

Drajanoff, Slavko

Slavko (Sam) & Evanka

Children: Mary, Stella, Nidelcho (Nick), Jean

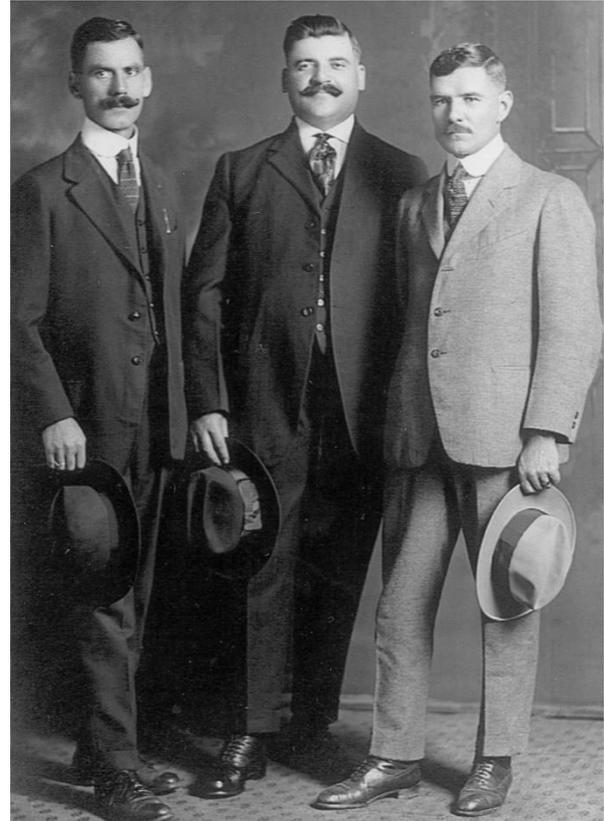
Drajanoff: Hearst Partner to Drajkoff and Chalykoff by Sam Drajanoff and Stella (Drajanoff) Wurm

Slavko (Sam) and Evanka Drajanoff were both born in Bulgaria in 1884. They lived in the small village of Verbitza and conceived two children there. Both died very young. Slavko owned and operated a small shop where he sold a variety of dry goods and, for those who chose to partake, an alcoholic libation. Slavko was lured to Canada in 1907 with the promise of lucrative jobs on the railroad. He arrived in Cochrane that year. He worked in Cochrane until 1912 and then returned to Bulgaria to bring his bride back to Canada. Upon returning to Canada, he moved to Hearst.

It was there he put his entrepreneurial skills to work. He worked with partners, Chalykoff and Drajkoff, and as a sole proprietor, operating a general store.



Chalykoff, Drajkoff and Drajanoff Store on the West Side of 9th Street -about 1920



Mr. Drajkoff, Slavko Drajanoff, Dimitre Chalykoff

Later, Slavko became a sole proprietor.



Drajanoff Store on the East Side of 9th Street –about 1930 (*later West & Co*)

Slavko and Evanka had four more children, all born in Hearst. The first was Mary, born in 1913. Stella was born in 1915 and Nidelcho (Nick) was born in 1918.

attend the Hearst Convent as part of their education. He was astute enough to recognize that French culture would be an important part of their future.



Slavko, Evanka, Mary, Stella and Nick Drajanoff about 1920

Jean followed in 1929, but died at the young age of twenty years. Slavko insisted Mary, Stella and Nick



Slavko Drajanoff in his Butcher Shop about 1930

The Drajanoff family lived and worked in Hearst until 1933. Slavko, a generous man, watched his business suffer the adverse financial consequences of the Depression in the 1930s.

In 1933, Slavko moved to Geraldton and worked for Daneff's grocery store. His inner drive as a businessman surfaced once again and he opened a British American Oil bulk plant. He sold heating and fuel oil, coal, flour and feed in the Geraldton and Longlac area. He worked at this business with son, Nick, until his death in 1949.

Slavko believed in education. Mary attended St. Michael's in Toronto and became a nurse. Stella graduated from North Bay Normal School in 1933

with teaching credentials and became the first schoolteacher at Bradlo. She moved on to Timmins and continued to teach until retirement. She now lives in Geraldton with family.

Mary (Drajanoff) Velyan—three children, Temyana, Peter, James

Stella (Drajanoff) Wurm—no children

Nick Drajanoff—two children, Carol Ann, Sam

Drajanoff, Stella

Hearst Girl, Stella Drajanoff, Bradlo's First Teacher by Stella (Drajanoff) Wurm

Editor's Note: Stella Wurm wrote the following story about her experiences at Bradlo for the Friends of Bradlo Reunion that took place in 1997. It is reprinted here with her permission.

The name Bradlo floods my mind with countless memories of interesting and unforgettable experiences. When I was at North Bay Normal School in 1933, rumours were circulating about the opening of a school in the Slovak Settlement, eight miles southeast of Hearst. Being a native of the town, with my parents still living there, I was interested and applied for the teaching position and felt fortunate to be hired.

Little did I dream that I would not begin until late in the dreary month of October and that I would live in a squared-log schoolhouse until a place was built for me. Armed with a steel cot, enclosed by hanging grey blankets, a stable lantern, flashlight and a pail, I lived in that eerie environment for a frightful week. Getting water from a twenty-foot-deep well with a pail dangling from a rope was a tearful experience.



Stella Drajanoff at the well

When I moved into my one-room dwelling, adjoining the home of John and Anna Bies, fear vanished and I settled down to face the monumental task of teaching twenty-six children who could speak no English.



Stella Drajanoff's room at Bies' in Bradlo

One boy, Joe Lilko, who had gone to school for six months in Stavert, now Jogues, could speak some English and proved to be my salvation. With Joe's help, translation of the readers was possible and progress was incredible, as my pupils were bright, eager and avid learners, and an amazement to my inspectors. No discipline problems there.

After contact with the IODE [Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire] chapters, we received many library books, gifts for children at Christmas and an organ, which was a blessing, indeed. With the help of the parents, who provided Slovak books and material, and Joe Lilko teaching me to read Slovak, we were able to produce a Christmas concert, half in English and half in Slovak. My father was a great Santa Claus.

Fun and laughs were a result of "night school" classes for the adults, mostly men. Besides learning to converse in English, time was spent on bank forms, understanding business letters received and various topics suggested by the group.



Bradlo classroom in 1934

Dances were held in the school and were attended by both parents and children. Desks were pushed against the walls, piled with clothing, while sleeping ones topped the heap. The Slovaks were great dancers and I was introduced to the *Chardash*.

My time extended beyond school hours. As I walked the two-mile, muddy wagon road to the corner where the road turned north to Hearst, I was stopped to read or write business letters, or make out orders for Eaton's. While in town on weekends, many Saturday afternoons were spent at the doctor's office interpreting for women with problems.

John and Anna Bies were such a comfort and help. Anna made sure my little place was warm after my eight-mile ski from Hearst.

She also was, indeed, a true and reliable friend. My three years in Bradlo, 1933–36, were most fulfilling, as I felt I helped the people who were very appreciative and kind to me in many ways, too numerous to describe. Above all, I loved the children, who were a pleasure to teach and who were willing and obedient. Bradlo was a unique settlement and memories remain precious to this day.

