

Vincenz and Kristina
Bogatin
by Daughter Christine
Austrian Displaced
People
Nea Hellas & Samaria
1949



Vincenz and Kristina Bogatin



We are submitting these photos in memory of Vincenz and Kristina Bogatin, who arrived in Canada separately in 1949, through Pier 21 in Halifax. Married during the war, in what was then Yugoslavia, they were reunited in Canada after several months apart.

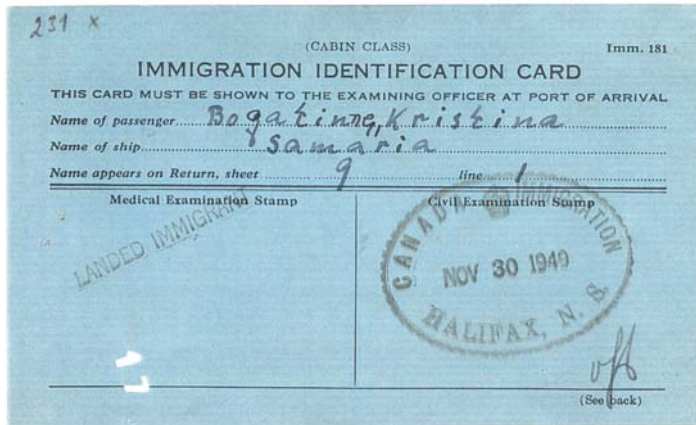
My father came ahead, on the troop ship Nea Hellas, to work in Northern Ontario for Ontario Hydro. My mother arrived in November of 1949, on the ship Samaria.

As young children my parents had witnessed the first World War. The region in which they were born was part of Austria, in a province called Styria (Stiermark). The region had been German speaking and children were schooled in German. After WWI, the language was banned, Slavic teachers were hired, and the children were re-educated in the Yugoslavian language.

They were forbidden to speak German, although parents and grandparents were slow to learn the new Slavic language. The communist doctrine was taught in schools.



From all accounts, the young adults of the 1930's in the new Yugoslavia faced poverty and hunger, and when WWII was declared, many young men signed up with the German army, if only in hope of a better economic future. Having been born German speaking, and still having an allegiance to his Austrian roots, my father Vincenz was no



exception. He and his elder brother joined the Gendarmerie, and they became experts in counter-sabotage of the railway line.

Every young man had to choose, no matter how willing he was to fight, which side he would be on. The choices were to join the local communists (partisans), or the German army or its paramilitary. For a thoughtful man with holes in his shoes, the choice was still a difficult one to make.

Many loved ones were lost during the war, including the beloved Austrian employers of my mother, who were killed by local communists for their land holdings. Her best friend since childhood, daughter of this landowner, had to flee for her life and leave the country under cover of night.

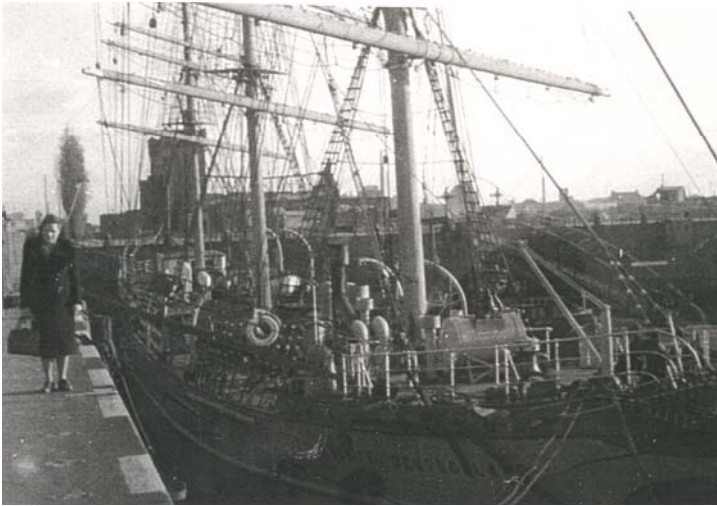
After the war, my father along with thousands of others who had fought against the communists were taken as political prisoners, by now enraged local partisans. They suffered starvation and daily beatings at the hands of people they once lived and worked with. My father became gravely ill with yellow jaundice while imprisoned.



My mother stayed nearby the castle Statenburg that had become the military jail, to be nearby in the slim chance they could be reunited. One

day, two months after the war a fire broke out, or was set, and my father, near death, was among those who escaped. Somehow they were able to locate one another and the two hid in a field of tall corn for several days, while others who tried to escape to Austria immediately were killed.

As Vincenz miraculously began to recover, the couple were able to make their slow escape on foot, over the beautiful rolling hills and valleys of their former homeland to the safety of a refugee camp in Voitsberg.



From there they eventually came to Canada, to settle in Kitchener, Ontario. Late in life, Kristina gave birth to one daughter. Vincent became owner and

proprietor of a butcher shop, Vincent's Meat Market and most of their business was done at Kitchener's Farmer's Market. After his death in 1967, Kristina carried on the business alone, until her retirement. Kristina passed away in Edmonton in 1995, at the age of 84.

This biography was written in loving memory of Vincenz and Kristina Bogatin (born Petelinsek) and all war torn immigrants by daughter Chistine and hand delivered to Pier 21 by their youngest grandson's friend Jody, who was visiting our country from Australia.

July 11, 1999

