



## THE 1935-36

### DIARIES OF GORDON BORACHEFF

Life in Hearst Ontario

Volume 1, Dec. 31, 1934 to May 12, 1935, 104 pages

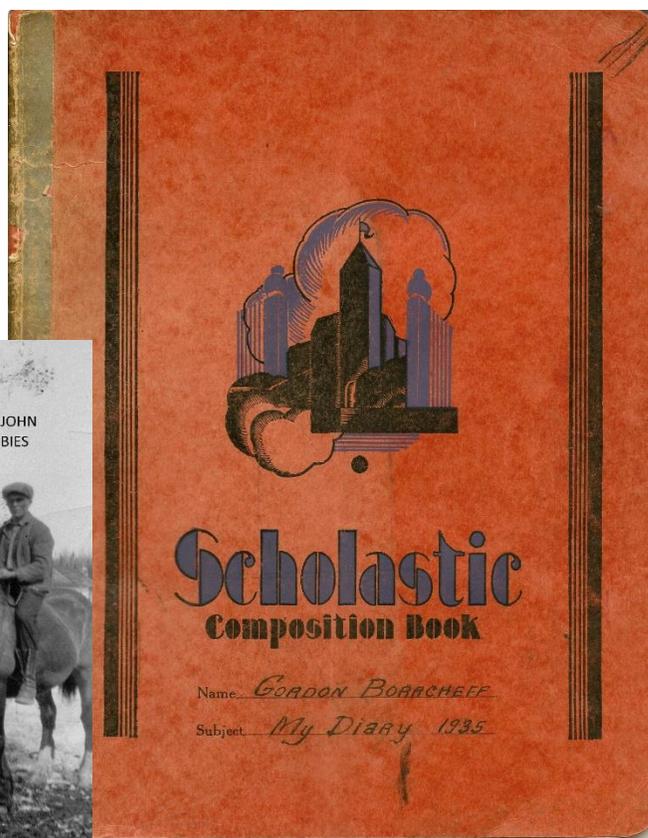
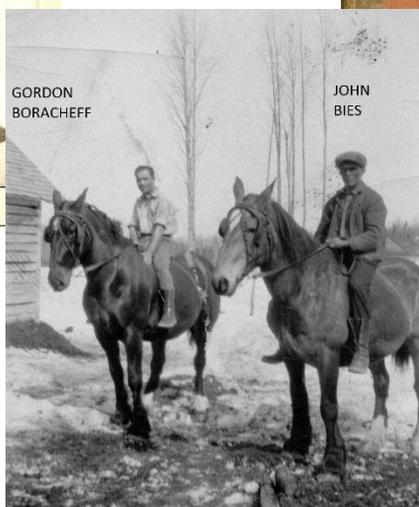
and Volume 2, May 13, 1935 to January 20, 1936. P 105 - 204

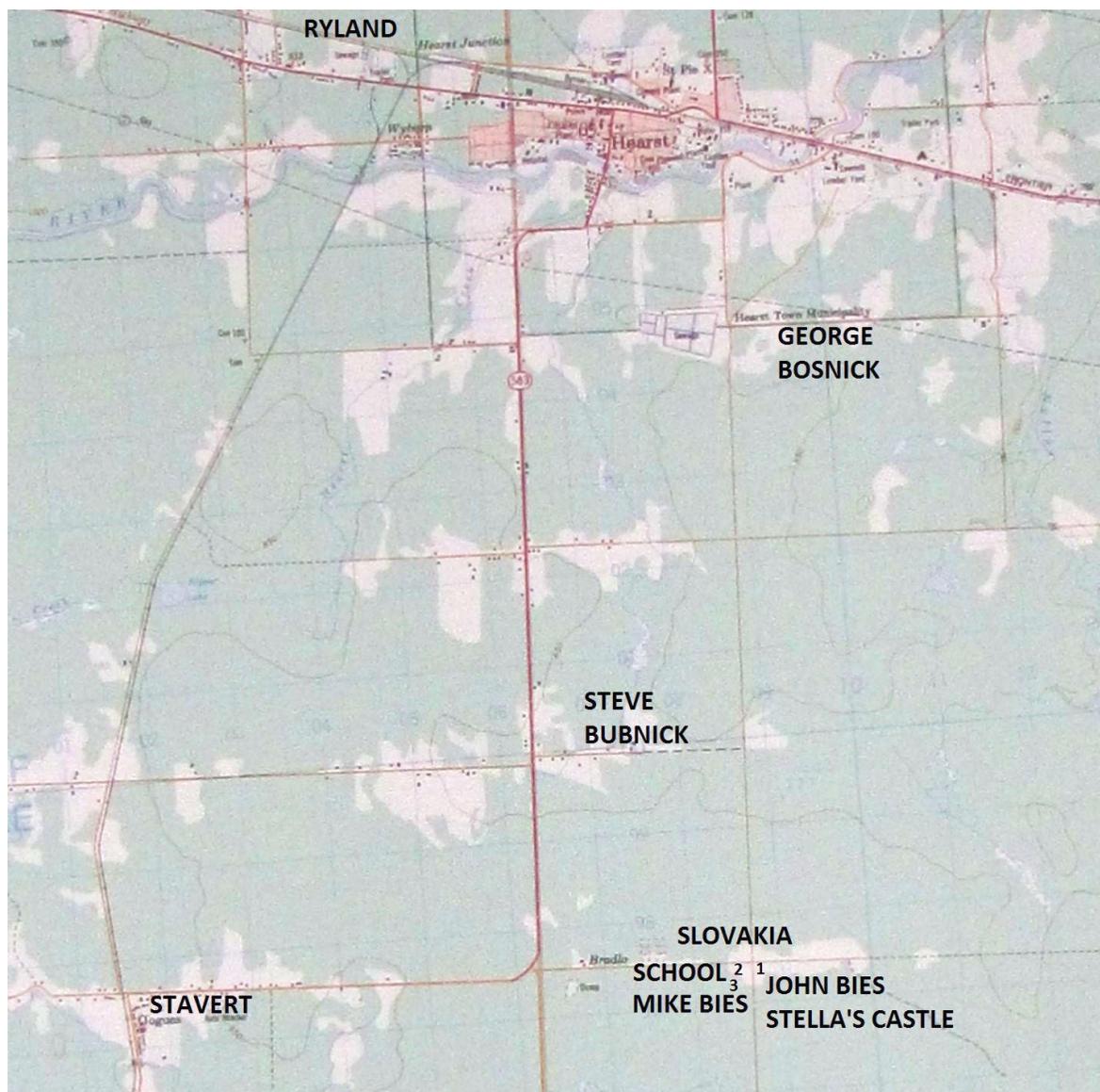
With thanks to Sam Drajanoff, Arlene and Jana Boracheff, the Bies, Drajanoff and Guty family photo archives, Clayton's Kids, and the internet.

*Transcription, editing, photo layout and [Editor's notes] by Ernie Bies Jan, 2015. Updated March 2020 (with help from Sandy Bies)*

*[Editor's note; Gordon and Peter Boracheff came to Canada from Bulgaria in 1920. Peter was born November 20, 1900 and died in Geraldton on July 2, 1985. Gordon, born June 2, 1904, also died in Geraldton on December 29, 1983. The 1921 Census of Canada shows a Penco Boracheff, aged, 18 living in Hearst. He was a labourer with the CNR and a lodger at the home of Slavko Drajanoff, a local merchant then situated on Front Street.*

*Gordon's diary indicated that he came to Hearst and met the Drajanoffs in about 1927.*





*Map of the Hearst area showing locations mentioned in the diaries.*

*Hearst had a large Bulgarian community; many were involved in various businesses. Originally Slavko Drajanoff was partnered with Dimitri Chalykoff and a third man named Drajkoff who went back to Bulgaria. Then Drajanoff and Chalykoff operated competing general stores on Ninth Street, directly opposite each other. Slavko Drajanoff and his wife Evanka, had four children, Mary, Stella, Nick and Jean. Dimitri Chalykoff and his wife Neda, also had four children, Neda, Rod, Sanna and Nick. Dimitri's brother Todor and their nephew Penu formed part of their extended family. Penu became a doctor and practiced in Hearst before his untimely death. Other Bulgarian businessmen in Hearst were: Leo Lambroff who operated a pool hall and the first Royal Theatre; Dan Marinoff, who owned the Hearst Bottling works; Bill and Anastasia Shoppoff who had a restaurant and confectionary store and Evan Topaloff who was a storekeeper in Stavert. George Petcoff was a section foreman with the CNR and he lived at the Ryland train station.*

Map of Hearst from Pioneer Partner's of St Paul's by Margaret Arkinstall.

Map of Hearst copied from  
Bill's first letter to his parents -

<b>HEARST - May 1931</b>				scattered houses	1. Waverly Hotel		
C.N.R.	round house				2. Chalykoff's Store		
station freight				fire-      ranger's	3. Drugstore		
Front Street					4. West's Store		
	1	2	4		5. Drajanoff's Ice Cream Store		
		3	5	24	25	26	6. Nationale Bank
George Street					7. Imperial Bank		
		6	7	23			9. Finn Hotel
			9	22		27	10. Finn Pool Room
		11	10				11. Lot I am trying to buy
Prince Street					14. School grounds		
		17	21				15. United Church Hospital
	14	18					16. Residence
		19					17. Anglican Church
		20					18. Anglican Parsonage
							19. United Church
							20. United Church Manse
							21. Lot reserved for Town Hall
	16	15					22. New Royal Theatre
							23. My Office
							24. Brisson Hardware
							25. Grieve & Powell Hardware
							26. Post Office
							27. Powell House

**HEARST IN 1931,  
FROM ARKINSTALL BOOK, P. 11**

George Street, 1931

*Gordon's diary reflects the loneliness of a young man who finds himself in a new country during the Depression. Five thousand miles away from Bulgaria, he faced an uncertain future, too proud to go home.]*

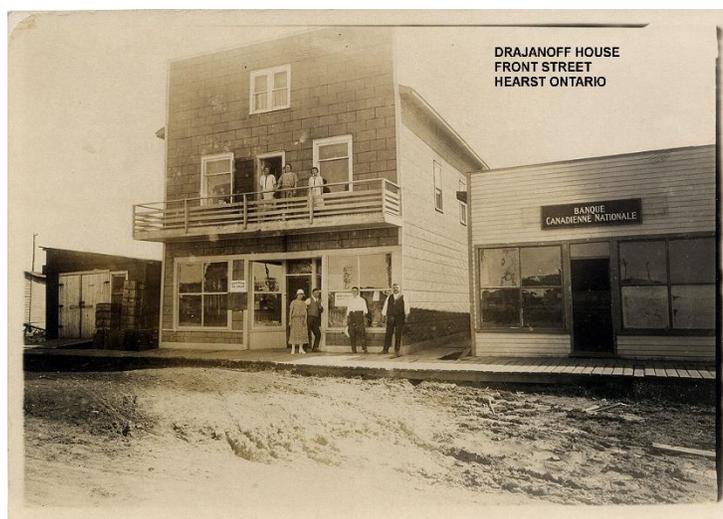
## My Diary    Gordon Boracheff

**Monday, Dec. 31. 1934, Stella [Drajanoff]** and I left Nakina where we had visited **Daneff** for five days. The train ride took seven hours, arriving in Hearst at 6 P.M. and we decided that we might go to the dance. I managed to dress up and brace up from the long ride by taking a glass of whisky and at ten I went to Stella's place. She was not going to the dance, but was writing a letter. I was disappointed although I did not care much to go to the dance for I could not dance. I left Stella with her letter writing and I talked with her father and mother (Slavko and Evanka) and then at eleven I went to listen to the radio where Stella was writing. I asked Stella to teach me to dance so we did a few rounds while Stella was pointing out my mistakes and showing me how it was done. Twelve O'clock, New Years. Everybody seemed happy and the family came in and began shaking hands and extending wishes for a happy new year and her Dad came with a gallon of wine. After a few glasses of wine I began to talk louder and said that from that day on I was going to be bad, as if I knew what was like to be bad. About two A.M. I bid these people, who I have known as my people for the past eight years, good night and went out.



Passing by the dance hall I went in as there was a jolly crowd there all with bright happy faces dancing to the music. I was sad – sad – 30 years old and here I was alone, no one seemed to care – no one who would look at me with a smile and make me feel that there was something worth living for. Fearing that I might burst into tears I turned and went home. It was New Years. I could hear voices shouting Happy New Year. I went to bed but not to sleep and I passed the whole night thinking without a wink of sleep.

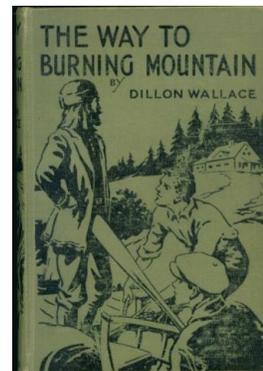
**Jan. 1:** Got up late – it was New Years Day, everything around me seemed wrong. I did not feel like talking nor wanted to see anyone yet it was soon dinner and **Pete [Boracheff]** and I were invited, as we were every year, to have dinner with **Drajanoff** family. When I was ready, I went up to the house. G. and his wife were there. So was Z. I did not want to drink but was coaxed to and in the hope that I might change my mood a little I drank five glasses of whisky and even that did not affect me a bit. The jokes, the music, the children who came



around me to play and not even Stella's presence made any difference. I knew I was the only unhappy person there so I went home. I could not eat or sleep again that night. Thus the first day of the New Year passed with only memories of sadness.

**Jan. 2:** Went to see Stella off to school. *[Editor's note: Stella was teaching at the **Slovak** colony eight miles south of Hearst and staying in a room she called "the Castle" in the home of **John and Anna Bies**. The first school, Kendall No. 4, was opened in 1933 with 18-year-old **Stella Drajanoff** as the first teacher. She taught there until 1936 before moving on to Timmins and a long career in teaching. Stella passed away in Geraldton in 2014 at the age of ninety-eight].*

Read some of "The Way to Burning Mountain" although it was hard to concentrate. Read till 2 A.M. and spent a restless night with many scattered and unpleasant dreams. It was a very cold day. *[Editor's note: **The Way to Burning Mountain - a tale of the Great Canadian Wilderness**, by Dillon Wallace, 1926. Boys Books Series.]*

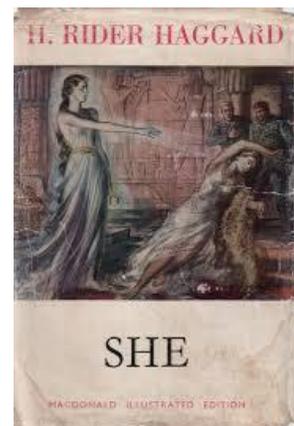


**Jan. 3:** Washed clothes and cleaned all day, in the evening went to the Young People's Meeting and had an enjoyable evening. There were 35 members. Went home, read some more and went to bed at 3 A.M.

**Jan. 4:** In the afternoon helped **Pete [Boracheff]** and **Dan** cut wood. Read and wrote till late.

**Jan. 5:** Helped cut wood all day – the three of us cut 40 cords in 7 hours.

**Jan. 6:** Sunday. I stayed home all day attempting to read the book "She" but was interrupted by everyday visitors who came to my place. *[Editor's note: **She** by H. Rider Haggard, 1887, is one of the bestselling books of all time with more than 100 million copies sold. Sir Henry Rider Haggard also wrote **King Solomon's Mines** and **Allan Quatermain**. "She" was originally set in Africa and was made into a movie in 1935 starring Randolph Scott but the setting was changed to the Siberian arctic.]*



**Bill** invited me to go and have supper with the **Teggins** where I enjoyed the supper and the radio. Then I went to church, before going home to read and write notes till late. It was snowing hard. *[Editor's note: the 1921 census shows Teggins, John, aged 43, CNR Police, and his wife Eliza aged 41. During the Dirty thirties Teggins roused many men who were riding the rails from the train. One was John Bies who then encountered people from the Slovak colony in Chalykoff's store in 1930 and decided to return to settle in 1932.]*

Often, I thought of home, the home that I have left almost 15 years ago, five thousand miles away, father, mother and the mess that we have made of our lives. For the past three months we had not heard from home. I admit I myself was not true to

mother all these nine years and did not write as often as I should have. I know that they were disappointed in us, discouraged and even giving up hope of seeing me again. It is enough to break any mother's heart, but what could have I done. For mother I would even have attempted to walk there five thousand miles, but there was father with whom I think we will never agree, so in my opinion it is the best after all to leave matters to take their course. Christmas and New Year passed with not even a card from home – although a month ago I wrote them – sent cards and 20 dollars from Pete and I but no answer- no wonder I felt miserable on New Years when we could have been together with the whole family.

**Jan. 8:** Was called to court as an interpreter for the **Slovaks**. The man (**Joseph Lukac**) who shot at his friend (**Steven Cismar**) in a drunken condition was found guilty (on January 3, 1935) and sentenced to three years and one month at hard labour and sent to Kingston Penitentiary. There were a few other cases which seemed so simple – so foolish, or else done because of need – theft – insult and drunkenness. It is a pity and a wonder how people with sense and power of reason could degrade themselves so much. [Editor's note: The Dec 6, 1934 story in the *Globe*, identified the shooter as Joseph Magon, rather than Joseph Lukac (corrected in later stories). Lukac appealed the sentence claiming he did not understand the charges and was not represented by council. The appeal court upheld the original sentence of three months on April 2, 1935.]

After supper I read the book "She" for 6 hours. It is one of the best books I have ever read – such language used, such imagination surely Sir Rider Haggard, the author of "She" can't be an ordinary man. My wish would be to express myself even one tenth as well as Mr. Haggard and that would be sufficient for me

**Jan. 9, 10, 11, and 12:** The following few days passed unnoticed. I wrote two letters to my dear friend in Montreal, **Mary**. Also received a letter from home – father and mother wanted Pete and I to get home without fail .

**Jan. 13:** On Sunday I decided to go to see Stella and I walked the nine miles. It was cold and the road was rough but I managed to get there. Stella seemed glad to see me. Being very cold I was persuaded to stay overnight and slept at **Mike's**. [Editor's note: **Michael Bies** who lived next door]. Next morning I left after splitting some wood and getting some water for Stella. It was very cold

**MIKE  
BIES**



*The Globe (1844-1936); Dec 6, 1934; P  
PE-7*

## Answering Knock Man Gets Bullet

### Hearst District Resident Is Held on Murder At- tempt Charge

(Canadian Press Despatch.)

Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., Dec. 5. — Joseph Magon was in Hearst jail to-night awaiting trial on an attempted murder charge which followed the alleged shooting of Steve Cismar, farmer, living about eight miles south of Hearst. Police said they obtained no motive for the act charged against Magon, but said the accused man claimed he was under the influence of liquor.

It is alleged Magon shot Cismar, who underwent an operation at Hearst to save his life, at midnight, Dec. 3. Cismar said he was awakened by someone knocking at the door of his cabin, but received no response when he asked who was there. Crawling out of bed and donning his clothes, Cismar said he was met with a bullet in the groin, fired through the window after the intruder had flashed a light through the pane.

Cismar crawled to safety behind a woodbox, where he lost consciousness, while his wife and two children remained in bed terror-stricken lest more shots were fired. At 5 o'clock in the morning help of neighbors was summoned, police were called and the wounded man rushed to Hearst for the operation, resulting in removal of the bullet.

Police said Magon surrendered to Provincial Constable W. Byrne, who was summoned to the scene of the shooting, a lonely spot four miles from the nearest telephone.

and took two and a half hours to get home.

**Jan. 14-19:** Stayed home, read and studied science and physics every night till 4 to 6 A.M. Saturday I received a letter from Stella asking me to send her my camera so I decided to go to see her the next day and bring her the camera and get some exercise. Received a letter from Mary. To bed at 6 A.M.



**Sunday, Jan. 20:** Got up at 11 A.M. After lunch, taking my skis for the first time this winter I set out for **Slovakia** at 2:30. [Editor's note: this was the Slovak colony eight miles south of Hearst that was officially named **Bradlo** later in 1935.] It was cold and the road was covered with snow from the previous storm and going was hard but I reached there at 5. We talked, sang a little, had tea and at 12 A.M. I went to sleep at Mike's again.

**Jan. 21:** Early next morning, after we breakfasted with Stella, she went to school. I did a few chores for her, cleaned the snow around her little palace, or castle as she calls it, split some wood and got some water. I set out for home on the skis at 11:30

A.M. even though it was snowing and cold and they wanted me to stay. The first three miles it was not so bad going through the wooded country. It was snowing hard and I hardly saw where I was going since the road was still covered with snow but then I came to the open where the road went through a cleared country. The wind that came from the south now changed and came



from the north. The soft snow flakes changed to hard cold snow. The wind became stronger and turned to a blizzard. I hardly saw where I was going. There was a team about a quarter of a mile ahead of me, but no matter how hard I tried to catch it I could not get close to it. The blizzard covered the tracks of the sleigh and the horses. Facing this wind and snow my eyes got filled with tears and my face plastered with snow, still I pushed the skis on and on. Often, I would stop, brush off the ice formed around my eyes and kept on with a smile. My hands and face were very cold so when I felt my nose, cheeks and chin freezing I would stop rub them with snow. I had only my B.V.D.'s and light breeches on. At last I managed to get home at 3:00 P.M. – 3 1/2 hrs. going. After I rubbed my hands and face with snow for about ten minutes and had a good meal, I was O.K. but I had frozen my chin, nose and a little of my left cheek so I could not shave for a week until the skin peeled and the sores healed.

That night the sky cleared – the moon shone bright and millions of stars were shimmering in the sky. It was very cold. There was hardly anybody seen on the road. Only the smoke of the chimney moved lazily towards the south. Had I a reason I felt that I could have stepped on the skis again and followed the smoke towards Slovakia. The thermometer read 45 degrees below zero.

**Jan. 22, 23 and 24:** Stayed home – the weather continued to be cold, at 12 that night it was 43 degrees below, next morning it was 52 below and Jan. 24 in the morning it reached 65 degrees below zero. One

of the coldest days we ever had. Pete went to Geraldton. In the morning when I got up the water in the pail in the little shack where I stayed was frozen – three inches of ice. Took me more than two hours to heat up the place again as all we had was the cook stove and when filled with wood the fire never lasted more than an hour. Thus our life goes on in Hearst and as it has for years.

**Jan. 25- 31:** Day by day the time slipped away unnoticed. Whenever I was left alone I tried to read and write trying to improve my English, staying up every night till very late. I hardly went to bed before three and often went to bed at daylight so hardly had more than 4-5 hours of sleep a night. A day didn't pass without me doing some kind of errand – some favour for somebody such as writing letters for people who were not able to read or write. I hardly sat at a meal without having someone for company. Yet I was happy to be able to do something for anybody who asked. Received a postcard from home – all's well – except that father and mother wanted us to go home. The weather continued cold and stormy. Did not hear from Pete.

**Feb. 1, 1935:** Friday. The weather changed suddenly. The snow began to melt. Stella came home from Slovakia for the first time in the past month. That night, **Norma**, another teacher from **Stavert**, came to spend the night with Stella. [Editor's note: **Norma Wade** taught in Stavert from 1934 to 1936. She married Algoma Central Railway conductor, **Roy Smith**, in 1936].

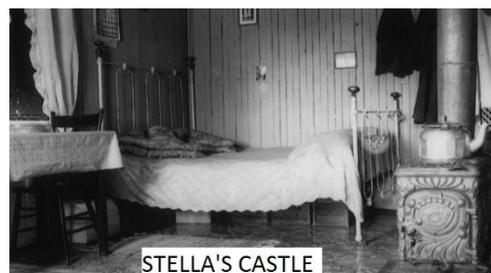


Bill and I met her at the train and spent the evening at Stella's house – we talked, had lunch and danced. How I wished I could dance like Bill.

Extracted from one of Stella's letters written to me dated Jan. 23, 1935.

*"It is grand sensation to receive letters when I am in the "castle" (the castle is a room where she stays at the colony). I am sure you can imagine what it is like can't you?*

*As I looked out of my eastern window I found the moon rising above the jagged spruce line sending its moonbeams to illuminate the little world called Slovakia, ( I gave it that name for most people here are Slovaks) where the castle lingers amid the friendly spruce and wherein a lonely princess dwells. The stars are breathing in their twinkling and hang low, pinned to the black carpet above. I ask myself – "Was such a night meant for solitude or companionship? Why had nature such an effect on man? Why are man's emotions stirred to such a degree by the wonders of God's hand? Do you ever ask yourself such a question Gordon? Alas! I answer "Thank God, I breathe" Then a feeling of contentment overcomes me; then I forget my solitude. Understand? Am I dreaming? What an idealistic person? (You may say).*



*Elated to hear that your visits to the castle hold so much meaning for you. Needless to say they are extremely pleasing to me as we seem to understand each other's views and can speak freely.....You have been everything that a big brother and friend could possibly be to another and on many occasions proven your kindness. ....You are a friend Thank God Signed: Always the same Stella. "*

We knew each other since I met her eight years ago. She was only a little girl of eleven then. Had I a sister I would have wished her to be like Stella and should a time come for me to choose a mate I would wish her to be like Stella.

**Feb. 2:** It rained a little but that night the wind changed. It began to snow and the following morning everything was frozen hard again and it was very cold.

**Feb. 3 – 5:** Visitors came in and out as usual. Did hardly anything worthwhile during the days but always at night stayed up until 3, 4 or 5 writing, reading and studying English. Still did not hear from Pete. The weather once more turned cold. Began to write “**Revelations of Bogdon of Bulgaria**”, while at it I enjoyed it so much and felt so happy that I wouldn’t have changed places with King George but was perfectly content and satisfied with myself and where I was – for I seemed to live through the lives of the characters I tried to portray in my story – I never felt happier in my life.

**Feb. 6:** It was a fair day. Dan and I went to John’s farm – 4 miles – shot 5 rabbits – came home at 6 P.M.

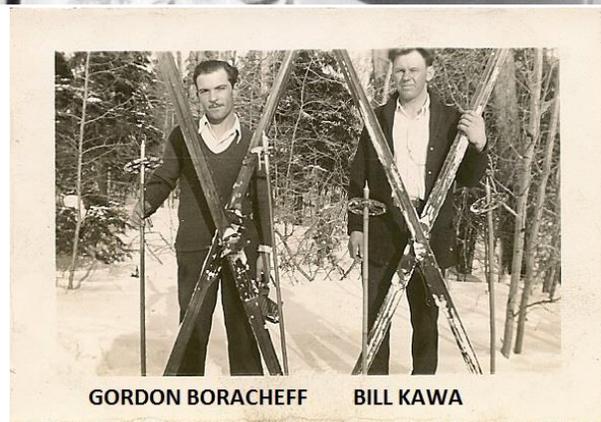
**Feb. 7:** As every other day, visitors – friends just came in and out – some just for a chat – some for some information or help. Had two Slovaks for dinner, one Bulgarian for supper. These came: **1. Bill – Bulgarian, [probably Shoppoff] 2. Bill – English, 3. John – Polish, 4. John and Mike – Slovaks, [John and Mike Bies] 5. Nick Horvat, 6. Vlado Horvat, 7. Dan – Bulgarian, 8. Nick – Bulgarian, 9. Kolio – Bulgarian, 10. Bill – Ukrainian [probably Bill Kawa], 11. Pete – Bulgarian, 12. Marin – Bulgarian, 13. Tony – Bulgarian [probably Todor “Tony” Chalykoff], 15. Two Slovaks for mail – 16. One Russian for newspaper, 17. Matt for newspaper -**

This happens every day and I take it as it comes. If I could help I do. At 8 P.M. I was invited to go to the young people’s meeting which was a box social. There was a good crowd – about 50, most young men and young girls – I bought three boxes – three ladies sat with me at lunch, two married and one nurse – had a jolly time – wish I could go oftener. Came home at 11:30 and wrote till 6 A.M. *Marginal note:* I did not know that buying boxes meant eating lunch with the ladies who made them.



**Feb. 8:** Mr D. Chalykoff was in till 12 midnight, read a little and went to bed at 3 A.M.

**Feb. 9:** Saturday at 3 P.M. Bill and I set out on skis for Stella’s castle at the colony. Bill was not used to skis so it took us three hours and we arrived at Slovakia at six. Stella and Norma met us by the school. It was a treat for me to be in the company of these young people.



The castle was Stella's room which served as bedroom, dining room, kitchen and all. Bill was tired and was lying in bed while Stella was writing letters. The gramophone which I brought from home was playing and Norma and I danced a few times. At two A.M. Bill and I went to sleep at Mike's next door.

At eight the next morning we went back. The girls were up. Breakfast over we arranged for Bill and



Norma to stay and cook the chicken that we brought while Stella and I went out skiing. It was 10 A.M. We skied through the bush on the winter road on which they haul pulp. It was a glorious day – the sun shone and from time to time flurries of snow came down and then it was clear and bright again. Through a virgin forest in places where the trees were so high we could hardly see the sky Stella was doing fine with the skis, her cheeks were red and she was full of life. Soon we covered five miles back and forth and at 12 noon came back to the castle, we took some pictures and at 1:30 had dinner. Again Stella kept herself busy with her school work and letter writing because she wanted to send the letters with us as it was only by chance that she sent out or received mail. [Editor's note: *The Slovak Colony did not get a Post Office until 1936.*] Bill and Norma went to look over the log school house. The following morning Norma

was to ride home with some team to her school in Stavert, five miles away.

At 10 P.M. Bill and I said good-bye to the teachers leaving them in solitude among the friendly spruces, as Stella says. The night was clear, the moon shone bright – it was like day – millions of stars danced in the sky – while the trees on both sides of the road cracked from the cold. When I came home at 1 A.M, I found everything frozen. The water in the pail was frozen solid – it took me some time to heat the place.

**Feb. 11:** Monday. Visitors began to come from early in the morning. Tuesday passed the same way – did some cooking and read and wrote– planned to write all night, but at 12 o'clock, an old friend came from Montreal and stayed with me that night.

**Feb. 12:** Men came in and out all day. The following day, I felt better. Pete still had not written.

**Feb. 15:** Received a letter from Mary E, she looked forward to coming to spend her holidays here in Hearst – Also received letters from **Mary Drajanoff, Stella and Kosta**. Have not answered any yet – did not even write for home for four months.

I cannot understand myself at all, for every day I would be overcome by different moods. One day would be happy as a lark, the next day I'll feel



depressed and discouraged – I would even hate to go out or meet anybody.

**Monday, Feb. 18:** There was a dance and, though I did not feel like going, I decided to go. I pressed my suit, got ready and at 11, went. There was a good crowd there dancing, most were influenced by liquor. Should I go and get drunk and join the happy crowd? I did not feel like it. Was I getting old? In **Shoppoff's** restaurant nearby, I met Bill and Norma. She was happy and asked me to go and have a dance with her. A few minutes later I was at the dance again and after watching for a while I put my coat on and came home without even one dance.



**Feb. 20:** Today although it was cold and windy, Dan and I went to old John's farm 8 miles, got three rabbits – Came home at 1 Stayed up till 3 A.M.

**Feb. 21:** Washed clothes - It was a very cold day. Wrote letters to Mary (12 pages) and Kosta. Stayed up till 4-5-6 every night writing some of the story. Pete came home from Geraldton.

Monday, **John Bies** came from the colony with his team so I decided to go to see Stella. It was very cold. We reached Slovakia at 5 P.M. and Stella was still at school.



After supper she taught night school. There were about 30 men and women



sitting and Stella was asking questions. Show me this, Where is that? Etc. In English and Slovak. Surely a girl to be admired. That evening we stayed up late, she wrote letters, marked papers, we had lunch at two A.M. and talked. Slept at Mike's. Got up at 7, had breakfast with Stella at eight before she went to school. Got some wood and water and at 10:30 was on my skis on my way home. Began to read

"Monte Cristo". Read and wrote until 5 A.M. [Editor's note: *The Count of Monte Cristo*, by Alexander Dumas.]

**Feb. 27:** Read "Monte Cristo" all day and went to the steam bath. The days were passing unnoticed – another month was gone and March came in.

Friday I was called to paint three rooms at **Dr. Arkinstall's** house. Saturday I painted a few hours.



Received a letter from home. Father and mother insisted that we come home. Tuesday painted again. Received another letter from Mary E. The last few days the weather was very cold – we had the severest storm this winter which lasted 48 hours.

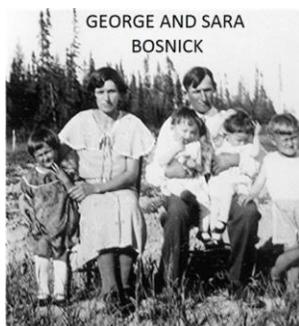


On two evenings **Doc Foster** came to see me. We had a very enjoyable talk for he is a man whom I like to listen to – so well spoken and liked by all. He is a man of over fifty – lover of nature – a Lone Eagle in the North Country who wants to help. He lives on his writing for magazines. *[Editors note: Dr. Fred Foster, age 31, is listed in the 1921 census in Hearst as a physician though there is no record in Hearst of a medical doctor by that name. A long time resident said he was a veterinarian].*

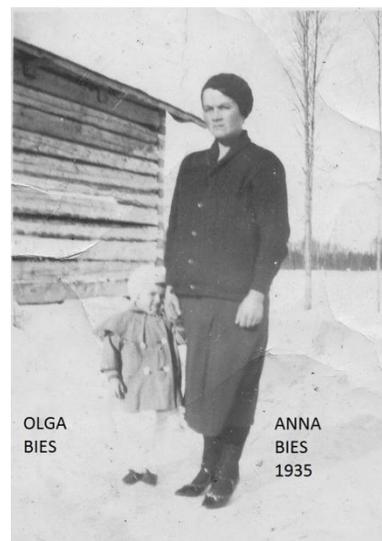
**March 1 till March 20:** Finished painting, got \$10 for it. Painted our little palace - put new curtains. Wrote a letter to Mary, 15 pages. Wrote 30 more pages of R. of B. of B. *[Revelations of Bogdon of Bulgaria]* Always staying up late at night. Doc Foster visited us a few times. Stella came home one Saturday and on Sunday I skied with her to her school, 9 miles and came back the same day – thus making 18 miles. Went once to the young people’s meeting. The last few days the weather was very mild and although there was much snow it was going fast. Wrote a letter home. Read some of the book Monte Cristo. Thus time passes unnoticed yet nothing is done, nothing accomplished.

**April 10:** Today is the tenth of April – more than a month passed since I entered any event. Here is how I passed the time.

One day Doc and I went to Stella’s. It was Sunday afternoon when we arrived there. That evening Doc, Stella and I visited a few Slovak houses – stayed late talking, that night Doc and I slept at Mike’s. Next morning we had breakfast with Stella when she went to school while Doc and I made dinner. Seeing **Mrs. Bies** cutting wood - a woman who is pregnant – I was not surprised for she cuts the wood always – I could not stand and watch so I took the saw from her and cut half a cord of wood. *[Editor’s note: Mrs. Bies was pregnant with her second child Anne].*



After dinner Stella went to school - Doc and I went on our way through the colony stopping here and there and we slept at **old John’s**. Next morning on our way home we stopped to see the twins who were a week old. When they came into the world the Doctor could not get there because of a big storm. Now the mother was working as usual doing the chores and looking after her



other two children, one 3 and the other two years old. Some life yet these people looked very happy and content. Soon we came home after covering about twenty-five miles for the two days on skis.

**April 2:** I was called to Cochrane as interpreter and witness for the Slovak who shot at his friend and who was sentenced to 3 years. Now he appealed the case to a higher court. Being a witness I could not go as interpreter. They found another. As I understood later the evidence was all twisted. The prisoner was guilty again of causing body harm and was sentenced to 18 months. We stayed in Cochrane two days and went to see the show and some friends. The following day I stopped in Kapuskasing but I was disappointed as there was no show that day.

That night my old section boss **Hugo Kjollonder** and his wife came to my place. Their little girl **Mary Margarite** was in the hospital sick with diphtheria. I promised to go and visit Margarite and report to them.

**April 7:** Doc went to visit some Russians at the Colony five miles from Stella's school. At 1:30 I went to Boubnic's [**Bubnicks**] two miles from the school where I met Stella. We stayed for four hours while old **Steve** played the violin and the children danced. Three of the children attended Stella's school. After



supper Stella and I set out for the school and we talked about her plans for attending summer school. After a light lunch I left at nine and was in search of Doc who was somewhere in the bush five miles from the school. The sky was clear but the moon was only quarter full so it wasn't very bright. At 10:30

I arrived at **Samuel's** and woke him up. At half past 11 I left him - he directed me to **Sowpel's** where Doc was stopping. I had to go through a narrow path in the bush - the moon had set - it was dark but very still, not too cold - I could hear only the hooting of an owl.

Soon I came to the bush road and after walking for half a mile I came to a small shack in the heart of the forest and woke up the fellows. It was after twelve midnight. They told me that Sowpel's place was half a mile from there. In the darkness I had missed the narrow path that led to the log shack so I walked back and forth for about two miles until I met **George Bosnick**, the father of the twins who was going for wood. He was very surprised to see me there at that time of the night. I had to go back a mile and soon found the Sowpel's camp, Doc and four other sleeping men at 2 A.M.

The following morning after a good breakfast Doc and I set out for home and stopped at a few places. At **Marco's** we listened to some wonderful music on a guitar and an accordion. We had dinner at

John's and Doc played on the old piano, John played and sang and then went home. We covered 25 miles. I walked ten miles and skied fifteen miles.

I visited Margarite who was a lot better. Wrote a few letters to some friends. Thus the time passes and nothing of importance happens. Wrote a letter home and sent \$20 for Easter.

**April 5:** Pete bought a car "Dodge" for \$1300.00 - \$325.00 for the old car and \$200.00 cash. It was not here yet. \$800.00 more to pay.

**May 12:** Another month slipped away. It snowed and rained, Doc and I paid Stella a visit then Doc and I got busy to type the story which I finished and called it "**The Call of the Mountains**". It took us about ten days and I sent it to True Story magazine, competing for the twenty five thousand dollar contest. *[Editor's note: It appears the Bogdon story became "The Call of the Mountains", perhaps influenced by the books Gordon had been reading. The March 1935 issue of True Story Magazine, pictured on the right, had a promotion for this contest on its cover.]*



Then around the first of May, Pete got the old car out while waiting for the new one to come. I got the truck going and did a few jobs transferring furniture, at the same time in my spare time did the housework, washing clothes, cooking, etc.

Went to the Easter dance with Stella and **Victoria** on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Went to get Victoria from Ryland with the truck. The following day, May second, I was up, glad that I was going to work. Pete went to Cochrane to get the new car. On the way to the gravel pit the truck broke down. Was it my fault or was it the truck? How disappointed and discouraged I felt. I felt as if I should go and jump in the lake. All day passed miserably. Pete did not come home that night. The following night he came with the new car. The truck was at the garage to be fixed. It seemed that everything I did was wrong. The truck did not seem to get us ahead any, it seemed that we worked only for it. I suggested that we trade it for a car. Pete refused and opposed my suggestions.

Thus, the winter passed. Spring came. May. Time for work yet I could never get the right thing to do. All the money I had saved in the fall was gone. I did many things yet I did not know one job but was always here and there and nowhere. Yet I saw no way out. I could not leave him for how would our people think and feel for in every letter they ask us to go home, how could we do it? God knows how hard I tried to keep everything in harmony yet where am I? What am I? A day has not passed for me not to do some favour for someone, anyone, all kinds of favours. We had not sat at a meal without having someone eat with us. Night after night I have stayed up till dawn to write and read something. God knows how hard I had tried in everything, in every way, yet I haven't even a decent suit to go among the people, but I go on the street like a tramp, thus I dislike to show myself on the street.

Pete comes home at nights always humming and cheerful, goes to bed and sleeps like a log. I ponder over my uncertainty, neither can I go to sleep as I should, nor have a job to go to in the morning.

How can I be cheerful, how can I be happy when I have nothing in my pocket? Yet I do try to be my best yet I seem to get nowhere. How can I think of love, girls and good times? The years pass, I am still at the same place. Why? Summer is here. I'll try once more to do things to change my circumstances, truck or car, two new cars, painting or whatever but I am not going to leave Hearst a failure. This summer it will be do or bust or never – so God help me. I have related my tribulations and experiences for the past four and a half months. What the next few months hold for me we shall see, again – but do or die it is going to be something worthwhile either for the worst or for the best.

*[Editor's note: This sample of the last entry in the diary shows that Gordon had very good penmanship. The contents of the diary prove that he worked very hard by reading and writing to better his English and to improve his lot in life. His parents would be proud of him.]*

**May 12, 1935 Hearst                      Gordon**

**1935 My Diary by Gordon Boracheff, Book II**                      transcribed by Ernie Bies January 2020

**May 13, 1935:** Snowed all day. There was a dance. I did not go. Felt depressed

**June 2:** Three weeks passed since I entered anything in this book. The truck was repaired, another \$35 gone from Pete's pocket. Worked three days on the gravel, hauled some wood and moved furniture. Sometimes days passed with nothing to do. Tried to fix a broken part on the front wheel on the truck.

**May 30:** The gravel began again. That day I worked hard, felt pain in my side and in general my health condition seemed to get worse for I was losing weight, from 130 pounds now I weigh 115 pounds. When I came to Canada 15 years ago, I weighed 110 pounds.

I suggested to Pete to trade the truck and get a car. The following morning, I went to work again and on the first trip the truck broke down again, the same thing. It broke for the fifth time since we got it. Another truck pulled our truck 15 miles. The next day I went to the dealer to trade the truck and he offered \$350 for it (although it has not paid for itself yet and it cost us about \$1000). I traded it for a Chevrolet car. The car would be here in a few days.

**June 2:** Sunday, **Penu Chalykoff**, a friend came home from University a few days ago. Stella and he are together most of the time. All day I stayed in. Worked at the garden.

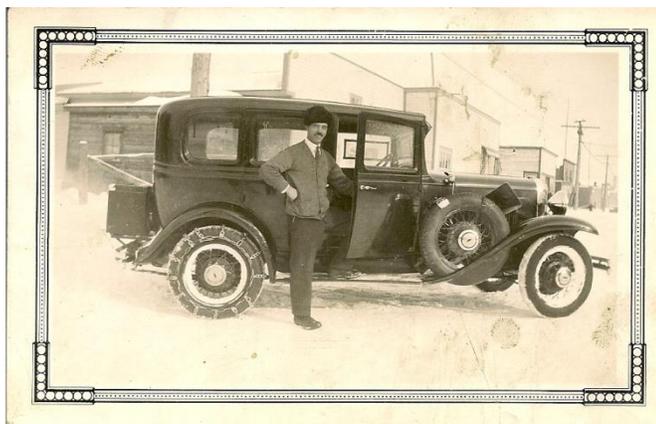


Monday: After dinner went to see the car dealer. He told me that he would come and bring the car after supper. I worked in the garden again and waited.

There was a dance that night, all seem jolly, happy, and I, in expectation perhaps to get the car, went to Ryland to get Vic for the dance

Pete, Penu and Stella went for a car ride with Penu's uncle's car.

Woke up at four, could not sleep, got up at six, watered the garden. Pete asked me to go and take Stella to her school (in the Slovak community) with the new car. I went, when I came back, I went to see the car dealer. I insisted that I wanted it and at last we came to an agreement, \$350 for the truck allowance and \$400 more to pay. I got the car in first-class condition and drove it home.



Pete seemed like a different man, spoke well, smiled and liked the car and began advising me as to prices of trips, that I should keep it beside his car on his stand. Washed the car, it looked like a brand-new car.

I wouldn't have given this car for anything now. Pete was away, took a trip, made two dollars. At last I was happy.

There is about \$500 to pay for my car, but I am glad. Pete has \$850 to pay for his, he sent his first payment of \$47 today.

For both cars we have paid by trading the old car and the truck. Also, by paying \$885 cash. Now we owe \$1250. Eighteen months to pay. Two new cars, two taxis.

**September 4:** Three months have gone. I have not entered a line in my diary. Three months, the happiest in my life if I could call that happiness

The month of June was a busy one. I took the extra trips when Pete was away, I made \$110 business, I'm sure Pete made three times as much. I had long trips, same as Pete, one day went to Cochrane. Pete went too, a trip of almost 300 miles. I drove four men and drove just as good and as fast as Pete and that night I



came to Hearst three hours sooner than Pete because he had trouble with this car.

Besides driving taxi in June, I made \$30 from signs. July was not so busy and I made \$50 with the car and \$15 from signs. August was one of the busiest, I made \$150 business with the car.

In the three months that passed I added 5000 miles to the 7000 miles on my car, and made \$310 while Pete must have made at least \$800.

Aside from my expenses and the cars I managed to meet the payments of the car which for the three months was \$130.

A friend of mine got married last year to a Ukrainian girl from Saskatchewan. I met his wife a few times at Drajanoff's and she told me that her sister was coming for a visit

Last March Victoria, the sister of Mrs. Petcoff, came to Ryland which is a small settlement 6 miles west of Hearst. George, my friend, was a section foreman so they lived at the station and as it happened my best friend Steve Guty was living there at the station with this family working on the section under George.

Often George came to town and every time asked me to go and pay them a visit and meet Victoria. But three months passed. I never went.

Before Easter I met George and he asked me to go and cut his wife's and Victoria's hair. So, one day I set out walking and soon came to Ryland.

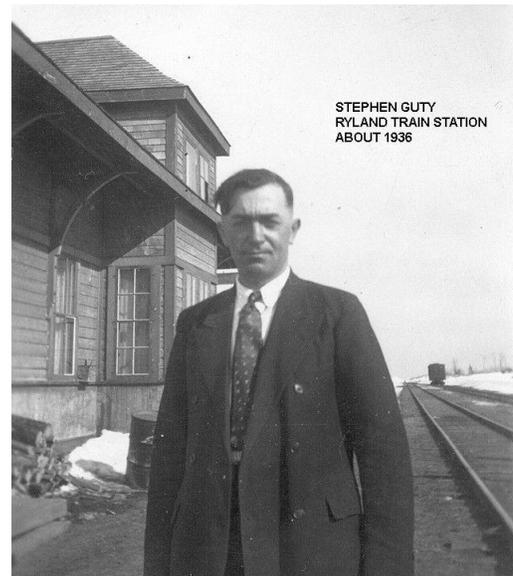
I met Victoria, a young girl in her teens, not very tall. I could see that she had come from the farm. Her hair was dark and straight, unlike her sister's, which was golden brown and curly.

I was kind of uneasy while cutting her hair, as I had always been when close to ladies, but the job done and supper over we tried to play cards. I did not know how to play, anyway I tried.

Often, during the following days, I thought of Vic (as I began to call her later on).

I had not traded the truck yet. Should I go and see Vic? Had I a right to? for Vic was only 17 while I was 31. The way George spoke I could see that they already thought that it was possible that Vic and I should get married.

Two weeks after my first meeting Vic, there was a dance in Hearst. Penu, Stella's boyfriend, had not yet come home from the University where he was studying to be a doctor. I took Stella to the dances often before. Now thinking that Vic was lonesome out there I decided to go and take her to the dance. After a while Stella too decided to come to the dance, so I had the pleasure of taking two ladies to the dance. Not being able to dance as I should I left them to enjoy themselves while I stood like a wallflower.



The dance was over. It was 3 AM we took Stella home and Vic and I set out for Ryland with the truck.

Three days later I traded the truck for the car.

Stella was going away to summer school on Monday, a week from that night. I suggested that we get together on Sunday once more before she goes. All agreed if possible.

Sunday, the appointed day, Pete was busy and I was hired for six hours. That meant that I would not be free until eight that night. I saw Penu and told them that as soon as I am free, I'll go and get them so we could go for Vic. At eight I went to Drajanoff's, there was no one at home. I went to Ryland.

For the following six weeks I went to get Vic at least twice a week, twice we went to Kapuskasing, 65 miles, to a show. Every time Vic and I got together we came to Hearst but did not go to Drajanoff's.

We went for car-rides to the lake and, every time we came to Hearst, went and had some refreshments. We talked, we sang, we laughed and joked as two kids would do. Often, we watched the moon sail across and hide itself behind the spruce trees. More than once we saw dawn before we parted.

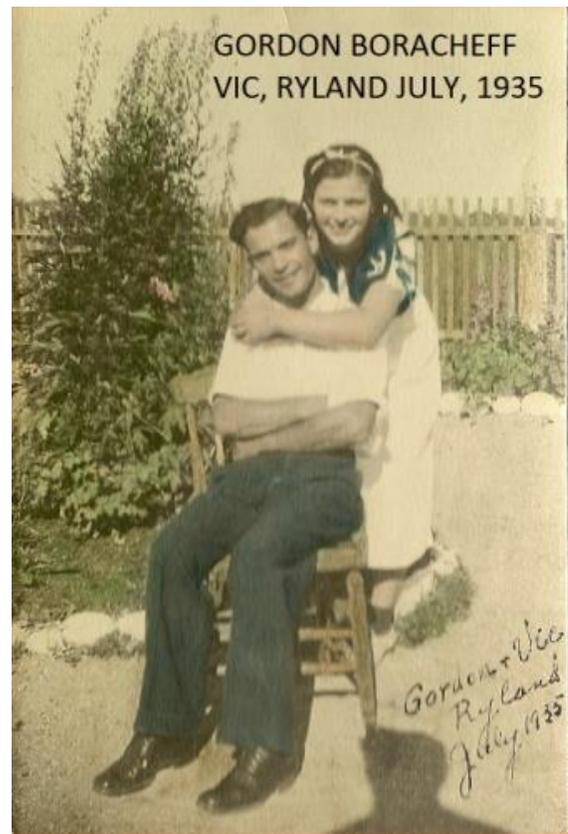
Then, at the middle of August, Vic went back to her West, 1,500 miles away. I sure missed her and miss her still. One thing I am glad for. we got pictures taken of us and at least that will remind me of the girl who came 1,500 miles just to show me what life is.

I began to read and wrote half a dozen letters. Today, exactly three months since I bought the car, once more I am adding to my diary.

In the three months past I wrote home only twice and we sent another \$20 to mother and father. They wanted us to go back and nothing else.

The story I sent to *True Story* was sent back to me. I sent it to a critic paying \$10. The report was good. I appreciate it for it is worth that much. I was advised to enlarge the story because it was too short for a book and too long for short story. Yes, I am going to attempt to enlarge it from 17,000 words to 100,000 words and try to make a book of it.

As we stand on November 5, 1935, Pete owes for his car \$500, I owe \$300 for mine.



Winter is here again. For the past month we had snow, cold, some nice days and rain. A few days ago, it was 20 below zero. November 14, proved a fateful day for me. I had a trip to make to Cochrane, 150 miles from Hearst. There were five Slovaks who had to go to Cochrane and had to be there for 2 PM.

The previous day it rained and the road was slippery, all ice, going with the car was hard. Thirty miles per hour was the most a car could go safely. We left Hearst at 6 AM. Driving was no pleasure. We had gone 45 miles when, at the speed of 15 to 20 miles per hour, the car slipped. All effort of keeping it on the road failed. It slipped turned around and in no time was laying in the ditch facing the way we came from with the wheels up in the air. Six men in the car were piled on top of one another with not even a scratch received, although quite frightened.

Although I was responsible for it, I did not feel bad about it because it was not reckless driving or any fault of mine. It may have happened to any expert driver on that ice and it did. In the next 24 hours three other cars did the same but with a lot more damage.

Watching the men in the car I could not help but laugh after I inquired and saw that no one was hurt. Some gas and oil leaked out. Just then a truck passed. Without any trouble we rolled the car over, the engine was running fine. On one side the roof was bent in. We lost no time, got in the car again, and went 15 miles to Kap. Thinking it was for the best, the men took the train and I went back to Hearst with the car. That night I took the same men from the station and brought them home 9 miles.

I drove Pete's car all day with the doctor (who also turned his car over the previous day) and others. My car has been at the garage for a few days to be straightened and painted.

Winter is almost upon us, often I feel downhearted at the thought that I owe so much and have nothing on hand.

Roddy Chalykoff has gone away to Québec and is managing their theatre. *[Editor's note: The Chalykoff family had moved to Val d'Or Quebec and owned the Princess Theatre. Dimitri became the first mayor of the amalgamated town in 1937. Gravesite of Dimitri (1879-1965) and Neda (1881-1960) Chalykoff, Val D'Or Quebec.]*



I have not read or written anything for months, it seems that I am always on the go, yet nothing done, nothing to show for it, even my ambition of writing seems to be dying out under the circumstances.

**November 20:** Today 15 years ago I landed in Canada.

**December 10, 1935:** Time goes, it awaits no man. Another Christmas approaching yet the way it looks it is going to be a different one than the past Christmases.

Up to date I ran the car and managed to keep up with the payments, and some for expenses. I managed to obtain an extension for the payments of the car. Six months from now I have to start to pay again. I have paid \$260, there are another \$260 to pay plus interest. There is another hundred dollars that I owe to friends. For years I have gone as a hobo. Christmas coming, I ordered a suit and an overcoat for \$35. Every year, Pete and I have spent Christmas with the Drajanoffs. Christmas is coming and they are alone. Drajanoff is away in Geraldton.

**December 12:** As I've brooded over things of the events that came and go, I sat down and wrote a letter to Joseph Stalin. Would Stalin answer? I wonder? this may sound foolish yet it may be, but we shall see.

**December 19:** Pete still runs his car. I got mine out occasionally

**December 20:** The following days till Christmas were busy for me I bought and wrapped more than 15 small gifts for children and sent out over 80 greeting cards. Pete and I were asked a few times to go and spend Christmas with Drajanoffs but I could not do it, I did not feel like it. I promised to go to Ryland and be with my friends Petcoffs and Gutys.

Christmas Eve, Pete and I were busy with the cars until 4 AM - Christmas

Went to bed at 6:30 got up at 7:30 and at 9, I found myself at Ryland.

A few drinks then dinner, **Miss Taylor**, the teacher was there. **Bill Kawa**, and **Bill B.**, also Guty's family.

All went well quiet but pleasant. At 5:30

George took us to Hearst with the motor car.

Between Christmas and New Year, I went to Drajanoff's about three times.

The cars stopped for good, too much snow.

On New Year's Eve instead of going to the dance I went visiting. On New Year once more I went to spend the day with my friend at Ryland. This time dinner was at Steve's, the same company, we took some pictures.

Too much snow and as my friends wanted me to stay, I spent three days with them. Once went skiing with Miss Taylor. I did nothing for three days but eat sleep and listen to the radio, something unusual for me.

Thus, the new year came and found me with \$450 debt. Pete and I did not agree any longer, he had made some plans and he was going to carry them out whether I objected or not. Neither Christmas nor New Year's we spend together. He was going to move to Geraldton. In my opinion it was a foolish move.

JOHN GIECKO, CARL PALMQUIST  
STEPHAN GUTY, RYLAND  
CNR SECTION GANG ON  
MOTORCAR



**January 6, 1936:** There was a snowstorm. I was forced once more to look for work with the shovel. I went at the CNR yard and was given work with the snow gang shoveling snow and cleaning switches and the yard.

Once more I went through Hell, sore back, hands and blisters for two dollars a day, it had come to that.

Pete was still home although he shipped the car Wednesday, January 8<sup>th</sup>.

The following day at 7:30 AM Pete left. I went to the station to say goodbye. My last words to him were do not buy a truck, work alone. Have nothing to do with anybody. Keep away from Drajanoff and Tom.

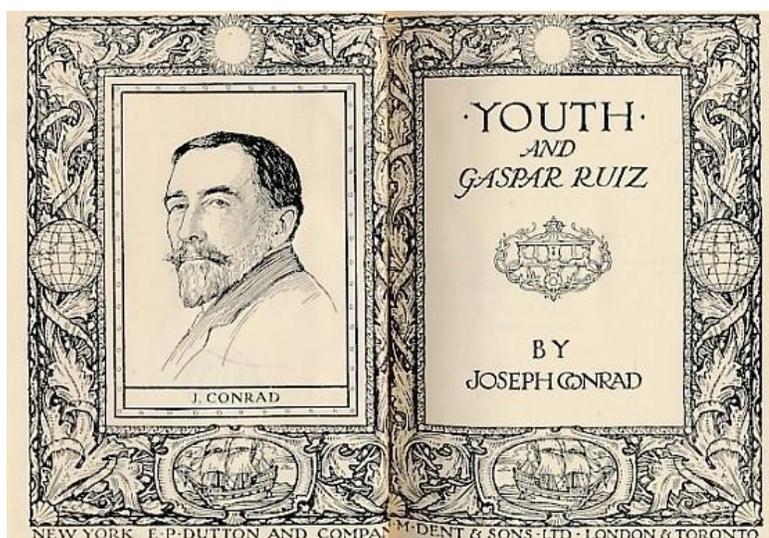
That day I went to work again, my feet got wet. Five o'clock seemed long coming. The last shovel seemed a ton to me. I was sore all over. The snow was cleaned, all of us were laid off. Saturday, Sunday and Monday I was very sick with cold, flu. In three days, I got over it.

Up to date I had answered all my correspondence. Now I was alone still I could not adjust myself to doing anything. Mrs. Drajanoff took sick. I had to go once or twice a day to do the chores.

Since Pete went away the weather kept cold, through 20 to 55° below zero.

On the tenth day of Pete's departure I received a letter from him, "I am well, he said, running the car day and night, took a man to help me. Sleep at the hotel, eat at restaurant and keep the car outside. No shelter for it.

**January 20:** King George died. Thus, the days passed and today it was 24 of January, 1936. I wrote letters to Mary E, Marian, Penu, Victoria, Jack McLoskey, Pete. Read a few short stories also "Youth and Gaspar Ruiz" by Joseph Conrad.



## END OF BOOK II, DIARY OF GORDON BORACHEFF

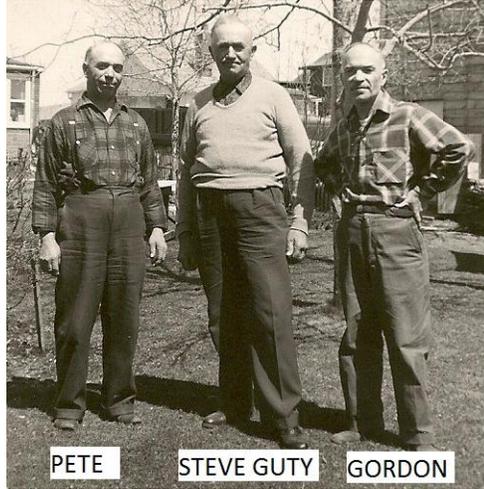
*[Editor's note: Gordon followed his brother Peter to Geraldton later in the 30s and joined him in the Taxi business. Gordon married Louise McManniman in Hearst on November 14, 1943. They lived in Geraldton and had two boys, Jordin and Jimmie. Louise passed away in 1977. The following pictures show Gordon and his wife Louise; Peter, Gordon and Steve Guty in Ryland in later years, Gordon with friends and some early pictures of Gordon].*



Photos courtesy of the Guty family photo archives.



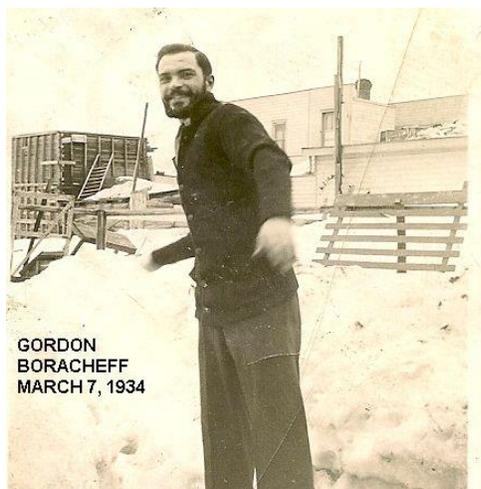
GORDON & LOUISE



PETE STEVE GUTY GORDON



KATHERINE GUTY, CHILDREN GORDON BORACHEFF, ? RYLAND STATION



GORDON BORACHEFF MARCH 7, 1934



Stella Drajanoff Wurm, Obituary, Timmins Press. 2014

## Stella (Drajanoff) Wurm



**WURM, Stella (Drajanoff)** - 1915 - 2014 - The family announces with sorrow her passing on Thursday May 8th 2014 at the John Owen Evans Residence in Geraldton at the age of 98 years. Predeceased by her husband Oliver Wurm in 2002. She is survived by her niece Carol House (Allyson) of Geraldton, her nephews Sam Drajanoff (Diane) of Geraldton, Jim Velyan (Jean) of Osoyoos, B.C., Peter Velyan of Shelburne, ON and Mark Hara (Ann) of Sault Ste Marie, ON and Karen Siltimaki (Aki) of Thunder Bay; her brother-in-law Bob Leckie (Michelle) of Brossard, Que. and numerous other nieces and nephews. Predeceased by her sisters Mary Velyan and Jean Drajanoff and by her brother Nicholas Drajanoff. Stella was born in Hearst, Ontario on

June 24, 1915 to Slavko and Evanka Drajanoff. In Hearst, she attended a one-room village school until Grade 7 and then a French Convent for Grades 7 & 8. At age 12 she left home for high school; the Northern Academy at Monteith. It was a government-subsidized school for northerners who had no access to secondary school education in their hometowns. After graduating from North Bay Normal School, Stella began her teaching career in 1933 at a Slovak Community called Bradlo, eight miles southeast of Hearst. In 1936 she relocated to Timmins to continue a very rewarding teaching career, which included employment at Moneta School, Birch Street School and Central School. Stella married Oliver Wurm in 1942 and they resided on Spruce Street in Timmins for the next 60 years. Following her retirement in 1967 she continued to contribute to her community by teaching Sunday school at First United Church during Rev. Miller's time. She was a founding member of the Association for the Mentally Challenged. Stella participated in the Music Festival with numerous school choirs and also served as an adjudicator's secretary. Stella was a sports enthusiast. She particularly enjoyed playing golf and tennis and rarely missed her beloved Toronto Maple Leafs on TV. A regular social event for Stella was her neighborhood bridge club. In 2006 Stella moved to Geraldton to be closer to family. Although she missed her many close friends in Timmins, she quickly endeared herself to several new friends. She continually expressed her love and gratitude to those who were near and dear to her. She will forever be in our hearts as our favorite Aunt and friend...a loving mentor to us all.

Funeral service will be held on Wednesday May 14 at 2 p.m. in the Funeral Home Chapel.

The family will receive friends on Tuesday evening from 7-9 p.m. at **LESSARD-**

**STEPHENS Funeral Home 705-268-4488** Remembrance donations to the Geraldton Hospice North West, 500 Hogarth West, Geraldton, ON, P0T 1M0 or to Kidsports Timmins will be greatly appreciated. Online donations or condolences can be made

at [www.lessardstephens.com](http://www.lessardstephens.com) 127662