new it wasn't English. I told them that her mother was from Macedonia and I was from Greece and she was born in the United States. So, she was speaking Macedonian. The teachers knew that's what she was speaking and apologized and wished us luck on our trip.

In Thessaloniki, we went to the hotel and gave them our passport. We told them we were American and they told us that they didn't have any rooms for us. We waited and people came in and the hotel people were giving them rooms. My wife went to talk to them in Macedonian, why they didn't have a room for us. They asked if she was Macedonian, and she said yes. So, they finally gave us a room. We were so mad at them because it wasn't right what they did to us.

We slept overnight and the next day we took a taxi to sight see. We went to see Lefto Pergo which is a 500 year old tower that was pointed to the ocean for look outs to watch and to protect the city. We stayed there for 3 days. We went to the bus stopped to make an appointment to leave on Saturday and they made a mistake and put us on the Friday bus. I went Saturday and they started yelling at me saying I was supposed to be there yesterday. My wife started yelling you can't understand Greek, how are the tourists going to understand you. One man was selling combs and cigarettes, and stopped in front of my wife to sell her something. My wife started yelling at the man to leave us alone, because we have enough problems. The man said sorry, I'm just trying to earn a living too in Macedonian. My wife asked if he was Macedonian and he said yes. So, my wife apologized to him. The bus finally came and we left Thessaloniki and went back to the village.

The kids did not like Athens or Thessaloniki, they just wanted to stay in the village. It was time to leave the village and everyone started crying, my mother, father and the relatives. The kids got scared because of all the crying. We got into the taxi and left the village to go to Yugoslavia, the Republic of Macedonia.

We went to Bitola to see some relatives. Then we went to my wife's village, Porodin. We saw all of her Aunts, Uncles, cousins and friends. My wife hadn't seen them in 15 years. We went to the graveyard to see my wife's mother's grave. We took flowers and the children. Everyone was crying. We cleaned around the grave site. My wife's cousin's Nevena and her husband Ioko were with us.

The next day we drove around Bitola. My wife's cousin's George and his wife and kids drove us to a city called Ohrit. The town had a lake and we swam all day. Milka's Aunts and Uncles were all there.

We went to a restaurant to eat fish. All of the kids were together Draggy, Julia and Otsko were all there too along with our children. Draggy started hollering "Aide da oime doma da iaime" which meant let's go home and eat. The waiters came back and said they didn't have any more fish. They only had beef left. So we asked for that. We waited another 2 hours to get that. They finally brought the beef and it was not cooked, it was very tough. So, we never ate anything. My Cousin Donna Gosheff's brother-in-law was a guard of Tito who was the Yugoslavian President at the time. He told us that they gave us left over meat from his meal earlier. He started cussing and laughing.

We went to another town called Strouga. There was a river that came in from the lake. Children were diving off the bridge for money that the tourists were throwing into the river. We went back to Bitola.

One day we went shopping in Bitola with the kids and Otsko, Nevena's son, and the street we were walking on had a parade coming through. There was a band. I stopped them and told them to play three Macedonian songs. There was a clarinet, trumpet, drums and small snare drum. They started to play right in the middle of town. Everyone started to gather together to listen. They finally stopped and I gave them 20 dollars and they left. I was so happy and we were all laughing.

I gave my address to the musicians and told them to play music one night at Nevena's house. The next day we went to Milka's village and stayed there during the day. That night Milka got very sick. We left there at midnight and went to the hospital in Bitola. They wouldn't open the door. They finally opened the door, gave us aspirin, and said come back in the morning. We went back the next morning and waited 2 hours before the doctor saw us. He gave her more medicine. While we were gone the musicians came back. The neighbors said we were at the hospital so they left.

The next day we went back to the village and my Uncle had a vineyard of grapes. It was like a cottage. We were drinking whiskey outside and it started raining. I could hear something coming from the mountain. I told my Uncle Pando to move his car because the rain was coming. I heard a river coming from the mountains. We saw that the ditch where my Uncle's car was filled with water and flooded. He asked me how I knew and I said I knew that noise because I lived in the mountains.

We left and went back to Bitola. It was time to leave again. All of the kids got into a carriage and started singing songs. We followed in a car to the train station. We took the train to Scopia, which is the capital of Macedonia. We went to see my Uncle Argie and Teta Dita. They were living there.

We went to Sophia, Bulgaria next on the bus. It took us 6 hours. We then took a taxi to my Uncle Athanos, Teta Deana, and Teta Donna's house. My cousin's Dino and Boiotse

were also there. Everyone was so happy to see us. We drove around to a lot of beautiful places together. There were roses blooming everywhere. Then we saw more cousins.

That night they had a party in the finished basement. All of the friends from the neighborhood and girls came over and everyone drank and sang. They had a party every night drinking and singing. I asked my Uncle what is all of this about, every night you have a party. My Uncle said that they don't think about tomorrow they live for today.

I told my Uncle I was going downstairs to see what they were doing. My Uncle translated for me. They were playing cards and drinking. I looked around and told them I could tell their future with cards. They started listening to me and my cousin Dincho told them what I was saying. I started telling the girls about her futures one at a time and they started to believe me. Then the boys wanted their futures told too. The next day more boys and girls showed up and they all wanted their futures told. I showed one card to a girl and told her that her boyfriend was here. I told her that her boyfriend was here and that they didn't get along with each other. Everyone started wondering how I knew.

Then two boys came to me. They asked about going to the United States. I told them both that they would make it there. They were both so happy when I told them that. My two cousins' came down and also asked me to tell their fortune. Something didn't look right in the cards for them. I told them that there were not going to America and not to move from where they are right now.

Later, the two boys and my cousins took the train to Yugoslavia. The train was carrying bails of hey. Two boys were hiding behind the hay, and my cousins were at the door. When the Serbians opened the doors, they asked for passports. My cousin's didn't have passports and they took them off the train. They had some money on them. They told the Serbs to take their money so that they could let them go back to Bulgaria. They didn't see the other to boys and they made it to Chicago in America. This was a true story. My Aunt Donna wrote me a letter and she told me about this story. I wrote her back telling her I knew.

We stayed in Bulgaria for two weeks. My aunt gave us some cheese and bread for the trip. They took us to the train. We went to Macedonia and it was summer time in August. It was so hot. The train left us on the side of the road next to 3 trailers. We went outside and the Bulgarians left us there. We waited until nighttime. Another train came and took us to Scopia, Macedonia. Then we took a taxi to see my Uncle Argie's house and Teta Dita's house. The taxi driver told us he knew where my Uncle lived. He took us there and was suppose to leave us in front of the house, but he didn't. It was almost two kilometer's away. It was now midnight. I had the kids and suitcases and I had to carry Nancy. We walked to the house.

My Aunt and Uncle waited up for us and we told them what happened. The next day my Uncle went to see the taxi driver and said shame on you to leave my relatives like that so far from my house. My Uncle asked if the taxi driver wanted to lose his license if my uncle reported him. The taxi driver got scared and apologized.

We stayed in Scopia for a week. Then it was Nancy's birthday. She turned 5 years old. My Teta Dita made a cake and put candles on it. We sang happy birthday. The next day we had to leave. We took the train to Germany. The Germans wanted so many people to work there. The train came from Greece full of people who didn't have a seat. We were traveling first class. They didn't want to give us our cabin. The kids were so small that I didn't know what to do. My Cousin Donna's brother-in-law was a police officer and saw us. He kicked three people out of the cabin and Milka and the kids went inside. I stood outside the door for 12 hours until we got to Austria. When we got there, everyone left the train because they didn't have tickets. I went inside the cabin. A guard came by and asked us for our passports. I gave them the passports and tickets. Then we left to go to Frankfurt, Germany. It took us all night.

We took a taxi to my sister-in-laws brother's house, Kosta. We saw them and I asked them to find us a hotel. At that time there was a big convention for people from all over the world. Everything was taken. I asked Kosta if we could stay for two nights and he said ok.

We drove around Frankfurt for two days with Kosta. Then we took the train to Paris, France. It took us all night. We drove around Paris for 2 days. We saw the Eiffel tower and we went up in it. We saw many things.

The next day we left Paris to go to port Laharor, France. We stayed there for one day and took the ship home to America. It took us 5 days. The weather was nice. It was now August 25th. We landed in New York and took the train back to Fort Wayne, Indiana. We had been gone for 3 months.

It was Labor Day weekend and the kids had to go to school the next week. Vasil took his bike to go and see his friend. He tried to cross the street and a car hit him. He didn't see the car. The car hit him right in the middle. A girl was screaming and told us to come see Vasil was hit by a car. We took him to the hospital and he had broken his leg. He had a cast on for three months. He had two pins in his leg and the cast went all the way to the top of his leg. Here we traveled all over the world and thank God it didn't happen over there. This was the end of our summer vacation 1969.

CHAPTER 54

Nancy started kindergarten. The kids were getting bigger. We traveled to Niagara Falls and the Sand Dunes, Mackinaw Island and a lot of different places. We went to different lakes to swim. One day I went hunting with a guy from the bakery in Berne, Indiana. There was a place that was covered with ice. I asked him what was there. He told me it was a lake that he went to every summer with his family. I told him that we would go there to. I came home and told my wife and kids that I found a nice lake to swim in. We went there to see the lake. There were a lot of games, swings, volleyball, tennis, and horses. The kids loved going to Pine Lake in Berne.

My hobbies are music, dancing, swimming and hunting. I went hunting for rabbits, quails and pheasants. I would bring them home and Milka didn't want to cook them. So, I gave them to the neighbors. To me it was a way to walk and get fresh air.

My kids started growing up. They all learned how to swim and I learned how to swim. Milka never learned how to swim. The kids never wanted to go to another lake. They only wanted to go to this lake.

At that time in Fort Wayne there was a drive in cinema. We went every Tuesday and Friday night. We ate hot dogs and hamburgers. We saw cartoons first and then the kids went to sleep. I had a 1960 Impala and I made a bed in the back with boards. I would put the kids to sleep there until midnight. Then we would come home and I would put them to bed. We always had to take the kids because they did not have their Baba and Dedo here. The kids grew up a little every year and they started wanting to go out with friends instead. The time came when Olga graduated from High School on the Honor Roll. She bought a brand new Camero. She said she was going to drive to the Coliseum for her graduation alone. It was the first time she drove by herself.

She got her diploma and we were all so happy. She was the first one in the family to graduate from Southside High School and she did it with High Honors.

We had a graduation party at our church. All of our friends and relatives came. She got lots of money and gifts. Then she went to Indiana Business School for two years and became a secretary and worked for a lawyer.

When we lived in a small one-story two-bedroom house with a basement, but we had a boy and two girls. We decided to make a room in the attic. We made the room for the girls to sleep up there. We were doing pretty good.

We sold this old house and built a new one. We were in the old house for 23 years. We built the new one in 1978. I painted and varnished the house to save money myself. It had bedrooms with a living room, family room, kitchen, dining room and finished basement with a kitchen. Everyone had their own room. The house was in Walden Community. The address was 6107 North Hampton Place, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 46815. (The years passed and everyone left us in this big house. When we needed it we didn't have it. Now we have a place for all of the children and grand children to stay at.)



Milka standing in front of our home at 6170 North Hampton Place

Vasil graduated from Snider High School and also went to Southside part of his high school years. Before he graduated and before we moved he said he wanted to have a party in the basement. We told him ok. Everyone heard he was having a party. We had sandwiches and potato chips and beer and pop. We left them alone and went to the cinema show. We got home at midnight and there were a few kids left. When I went down to the basement I couldn't believe it. There was beer cans all over the basement. The kids were all over the house. The house smelled like beer everywhere and it took us forever to get the smell out.

When we were in the new house Vasil graduated from high school and we had a party for him with his friends and our relatives. This time we stayed home. It was nice weather and we had a good time.

Vasil bought a new car called a Mazda. He didn't want to go to College. He said not to spend money on him, and he told me that not all of my fingers were the same and that he was different. I told him to have good health and if you work hard you will be ok. Before he graduated he was a driver for the bakery delivering bread to restaurants and stores part time in the summer. Then he found another job.

When we left the old house people were living differently. When we came to the new house all of the kids were living in high class and Nancy changed. She started going out with girls from Snider. She met a lot girls and boys. When Nancy graduated high school we made a party for her. She invited her friends and family and we had a party in the new church hall. Then she bought a car. It was called an Omega it was two years old. She wanted to be a nurse. She went to school for 6 months and didn't like it and changed her major. There was a lady who lived behind us. We asked if she could get Nancy a part time job in the offices. She started working there part time and then went full time.

She went to school at night. It was difficult for her but they paid for her school. She went to the University and got a diploma from Purdue University, Fort Wayne Indiana. She still works there.

CHAPTER 55

We are Orthodox Christian. We go to Saint Nicholas Church. We believe in God and Jesus and Mother Mary. My wife and I got married November 20, 1955 at the church on Oxford Street. Milka took the kids to church every Sunday. I couldn't go because I always worked on Sundays. My wife went every Sunday with the kids to learn about our religion. Milka sang in the choir for 27 years and loved it. The kids were in the youth group and Olga, Vasil and Nancy sang in the youth choir.

The kids started going their own ways. Olga found a boy named Jerry Roszkowski and he is Catholic. They decided to get married in a Catholic Church and we told them that that was ok with us. As long as they have love and live together it was ok.

Time came and Vasil found a girl named Sue O'Morrow and she was also Catholic and they got married in a Catholic Church. We told them the same to be happy and love each other in the Catholic Church.

Nancy met a boy named Chris Black and they got married in our church. His family didn't have a religion, so they decided to get married in our church as long as they have love and good health. That marriage after 10 ten years they got divorced.

Nancy found another guy Herb Hildebrand. His family was Catholic and Lutheran. His family lived in Tennessee. They got married at Saint Nicholas Church.

When I retired from the bakery I got to go to church with Milka. I have gone almost every Sunday since then. I write this for all of the grandchildren. I pray that you all have love and good health. Keep God in your hearts because he is the higher power. This is what I believe.

CHAPTER 56

Olga got engaged to Jerry Roszkowski. He was born in Merriville, Indiana. His grandfather was from Poland and his grandmother was from Croatia, Jerry's parents John and Mary were born here. Jerry had one brother and two sisters.

Now it was time to make the wedding. We had a lot of people and we celebrated. Everyone was very happy. She left us to live in Indianapolis. We were happy but

disappointed because she had to move. We couldn't see her for months until we learned how to get to her house. We were happy to have a son-in-law in our family. Jerry worked in Indianapolis and Olga started to work for a lawyer. First they lived in an apartment and latter they bought a house, and then anther. Time passed and my first grandchild was born and his name was Johnny. We were finally a Baba and Dedo. Then they had another child named Lindsey. Later came another girl named Christie. When I came back from visiting my mother in 1995 I remember sitting and drinking whiskey. Jerry told me to have another shot because they had a surprise for us. They were going to have another baby. They had a little girl called Paige.

CHAPTER 57

We started to go to Indianapolis to baby sit our grandchildren while Jerry and Olga went on vacation. When I retired from the bakery Jerry and Olga left Indianapolis and went to another town Loveland, Ohio. Olga went with the kids to buy a house. It was further away. They wanted me to stay there for one week. I went by myself to watch the grandchildren. I cooked and took them to school. Christy was 2 and John and Lindsey were in school. Paige wasn't born at that time. Jerry didn't like Ohio and they moved back to Indianapolis. They built another house and went back to the same house. I watched the kids again when they were older. I had to drive the kids to school myself in Indianapolis and it wasn't easy. When Baba retired she started coming with me to baby sit. I would smoke cigars and Baba would cook. I just had to drive the kids back and forth from school. The kids started growing up and then started going with their mother and father on vacation. We loved watching the kids. Lindsey and Olga went to Washington. All the kids were in a lot of sports.

Johnny graduated from High School with Honors. We all went to a very expensive restaurant. It was a \$35 steak. You had to pay for everything separate. It was the most expensive meal. Two weeks later we went back for his graduation party. Everyone from Fort Wayne came friends and relatives. We came home that night.

CHAPTER 58

Vasil got engaged to a girl named Sue O'Morrow. Her parents were Maurice and Edith and she has a sister named Cindy who also had a daughter Nicole. We had a big wedding for them. We had a lot of friends and family there. They stared living in an apartment for one year. I was happy to gain a daughter-in-law but sad that Vasil moved out. They later built a house. I helped with the varnish and staining and a lot of smaller projects. They had a son named William. We were happy to have a grandchild to carry on our name. Later they had a girl named Stephanie. Vasil and Sue worked very hard. We

started baby sitting on Saturday and Sunday because Bill and Sue were working. Then they went to KinderCare.

William started going to Elementary School and was playing soccer. As he grew up, he learned to play saxophone in Elementary School. In high school he started playing music in High School. One day he asked me for my saxophone. I gave it to him because I wanted him to have something from his Dedo. We went to watch him play. He became the Drum Major as a senior and fell off the podium and broke his arm. He still conducted with one arm. He did not give up. William and Stephanie both marched in a parade in Hollywood California. Stephanie was a color guard. William got gold and silver medals in many competitions.

One day I was talking to my son and said we need to cut down some overgrown bushes. William was 12 at the time and was listening in to our conversation. He took the ax from the garage and cut them all down. Vasil called me and said do you know what your grandson did. He cut down all of the bushes. I told him that when Vasil was younger he was knocking down icicles from the garage and put dents all over the aluminum siding.

Stephanie started playing the trumpet one day and she tried for 3 months. She didn't like it and gave up. She played soccer and did color guard. She looks just like my mother.

The days passed and Vasil and Sue came to our house and had a surprise for us. They had another boy named Thomas. We started all over again to baby sit. Today when I wrote this book Thomas was playing by me. He makes me and Baba feel like a young couple again.

Vasil had a three-bedroom house and they really did not have a room for Thomas. He decided to remodel his house and add another. We took space from two closets and the master bedroom. Vasil and I finished this room and Thomas was very happy.

CHAPTER 59

Nancy had two children from a previous marriage, Michael and Jessica. We baby sat them once in a while but they mainly went to TLC Daycare. Jessica took dance lessons and gymnastics. She played Volleyball and Softball. She is now playing the clarinet in High School and is in the same band with William and Stephanie. Michael loved sports and played soccer, baseball and football. He broke his hand the first year of football. He also decided to play the saxophone in school like Dedo.

On May 3^{rd,} 2003 Nancy got married to Herbert Horst Hildebrand. He was German. They went together for two years. His father was Horst and his mother's name is Jutta. He has a sister named Bettina and her husband is Steve. His parents lived in Tennessee. We had a wedding in Fort Wayne with all of the relatives. At the wedding it was time for the father/daughter dance. I was ready for a slow dance when the jitter bug came on. We danced and had a lot of fun.

They bought a house within a few miles of us. They got pregnant right away and had a little boy named Dirk Jacob. We were so happy. We baby sat him for the first 1 ½ years of his life. We still watch him 2 days a week.

We enjoy watching Dirk and Thomas. Dirk and Thomas are like brothers. We dance with them and have parades in the house. They both try and act like William conducting the band. They stand on chairs and waive their arms. They blow their flutes and we all have a good time.

CHAPTER 60

Many years passed and my parents got older. I had to go visit them. I worked so much and didn't get time off. My father got sick. I decided to go to see him. The 1984 Christmas Day Olga and Jerry came to celebrate with the family. We exchanged presents. At the end I opened a box. I saw \$1000 inside. I thought it was fake money, but it was REAL. I looked at Milka and said this is real. Olga and Jerry said to use the money to go see your parents. I went to see my parents in 1985. I stayed there for 6 weeks. They were so happy to see me and I was so happy to see them. The next year in 1986, my father died. I was so glad I got to see him one last time before he was gone. I thank Olga and Jerry for that.

CHAPTER 61

My brother died in 1982 before my father. He was only 46 years old. He left this world too fast. We worked together in the bakery and he used to relieve my job when I went home. He died one morning before relieving me. I brought him to the United States with his family. I brought over my brother, sister-in-law and their daughter Marika. He also had a son in the United States named Kostakey. Kostakey married a girl named Stella and they had 3 girls. Marika married a boy named Dean Short and they had 2 girls and one boy. My brother built a brand new house and later he died.



Nikolas, Pereklis, Sultana Skembos

In 1991 we decided to go back to the old country to see my mother again. We stayed there 3 weeks. There were no young people left in the village. They had a party for us everyday at the village. We really enjoyed ourselves. We went to Milka's village and stayed there for two weeks. Before we left from there, my mother stared crying. Milka promised that I would come back again if she stopped crying. We came home safely.

In 1995 I went back again after 4 years and stayed there two months.

In 1996 my mother got sick and I had to go back again. I went to see her one last time. When I saw her she was bed ridden. There were only about 16 people left in our village. During the Civil War everyone left for the city. I could not take care of her by myself. I took her to a nursing home in a town called Kozanie. She lived there for 40 days and died. I left at midnight and locked the door to the house. I gave the key to a lady named Celia Tozoto. I told her that the house is gone. It was such a disappointment to see the house gone. I didn't go back. I gave money to Tom Flahada to burry my mother where my father was when the time came. I received a letter from Luba and said there were a lot of people at the funeral home. My parents and brother were gone.

Milka's mom died in a bus accident in 1954. Milka was on the same bus and people got thrown from the bus. Those in the middle of the bus got killed. I never saw my mother in law. In 1969 when we visited her grave with the children we placed flowers and candles on her grave.

My father-in-law lived in Florida with his wife Styjka from Serbia. Milka and Ilanka went to Florida to see him when he got sick. They stayed there for 3 days in 1990. The rest of us drove down for the funeral.

Years passed and we had another tragedy. My sister-in-law Ilanka got cancer and died in 2000. She was only 60 years old. She was married to my brother-in-law James Simoff. They had two children. Michael who married Evonne and adopted a boy from Old Country named Evan and Michelle who married Keith Krings. She had two girls Nicole and Megan. We went to the funeral and everyone grieved so much. Milka was devastated. We go to visit Ilanka's grave in Michigan every year.

CHAPTER 62

I went back to see my mother May, 1995. I stayed there for 2 months. Before I left my sewer broke in the house. I called the sewage company and they told me that they could not unplug the sewer and that they had to dig. I had a nice tree in front of my house. They told me I had to cut down the tree so that they good dig. The sewer had to be replaced it cost \$3500 and I couldn't believe it. I had to leave the next day. I took the plane from Fort Wayne to Detroit to Amsterdam, Holland. Then I took the Olympic Plane to Thessaloniki.

A guy Thomas took me by taxi to my village. There was a big storm with 3 inch hail and rain. It was hard to drive through this weather. We finally got there late. My mother opened the door and was so happy to see me. The driver left.

I stayed there for two weeks and then an earth quake hit at 2:00 Midnight. I woke up and my mother said it was an earth quake and don't be scared. The next morning during

breakfast we were drinking coffee and another earth quake hit. It was a 6.5 on the ricter scale. I started yelling lets get out of the house. My mother said this house has withstood many earth quakes and it would survive this one. The phones and power were off. I tried to call my wife. They had heard on the news about the earth quake. Milka kept trying to call me too. Finally that night I tried again and I got Milka who was working at T&T Tailoring and she answered the phone. The entire time I was there earth quakes kept coming.

While I was there I walked around outside. During the revolutionary war, the floor and steps to my house were burned by the army. There was one front door step that was never burned. One day I was looking for a bar under the step and found a violin and then I found an old trumpet. I cleaned the violin up and brought it to the United States. It was walnut. I asked my mother who played these instruments. My mother didn't know. At that time she told me that maybe my grandfather was playing it. When the Turks came they burnt down our village in 1903. They burnt down 75 houses in the village, but our house survived. Maybe that is the history of why I am a musician and my grandchildren play instruments.



Kosmas and the Violin and Trumpet he found

On May 20 in our village there were only three families left in the village. Around 16 people were left. There were only old people left. It was St. Nicholas Day and we had a festival. People came from Kastoria to celebrate. There were close to 100 people. We all went to the church and there were 4 preachers. It was a nice service. At one house they had tables and chairs and wine and whiskey. They had barbeque and lamb. Everyone celebrated. The next day in the morning I woke up and

everyone had gone back to Kastoria. All that was left were the older people. I decided to walk around the village. The Greeks opened the border with the Albanians so that anyone could come to Greece and Macedonia. Every one was coming to our village to find jobs, but there was none. Everyone did their own work.

When I was walking one day, four Albanians were walking toward me. I turned right and they turned left, I didn't know what to do. I walked into the field and they went the other way. I got scared. A little while later the police came by looking for them. More people started walking through our village and they looked like Andartis. At night they came to the villages and they were stealing. The older people were scared and locking their doors. One night they came in the middle of the village. I saw a lot of people at Midnight talking and yelling at night. My mother said not to be scared. I looked out the window and they had built fires around the house. They were using our winter wood.

They had bags and they looked like gorillas. Our door was locked. We had a big bar that locked it from one side to the other. They couldn't get through and our windows had bars on them. I remember seeing the same thing over 50 years ago. I couldn't believe my eyes that I had to see it again.

One day outside there was a small boy walking toward me with a plastic bag. He started talking in Greek and I didn't understand him. Then I asked him if he knew Macedonian and he did. We started talking. I asked him how old he wand and he said he was 16 years old. I remember seeing myself looking exactly like him 50 years ago. I went into the house and got a loaf of bread and tomatoes and a big bottle of coke. I gave it to him and he told me he wanted to go to the village called Neret. He had relatives there. I told him to go on the other side of the mountain and then you will reach another village. He said thanks for everything. I had to see the same thing again after 50 years.

I was walking everyday at noon. The next day I was suppose to go home. I told my mother I was going to walk at 9:00 in the morning. She told me not to go in case I got hurt. When I was walking in the field I stepped on a snake, it wrapped itself around me. I had a stick and started hitting it and finally it slithered away. I told myself to go back to my house and stay there until it was time to go. I left the village and came to the United States. I thanked God that I got home ok.



Sultana & Pereklis Later Years

CHAPTER 63

This chapter is about how I started working at the bakery. I was there for forty years and four months. I started working with an older German American who was born in the US. He was getting ready to retire at the time that I started. He told me that you will never go hungry if you work at the bakery. It is a solid job. I thanked him for telling me the truth.



Kosmas at Holseum Bakery

I started working with an Italian who was born in the US. They gave us checks one for me and two for him. I asked him why he got two checks. He told me that one was a US savings bond. I didn't understand what that was, and he told me if I put \$5 from each of my checks every week that at the end of the month you could get a \$25 savings bond. He told me not to count on that money and use if when I get old. He gave me a good idea and I thank him. I went home to my Dedo Vasil house and told him what the Italian had told me. My grandfather didn't like it and he told me I should put the money in the bank and not a savings bond. I told him I would do both. The bonds started to accumulate. I decided to add to it and put another \$5 per week and got more savings bonds. When a year passed I showed my Dedo and told him that the bonds made more interest. Later on I was doing \$50/week. I thank that Italian for that advice. After 30 years the bakery wouldn't do the bonds anymore. I saved a lot of money doing this. I told my son and my two daughters to do the same thing. Times have changed and they weren't worth as much anymore.

After a half year of working in the bakery they told me that the bakery was going to close down. They wanted us to work for 2 weeks without pay. We all agreed, but then the next week they started making a new type of bread called twist. The public loved it and we sold a lot of that type of bread.

One day I went to the bakery to work and there was a fire. The fire department came and extinguished it. Later they built a new bakery more automated and things were good.

I remember when one truck driver came bringing lard. There was a big barrel outside. The truck driver didn't put the lard in the barrel he was leaving it in the street. I started yelling at everyone that the lard was in the street. We all had to pickup the lard out of the street with shovels and the barrel.

Another day I went to work there was a flood and a river flowing through the door. A main pipeline had broken. No one had seen it. I yelled and they shut off the water line and we had to clean it all up.

Later another day I had an accident on Lake Street. The other driver ran a stop sign. The police came and they checked everything and took me to the hospital. I was there for four hours and my wife did not know where I was. The bakery was waiting on me and they called my wife. She said I left for work already and they said I wasn't there. I was in the hospital. When I was released I went to my cousin's restaurant. They asked where I had been because everyone was looking for me. I called my wife and she came to pick me up. When she came to pick me up she asked me if I was ok. I told her that my head was itching. When we got home she checked my hair and found pieces of the review mirror from my car was all over my head. They didn't see this in the hospital. Milka cleaned it all up. The car was totaled.

One time I forgot to put my alarm clock on. Chris Nasilaris was working at the bakery. He called my house and my wife told him that I was there. She said I left a long time ago. Then she said let me look in the other bedroom. Chris said what you don't sleep together. She said no. Chris told everyone at the bakery. I told him that the rich people don't sleep together and they had separate rooms. They believed me.

When Olga got married we had an extra room and at that time I slept in her room. I had to getup at 2:00 in the morning and Milka was getting up at 6:00 in the morning. I was working nights and she was working days.

Two times I went to the bakery at night and I was supposed to be there at 6:00 in the morning. The supervisor asked me what I was doing there. He said go home and come back at 6:00 in the morning.

One year there was a blizzard, I told my wife I was going to work and she said there was too much snow. I saw a bull Dozier that came by my street. I told Milka to make me a lunch and I followed the bull Dozier to work. There was close to 3 feet of snow on the ground. I got close to the bakery but still had to walk two blocks. When I got to the bakery no one was there. I saw my supervisor and he asked what I was doing there and I said I came to work. He said no one was working go home. So, I started going home I walked. The wind was blowing. It took me almost two hours to go back home. We only lived 4 miles away. I told my wife and she said she told me not to go. We stayed home for two days then went back to work.

One spring day there was a tornado that came through Indiana. It went through many counties. It knocked out power line and we didn't go to work for three days until the power came back on.

One year in 1960 we made a strike so that they would give us more money and a pension. We voted to strike and went out for one month. There were 80 of us. The truck drivers were not on strike and kept delivering bread. We told them not to, but they continued anyway. One guy had a big dog walking with us while we were picketing. People were more scared of the dog than us. The police came and said we couldn't have the dog there, so we sent the dog home. We were on strike for a month. It was time to vote and they strike was over and we went back to work. They finally gave us 10 cents/hour and a pension. Everyone voted to accept that contract. We went back to work.

They did not take one boy back to work. A truck driver accused the boy of putting sugar in his truck's gas tank. It was all a lie the truck driver didn't like the boy's father who was his supervisor. They fired the boy and they gave him a bad name. He couldn't find a job anywhere. It took the boy three years to clear his name. His father went back to the bakery and told them to take that information off his record. They cleared his name and he found another job.

I was never laid off and during that strike it was the only time I didn't have a paycheck. Thank God because we struggled that one month. We had some money saved and had love together. This was my work history.

CHAPTER 64

I went to volunteer for the city during a flood one year. I went three to four times to volunteer at that time. It was in 1982 when Fort Wayne was flooded. I went to the basement of the Coliseum where we filled sand bags and loaded trucks. We took the bags anywhere along the three rivers building dikes. Many of the basements were flooded. I remember that President Reagan came to visit and help us. He was picking up bags and filling them. They were taking pictures and had him on the television. I also went to the City garage to fill sand bags.

CHAPTER 65

In 1951 I worked at my Uncle's restaurant after living here for just one month. They had one guy who was the cook. His name was Sam Katsos. He asked me if I wanted to paint his house. I told him I didn't know how. He should me and taught me how to do it at his house. He let me in his house and then left me by myself. I took a stepladder and climbed on top of the garage. There were other people living in the house. I had a gallon of paint and a brush. The stepladder slid and I fell down with the open paint can. It spilled everywhere, but I did not get hurt. The lady that lived there started helping me

clean up. I was covered in paint. She helped me and took me back to the restaurant, and yelled at Sam for leaving me alone. I did not understand her. Later on, I did become a painter for a side job and I painted houses and offices.

CHAPTER 66

It was time to retire at 62 years-old; on February 19, 1993 when I left the bakery. All my kids and my wife had a surprise party for me. They invited all of the relatives and we celebrated at the church hall. Olga came with Jerry, Johnny, Lindsey, Christie to visit and Lindsey said that they were having a surprise party for me. She told me ahead of time and couldn't keep the secret. It was hard for me that after so many years to not work. I started painting houses to pass the time.

Now Milka and I have a job babysitting. When I was young I couldn't watch my kids because I was working. Now when I'm getting old I get the chance to be like a father. I've been retired for 12 years now and God has given me and my wife good health and love. I am very happy with my life. I have wonderful children and grandchildren.

CHAPTER 67

I write this section for my wife. She was sewing clothes for the kids. We never had to buy clothes. She stayed home to take care of the kids for 15 1/2 years. Then she decided to go to work. She went to a factory to sew clothes.

My wife retired December 12, 1996 after sewing in three different factories CoHan and Sons, New Haven Tailoring and finally T&T Tailoring. She worked for 27 years all together besides taking care of the kids.

Some lady asked Milka to help make costumes for the dance group at church. The group is called Mali Macedoncie meaning small Macedonians. They started dancing Macedonian dances. My grandchildren Jessica and Michael were both in the group. Milka belonged to the Church Women's Guild and they decided to donate money for the dance group. Milka and a few other ladies made all of the costumes.

In 2003, the first week of November there is an annual Macedonian Ball to raise money for the church. At that time the dance group performed, and they announced that they were going to dance for a ½ hour. Everyone was there Olga and Nancy's families were there and Billy and Stephanie. Vasil and Sue were at home. After they performed we all clapped. Milka was asked to go up front and they all thanked her.

At that time Christy, Stephanie, Lindsey, Billy and John wanted the same kind of Macedonian Uniforms. She also made costumes for them.



From left to right Kosmas, William, Lindsey, Stephanie, Thomas, Christie, Jessica, Dirk, Michael & Paige



Kosmas, John & Milka

Baba and Dedo gave them the uniforms at Easter time in 2004, so that all of the grandchildren had Macedonian Clothes. We got everyone together and gave the kids the clothes and they were all happy. Thomas and Dirk were small and she made them two sets so that they would have the outfits when they grew up too. We had everyone dress

up in their outfits and I had my old saxophone, William had his saxophone, and we had a drum and we took a group picture. Latter we took a picture of John in his costume. Thank God we had another good Easter with love and family.

Milka is the best seamstress. She also made for all of the grandchildren. She knitted 2 pillow cases, 3 dollies, and handkerchiefs for all of them, so that they could remember her. She already has them in her hope chest to give to each of them. Now she is making baby blankets for our great grandchildren.

I decided to make horseshoe plaques for all of my grandsons. So that they would have good luck and be happy and so that they would remember their Dedo.

CHAPTER 68

In 2004 Lindsey graduated from high school. We went to see her when she got her diploma. We were very happy and we went to eat steaks. The next day we left. Olga had a party for her June 12. All relatives came from Fort Wayne to her party. There were almost 100 people. We swam in the pool and ate and then left.

I write this for Christie on Labor Day 2004. It was a Friday night and we went to a High school Shatard football game. She was a cheerleader and we saw her way up in the air. We celebrated seeing her perform. Christy's team lost 10 to 7. We were happy to see her. The next day Vasil and Sue came, but Nancy could not come. We ate, swam and slept over night and then came home the next day.

CHAPTER 69

My wife and I started traveling in our retirement. We went to Florida one year. I was driving and she was navigating. She told me to turn left, turn right. I couldn't hear or seen and neither could she. So we stopped at a hotel in Alabama called Comfort Inn. I went in and asked for a room. They wanted my charge card and I said I wanted to pay cash, they didn't want my cash they wanted my card. I gave them a debit card and they gave me the room.

When I retired the bakery sent my pension check and Social security checks to my house, now the banks change and it is a direct deposit to my account. I paid all of my bills through the bank and now they said I had to make checks to pay my bills. I didn't know how to do that. I did not know how to write. At that time I asked my grandchildren to write all of the numbers in English so that I could use that and the name of the companies to write my own checks. I still am writing the checks for 12 years and only one check came back. Now when I go to the store, I sign a card and my bank pays all of the bills. I still have to balance my checkbook, and the bank sends me a record. Now I know how to

read and I understand a lot of things. I did not know this when I was young, but now when I am old I am learning to read and write. Thank God I came to the United States. We are doing ok.

CHAPTER 70

The year was 2001, Jerry and Olga and the kids came to our house for Easter. Everyone was there. We all celebrated. Jerry and Olga told us that we were all going on a group vacation. Jerry said that everyone was going on a cruise, including Nancy and Bill's families. The called us later and said it would be June 27-July 29th. It would be 7 days. We decided we would start from Puerto Rico. The ship's name was Destiny. We took the plane from the Fort Wayne to St Louis then to Puerto Rico. We all made it there the same day. Everything went well until we got to Puerto Rico. We found everyone's suitcase but Nancy's. We looked all over the place and finally we went to the lost and found and there it was. We then took a taxi to the boat. Olga and Jerry were already there. They took an earlier flight. We all met on the boat. We found our cabin and it was first class with a balcony.

The boat left at noon. It traveled all night and the next day we arrived at St. Thomas. We decided to go to the beach. We took the taxi to the beach and we swam all day. There were some stones in the ocean and I hit my toe. I didn't tell anyone. It hurt me all week long. We shopped, and then we left the island. The next Island was St Lucia. We took a taxi again to another beach and shopping. The next island was Currisel. We again went to the beach and shopping. The next island Aruba was 2 days away. We took a taxi back to the beach. It was so nice watching all of the kids swim and play. We bought something from every island. Finally, we were headed back to Puerto Rico. When we were leaving the boat the patrol let everyone go through but Nancy, Jessica and Michael. He started asking the kids questions and then finally let them go through.

We took the plane back to Fort Wayne through St. Luis. We were delayed, something was wrong with the plane. We all had to leave the plane and board another one. We running through the airport trying to make the next flight and almost missed it.

It was a wonderful trip. We went to shows and danced and gambled. One night there were dancers on stage and we were sitting in the front. One lady came off the stage and started dancing with me. All the kids yelled all right Dedo! Michael, Paige, Jessica, Stephanie, and Christie went on stage for a Magician show and Michael won the prize, a little ship. Olga and Jerry had given us each \$500 for spending money. What a wonderful surprise. I thank Olga and Jerry for such a wonderful trip.

CHAPTER 71

In 2003 Olga and Jerry called us again. They asked if we wanted to go on another cruise for another week. We told them yes. We went August 26th-September 2nd. We drove to Indianapolis and took the flight from there. We were getting ready to go in the cars at 4 am and then I looked outside and there was a limousine outside. Everyone got in Olga and her family. I was driving in the limousine and thought I have to be dreaming.

We went to the airport and took the plane. We were in first class again. We left Indianapolis to Miami Florida. The boat left at 10 am. We were in a 1st class cabin again. The boat went all night and in the morning we landed in Cozumel Mexico. It was a beautiful island. We stayed for 8 hours. We went to the beach all day. It started raining really hard and we had to wait for a taxi. We decided to go shopping. Then back to the boat. Jerry gave us spending money again to buy what ever we wanted. I decided to buy a gold chain necklace. Mother bought clothes. I also bought a statue.

The next island we went to was the Cayman Island it was occupied by the English. We went to the beach that someone recommended, but there were a lot of stones. It was a long island. We sat on some chairs and they said we had to walk a half mile away to a better beach. We took the chairs down there and swam for 4 hours. Then we went shopping again and went site seeing on the island. Then we went back to the boat and it was 2 days before we landed in Jamaica. We saw a river flowing from a mountain. Then we went to another beach. We swam and celebrated.

I saw 5 black boys playing. They started talking to me and said that I look like a very happy man. They asked me what nationality I was and I said Macedonian, but I got married in the US and my family was born in the US. I said I had one son and two daughters. They asked me how I lived in Macedonian. I said I left there 52 years ago and my country was America. I asked them where they lived and they said they lived in Jamaica. One of them served in the US Air Force for 6 years. He had long black hair almost 2 ½ feet long. Milka asked if he was wearing a wig. He laughed and said it was his hair. He let everyone touch his hair for good luck.

Then as were leaving the beach the boys asked me how we danced in Macedonia. I took the boys hands and started teaching them how to dance. Everyone clapped their hands. I told the boys that I was going to show them how to do the Jitter Bug, tango and Chacha. We all started dancing and my grandchildren joined in. I told them I would play a song with my fingers and I played the song of Mountain Zuma. Everyone listened and when I stopped everyone clapped their hands. A marine on vacation came up to me and shook my hand. He thanked me and gave me a pin from the marines with a flag on it. Everyone clapped again. Then I told them I could play a leaf too and I played Yankee Doodle Dandy. All my grandchildren clapped.

We took the taxi shopping again. Jerry bought Olga a ring and Milka was watching. Then someone told Milka to pick something out. She said everything was too expensive. Jerry ended up buying Milka a beautiful bracelet.

On the boat we traveled around Cuba but did not land then we went back to Miami. The boat was named Triumph. We had a nice time dancing, gambling, exercising, and shows every night. We flew back to Indianapolis and the limousine was waiting on us. I thanked Olga and Jerry again and we had a great vacation without spending one Penney.

CHAPTER 72

September 19, 2004 we went on a trip to Las Vegas. One day my cousin George said he was planning a trip to Las Vegas with all of the cousins. Me, Milka, Pando, Rea, Vasil, Lefteria, Boris, Vesna, George, Millie, and two other people from Toledo Stanley and his wife. We decided to go for one week. Vasil and the baby Thomas took us to the airport. We flew to Atlanta Georgia. From there we took the plane to Las Vegas the same day. We went to the Flamingo Hotel. We stayed there for two days. We gambled on the machines.

The next day we drove to a place called Grand Kanian near the Grand Canyon. We stayed there one day. We stayed at the Paige Hotel in Arizona. The next day we drove to Utah. We saw a mountain called the Rise Klizon. George and I decided to walk down to the bottom of this mountain. Milka and Millie got scared and started back up ½ way down. It was neat at the bottom.

We all piled back into the van, 12 people and drove down the highway. It was high in the mountains. It was a very tight road with many stones. There was a narrow place with cliffs as high as 30 feet. We finally got down to the valley and saw the hotel called ARC and the town was called Lion. There was also a park called Lion. We went to a restaurant and then went back to the hotel room we drank wine and played cards. Milka and I didn't want to play cards so we went to bed. The next day we went to the park. They didn't want to take the cars so we took the bus. Every 10 minutes the shuttle was running.

We went up to the mountains to a trail. We were all walking and found a river coming down from the mountain. We washed our hands and came back up the trail back to the bus. It was beautiful.

We all got back in the van. There were 4 of us on the back seat. Boris and George were driving the van. We started singing in the van. I told them I was going to sing an American song that I wrote for my wife called "Now I know you love me." Everyone clapped then I said I wrote another song "American Miko America".

The highway we traveled to go back to Las Vegas took us back to the same hotel. We stayed there for three nights again. We decided to see a show at the hotel. Then they all wanted to go to another show. Milka and I decided not to go. We went outside for a walk and found a German Festival with music. One girl came up to me to sell me some German tapes of music. She started dancing by us. She asked where I was from. I said Fort Wayne Indiana and everyone clapped.

Later they had the Polka and Milka and I started dancing and everyone started clapping again. We went back to the hotel to eat and I started playing the slot machine. Then all of the sudden I won and it was for \$241 dollars. I started laughing. Then I went to another machine for .25 cents and it started ringing and I won \$57 dollars. Then I went to another machine and I won \$12 dollars. It was midnight and I told Milka we better go to bed.

The next morning we went to the airport. I saw a slot machine again and I put \$2 in it. The machine rang again and I hit \$180. I told Milka and she didn't believe me. He gave me the money in my hands and took the plane to Atlanta Georgia. I tried transferring planes. I put my bags in the overhead and I hit my head. I started bleeding. I didn't say anything to anyone. That was the only thing bad that happened. When we got to Fort Wayne Nancy and Dirk were picking us up. Baba started talking to Dirk and he started crying. Then she talked to him and he started laughing. Then I did it and he cried then laughed.

CHAPTER 73

In December 2004, Jerry & Olga asked us to go on another cruise. They said it would be December 20 – December 29 for nine days. We left the house and went to Indianapolis again. At that time Jerry built a restaurant called the Fox Pub Grill. He said we were going to eat there. It was a great place. I had a frame with \$5 that I gave to Jerry for good luck.

We had Christmas the week before with Vasil's family and Nancy's family. We opened the presents and we ate and drank. It was nice. Olga and Jerry also had Christmas at their house and they opened all of their gifts. They gave me a gift, an electric blanket and gave mom a tray. Jerry and Olga also gave us money for Christmas and the trip.

The next day we left in a limousine again to the airport. We went to Fort Lauderdale we had a stop in Tennessee. We took a shuttle to the boat called the Carnival Legend. They wouldn't let us on the boat. They dropped us off at holding area. The kids got hungry and wanted to eat, so we went to eat and bought 8 hot dogs and 5 pops and it was \$50. We stayed there and didn't know what to do. I asked Paige if she wanted to play the hand clapping game, then Lindsey, then Christie, wanted to do it. When we stopped everyone started clapping. They couldn't beat me. Then we went on the boat at 7:00. They gave us each a refund of \$16, big deal. We finally got on the boat and it left. There must have been some kind of storm because for two days and three days there was a big wind. We found out later it was from the tsunami that hit in Asia.

The first island was St. Martin. We went shopping and went to the beach. They had a lot of clothes for sale. We had to take a small boat to another beach. We stayed there and there was a lady selling clothes. We started drinking beer and Jerry and I started smoking cigars. We had to take the small boat back, but before we left we had to pay the guard money. Jerry and the kids went through without paying. He stopped Milka, Olga, Paige,

and I and asked for the tickets. I started yelling for Jerry, Jerry, Jerry come back, then Jerry came back and had to pay \$40 and Jerry broke the law because he did not pay. We took the taxi back the boat.

The next island was Barbados. It was Christmas Day and we decided we were all going shopping to buy something. All of the stores were closed. We found a few things to buy at the port. We then went to the beach to swim. There was a big beach with a long dock and there was rope that Paige would swing on and jump into the ocean. We swam all day and the captain from the boat started talking to us. We went back to the boat and they had a Christmas Church Service. A preacher from Barbados and one from Granada did the service.

That night we went to celebrate and we went to a Las Vegas show. We sat in the front again. The show started and an officer sitting next to me. He was undercover. A girl stared dancing and a chain came off one of the girls dresses and it flew right in front of me. I told my wife look what happened to me. I gave the chain to the guard. Everyone started laughing.

We went gambling and I won \$18. Later I didn't win anything. My wife wanted to play \$7 per day. She lost all of it. We didn't win anything.

The next island was Martinique. It was occupied by the French. We took a little boat to go to another beach and we only stayed there for a few hours because the boat had to leave by 3:00.

There was a special party for people who had been on a cruise more than one time. The drinks were free and we were dancing on stage. We had a good time. We didn't pay for everything it was all complimentary.

Jerry gave Olga a ring for a gift and he gave Milka a necklace and he bought me a watch. Johnny gave it to me, he was wearing it and took it off to give me. We were all happy.

The next day we landed in Fort Lauderdale. They said Indianapolis had a snow storm and the plane wasn't working. There were suitcases everywhere. We found ours and flew to Indianapolis. We took the limousine back to their house. The next day we had to wait until 9:00 to go back to Fort Wayne because of the fog and snow. When we got home Bill had shoveled our driveway and it rained all night and by the next day the snow was gone. I thank Jerry and Olga again for the wonderful trip.

CHAPTER 74

October 29, 2005, my children and grandchildren gave us a surprise 50th wedding anniversary party. They planned it 22 days before our anniversary so that everyone could be there. It was actually November 20th. My cousin George and Millie told us we were all going to a restaurant to eat to celebrate. All of the cousins were meeting us. We took a nap in the afternoon before George picked us up. He was coming at 6:00 pm. Milka was sleeping and I was watching TV and he came 5 minutes late. Then he said we were all meeting at our church first. We stopped in front of the church and I thought something is going on. He told Millie to go inside and get the cousins. She went in then came back out and said she wanted us to come inside. We all walked into the hall and they opened the door and everyone yelled surprise. There were a lot of people inside. I saw all of my grandchildren and my kids and friends and all of my relatives were there. My brother-in-law and his girlfriend and my niece and her family came from Livonia. My cousins Pando and Rea came from Toledo, and my cousins Lefteria and Bill came from Rochester my relatives and friends came from all over the country and Fort Wayne. There were almost 130 people.



Kosmas and Milka's 50th Wedding Aniversary

We ate chicken, mashed potatoes, green beans, salad, peta, whiskey, beer. We had music from tapes. We dance from 7-11. Thomas and Dirk were dancing. They had a cake that we had to cut like newly weds. We fed each other. Then we toasted with Champaign glasses. We took pictures. The kids all gave us a family portrait of the whole family in a frame. Here is the portrait.



Back row left to right Jessica, Stephanie, Christie, Herb, Lindsey, John, William, Jerry, Vasil, Front row left to right Michael, Nancy, Dirk, Milka, Thomas, Kosmas, Paige, Olga, Sue

Dirk bought Baba a gold jacket before the party. Milka had sparkled everyone with the blouse. Milka had a red rose corsage and I had a one rose corsage. We danced and partied all night.

When we got home we opened the gifts and cards. We were so happy. Then Jerry and Olga said they were taking us on another cruise. Everyone started clapping again. We were so happy.

We will never forget this party. There was a lot of money and time spent. The kids did a wonderful time. We thank them all for this. We are very lucky to have such a loving family.

CHAPTER 75

December 2005, for our 50^{th} wedding anniversary we went 8 days on the Carnival Liberty from 12/24 - 1/1/06. We went with Olga's family on another cruise. We went to Indianapolis. Jerry and Olga gave us spending money again for the cruise and Christmas.

We flew from Indianapolis to Fort Lauderdale. We went to the boat and boarded. It was one day before Christmas. We went for 3 days and 2 nights and arrived in Costa May Port, Mexico. We stayed there and went to the beach again for 4 hours. That beach was so hot. We sat in chairs. We bought beer and drank. We lit cigars. Olga and Milka

went shopping. We saw two guys who had guitars and they started playing music to us. I gave them \$5 and they left. We went back to the boat.

The next island was Costa Rica at Port Limon. We stayed all day at the beach again. My wife told me to take my shoes off. The sand was so hot, I couldn't walk. There was a bar at the beach. We couldn't swim too much because of the wind. Milka took her glasses off and put them on top of Christie's bag. She lost them and we looked all over the place. Later that night at dinner Christie found Milka's glasses.

Then we went to Panama at Port Colin. We shopped, and we wanted to go to the Panama Canal. Americans had built it 100 years ago and sold it to the Panamanians. There was a big chain pulling the boat through. We would go into the canal and the doors would close, then the canal would fill up with water and then the gates on the other side would open. It was something to see to watch the doors open and close. I don't know how they made that. Then we left.

We took the boat back to the states. It was another 2 nights and three days. There was live Las Vegas singing and dancing shows. We played the slot machines. We went to fancy dinners. Then Jerry and I went to the cigar room. Jerry and I lit two cigars, and then Johnny took out a cigar and smoked it too. There was a girl playing the piano. I told her to play a song for our 50th wedding anniversary. She didn't know how so she played the tango. I surprised her with this dance and I gave her \$10. She was happy.

We went to dinner and they brought us an anniversary cake and all of the ushers started singing to us. We were very happy. Then we went to the show. They started singing Yankee Doodle Dandy, everyone got up and a drink spilled on me. Then there were streamers and confetti and they threw it all over us.

It was New Year's Eve and we went up to the deck to celebrate at 10:30. Everyone was dancing, drinking, and singing, at the last hour and there were people everywhere. Everyone was happy. They showed a big screen TV with the people celebrating in New York, and then they showed our boat on the TV. Then we got hats and horns. We danced for the last 15 minutes then we went to back to the room. I had lost my pin with the flag on it. When I took my shoes off there was the pin in my shoe.

We left for the airport in Fort Lauderdale in the morning and we waited 5 hours for our flight and the plane went to Atlanta Georgia. It started raining and thundering. Everyone got very scared. We finally landed. We took another plane because the one we originally were to use was not running....we had to wait another 4 hours. We took the plane to Indianapolis and arrived at 12:15 at night. We went to get our suitcases and they were not there. We went back to Olga's house without our luggage. We came home and Olga called and said the suitcases arrived. We had to go back the next day to get them. We came home. We had a pretty good trip. It was the best vacation...

CHAPTER 76

On Saint Nicholas Day 2005 the Bishop came from Pennsylvania. He preformed the service and we all went to the hall to eat. Then they called our names and George Lebamoff and his wife, and Nick Tsuleff and his wife. They gave us 50th wedding anniversary icons. The Bishop was happy to see us because our wedding was the last one he performed before becoming a Bishop. He was the one who gave us the icon. He was very happy.



Thomas, Milka, Kosmas, and Dirk sitting at the table while Kosmas Writes his story

I came to America because I wanted a better life. I am very happy. I thank the United States of America for allowing me to migrate here. I thank the State of Indiana, the county of Allen and the Fort Wayne community for a good life.

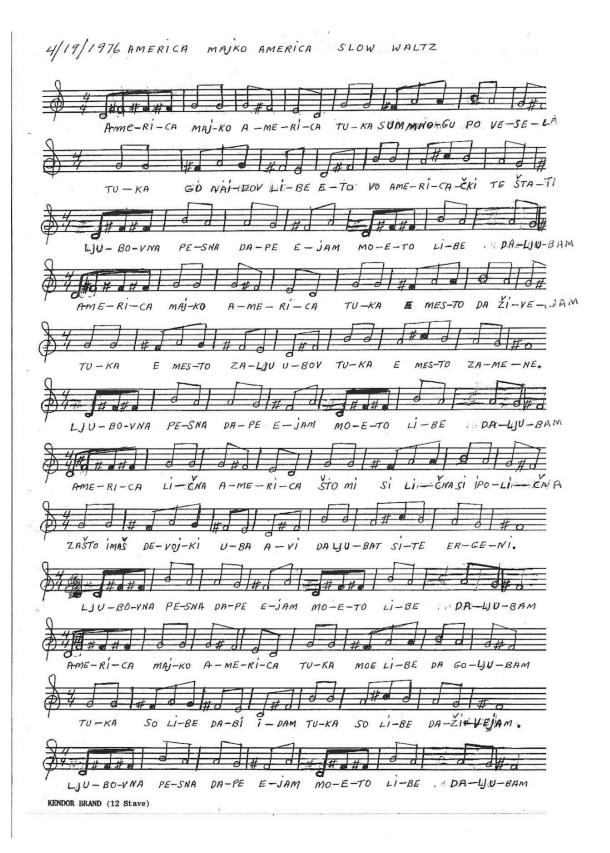
I thank my Dedo and Baba and my Aunts and Uncles and cousins for helping me come here. I thank Holseum Bakery of Fort Wayne for my job. They taught me how to talk English. We worked like a family. I worked there for 40 years and four months and I never fought with anyone. Listen to what your bosses tell you and do the job right. Obey the law and believe in God. He is one power I believe in.

The life we live here you will pass a lot of things, not just you but a lot of people who live here. Everyone has a plan. No one is perfect. Continue living a happy life. My advice from me to you is to keep dreaming. My dreams have all come true. Never give up. The most important thing is good health and love. Take care of your family. That is my prayer from me, mom and dad, Dedo and Baba. Live in this good country, God Bless America.

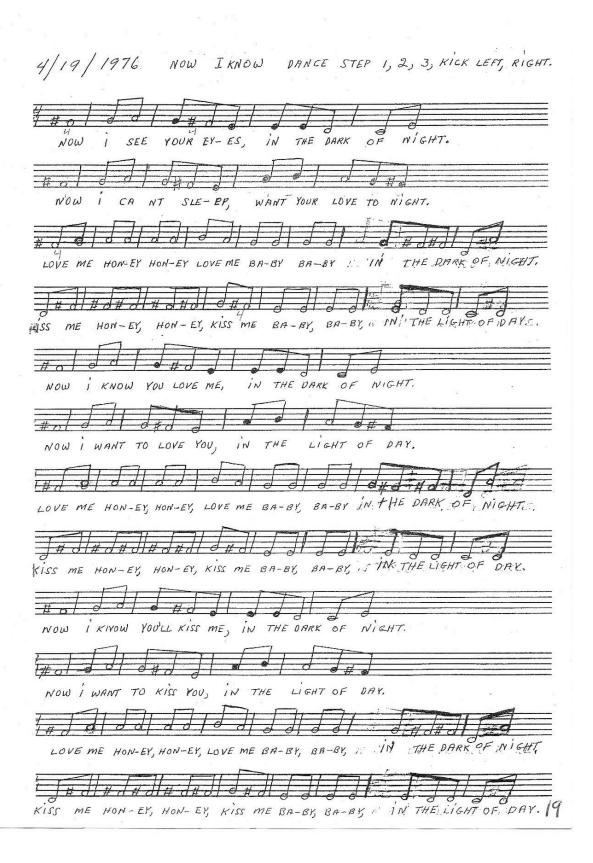
This book is for my family, so that they will know about my life.

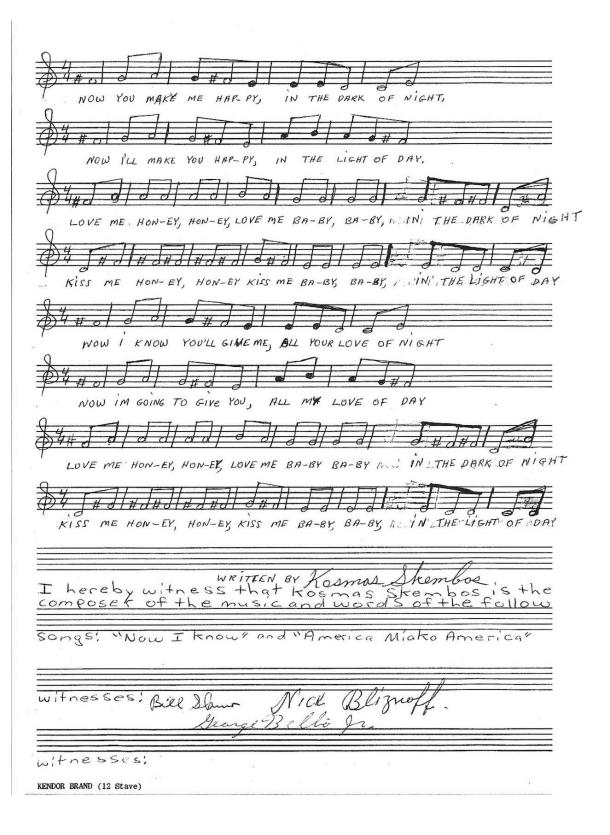
Kosmas Pereklis Skembos

Written by: Kosmas P. Skembos Translated by: Nancy Hildebrand Date completed: July 22, 2006

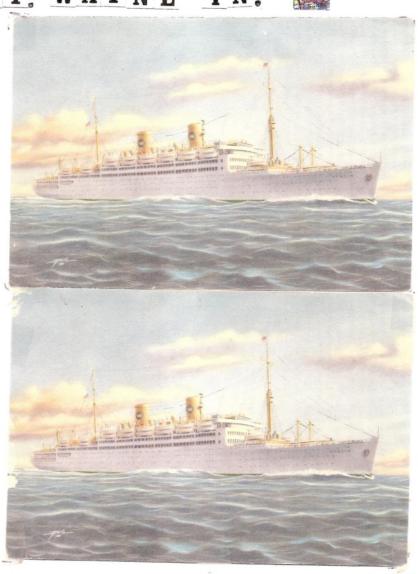


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