

One Life
in the 20th Century

by
Heinz Mueller

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One Life in the 20th Century

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FOREWORD

Heinz Mueller, *One Life in the 20th Century* – truly one very special life in the 20th century. My father is Heinz Mueller, a beloved and respected individual in both his personal and professional life. When my dad first mentioned that he wanted to write a “book” I encouraged him. Of course I should have known that this would soon become an all-encompassing project which would be completed in record time. He simply sat himself down and started remembering and then writing and writing and writing. What has resulted is a wonderful gift to all of us in the family and a treasure chest of Dad’s “scribbling” which will grow even more meaningful as time goes by.

Sweet memories of a lovely childhood in Zoppot are recalled and then evolve into painful memories of World War II. Some of the stories I can remember having been told in my own childhood but the horror of seeing them in print makes me wonder how anyone could survive such a brutal youth. There is no self pity in these recollections – they are simply stories of what happened along the way. So many people have experienced this type of horror in their lives – some are crippled forever by it but many go on to live happily as Heinz does. I find this very inspiring and humbling as a child who has had a much easier road to adulthood.

Immigration to Canada, early memories of Toronto and the beginnings of starting Wholesale Lettering & Carving. Light, amusing memories of an immigrant starting a new life and a new business in Canada and all told without a mention of the long days and late nights, stress and strain involved in the creation of the largest granite memorial producer in Canada. This is because he loved his trade and had a true desire to

improve the industry. It was never “just a job”. Along the way there are cottage tales, children growing up, the pain of divorce, eventually a new happy marriage and lots and lots of great vacations! Travel and history have always been two of my dad’s favourite loves – in combination, they are unbeatable. Now that he is retired there is more time for Victoria and travel, watching “the birds” or doing something different like writing this book. My father’s love of life and never ending optimism come across strongly in his writing and I thank him for sitting down and putting his memories on paper.

Acknowledgements

On my journey to revisit my past it did take some time to recollect all the events. This is why I am very grateful for the help that I received from the family, especially my wife Victoria, and my daughter Benita DesRoches.

I also want to thank my grandson, Cameron, who asked me many times “Opa, when are you going to write about your past for us?” A special thanks also goes to the lady, Mildred Cameron, who did all the typing.

PROLOGUE

In writing this book I was not only trying to relate for my grandchildren the tragic and happy times of my life. I also wanted to mention how thinking of today's society is very confusing, especially concerning the refugees throughout the world. Many are sitting in camps for years. Newspapers and people who mean well collect money and churches pray for them. If they terrorize and kill the people who deported them from their homes, the public often forgives them because their frustration justifies their actions. This has been going on in some cases for their whole lives - more than 50 years living in camps!

Very seldom does anyone write about all the refugees after World War II, especially those from Eastern Europe. They came from Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland, (the former East German part), many from Russia and the Balkans. They were deported because they were either German-speaking or they ran away to save their lives knowing that they would be prosecuted for opposing the Communist regime. There were also one million people thrown out of Turkey and three hundred thousand out of Greece, also quite a few Germans were deported from Northern China. We were in total quite a few more than ten million, more than all the refugees since that time, the greatest movement of people in all of history. Yet there are no refugee camps in Europe because we integrated and made our new homes wherever we ended up!

What a waste to live all your life in a refugee camp, getting guns to destroy your enemies and waiting to throw them into the sea or kill them because they have a different religion (which many say is an invention of the human mind anyway), forcing everyone to speak

your language or fighting for male dominance like in the dark ages.

Except in emergencies we should not support refugee camps - we should rather help the people to integrate into society or help them to emigrate to start a new life, the same as we once did. Life is too short to do otherwise. Some of us have a much better life now than if we had been allowed to stay in our original homeland.

Heinz

A beautiful beach, white sand, gentle waves. In the summer the beach was full with thousands of people, children running and playing games, dogs trying to catch balls, ice-cream vendors pushing their carts with large black and white striped umbrellas trying to draw attention with their loud bells. There were many cafes where one could sit outside under umbrellas and enjoy the beautiful scenery. Between the cafes were ponds surrounded by flower beds where ducks and swans floated by. Extending into the sea was the largest pier on the Baltic Sea and it had two levels. The top level to the delight of us children had merry-go-rounds, ice-cream stands, and games. It was like paradise. This was the town where I was born, Zoppot, a beautiful little tourist town on the Baltic Sea that belonged to the independent Hansa city, Freistadt Danzig.

The name of the city originated from the Gothic tribes who called it Gothiscandza (the coast of the Goths) the Slavic people named it Gdansk and then the Germans changed it to Danzig. The city had a long history and is located on one of the largest rivers in Central Europe called the Weichsel. It is here where many Germanic tribes from Sweden landed. The Burgunder, Rugier, Vandalen Gepiden and especially the Gothic people occupied the region right down to the Crimea in the Ukraine on the Black Sea and from there governed the Roman Empire from Ravenna. We had many historical artifacts in our Museum from that period, like the abandoned Viking boat found in the dunes on the beach.

The River Weichsel was like a highway where large floats carried wood all the way from the Beskids, a mountain range in Slovakia, to Danzig and from there to England to be used in the coalmines. The river men guiding the floats had constructed shacks on the

decks of their floats where the whole family would live and upon delivery of the wood they would all walk back to their homes in the mountains. In the Middle Ages the river was also used for transporting nearly all of the grain from the Ukraine through Danzig.

During the 14th century when the Hansa cities were at their height England and the Hansa Association had a disagreement and Captain Paul Beneke in command of the Peter Von Danzig, a large caravel, sank one of the largest galleys England had at that time. Some of the booty from the sinking boat was taken to St. Mary's Church (it is the largest church in Europe built entirely of bricks) the most famous being the painting "The Last Judgement" by the Dutch painter Hans Memling, today it hangs in the National Museum in Danzig. After that event England and the Hansa settled their differences, however history can often be very one-sided because in school we were taught that Danzig had won the war against England, and we had Paul Beneke Street, Paul Beneke Park and many buildings named for Paul Beneke. This was a little bit of an exaggeration but that is how many countries enhanced their history over time.

Zoppot was ideal for tourists who came from places such as Moscow, Warsaw, Stockholm, Berlin, especially those from high society, as there were the mud baths to make the ladies slimmer and Zoppot had a very large casino. No citizen of Danzig was allowed to play at the casino, too many scandals. When my father was a young man he operated a stand in the casino and he had to have all his pockets sewn shut because no one was allowed to accept tips.

In the south of the town of Zoppot there was a large forest where in a valley they staged Wagner's operas. My Aunt Lenchen used to rent portable chairs to the guests. There were never enough seats and most people never asked for their deposits back, my Aunt Lenchen liked that. The biggest event of course was the opening of the racing season, that's when most of the representatives of Europe were in attendance. The

President of Freistadt Danzig did announce the opening of the season and that's when the show began but always with something very spectacular. When I was very small I remember the large Zeppelin (blimp) landing right in front of the grandstand and dignitaries disembarking from the gondola. One year there was an ostrich race where they constructed very small roman carts just big enough for the jockey to stand on, another time we had a dozen trained falcons swarming over the grandstand showing what they could do.

The next day was the big parade with many floats, flowers, balloons and clowns. I still remember one particular float filled with butterflies beautifully decorated with all sorts of flowers and in the middle of the butterfly were little boys, one thought it was funny to stick his tongue out. All of the events were free for our family because my grandfather was in charge of the racetrack. It also meant that all our family celebrations, weddings and birthdays happened in the restaurant at the grandstand. Some of my uncles were always minding the bar. I remember once on my father's birthday when my uncles lifted him with his chair into the air right into the chandelier and to all of our surprise after swinging for a while the chandelier did not fall down. An embarrassing thing for my parents happened on the day of my Aunt Trude's wedding. We were all ready to go to church by horse and buggy when a very young goat that my grandfather kept pushed me right into the mud, I was wearing my new velvet suit at the time. It was not a very good day for me; I was about six years old.

Our family was very religious and my Uncle Stefan was a Jesuit priest. At one point he had a nervous breakdown and left the Jesuits and became a real estate salesman who did not have one of the best reputations. He was also a chocolate salesman and he persuaded my father to buy his chocolate samples for us kids and then he proceeded to eat most of them himself, my father was not very happy with him. My Aunt Elisabeth became a nun and belonged to the Grey Sisters; she

used to come to us on her holidays. One day we were all sitting at the table and my father saw a ring on Aunt Elisabeth's hand and asked: "Why do you wear a ring," and shyly she said that she was married to Jesus. My father, in a very serious manner, announced that he was not aware that Jesus was his brother-in-law, which did not go over well with my Aunt.

There were so many relatives that the parents used to exchange items. I remember my Aunt Agnes; she rented rooms to the tourists as there were so many there was always a shortage of rooms. She had a son who was a few years younger than I and my parents gave him my rocking horse, they said I had outgrown it. It was such a nice horse with natural fur and a nice long tail; I did not like at all losing my rocking horse.

I was very young when my father's mother died I was told she was a very pleasant lady and that she had twelve children, three of whom had died. Everyone from the neighbourhood who had a problem came to her for advice; she always had time for everybody and was very patient. For all her children and grandchildren she knitted socks, scarves and sweaters. She was always busy despite being quite a bit overweight; they all missed her very much when she died. My father always said that his family was very unusual, for example he did not tell anybody that his father and grandfather were widowers who had then remarried. Being the comedian he was he told everyone that he was married first, then his father and finally his grandfather got married.

My grandfather's family house was financed with a veteran's mortgage. Inflation was very bad in Germany and even though he could make 1 million marks a week that would only buy a few loaves of bread. One day in the late 1920s my grandfather asked his six sons on a Friday to place all of their money in a big bread basket on the kitchen table then he took the basket to the bank and paid off the mortgage. He was lucky because a few days later all of the banks stopped payments on any loans.

The centre of the family was my grandfather from my mother's side and with all of the uncles, aunts and cousins there was never a problem. I had a wonderful childhood. Every Easter members of the entire family would go on an outing that we always looked forward to during the year. First we would have breakfast in our home and then we were on our way to the south of Zoppot past the gentlemen's farms, and because of the racetrack there were always lots of horses in the fields with their young foals who could barely follow their mothers and it was very funny for us children to watch. Then we entered the very large forest that extended from south of Zoppot past the Wagner outdoor opera stage all the way to Poland. There were no cars using the walkways and we always ran ahead of our parents looking for early flowers, trying to catch the small Alexander lizards and then the greatest fun for us was climbing the large towers that the forest rangers used to watch and control any forest fires. Around noon we would arrive at a small zoo that was in the middle of the forest. I think it was called der grosse Stern. There were deer, monkeys, some small animals and a large bison. Attached to the zoo was a large restaurant and I still remember the most important part for us children was the cherry juice. I will never forget these walks, they belong to the peaceful part of my childhood.

One thing that all kids engaged in from the time they could walk was searching in the sand on the beach for amber. We all had our boxes and used to exchange pieces with each other at school. The ones that had the most worth were the ones that had insects encased in them. Before the Ice Age, when the Baltic Sea was a large evergreen forest, the insects got stuck in the sap and petrified.

We were not always angels, my Aunt Uschi (she was only 4 years older than me) and I used to run up and down the grandstand after every horse race to see if some of the spectators had lost any money, we never found very much. Then we used to jump on the

chesterfield which had a shelf above it with a dozen or more fine Porcelain figurines which were grandmother's pride and joy. Of course one day I jumped too high and hit the shelf from the bottom and all the figurines came crashing down and most of them broke. At that very moment grandmother walked in and the punishment that Aunt Uschi received was immediate because she was older and should have known better. I always wanted to be older but at that moment I was very happy to be younger than her.

My grandfather was always very busy as the racetrack was a going concern. There were many buildings that housed the horses that came from many countries such as Russia, Poland, Sweden and Germany. Because of the betting there was the criminal element and many attempts were made to injure the horses, I remember that one horse was poisoned and died. My grandfather had half a dozen big Doberman dogs guarding the racetrack and during the racing season he had special guards protecting the horses. Also in the summer he helped an English society with their greyhound races, the dogs were in cages and hanging in front of them was a piece of rabbit fur attached to a long rope that led to a motor, as soon as the cages were opened the motor pulled the piece of rabbit fur as fast as the dogs could run. It was really funny when the motor ran out of gas and the rope with the rabbit fur stopped, the dogs ripped the fur to shreds in a few seconds. One regulation from the racetrack that my uncles did not like was that nobody from our family was allowed to place any bets. If they had my grandfather would have lost his position.

The company my father worked for was called "Vollmann" and when they moved closer to Danzig, it was too far for my father to go to work so we moved to Langfuhr, a suburb of Danzig. The street was named after an old mill, the Abtsmuehle Am Streesbach the same creek that Günter Grass mentioned in his book *The Tin Drum*.

Langfuhr was quite different from Zoppot, closer to the big city but not as idyllic, the schoolchildren, especially teenagers from north of the railroad track, did not like the ones from the south, maybe jealousy as they had nice paved roads and we had cobblestones. Shortly after we moved to Langfuhr there was a big war going on. Hundreds of kids from the Bocksche Ecke (the roughest neighbourhood in Langfuhr) and hundreds of kids from the south around Michaelisweg met on the wide street (I think it was called Seestrasse) with sticks, stones and all kinds of weapons, the yelling, the screaming, the noise, the streetcars stopped on both sides, people got out of the streetcars to watch the craziness. All the windows opened from the apartment buildings at the beginning of the Abtismuehle. They probably thought that all the young people were going nuts. As soon as we heard the sirens of the police cars we all ran, hid, or ran home. The next day both sides were bragging that they had defeated the other side.

I was not right away accepted in the new school, I was constantly ridiculed especially by a tall boy much larger than I. I got so upset, I never fought but at that moment without thinking I hit that tall fellow right under the chin, he went down in a split second, like a piece of board. Then I came to my senses, looking down on him I thought if he ever gets up he is going to beat me to a pulp. I was frightened. He opened his eyes, crawled away swearing, got up and ran home. Now I was accepted and left alone.

The same summer I was sent by the N.S.V. to Mecklenburg on holiday on a farm near Schwerin. It was nice especially for a city kid trying to find the eggs in the hay where the hens hid them and playing with the young goats. They had one problem; it was the hoof and mouth disease. All the houses in the village had a tray with lime in front of all the outside doors to disinfect the bottom of our shoes. For a number of days there was a military maneuver with thousands of soldiers,

guns, tanks, it was very exciting for us kids. The highlight was the arrival of Hitler's second in command, Herman Goering, who inspected the maneuvers. We wanted to run after his big Mercedes convertible but were prevented by the military police. The holiday was not long enough.

My new school was close to the forest next to the Blind Institute, on a day in 1938 on my way home from a friend's house I saw a commotion on the street. Many people in brown shirts were yelling and smashing the large show windows of a clothing store I was in shock I could not understand what they were doing; I was only 8 years old at the time. They proceeded to nail some wood across the openings of the broken windows and I could not believe my eyes when a very old man was dragged by his long beard out on to the street, he looked very frightened and I thought they were ripping off his beard. Then we were chased away. I asked my parents why they did that to the old man and my father told me that we in Danzig have now a similar government as they have in Germany and they hate the Jews and say that Jews have taken advantage of the German people. My mother said: "I know this person and he is a very nice man and his prices are much more reasonable than the other stores, I do not understand." This night from November 9th to 10th in 1938 was known as the Kristallnacht.

Now there was more and more pressure on all young boys to join the Party boy scouts, the Hitler Youth. Many people that my parents knew were very much for Hitler's party and many others were against it, for a little boy it was very confusing.

Then on September 1, 1939 our whole world changed, the war broke out and Danzig became immediately part of Germany. Our money, the Gulden (backed by the British Sterling Block) changed to the German mark which most people did not like because our money in the bank devalued by twenty-five percent. Danzig was right away involved in the war.

The post office was Polish and was fiercely defended. In the centre of the harbour was an island called Westerplatte that was fortified and occupied by the Polish Army. The German air force attacked the island immediately using airplanes called Stukas. These planes when they dived down had very loud sirens which frightened the people more than the bombs. The German battleship, the Schleswig Holstein, also attacked the island with her big guns.

Our apartment windows faced the Westerplatte so many of the neighbours and my friends came to our apartment running from one window to the other to watch the fighting. It was more spectacular than the fireworks I saw at the CNE in Toronto many years later. These were the first bombs of World War II, we kids thought it was great fun but our parents were afraid of what the future would bring.

After a week the island in the harbour of Danzig capitulated and the Polish Commandant was allowed to keep his sword as a sign of honour. This was probably the only noble thing of this kind that happened in the whole war, but thirty-nine of the surviving defenders of the Polish post office were brutally murdered by the execution squad. This was shocking and very hard to understand for the general population. From then on so many things happened so fast, our neighbour disappeared overnight and they said he was picked up by the police because he was a communist, his wife never saw him again. The local Lutheran minister called Hitler a dictator and he was arrested immediately. People with Polish names were asked to change them to German names. My grandfather on my mother's side was asked to change his Polish name Krzeminski to the German name Kruger; he refused and lost his position as manager of the racetrack. If the Nazis had known at that time that my grandfather had been born out of wedlock while his mother worked as a maid for a Jewish baron named Herr Von Feuerstein who was his father, he would have ended up in the concentration camp.

My father's and my mother's family both came from mixed backgrounds. German Kashubian Jewish. The Kashubians live in the north of Poland and around Danzig. On my father's side my grandfather's second wife was a Kashubian and two of my father's brothers had Kashubian wives. On my mother's side, my grandfather's mother was Kashubian and his father was Jewish, my grandmother was Kashubian. The Polish people despised the Kashubians because they were too much like Germans and the Germans looked down on the Kashubs because they were too much like Poles.

We had to attend a very large gathering in Zoppot on the large area at the beginning of the pier. There were thousands of people, all the different columns from the Nazi party, representing the whole Free City of Danzig, all in uniforms, also many government representatives from Danzig and Germany. It was very festive, all the important people were sitting behind a long table with white cloth that was decorated with oak leaf garlands, it was at least 100 feet long. Behind them were many Standarten from all the units. These are square flags with gold tassels and had on top a bronze eagle holding a swastika. Left and right were two large military bands. This was to celebrate to be part of Germany again. There was speech after speech all celebrating this historic event. Then the two huge military bands started to play the German national anthem. I have never again seen anything like this. The music started first very slow and then like a wave everybody sang with such emotion, many had rosy cheeks, the lady beside me had goose pimples on her arms, quite a few had tears running down their faces full of joy, the atmosphere is hard to describe, it was an emotion very dangerous, impossible to have a dialogue.

Times were very confusing, Jewish stores had to be closed and many Jewish people had already left the city. A lot of spying was going on, people were torn between loyalty to friends and the new state. Because of the war more and more soldiers were needed and my

father and many of my uncles were inducted into the army. From my mother and father's families there were ten in total. Many school teachers were inducted into the army and older teachers were brought out of retirement. We kids took advantage of the older teachers by asking the smartest kid in the class to write the exam and then we all copied it making small changes. A female teacher discovered the cheating and went crying to the principal. All of us were very ashamed. There were not too many holidays and the whole school had to go to the countryside in West Prussia to help with the potato harvest. It was different, that's for sure. The kitchen help at one big estate informed us that our teacher, who was supposed to supervise us, was stealing butter meant for us and sending it to his wife. We all went on strike and the teacher was arrested. We never learned what happened to him but this was a serious crime because all food was rationed.

The owners of these large estates belonged to the nobility. Some of them were installed from Germany, from the crusaders and the Prussian kings many years ago. Originally the Prussian people did not belong to the Germanic tribes, they belonged to the Baltic nations. They lost their language a long time ago and adopted the German language. These noble families supplied many officers to the German army and were known as the Prussian Junkers.

The estate owners were continuously riding around the fields on horses trying to supervise us picking potatoes, we didn't like that. We would take long sticks from willow trees, attach small potatoes to one end and hide behind the potato wagon, from where we bombarded the horses, the overseer and his family members, as they were riding, the horses took off with such a speed they nearly lost the riders.

Coming home after the harvest we took advantage of not having much supervision and spent most of our free time on the beach which made it difficult for the soldiers and their girlfriends to enjoy the peace and

quiet of the beach from behind the bushes. We also visited nice restaurants where we put small opened bottles of sulphur under the tables and left, as typical mean boys we watched as the guests emptied the restaurant holding their noses.

Not long after the war started all food in Germany was rationed which made it difficult for my mother, but because of Uncle Fritz who lived in Glettkau, not far from Zoppot, we always had plenty of fish. Uncle Fritz had a large fishing boat; he had to deliver his total catch to the central depot, but the more expensive fish he kept for his relatives. He also got us some bottles of fish oil which I buried in the basement for bad times. The Baltic Sea is not very salty, that's why most of the Bay of Danzig was frozen in the winter and Uncle Fritz had often a lot of trouble with the motor (difficult to get parts). A number of times his motor quit and he got stuck in the ice. One time the boat was so damaged that it sank and he had to crawl on a piece of ice so as not to drown. He was picked up by a tug boat. Aunt Marie was always worried that one day Uncle Fritz would drown, which happened years later near Denmark, together with his oldest son.

My mother was becoming more and more uneasy and could not understand what was happening. Her girlfriend's husband was an engineer and an officer in the German air force in charge of the maintenance of the Danzig airport. He was ordered to go to a small town about 20 kilometres from Danzig called Stutthof to supervise the construction of some buildings and after looking at the plans he refused the order. His friends said he was lucky not to have been executed, instead he was demoted to a private. Stutthof was later known as one of the most horrible concentration camps of the Nazi era.

My father was now in the army and in Denmark, he wrote that it was a nice country and sent us some very tasty smoked meat. From school we were all forced to join Hitler's youth club, I joined the navy.

I remember gliding in a canoe on the River Motlau through the Schichau shipyard, the same place where the future president of Poland used to work (Walesca). It was evening as we came around the bend in the river; we were overwhelmed by the beautiful choral singing of a few hundred Ukrainian men and women who were sitting at the edge of the river with their feet in the water. The women were wearing coloured kerchiefs and some had on colourful embroidered blouses. They were singing with all their hearts and we stopped rowing and sat speechless listening to the beautiful singing, I could feel their sadness. They were taken from the Ukraine and forced to work in the shipyard because most of the German workers were in the army.

When my father wrote again he was in Norway in a city called Narvik close to the Arctic Circle. He wrote that he had an experience he will never forget. They were on a big transport carrier loaded full with soldiers; he wasn't sure of how many, at least 2000 or more, that big boat was trying to bring the soldiers from Denmark to Norway. It is here that the North Sea separates from the Baltic Sea, there are always strong winds and the sea called the Skagerak is always very rough. (I think this is where Admiral Nelson had his final battle with the French.) My father said: "It was daytime and the transport carrier was going very slowly when someone yelled out that a torpedo was sighted heading directly towards the big carrier, at the speed it was going it would hit the boat right in the middle and we were completely helpless." "You know," he said, "I am not a very religious man but at that moment I wished there was someone that could help us. Then out of nowhere raced a small speedboat that was escorting us, into the path of the torpedo, the torpedo exploded, tearing the speedboat and its occupants to pieces. We couldn't believe that the soldiers on that speedboat sacrificed their lives to save ours. This was the most heroic act I ever experienced in my life." My father talked about it many times.

My father liked Norway as much as he did Denmark except that it was much colder. He told us how he liked to observe the people and that the mothers in both countries were trying to get their children to school on time without forgetting anything, the same as the mothers in Danzig. One thing he told us about Norway was that the people were losing their teeth very young because of the hard water. He sent us some herring packed in salt.

Finally my grandfather did find another house because he was forced to leave the racetrack, this one was closer to the sea. He went back to his old profession of building furniture and had to buy new tools and wood. At that time the Baltic Sea was very stormy and caused flooding in those parts of Zoppot that were close to the shore including my grandfather's new shop. It was while I was helping him to clean up his shop that I discovered he did not use the metric system, instead he used the Zoll which equals an inch and Ellen which equals a foot. The word Zoll meant a joint from the finger and the word Ellen meant from the hand to the elbow.

Whenever I had free time, especially in the summer, I would help the nuns who ran the kindergarten next to where we lived beside the old mill. The nuns were always very busy as most of the fathers were in the army and many of the mothers had to go to work. I would make knockbrot (bread) with marmalade for the children and wash their hands and faces and even their clothing when they messed up and while I was doing that their little mouths were never quiet, there was always noise and laughter, especially when Sister Mary walked by. Her behind used to wiggle when she walked and the children called her Wigglebum when she couldn't hear them. We played games like ring around the rosie and we sang songs. The nuns were devoted to the children and I enjoyed my time with them very much.

In the summer of 1943 we were ordered to attend

a seminar on the Baltic coast west of Danzig in Pommern to learn the Morse code and navigation system in order for us to become cadets in the navy. Even though we were very young our officers were from the regular navy, we were much too young to be there. The camp was located on the beach with very high grass on one side and a large forest on the other. As this was part of Poland we all had to take our turn standing guard. On the day it was my turn around 2 o'clock in the morning I had an experience I never expected. Everything was very quiet and then I heard a very light noise in front of me, when the noise increased I had no choice but to yell out "Who is there? Give me your password!" It was very quiet, there was no sound then after 5 minutes it started again very slow and then increased, so I yelled again asking for the password and once more it became quiet. I began to get very nervous and when after 10 minutes there it was again I knew I had to act. I took my rifle and shot in the air. O my god you should have seen what happened then. All the lights went on in the barracks and there were at least 500 boys plus the officers running and asking what had happened. I explained. We formed a half circle pointing our rifles and slowly approached the spot where the sound came from and slowly very carefully we came closer and closer. Then our officer pushed the tall grass aside and we could not believe our eyes. There was our sergeant and the secretary from the office the way God made them, completely naked. They were not happy to be discovered in that position. Now I was a hero in the camp, but not long after did I get my reward, but not the way I liked it. We had been exercising very hard on the beach in the hot sun and our sergeant felt sorry for us and gave us a short rest. I stretched out on the warm sand in my bathing suit and immediately fell asleep. A loud trumpet woke me up and as this was a signal to line up in full uniform to receive a high ranking officer I quickly rushed to the end of the line, then I became aware that everybody except our commanding officer

was suppressing laughter, and only after they could no longer hold it in, they all broke out in loud laughter, did I realize that I was painted from top to bottom with black and brown shoe cream, toothpaste and even yellow mustard. I was so embarrassed I nearly cried. Thanks to my friends I was made the laughing stock of the camp for a long time and I did not find it funny. A few weeks later the camp was dissolved and we were sent home and ordered to report in about two weeks to the railroad station.

The next time my father wrote he was in Italy in the most southern tip. He sounded as if he liked it there as it was much warmer and he had a half day off and said he was lying in a vineyard eating grapes. He did send us some marmalade. The name of the town he was stationed at in southern Italy was Valencia.

As we were told we reported to the railroad station and ended up on the border of Poland and East Prussia close to Belarus in the middle of a forest. Our group was very large, consisting of several hundred from high schools, many apprentices from the shipyards and a number of submarine crews waiting for new submarines because so many had been sunk by the allied forces. We were housed in plywood tents called Finntents and were attached to the army; our orders were to dig trenches, bunkers and underground communication stations for the retreating German army. Many of us were much too young to belong to the army; I was only 14½ years old.

The ground in the forest was very sandy so all the trenches had to be reinforced with logs and branches. My job was to measure the length of the trench that was dug each day and keep track of how many logs were used; I had no paper or pencil and no measuring device. My friends who were digging the trenches knew that I was counting and would loudly help me 27, 35, 69, 45, 106, and 28 so I gave up. I did not know what to do in addition the chain of my bicycle broke then I remembered what we had learned in school about

Frederick the Great, the King of Prussia. The King, whenever he had time, liked to play cards and he went into the middle of the forest to visit a Forest Ranger who had become his friend and in the middle of playing cards the King asked him: "How many trees do you have under your control?" without missing a beat the Forest Ranger said: "Three million three hundred and thirty-five, if you don't believe me, go count them." So in the evening I went to the engineer and told him they had dug 335 feet of trenches and used 210 logs, he marked that in his little book, closed it and said thank you very much, and that was that, who needs paper and pencil!

We were told that we were surrounded by partisans and being very young some of my friends pretended to be partisans running through the woods making noise. The people from the next camp did not know they were only playing and they thought they were real partisans with guns and knives when they came down the hills, we were very lucky no one was killed. A number of people ended up in the hospital and one was seriously hurt by a knife to the lung but he survived. A few weeks later we were given a good example of how to get promoted. Our section leader got sick and had to go to the hospital so we needed a replacement. We were all lined up, about 80 or so, and our officer walked up and down looking at us, then he pointed to me and said, you are going to be the next section leader. Nobody could understand it, I was the youngest, he did not know me and I had never spoken to him and besides that I was not very tall. That night we were lying in our bunks and trying to understand why I was selected when one of my friends yelled out and said: "I've got it, I know why you were promoted, you were the only one from the whole group who wore white shorts and you must have stuck out like a sore thumb, so there you have it."

In the meantime we continued to dig trenches, hundreds and hundreds of meters of trenches covered

with branches, one could not see anything from the air and everything was facing east towards Russia. The Russian Army advanced, stopped in front of our trenches, they then turned north and attacked all the trenches from the side going south, which made all our work that we were so proud of, useless. One other thing I remember from that time, close to our camp there were hundreds of people digging a very deep trench which they called a Panzer-graben that was to stop tanks from advancing. The Waffen SS were guarding these people and we understood they came from a concentration camp. We watched them, there were many good looking girls among them for young men to look at but the Waffen SS told us that this area was forbidden to us. We did not know much about what was happening in the concentration camps at that time but we were always wondering. As the Russians came closer our camps were dissolved and we all went back to Danzig. On the way back on the train we listened to a few young soldiers that came from the front bragging about how many Russians they had shot. It was the same as if they were talking about how many rabbits they had shot, like a game; I was totally disgusted by how lightly they took it especially when I thought about the nuns in Danzig and their humanity. These Russians must have had wives and children and I wondered what had we become, everything was very confusing.

The Americans and British bombarded Danzig more and more and they did a lot of damage. People no longer believed that Germany would be successful in the war, some deserted from the Army. A number from our group were attached to the Volksturm which was made up of young boys and very old men, it was a disgrace. During this time my father was in the hospital in Schlesien and was asked to move to the next hospital going west but he reported to a hospital 500 kilometres north to Danzig to be closer to home. They threatened to shoot him as a traitor and my mother almost had a nervous breakdown.

As the Russians advanced more rapidly, Germans from East Prussia and south of Danzig swarmed into the city trying to flee to Germany before Danzig was completely surrounded by the Russian Army. Many came by horse and buggy with all their belongings on top of the buggies, just like the pioneers from the Wild West. People with large apartments had to share space with the refugees for a few nights till they could continue on their way. Many came by boat, large and small, anything they could get their hands on. My Uncle Fritz, a fisherman from Gletkau, packed his family and a few items in his boat and went by sea to Schleswig Holstein, a half year later he and his son both drowned while fishing.

My Aunt Trude and her daughter Hanelore and my Aunt Lenchen also went by sea with a friend who had a tugboat from Gotenhafen. On their way to the harbour they had to pass a number of lanterns and as they came closer they saw something attached to the lanterns and to their horror they recognized that these bundles were German soldiers who had been sentenced to hang. They all had big signs around their necks saying "I am a deserter" or "I am a coward". My Aunt Trude was so upset she became ill and cried, "How could they do this, the war is nearly over." The captain of the tugboat was asked to attach himself to a convoy of boats that were all going from Gotenhafen to Schleswig Holstein. The captain refused preferring to keep as close as possible along the coast. During their journey on January 30th, 1945, not too far away from the Bay of Danzig, my Aunt Trude witnessed the biggest marine disaster in history. Around 9 o'clock in the evening a huge explosion frightened everybody, a large passenger ship with 10,500 people on board was hit with 3 torpedoes from a Russian submarine. The ship was called the Wilhelm Gustloff. My aunt said she would never forget that disaster even so it is already over 50 years ago, the noise, the lights from all the surrounding boats, the screaming, and the confusion would be engrained in her memory forever. It was very

cold, between -10 to -18 degrees and because there was ice on the deck of the ship as the ship tilted people slid right into the water. There were not enough lifeboats and as one lifeboat was let down she saw another one fall directly on top of it. There were 4000 children on board and the life jackets were too big for them, when their heads were under water their legs were sticking into the air so they drowned. Children were seen clinging to their mothers but the waves dragged them out of their mothers' arms. Many people were trampled to death in the panic to get life jackets or rush to the lifeboats. It took the Gustloff 50 minutes to sink. Heinz Schoen, who researched the tragedy, wrote that there were 2 torpedo boats, 3 minesweepers, 1 steamer, 1 torpedo fangboat (which caught torpedos), 1 freighter and 1 patrol boat and they were only able to save 1252 passengers which meant 9330 were drowned, making it the worst marine tragedy in history. Recently, while I was in the Dominican Republic on holiday, I met a lady from East Prussia by the name of Well who came from Elbing. She said that she had her grandfather to thank for being alive today as her whole family had agreed to send all the children on the ship Gustloff but her grandfather was completely opposed to the idea and they travelled to Germany by horse and buggy.

After January 1945 it became more difficult to leave Danzig. The Russian Army was trying to make it impossible to reach Germany by cutting Danzig off to the west. Nearly every second night we were bombarded by the American and British air forces. It was usually around 2 o'clock in the morning when the loud sirens woke us up and then we had to run, many children still in their pajamas, to the end of the street where the big school was because it had the deepest basement for us to hide in. The German anti-aircraft guns around Danzig (which were mostly manned by Ukrainians) were trying to shoot the airplanes down but they were too high. They did manage to shoot a few down, one crashed close to our school in the middle of the forest.

We all ran over collecting pieces from the airplane till the police chased us away because they thought that there was still some explosives in the wreckage. The damage that was done to the city because of the airplanes became more severe.

The German army command in Danzig became more nervous and they executed their own soldiers for the slightest infraction. I had to go to Danzig to get some documents and rode the streetcar which went along a beautiful avenue surrounded by large trees originally started a long time ago by Napoleon's soldiers, as the streetcar came closer to Danzig we were faced with a terrible sight. At least a dozen German soldiers were hanging from these trees with large signs around their necks which said the same as in Gotenhafen, 'I am a coward' or 'I am a deserter'. Some of them must have been hanging there for many days. It was a gruesome sight and most people on the streetcar had to turn around, they could not face it. How could they do that, kill their own soldiers? The war was almost over. It was such a waste to take the lives of these young men when we were completely surrounded by the Russian Army and we all knew, except for a few fanatics, that Germany would have to capitulate any day now.

There was nobody living in the apartments any more because the bombs, rockets and cannons made it impossible, we all lived in the basements. The Russian Army was getting closer and closer and Danzig was now within reach of their most dangerous weapon called the Stalinorgel. It consisted of approximately 36 rocket throwers each holding 6 rockets about 2 meters long. They were all electrically timed to cover a square kilometre, it was devastating. In order to be safe we learned to jump into the first rocket hole that we saw because the rockets would never strike the same hole twice. Despite that, many soldiers and civilians got wounded by shrapnel (I had a small piece of shrapnel in my left hand) the hospitals did not operate anymore.

The whole city was burning and the sky was lit up and it looked like the end of the world was near. The fire created such a storm. The need for oxygen sucked everything into the flames and people had to watch, especially the children. They say that 90% of the city was destroyed and over 100,000 people died.

Finally on March 30th, 1945 the German Army in Danzig capitulated and the Russian Army seized the city. Now we thought the disaster was over but for many it had just begun. The Russian soldiers came from the Kirgizian Region in Asia and to us they were very fierce looking. The Russian high command gave the soldiers a free hand for 3 days and it was brutal. There was violence everywhere, murder, robbery and women were raped all over the city. I ripped my mother's dress, put bandages on her face and ruffled up her hair to make her really ugly looking and she was not raped. Her girlfriend whose husband refused to work in the concentration camp was taken away by the soldiers and we never saw her again. Her daughter who was my age was raped so many times she died within three weeks. Let me tell you about this family, they were very religious Lutherans, I attended all their birthday parties and they prayed before every meal, even before we would blow out the candles on the birthday cakes we would pray. Their son was my friend and we went to school together.

Another lady could not take sitting on the cement stairs in the basement any longer and she asked my mother if I could stay with her in the apartment so she could stretch out on her bed. My mother agreed and in the middle of the night half a dozen soldiers crashed into the apartment, forced me to stay in the room, and proceeded to rape the lady. I cried. Up to this point I was very devoted to the Catholic religion and I wanted to be the same as my Uncle Stefan, a Jesuit priest. These events completely destroyed my faith and I could not believe in a God who was so unfair.

The next day I had to go to the outside pump for

water as the water and sewage pipes in the apartment were destroyed. On my way I was approached by a number of former prisoners from the concentration camp Stutthof and they attacked me ripping off my new jacket, I saw many of our neighbours watching, I was lucky to get away with just a bloody nose minus my new jacket. I could understand their fury after living in that concentration camp and not knowing when they would be killed. The German Waffen SS killed 65,000 people: Polish, German dissidents but mostly Jewish people perished in that terrible place. They used Zyklon B; the Russians found quite a number of unopened canisters of the poison.

A few days later thousands of German prisoners of war being escorted by Russian soldiers marched on the Ostseestrasse, a wide street next to ours. It was really not marching because when you looked into their faces you could tell that many of them could not believe they were prisoners after having been told that they were the greatest nation on earth. They all went to the prisoner of war camp not far away from where we lived. My father and my Uncle Kurt were in the same camp and they looked hungry, not shaven, their clothing dirty and ripped. A couple of days later the Russians went from house to house looking for German soldiers that had escaped including the young boys from the Volksstorm and I was one of them. We were rounded up and our first job was to go to the airport because the German air force had plowed the landing strips to make it impossible for any airplanes to land. We received picks and shovels and proceeded to fill in the grooves that the plows had made so that the Russian planes could land. We were guarded by Russian soldiers. Left and right of the landing strips were many bushes and trees and before we were told to go back to the camp I hid in the bushes, because there were so many of us the Russians did not notice me. At night I carefully found my way back to our apartment where I changed my clothing. Even though it was very cold I

changed into short pants and my mother cut my hair to make me look much younger, it worked.

On May 8th, 1945 Germany capitulated and the new Polish authorities took the administration of Danzig over from the Russians. All German speaking citizens had to register and receive an identification card. They ordered us to clean up. First we had to get rid of the dead horses which was very difficult to do as the legs were stiff and sticking up in the air and the stomachs were bloated. We first cut off the legs and then punched a hole in the stomach with a crowbar and then we would run because the stench from the stomach was terrible but now we needed a much smaller hole to bury the horses. There were so many horses used by the German army that after they surrendered they were abandoned and no one took responsibility for feeding them and they died. Now came the worse part, looking for human body parts, legs, hands, etc. I still remember having half a head on my shovel and one eye looking at me; I could not eat anything for days. While all this was going on the nuns who ran the Kindergarten could not cope with the destruction, rape and having no food to eat. Nobody could look after them because the remaining people could barely look after themselves, so they became ill and as there were no hospitals they died one by one. I remember the first one to die was Sister Maria (the one the kids called Wigglebum). An old man in our building had a few boards which he used to make a box to lay Sister Maria in and we drove her in a two wheeled cart to the cemetery. We were stopped by the Polish police and had to leave the body on the street in the hot sun till the evening and only after we had finished what they asked us to do could we continue to bury the nun and quickly get home because there was a curfew. What they had asked us to do was to go where there once stood a large tank filled with cooking oil that had been exploded by a grenade leaving a lake of cooking oil on the ground; we had to fill another large tank with the oil using our milk cans.

We needed food and my brother Hubert (who is 3 years younger than myself) and I went out to pick young leaves from the weeds growing between the streetcar tracks to make salad. About 200 yards from our apartment we could see the ugly skeleton of a burned out train. Some of the railroad cars were loaded with sugar which had melted and dripped on top of the burned grass, gravel and garbage. With pick and shovel and a sack we brought some of this mess home to my mother who had quite a time on the stove separating the sugar from all that mess. Some Polish merchants came from Warsaw to look for merchandise for the big stores because there were no factories operating yet. They came by horse and buggy carrying a drum filled with salt herring which they offered for bed sheets, clothing and shoes, anything that was in halfway good condition, this helped us, we had herring for a few weeks. I knew of a very large building that was filled with potatoes but was guarded by Russian soldiers and all the windows were nailed shut with boards. In the middle of the night I crawled in the high grass towards the ditch that surrounded the building, the two guards always walked together around the building. I had come with a sack and a crowbar, when the guards were on the other side of the building I jumped to one of the windows and tried to remove the board with the crowbar. The squeaking sound the nail made as I tried to remove it was so loud that I ran away hiding in the ditch but nothing happened because the guards were too far away and busy talking so I went back and worked on the window until I got into the building and proceeded to get my potatoes. My mother was so happy to see me not only because of the potatoes but she was afraid I would end up in prison. I started looking for any kind of canned food in the rubble of basements, in burned out houses and empty barracks where the German soldiers used to live. I did not find too much but then I saw a beautiful blanket on a bed and as I grabbed it was shocked to discover I had grabbed the

nose of a dead soldier who was under the blanket. I dropped the blanket and ran and after that I gave up searching in basements.

We were not only looking for food, there were a number of Polish business people that wanted to start new factories and encouraged us to look for copper or brass for a few zlotys. A few boys from our street joined a group of boys and handicapped men that were not drafted to the German army. We were digging for shells from the anti-aircraft guns and any other cannons close to the sea between the two fishing villages, Broesen and Glettkau. Two boys and myself found some German hand grenades. They were different from the American which were more like pineapples. The German have a long wooden handle plus a metal top. As there were no Russian or Polish military anywhere near us we wanted to know if they were live or not. We hid behind some high sand dunes pulled the cord counted for a few seconds and threw the grenades as far as we could, nothing happened. Being afraid we must have thrown the grenade too early or they were duds, we were just walking over to see, that's when they exploded. We were lucky we had not gone over the high sand dunes too soon, so we did not get hurt. The group digging were mad at us because if the Russians would have heard the explosion they would have arrested us for fooling around with live ammunition.

The German army had dug very deep holes before they dumped the shells and ammunition, and because the shells were very heavy they sank even deeper in the light sand. In order to dig out as much as possible before the curfew they were using picks. Knowing that there were also live shells in between, we told them that they were crazy. They told us not to worry they knew what they were doing. We wanted no part of it and went home. Sure enough the next day they had an explosion, the boy that was in the hole got hurt. We understand that the other boys dumped all the shells from the buggy, put the boy on the cart and ran to the

suburb Langfuhr for help. The boy nearly died but they were intercepted by the Polish militia (police) who drove the boy to the Russian provisional field hospital where the doctors were able to remove most of the metal pieces of the exploded shells from the boy's body, but they could not save one leg. They had to amputate it. After that all mothers made sure that none of their boys were digging for any shells.

More and more Polish people came from the south and east of Poland and they occupied the empty houses that were still standing. One morning I had a close call. We used to greet each other in Danzig in different ways like Hello, or Guten Morgen, Guten Abend, Gruess God-ouf Wiedersehen but under Hitler every store had a big sign saying, your greeting is, Heil Hitler. There was no other greeting. If you did not greet Heil Hitler you were fined. We had a few zlotys from the man with the herring and one morning my mother asked me to get some spices so I went to this new Polish store probably still half asleep and as I opened the door out of habit I said Heil Hitler. I still remember these two Polish women at the counter turning around, their mouths open, completely speechless. At that moment I realized what I had done and I turned and ran like never before and I never went to that store again.

During this time a beautiful dog, white with black spots, attached itself to my brother Hubert, wherever my brother went, going for water looking for food in empty buildings, the dog was always close to Hubert, licking him and Hubert hugging him, the two were inseparable.

The shareholders of the racetrack who lived in London installed my grandfather as manager of the racetrack once again. The Chairman of the Board, Major Von Schoenfeld, whose house had been destroyed, moved in with my grandfather. I was present when Major Von Schoenfelds wife, "Lady Schoenfeld" treated my grandmother like a maid. I was furious and I said it was an insult to my grandmother. I

guess she thought because she came from nobility everybody had to serve her. She had to get her own water like everyone else.

The same as that lady, many people still lived in the past and rumours did not help as some thought the new German rockets, the V2 weapons, would still make Germany victorious. Others thought the Americans would continue the war and fight the Russians. Some thought Hitler was still alive and living in Argentina and that a large part of the German army had joined the French Foreign Legion. But most of us did know that we probably would be deported to West Germany to make room for the Polish people who were thrown out of East Poland when Russia took over.

In the meantime the situation became worse. We could not find any more food in the rubble and we had nothing left to sell to the merchants and stealing from the warehouses was more difficult because they were much better guarded. We could not live on the young leaves of weeds only. Now there were dogs everywhere because people could not take their dogs when they fled. Our neighbour, who was a building contractor, had a female German Shepard guard dog to protect his yard. At night around the Abtsmuehle (that was his house) the noise was unbearable as dozens of male dogs used to visit, howling and barking, trying to get the favour of the female dog, so he killed his dog and hung the body on a post. All the dogs came looking and they never came back again. Two streets over was The Gudron girls high school that was used as a hospital, it was filled with wounded German soldiers and the situation with no staff or help of any sort plus no medicine, was unbearable. Hell could not have been worse.

We had to get some more food we were running out of everything. Then some old lady said 'across from us in the barracks where the German soldiers used to live is all kinds of food', she said she knew because she used to clean there. So I watched and saw that in the evening nobody was watching the building. I borrowed

a two wheel cart from Mr. Schneider the contractor and went over to inspect the building with my brother Hubert. Hubert being smaller crawled through a small broken window and opened the door; I got in with my cart and started to look for food. Then with a crash a side door was pushed open and a man from the Polish militia with a gun in his hand yelled at us, I pushed my brother back out of the window and raised my hands. The policeman kept on yelling in Polish which I did not understand. Then he searched and took my identification card, locked it in a desk and told me to come back the next day. I had no choice if anybody would catch me with no identification card I would go to prison. I quickly went home, got some chisels and a hammer, and waited in the bushes for the policeman to go home. Finally very late he decided to go home. I smashed a larger window crawled through and tried to open the locked desk to get my identification card, the noise I made in that empty building with my hammer and chisel I don't want to remember, I was sweating for fright. But I found my papers and rolled the cart back to my neighbour very slowly not to cause any suspicion; I was lucky but had no food.

One day in the fall (I forget the date) we had a knock at our apartment door and we were told to vacate the apartment in half an hour and be ready to go to the railroad station. It was not a surprise but we did not expect it to be so soon. One thing was very sad for my brother, we were not allowed to take his beloved dog along. We did feel very sorry for Hubert, he had become very close to the dog and the dog whimpering looking at us with his big eyes and nervously moving his feet did not help as we went to the railroad station. We arrived at the railroad station with hundreds of other people; it looked as if the whole district was going to be deported. There were not many men, mostly young children, mothers and old men. They did not have time to gather all their belongings and if they did they were not allowed to take much. They were all

German speaking and did not know any Polish, which was the reason for their deportation. The train was a freight train and too many people were assigned to each wagon including all the suitcases. It was way too much. It was a good thing that the young people were allowed to be on top of the roof of the wagon. It was very dangerous because the roof was rounded from side to side and everyone was warned not to sleep lengthways on the top of the roof. Many young boys could not sleep across but slept lengthways and because stretches of the rail lines were provisionally repaired the ride was very shaky and a number of the boys rolled down the railroad car roof and some were crushed under the wheels of the train. Because there were so many people, children crying, no toilet facilities and the rattling of the train the mothers in the wagons only knew what happened to their children on the roof when the train stopped. Our ride was from Danzig to the new border of Poland to Frankfurt on the Oder, it was no more than 400 kilometres but we were always put on the side track to let the military trains go through and it took our train three days. In our railroad car was also my Uncle Helmuth's family, my father's brother, his wife, my Aunt Lizzy, her mother and her two children, one who was just a baby, only a few months old. It was impossible to give the small baby at that age the care that it needed and halfway between Danzig and Frankfurt the baby died. On one of the stops when the train was on the side rails, with the help of a few boys I buried the little baby in a small meadow beside the railroad tracks. The meadow was covered with grass and wild flowers.

When we arrived in Frankfurt for the first time in three days we received hot soup from the East German Red Cross, I never appreciated hot soup so much. As we were slurping down our soup my mother saw a lady walking around in her dress and only then did we realize that one of our suitcases had been stolen. Of course there was a fight but we did recover most of our clothing.

We were lucky to have some German currency because before the war my father had the foresight to sell a piece of property we owned, it was a nice garden right beside the chocolate factory and the only thing that I didn't like was that I had to water it so often. Now we were off by train to Berlin to find my Uncle Joseph and his wife, they had no children and their house was destroyed. We could not find my aunt and my uncle was still in the prisoner of war camp. He used to work as an engineer for the Todd organization constructing fortifications in the Ukraine all the way down in the Crimea.

The destruction of Berlin was unbelievable. Nobody had water, they had to get it from the hand pump, the water was dark brown from too much iron content. We continued on to Leipzig. I paid 250 marks for a half kilo of butter on the black market, it normally cost 3 marks. When we arrived at the border between East and West Germany we wanted to go to Wurzburg to see my Aunt Hildegard. There were lots of people wanting to do the same thing and get across the border. It took us a long time to find a guide to take us over the border to West Germany because only a week earlier some people had been shot and one was killed. We finally found one guide who said the East German border guard was his friend. We did not trust the guide, he wanted 500 marks for each person we were very uneasy but we had no choice, we took a chance. He had 15 people to take over the border. They were all deported Germans from Poland. He got us all off the street into houses of his friends and out of view of the police. He came around two o'clock at night and asked us with our suitcases to follow him to a small forest close to the border. He was constantly observing his lookout who was sitting up in the tree watching the border guard. Once the lookout was sure that the border guard was around the hill, our guide told us to run as fast as we could with our suitcases across the field, hide behind the first haystack, lie flat on the ground and not move

until he told us. We waited ten minutes and then moved to the next haystack. Again we waited 10 minutes then we had to crouch through a small wire fence, continued to run quietly for a while and then realized that we had made it. We were in West Germany. We all started laughing and hugging each other, then thanking our guide and feeling somewhat ashamed not having trusted him in the beginning.

The city was Folda and wherever we went we had to spend the night in a school. The schools were still not operating and there were no hotels or rooms available. We made our way to Wurzburg where we found my Aunt Hildegard and her 3 children. Her husband was still in the prisoner of war camp, he used to be an officer on a submarine. Aunt Hildegard's house was completely destroyed by bombs and it was during that time that she broke her leg and had to have it set by a medical student who did not do such a great job and she had a limp for the rest of her life. She lived with her mother-in-law and we could see that this was not a very good arrangement. She wrote love stories in order to make a living.

We spent a few days in Wurzburg sleeping in schools at night. It used to be such a nice city but so much of it was destroyed. We were told that the best place for us would be Bamberg and we were sure that this would be the last trip we would have to take and we were right.

Bamberg is a jewel, nothing was destroyed and it is beautiful. It was declared a historic site by the United Nations and it was the first capital of Germany, started by Kaiser Heinrich II. When we arrived they were celebrating the 900th birthday of the cathedral. The Arthur Rank film company filmed the first movie of Romeo and Juliet in Bamberg. After all we had experienced in the last while we were sure we were entering the civilized world again but the good people of Bamberg informed us the reason why their city was saved was because all of the people of Bamberg were

good Catholics and believed in God, that is why God saved Bamberg. We spent a few nights in the Bamberg theatre which was a refugee camp at that time and was located right across from the house where Jacques Offenbach, the creator of the Student Prince, had lived. Before we were allowed to stay in the refugee camp we were deloused. We had to take all our clothes off which were steam cleaned with a solution to kill all the lice, then we took a shower and after had to run around with a towel wrapped around our heads (just like the Arabs) soaked in some kind of poison to kill all the lice that were in our hair. This was normal in most refugee camps otherwise one would not be able to control any serious health problem. But as young people we thought it was fun to run around as Arabs. After a short waiting period the city gave us a small flat near the city family home of Freiherr Von Stauffenberg. He was the young officer who had tried to assassinate Hitler near the close of the war; the house was still boarded up. His family also had a castle with a well-preserved drawbridge not far away from Bamberg, maybe 30 kilometres, close to the Czech Republic border. The young officer was executed according to Hitler's orders. (We did visit the castle some 40 years later.)

Now we were all alone in Bamberg and my mother and I thought it would be good to find out where all the other family members were. Before the war everyone except my Uncle Joseph, who lived in Berlin, all lived within a 10 kilometre circle. We were able to get some information from the Red Cross in Berlin and some from Aunt Hildegard. My first trip was to the North Sea. I jumped on a freight train as the passenger trains were not up and running yet. The wagon I was in was open and filled with coal and I was freezing so the next time the train came to a stop which was in Aschaffenburg, close to Frankfurt, I decided to jump with my knapsack to the next wagon which would give me more protection, that's when the train moved ahead and I fell in between the two railroad cars.

About half an hour later I found myself lying in the middle of the grass beside the railroad car surrounded by a number of people who told me that when I jumped and fell between the railroad cars I had hit my head on the railroad car bumper and fell right across the rails and that is when the train stopped. They said if the train would have gone one more foot I would have been cut in half. They all said how lucky I had been and all I had was a bad back and a bruise on my head.

I continued my trip to Cuxhaven on the North Sea and after asking a farmer in the area I found Aunt Trude, my cousin Hanelore and Aunt Lenchen, who had come by boat from Danzig having witnessed the sinking of the Gustloff. Aunt Trude's husband Hans and Aunt Lenchen's husband Kurt were still in the prisoner of war camps. From there I traveled to Flensburg close to Denmark where I found Uschi, she belonged to a unit that was part of the army and she had been released early. Aunt Maria and her children as well as Uncle Fritz the fisherman were in Heiligenhafen, close to Lubeck, I did not get to see them. Uncle Fritz and his oldest son, as I told you earlier, both drowned when their fishing boat sank near Denmark during that time. Before I returned to Bamberg I stayed overnight in a bunker in the city of Kiel. The bunker was especially built to withstand bombs from the airplanes. The walls were about one metre thick. When I woke up in the morning, I had huge boils on my face, my nose and lips looked to be one, the people that were sleeping on these cots left and right of me looked the same. We went to the bathroom to look in the mirror, we really looked like monkeys; it was so funny we all had to laugh. The bugs crawled at night up the electric wire and dropped from the ceiling onto our faces. When I came back to Bamberg my mother had a shock but I looked normal in about a week.

I enrolled in an apprenticeship program as a stonemason and stone sculptor, also taking bookkeeping so that someday I would be able to run a business. As

soon as I was able to manage the tools I was sent to the cemetery to remove all the swastikas and emblems that were from the Nazi era from the monuments, there were hundreds. But more important than that every morning before 9 o'clock I was told to take my bike and go to the restaurant with an empty case of beer bottles and exchange it for a full case, these were the big bottles with the ceramic snap on caps. With all that beer we had to be careful because we were cutting a lot of lettering and could easily make a mistake, but nobody ever made a mistake before 3 o'clock. We also had to replace a lot of stone on old buildings, they were old and dirty and the replacement stone stuck out like a sore thumb. My job was to take a pail, go out on the street and collect horse manure and get some black soot, add some water, mix it and smear it over the new stones. Then the new stones blended with the old buildings very nicely. I remember working on the old town hall which is standing in the middle of the River Regnitz. We were adding a new balcony. The sewage from the old town hall was not connected to the city and underneath the balcony in the river a little mountain of human waste had developed. By accident I dropped my chisel into it and it went plunk and disappeared, we all stood there on the scaffold looking down and debating who was going to go get it.

There were many American soldiers stationed in and around the city of Bamberg and young ladies used to come from far and wide. It was very good for the economy of the city, all the hotels were filled. One hotel in Bug a Suburb even rented twice the amount of rooms they had. The good people of Bamberg rented rooms all over the city; by the month, the week, by the day and in emergencies by the hour. The best part was that they did not get paid in marks but rather either with food or with American army money, the green-back. Food was still rationed at that time and the mark was not worth much. All this activity had some inconvenient consequences. Close to the cemetery was a

very big high school which had been converted into a hospital and it was completely occupied with these nice girls suffering from the consequence from their activities of one form or other of venereal diseases. Most of the windows of the hospital were facing the cemetery and there they were sitting in the windows with their naked legs hanging out. Not being inexperienced with young men they sang and whistled trying to tease us while we were trying very hard to set our monuments. We did not complain, however our employer Mr. Zimmermann went to the administration of the hospital complaining and said that this behaviour did not go well with the atmosphere in the cemetery. I don't think the hospital administrator had time to tell all that to those nice young girls.

After having lived in Bamberg for half a year my Uncle Walter paid us a visit and gave us some good news. He had been released from the prisoner of war camp and had found his family. They were in the Alps close to Switzerland but the biggest news was that my father was still alive. Uncle Walter's prison camp was in Russia, actually in Siberia behind the Ural Mountains and it was a big camp with about 5000 prisoners. One day when he was lining up to go to the outside latrine the back of one of the prisoners looked familiar to him and when the prisoner turned around he recognized his brother; they both could not believe it, they had not seen each other for 3 years. They both used to, during the bad times before the 1930s, sleep in the potato fields during harvest time to protect the potato crop from being stolen and they would dig out the roots of big trees so they had wood to burn for the winter. The news was a great relief to us because we did not know that my father was alive. It did take still half a year before he was released. He had no idea where we were but through Aunt Hildegard in Wurzburg he found us. He was blown up like a balloon and the doctor said it was because of a lack of sugar which they did not get in Siberia, when we pressed his skin we created a hole

and then watched till it popped up again. He had to spend six weeks in the hospital to become normal again. He had changed, before Siberia my father had been a very ambitious man who was in charge of big projects, now he wanted none of that. Instead he took a job with a big company who made gears for turbines and he had some responsibility for supervising the constant expansion of their buildings but the better offers he received offering much more money he refused.

We had a nice surprise, Hannelore, Uncle Walter's daughter, came to visit us; she is my age and very pretty. While she was in Bamberg she dated the Bavarian leader of a new nationalist party. He created quite a scandal at a convention of the largest Bavarian Party, the C.D.U., at the concert hall. He organized a very rowdy demonstration; he gathered people that had nothing else to do, the unemployed, the roughnecks from the tough side of town, gave them cigarettes and fed them beer as much as they wanted. The result was terrible, yelling, screaming, smashing of beer bottles, fistfights till the police came and threw quite a few dozen in jail. It certainly did not help his party.

The next day I showed Hannelore the Bamberger Dome. While we were kneeling in the benches and admiring the beautiful Cathedral a group of about 60 young men silently entered the Dome. They came from the seminar studying to become priests. Hannelore looked at all those young men and after a long time said: "What a waste."

On our second Christmas in Bamberg we went to the evening mass in the Bamberger Dome, it was 12 o'clock midnight. In the middle of the mass two former German officers entered the big dome. Everyone could see that they were only now released from the prisoner of war camp. You have to imagine the big cathedral, 900 years old, behind me was the first free standing statue built after the Dark Ages in all of Europe, "the Bamberger Reiter" (a proud king sitting on a horse). On one side of me was "The Sarcophagus of Kaiser

Heinrich II and his wife Kunigunde” the finest of the Civilization of Northern Europe, and then you have the former example of Germany’s pride, two officers in rags, completely defeated, magnifying the tragedy of Germany. I do not know what happened but suddenly the whole congregation of more than 500 people went to the officers shaking their hands giving them money and crying. The priest nearly stopped the sermon. It was an acknowledgement that a proud nation had died. Then we all went outside and from the towers the trumpets started playing and some of the people just sat down in the snow because they could not stand any longer, their sadness was too great.

At work we were very busy we even worked a lot in the evening, especially the first and second year. We all would go to the Ober-meister after work and continue to work on soldier’s stones by the piece. The Ober-meister had the contract with the government. One time we had over 40 soldier’s stones finished and nicely lined up when overnight someone pushed them over like cards causing substantial damage.

I had many friends and we were all single and enjoyed life to the fullest. Some of us wanted to become sculptors and wanted to advance our knowledge of the human body so we joined modeling classes in the evening. At first we had a lot of problems such as making a mess with the clay especially when it dried and we stepped on it. But once we collected money for the janitor to clean up we were alright. We had nice looking female models whom we put in the centre on a turntable the way God made them. We had lots of fun joking around and teasing each other and it was questionable how much we really learned. We had many parties and they were held between the flowers and trees of a wholesale florist company, everyone enjoyed them especially the models who were free and uninhibited. I remember one New Year’s Eve when we all went down to the old city and shortly before 12 o’clock from between the small side streets we started bombarding

the police with firecrackers and then we ran and hid nicely in the bar of the Kunslerclause, our favourite drinking hole. Then around 2 o'clock in the morning pretending to be completely sober we went yelling and singing to the River Regnitz to follow the old German tradition of approaching the New Year completely clean. We went to the river to wash our wallets out and it was then that the police caught up with us and we all had to pay a ticket for making too much noise. The tradition also was that housewives were supposed to clean the house from top to bottom before New Year's Day.

Most of us joined the soccer club F.C. Bamberg and that was a lot of fun. The biggest holiday in Bavaria (Bamberg belonged to Bavaria) was Kirchweih. That was the anniversary when the local church was erected. The preparations would go on for days, relatives and guests came from all over and there was dancing, games and of course food, the holiday would last for three days. The highlight of the celebration would be the soccer game. In the summer we played every Sunday in a different village for Kirchweih. Coming from the city we were usually better players so if we did not like a village we parked our motorbikes behind our goalie and we would beat their team as much as we could. When the game was finished we jumped on our motorbikes and got out of that village as fast as possible, most of the time they'd throw all kinds of garbage after us. If at the same time we liked the village we would of course lose the game. We were all regarded as the best of friends and we got free food, all the beer we wanted to drink and the girls were nice, everybody was happy.

By the beginning of 1948 all my uncles from my mother's side were back together with their families. On my father's side we never heard from Uncle Helmuth, my Uncle Clemets stayed in Zoppot because his wife is Kashubian and can speak Polish but he does not like it there any more. There are different people from different cultures and he will soon come to

Germany. He writes that the Polish people treat the Germans who are still there the same as the Germans treated the Polish people, like second class citizens. My grandfather lost his position at the racetrack again when the Polish people from London that had hired him were removed and the Communists took control of the racetrack. My grandparents were allowed to move to Germany and my Aunt Sister Elisabeth was able to care for them in the convent near Aschaffenburg. Aunt Elisabeth said she really loved being a nun and if she was born again she would enter a convent that was stricter as there was too much infighting between the nuns where she lived now.

My apprenticeship went really well and I liked it very much. We mostly worked for the farmers because our food was still rationed and our supplier needed to be able to purchase the saw blades to cut the monuments and without food from the farmers it was not possible.

Our second most important customers were all the good Catholic people that had promised God before the war that if their houses or farms were spared they would erect a statue of Mary or Jesus on their land and most of them placed them near the crossroad of their fields. This is how I got most of my experience in sculpture work. When we were setting a monument or statue in the country our meal was always included and this was always quite an experience. We were mostly 15 to 20 people including family members in a very large combination kitchen and living room and we would all be standing and praying out loud while the children were poking and jabbing at each other. I remember the mother was stirring the soup on the stove while the father was minding his own business when out of nowhere the mother took the soup ladle with the soup dripping all over the floor and began hitting the kids over the head. The kids yelled out and stuck out their tongues but the mother never slowed down in her prayer and just repeated the process of hitting them

again. Not once did the father ever look up from his prayers or get involved and it appeared as if this did not mean much to any of them. In Prussia I think the children would be afraid to do such things during prayers. I told my father what had happened especially about them sticking out their tongues and he only said that if I ever tried that I would see what would happen.

This was the time when all food was still rationed and being partly paid with a meal or any food was very important. One month I was very unfortunate. I picked up our ration cards for my mother, my brother and myself from the City Hall at the beginning of the month, then went to work and at the end of the day going home I checked in my pockets, all the ration cards for the whole month were gone. Nobody but only one of my dear co-workers must have done it. I went to the City Hall to replace the cards. They said it is too bad we cannot do that. My mother had received some extra soap for sewing some extra blouses. I took the soap and went from village to village and from farm house to farm house to exchange the soap for any kind of food. I got some but not too much. Then I took my bike and a sack and drove at night outside of Bamberg to the apple orchards. One could not buy any apples, you had to exchange them against something. I climbed up these old apple trees and filled my sack. Then I saw a man coming over the hill yelling and screaming with a stick in his hand trying to catch me stealing his apples. I was very lucky, I jumped on my bike with my full sack of apples and realized that the farmer was limping and could not run very fast. That is how we survived.

The American army had their own money called the greenback and it was meant for the Army only but many business transactions were conducted with greenbacks especially on the black markets. Some of the black marketers had thousands of dollars in greenbacks and as the German economy began to slowly get better the American army decided to remove the greenback

out of circulation and only soldiers could cash them in; before long the greenback became useless. The black marketers were devastated as all their hard work was now worth nothing. In Bamberg three dealers killed themselves. On the cemetery grounds where I worked there was a little house where two Bulgarians lived. They made their living buying and selling in greenbacks and they got into a fight and one killed the other with an axe. We all went over there to study the blood all over the nice white walls. Only a week later I was looking in the cemetery for some small stones to straighten crooked monuments with and as I went near the bushes I saw through an opening a man sitting on a bench moving back and forth. Then I saw a pistol on the ground and when I faced the man I saw blood and stuff coming out of his forehead. I ran as fast as I could to the cemetery office to call for an ambulance and they came and took him to the hospital but on the way he died. We understand he was a police detective but we never found out what his problem had been.

So many things happened that year. We had a new apprentice, just a young boy helping us with the setting of a very big monument; the monument was lying on the grave with the bottom on the foundation so the four of us were trying to bring it to an upright position. As we did so we heard a deep moaning, it came from the young boy and his face was completely white, he looked as if he was having a heart attack. When lifting the monument one of his feet sunk in the fresh soil and broke right into the coffin and then he must have turned his foot so that his toes were underneath the next board but he thought that the dead person in the coffin was holding onto his foot. We dug out his foot as fast as we could and then we revived him with cold water and sent him home. We all wanted to laugh but it was not funny.

The next spring our boss experienced a strange incident. A husband and wife had come to his office to buy a monument. They were very fussy and finally

decided on one monument and also the price which they then paid for by cheque. Mr. Zimmermann wanted to know the dates for the lettering and the lady said the date of death will be in three month's time (I think it was August 6th) and her husband agreed. Mr. Zimmermann came out of his office after they left and told us what happened and he was laughing because he thought it was a joke but sure enough on August 6th they both killed themselves.

The city was filled with refugees with quite a few of them coming from Danzig and West Prussia, we came together to share our problems and created a club, "the Danziger Club". We rented a hall and held meetings, dances, get togethers, it was a home away from home and it was nice. Now the Ostprussen, Schlesien, the people from the Warteland had their own club and we would invite each other into our clubs. My parents especially liked the clubs as they made many friends there. Then we all decided to join the Fluechtlings party (the party of refugees). What we wanted was to partially distribute the loss of the war to all Germans. The refugees had lost everything, some had owned factories, land and businesses but the citizens of West Germany lost much less. It was called the Lastenausgleich; I became the representative for West Prussia of Oberfranken. We wanted all West Germans to be assessed their property value and pay 10% of that to the government. The refugees would have to prove the value of the property they owned before the war and that was not too hard to do as all the documents were kept in Berlin. Then the refugees would get 10% of the value of their former assets. With the help of Adenauer, the Chancellor of West Germany, it became law and helped thousands of people to start their business up again.

The next big change that happened in Germany at this time was the Floorbereinigung and it was a monstrous undertaking. For different cultures there were traditions passed on and for the German farmer

one tradition was that when a member of the family was married they received a small piece of land as a wedding gift. As time passed they ended up with many small acres of land, too far away and too small for a tractor and very uneconomical. Two of our friends were surveyors and they had to work for years in these small villages surveying. Across the countryside many properties had been marked improperly, cornerstones were moved in the middle of the night and ownership was not clear. Some parcels were too small, too many walkways and too much waste of land. Then the negotiations began and in some villages it took 10 years to settle. The end result was that a farmer who had 35 fields ended up with 5 fields and more acres (less walkways). The village got a free park and it paid for the farmer to buy a tractor. In the past it took two families to run a farm, the old and the young family, now only one was needed. It was the best thing that ever happened to the German farmer.

In the meantime now that my father was home the flat where we lived became too small for us and we moved to an apartment near the edge of the city on the property of a vegetable farmer. Bamberg is the centre in Germany for growing vegetables and is located in a valley; because of the good soil they have three harvests a year. Living in the new apartment was like being in the country. I began to feel more and more uneasy with talk of the Cold War and many Germans still reliving the past. I had now finished my apprenticeship and began working for Buetterich which was taken over by Mr. Bluemel. Mr. Buetterich had died only a few months before. He was a very friendly man but he wanted to do everything by himself, even the setting of the monuments.

A half year earlier he had an accident while setting a monument, when he turned the monument it fell on him and crushed his leg, within a few days he developed gangrene and died a few weeks later. My new employer was not very healthy and spent almost half of

every year in the hospital. Despite my still being very young I was put in charge of the 8 people who worked in the company and that was when I learned how to run a company on my own and to deal with customers. This made it a lot easier for me when I started my own company years later in Canada.

Where I really had to be on my toes was with the stonecutters, except for the two apprentices, they were all former soldiers. Two were former paratroopers, the over-friendly sarcasm I had to deal with taught me self control. The army had made them tough. We had a lot of heavy lifting to do. One time when we were trying to set a large stone grave border 6 feet long and about 250 pounds each we had an accident. The two paratroopers were lifting these stones from the large wagon to the ground and one (his name was Fritz) forgot to pull out his hand in time. He calmly asked his helper to move the stone to be able to pull out his hand. After Fritz had pulled his hand out, he looked at it, one finger was completely smashed and blood dripping all over, observed, "Now this finger I don't have to wash anymore." He wanted to continue to work, I had to send him with someone to the hospital. After 2 hours and his finger amputated he came back ready to work again. I asked him if he had lost his marbles and chased him home.

They always had fun when somebody made a mistake in the lettering. The boss would come and ask why he did that (stupid question) then all his dear buddies would gather around and wanted to know: if he was mentally ill; how could he be so stupid; if he did not know any better, maybe he should go back to school and learn how to read. It got so bad the fellow wanted to crawl into a hole. It was disgusting. Some mistakes were kind of funny. It was Max, he was working on a very large monument which was divided in half for 2 related families, he went to the office and asked the boss if he should put 'Ruhe in Frieden' (Rest in Peace) on both sides on the bottom of the monument. "Sure" said Mr. Bluemel, our boss. A half hour later we heard

some noise and swearing and watched Max grabbing his coat and running home. We looked at the stone he was working on and saw the reason. He had cut the epitaph in nice letters across the bottom of the monument, it read: 'Rest in Peace on both sides'.

During this period there was always some tension between the Prussians and Bavarians. I was told once in the cemetery by a nice old lady that I should go back where I came from because I only take work away from the Bavarians. That kind of animosity goes far back to the time of Napoleon. His first wife Josephine was a Bavarian Princess and Bavaria helped Napoleon against Prussia, Russia and Britain.

My grandfather said that before World War I whenever there were a number of Prussian soldiers in a tavern and some Bavarian soldiers entered, the first thing that happened was that all the knives got stacked underneath the table to be ready for a fight.

We made a lot of jokes about the differences between them. A friend of ours said he was going to have some fun and he wrote an article about the Bavarians and Prussians and it was published in the local newspaper, the Frankischertag. It went something like this: "We Prussians like the Bavarians very much, the beautiful countryside, the castles, the Alps where we like to go skiing but the people are quite different from us, never mind the Lederhosen with the shirt sticking out of the bottom, look at their faces, the eyebrows, they go right across from one ear to the other and look at the forehead it is slanted just like the apes." Now that was not very funny and it was picked up by all the big newspapers in Germany and our friend was fired.

One time I really got confused, it was around 1950, it had not rained for quite a while, the farmers were all worried the fields were all dry so the harvest would be a catastrophe. The Archbishop of Bamberg asked all the people in the churches of his district to join a procession through Bamberg all the way up to The

Altenburg, the reason, to pray for rain. There were thousands and thousands of people participating. It looked to me like a leftover from the pagan days. The Romans used to pray to Jupiter for rain and if he did not deliver, they told him that they have been very nice to him, they did not deserve that and proceeded to beat his stone statue up. The Mayans pushed one of their believers, with a big stone tied on their feet, in the cenote, so he could beg for a long time under water for rain.

The Bavarians have some different traditions especially regarding older houses. They have long narrow mirrors attached to the outside of their windows facing the street that enables the ladies to know everything that is happening on the street. My boss Mr. Zimmermann had one of those large mirrors attached to the outside of his office window which enabled him to watch what his dear employees were doing at all times. I didn't like that at all and every morning I turned the mirror and when he arrived at work an hour later he had a very good view of heaven. He came out of his office very angry and while he was adjusting his mirror he was swearing and using the name of God in vain many times. I believe he knew who the culprit was the whole time. One of the most amusing things we encountered was when the city aldermen wanted to build a swimming pool in Bamberg. Many people were against it and so the oldest city alderman stood up in the chambers and said: "I have never taken a bath in all my life and my skin is as clean as alabaster". The laughter was never ending and of course the whole thing was printed in papers all over Germany. The city fathers had no choice but to build the swimming pool. I am only kidding about Bamberg and do not want to give the wrong impression. Bamberg is one of the most beautiful cities in the world and some parts are like being in a fairy tale. One could fall in love with the city. The castle, "The Altenburg" overlooking the city, was a treasure by itself.

In Bamberg All Souls Day is always a very important day. The graves have to be cleaned, the monuments straightened, new fall flowers planted, not only that, thousands of people will come to the cemetery. The ladies will come in their best clothes, the fur coats will come out. That day is not only to remember the ones that passed away, it is a big social event, a fashion show. We were always very busy to straighten all the crooked monuments out. While we were looking in between the bushes for small stones to put underneath the monuments, the cemetery was full with mostly elderly ladies cleaning the graves, watering flowers. I thought that day that now I had enough little stones, it had just rained, I was full of mud with my wet hair I must have looked like a mess. I stuck my head through the bushes facing an old lady who was absent-mindedly watering her flowers, she raised her head widened her eyes in fright looking at me then opened her mouth, dropped her watering can, turned around and screamed, then ran as fast as she could to the gate while continuing to scream. The other ladies saw her running and me coming out of the bushes, dropped whatever they were doing screamed and also ran towards the gate. The superintendent came out of his office because of the noise, saw a dozen ladies running out of his cemetery and me standing there and yelled to me, "What the hell are you doing to these ladies?" I had a lot of explaining to do.

I was thinking more and more about immigrating to get out of Europe so I submitted my application to South Africa, the United States and also to Canada. I knew it would take a long time so I applied to a sculpture school near the city of Bonn and was accepted. The school was supposed to start the next summer. In the meantime my friends and I joined the Bergwacht (mountain guard) where we learned to climb and slide on a rope and then we were sent to the mountains to look after the crazy tourists. We were attached to the Red Cross. This is where I had some of the best times

of my young life, meeting nice young people and being in the fresh air of the mountains, it was great. Sometimes we felt too good and I remember one time we were in the Alps near Berchtesgarden and we were approaching a very deep gorge about half a kilometre deep with a small creek and many rocks on the bottom. Instead of crossing the gorge on top of the bridge I had to cross the bridge on the bottom hanging from the beam, it must have been too many beers. To make things worse a friend that was also not very bright started crossing the bridge on the bottom from the other side of course on the same beam. As we met in the middle I realized that he had become frightened and froze not able to go forward or backwards, now all the singing had stopped. Our friends on both sides of the bridge became aware of what was happening to us and we were all afraid our friend would fall into the gorge. I went around him only because at that time I had no fear of heights and we started encouraging him step by step to look straight ahead, never looking down and come to the other side. It took a long time and when he reached the other side we were all so happy, he was completely exhausted. We thought O my God how could we have been so stupid, maybe it was part of growing up.

A month later we were establishing a new route on a very large mountain and I was first with hooks and rope. I had to put in many hooks for the new route so that the rope would give us better security and I lost my grip and yelled out that I was going to jump with the rope to the next hook. My friend on the bottom end let the rope slip through his fingers because he was talking to his girlfriend at the time and did not hear me. I fell to the next ledge and was knocked unconscious and bruised by the fall but nothing was broken. Because of that fall today I still cannot climb a ladder or even stand on the glass floor of the CN Tower in Toronto.

All my life I have loved going to the theatre but it took a long time after the war before they could get a

good crew of professional actors together to perform. We went to see the Vogelhandler by the Bavarian Strauss. The first minute was all right and then it started, the voices were terrible, off key, entered at the wrong time and then the audience first slowly like a wave and then louder and you could not hear a word from the stage. I don't know where all this came from, they bombarded the stage first with tomatoes and then eggs and some from the audience had very good aim and the actors splashed with eggs and tomatoes ran off the stage. Then the police came in and cleared the concert hall but the audience came out singing and laughing, it was as if they had won the war. I still don't know where the tomatoes came from. There was one more performance which did not work out too good. One of the biggest bands in Germany was going to play in the concert hall and tickets were very expensive and when we all sat down and the curtain opened a small band no one had ever heard of was there instead, everyone walked out and we all went to the police to get our money back.

It was at this time that I had a call from the South African Embassy asking me to take an examination for immigration to their country. I think I had to go to Munchen and there I was told that I could work in the goldmines as a supervisor down to 2000 feet and no more because my eyes would not take the pressure. In the meantime more and more fighting was going on in South Africa and I had had enough of that life. The American consulate wrote and asked me to come for an interview so I drove to Mannheim and the result was no problem at all but I would have to wait a few months and one more thing, I probably could be drafted into the Vietnam War. That was not too good. The Canadian Embassy asked me to get a doctor's certificate and fill out a form and a few weeks later I was told that they did need people like me and I would get a visa in a few months. I was very happy as I had enough of Europe and the Cold War was becoming more intense

with Russia and I was tired of having to listen to what had happened in the past.

Now I had to tell everyone as only my parents knew of my plans. My friends were happy for me and Mr. Bluemel my boss was very disappointed because he had planned to turn the company over to me and he is sick all the time, what was he going to do. (He lived for another 30 years.) I never liked him and now I never believed him. I was really looking forward to a whole new life. I sold my motorbike and that gave me enough money for the fare to Canada and then I said goodbye to everybody, parents, brothers and friends. Our neighbour had just killed a pig and gave me two cans of smoked pork meat. Aunt Uschi's husband Max drove me to the train going to Bremerhafen. On the same day (I think it was in the fall of 1953) we checked in, all 800 of us, on the ship called "La Rosa". You could not imagine the atmosphere and the anticipation of what would await us, many were babbling about what they were going to do, it was a very happy atmosphere. It was one of the first times that everybody paid for their own trip to Canada. Before this time the refugees were sponsored by the Government of Canada but in return they had to work on farms for a time. Most of our group was trained in one field or another. There was entertainment on board, even dances, some girls even disappeared into the cabins of the crew, and they said they were improving their English - the crew was Portuguese. The bartender gave us good advice on how not to be seasick. He said to drink as much as you can of one father and two sons (that is 1 coke and 2 shots of rum), we followed his advice and it worked. The boat trip took 8 days.

When we approached Montreal the high buildings, the bridges, and the huge city, I could not believe my eyes. All my life I had been taught in school that the Germans invented nearly everything, the others only copied. The Germans were the smartest people on earth, that is what Hitler taught us. So I

thought how could they have done all this without the Germans? It is amazing how one can indoctrinate a young person's mind. That is when I really started to learn about history and I continue to enjoy reading about it up to this day.

Most of us continued by train to Toronto and the reason for that was because it was an English-speaking city. Once we arrived in the city of Toronto the first place I went was the unemployment office on Yonge Street north of Bloor (where a Canadian Tire store is today) and got a job in 10 minutes. Then I went looking for a room and found one on Beverly Street owned by a Hungarian couple. They wanted \$14.00 for 14 days and I only had \$7.00. I offered them my gold watch but they refused, saying that they would trust me and they would wait until my payday. The next day I started my new job with the Gest Company going underground helping Bell Telephone to lay cables on the Canadian National Exhibition grounds. Going underground was very dirty work and I came home as dirty as a chimney cleaner. In the evening I looked for work in the monument industry. Around the corner from where I lived was Goldberg who told me that if I knew Jewish I could start working the next day, however three days later I found a job with the McIntosh Granite Company on Yonge Street.

I will always remember my first day. The owner, old Mr. Taylor (a real gentleman) introduced me to everyone. I knew very little English but that did not matter. At lunch time the foreman, Doug McKenzie invited all 5 of us from the shop for a beer at the local beer parlor. We each paid for one round of beer and we had 5 beers each in the half an hour that was lunch-time. I was impressed, Bavarians do not drink that fast. On our way back our driver, whose last name was Crittenham, nearly got stuck in the old street car tracks on Yonge Street, I think they were in the process of removing the tracks. Then our driver who seemed to have been affected by all that beer aimed the car at the

big lantern in front of the monument shop but luckily he missed. When we got out of the car Grivan King, another newcomer, and I tried to assist our foreman to be able to go past the office to the back of the shop to continue our work, however we were not successful. Right in front of the owner Mr. Taylor our foreman slipped out of our fingers and fell to the floor. This was the first day for Grivan King on the job and my first real introduction to Canada.

Everybody was very nice and my wages were 90 cents per hour. Our foreman sometimes had a very short temper and proved it one day when the streetcar driver on St. Clair and Yonge Street was ready to leave but our foreman wanted him to stop and open the door but it was too late. So Doug our foreman (maybe the beer had already affected him) just smashed the door of the streetcar, opened it and sat down waiting for the streetcar to continue, the police didn't like that very much. A few months later Doug had very bad luck, while walking on the sidewalk he was hit by a car and broke his leg even though he had nothing to drink and was completely sober. As the hospital stay for our foreman extended, Mr. Taylor asked me to become the foreman. I was completely on my own as the office never interfered with the shop. During this period of time I experimented with the sand blaster, automatic hammer and metal letters which were all new tools to me. It was during this time that I invented the one stage shape carving. I also kept daily track of all the cost, material, shop, office overhead and wages which made it easy to simplify all shop costs.

In the beginning my English was not very good but I did pretty well ordering bacon and eggs in the restaurants but if the waitress asked did I want dark toast, white toast, eggs scrambled or sunny-side up, I only repeated bacon and eggs until she gave up and brought me what she thought I wanted.

Gord Crittenham invited me to go duck hunting with him and we went to Rice Lake. On the way Gord

had to visit a former girlfriend whom he had never introduced to his wife. When we reached the lake I was all excited, we rented a boat, got some decoys and there I was taking aim. I pulled the trigger and shot and all the ducks flew off as I toppled over the side of the boat. The water was very cold and the laughter very loud and Gord proved he could not keep a secret.

The first job I had to do in Canada was of course the same as in Germany, work on soldier's stones and war memorials. Because I was also working on Jewish community monuments I was investigated by the Wiesenthal Organization. I was cleared.

What I very soon found out was that one has to be very careful to judge anybody in North America because the people come from all corners of the world. In Germany when a wealthy customer enters a restaurant everybody knows from the way he stands, the way he walks, the way he is dressed, and the waiter does not walk, he comes running. In Canada it is different. One example I encountered was during the summertime on a very hot day, maybe 95 degrees Fahrenheit (do people realize that Fahrenheit was born in Danzig?) on my way back from the hardware store I saw an old man working on the sidewalk. He had on an old pair of ripped trousers a dirty shirt and a cap that had seen better days; he had a wheelbarrow full of cement trying to fix the sidewalk. I approached him and trying to be very diplomatic asked him, "Are you nuts, you must be crazy to work outside in this heat". He smiled and then I said, "I hope you get paid enough." He looked at me in a strange way and I felt I must have said something wrong. Coming back I mentioned this incident to Mr. Taylor who asked what I had said to the old man. Then he asked if I did know that this man owned the 10 storey apartment building beside us and the two 5 storey buildings south of the church and a few more buildings near High Park. He is an old Ukrainian and many times a millionaire and he just likes to play with cement.

Here is one more example. A customer came to the shop and wanted many changes to a drawing. He had probably never gone to grade school and he was wearing an old outdoors jacket and big dirty boots. His small girls were jumping around with runny noses. Feeling annoyed already I asked him if he wanted to see the drawing again. "Yes", he said, "when you are ready you can call my secretary at the University of Toronto, I am Professor Dr. Chang". I never would have guessed.

With the freedom I had I really liked working at McIntosh. Mr. Taylor told me about the background of his ancestors from his father's side, they were English and some were very wealthy. The lineage from his mother's side was very interesting. When the Elector from Hanover, George Louis, ascended the British throne as George I, Hanover loaned Britain some regiments of soldiers and that's why the soldiers that occupied the Kingston Fort were all German soldiers from Hanover. They never went back. Some of the churches around Kingston still have the German bibles in their libraries. This was where his mother's ancestors originated.

We produced a very good product and we always wanted to be the best. We also had a very fast driver, Grivan King. Every Christmas he got so happy (not because of the beer he said) but each Christmas someone smashed his car. We had all the pictures of Grivan's smashed up cars lined up in the shop, his trophies. One time Grivan came back from a trip in the company car and said to Mr. Taylor, "someone smashed into your car". "How did it happen?" asked Mr. Taylor. "You see" said Grivan, "I was following this car going uphill when the car in front smashed into your car and damaged the whole front of the car". I can still see Mr. Taylor standing there trying to figure this out.

I had found a new room on Walmsley Avenue within walking distance of work. The owner of the house was Bulgarian and his wife came from Berlin.

They had 6 boarders; one bartender and his wife, one lady who worked for the Toronto Transit Commission who was in the middle of her divorce (she was very active at night with her male guests), one engineer, one university student, myself and one tall Bulgarian, a friend of their family who was not always there. We all socialized in the large kitchen and tried to solve all the problems of the world. The tall Bulgarian mostly talked about his wife, he did not trust her, and he thought she was cheating on him. He got very angry and it got worse day after day. He hired a detective to follow his wife and he was always watching the telephone. Then one day, I think it was in 1954, we were all in the kitchen and the detective phoned. He had found the Bulgarian's wife in a motel on the lakeshore. The Bulgarian told the detective to get out of there and stay away from the lakeshore as far away as possible. Now no ten horses could hold him back, we tried to calm him down but to no avail. Because it was a question of honour and all that, with a gleam in his eye he charged out. The next day we heard on the radio about a jealous husband who went into a rage in a motel on the lakeshore killing his wife's lover and wounding his wife. He was immediately arrested by the police. It took a long time for the court case and the Bulgarian was sent to the penitentiary in Kingston for two years, maybe the sentence was so light because he was not totally in control of himself. The detective lost his licence.

On the weekends I used to go to the German Club and there I met many interesting people. I met a few ladies that were just deported from Northern China, "Tsingtao". They were born there when it used to be a German colony. It was their home and one day they would like to go back there again. I also met some people from Jaffa, Israel who were full of enthusiasm for Israel and once they had finished University in Jaffa they would stay in Israel. In the German Club there were people from all corners of the globe, but not too many Germans.

I was also introduced to two ladies; one was Lilly from Chautauqua, New York who is a story by herself, and a lady from Wurzburg in Bavaria who it turned out had worked in the same store where my Aunt Hildegard used to go shopping. We had a lot in common and we began to date, her name was Monika. As time went on Monika and I went to visit Lilly often in Chautauqua, she was full of excitement and fun to be around. Lilly was born in Frankfurt and had married an American soldier named Harry who was a little older than her. Harry was a very likeable man; he liked dogs and always had at least half a dozen. He was always very busy repairing all the old houses in the tourist town of Chautauqua. The town was very well known in the state of New York and one could not get a room in the summer. Mostly retired people and a lot of entertainment, Arthur Fiedler was there every summer and one had to pay admittance to get into town. Lilly used to come to Toronto and the reason was to rendezvous with Werner Von Nois, the father of her first son. For many years he used to have the German radio program in Toronto. Once when Lilly had stayed over we went dancing at the German Club. There she met a former officer of the German army, he used to train horses for Gottfried Von Cramm, the man who married Barbara Hutton, known as the poor little rich girl from Woolworth's; now he was training horses for E.P. Taylor. They had much to talk about and appeared to want to become even more intimate so we left them alone.

Let's continue with Lilly, she had a brother who was a scientist and worked with Werner Von Braun on the V-2 rocket project in Swinemunde. The Americans took a large portion of the scientists and brought them to Florida where they continued to work and became American citizens. However the part where Lilly's brother worked was forced to go to Russia. The Russians were different and as soon as they were sure that the scientists had conveyed all their knowledge to

them, the Russians sent them home. Something must have happened to Lilly's brother because he was like a zombie. He could not hold a job and was painting pictures on pebbles at the shores of Lake Chautauqua. At that time he had a meeting with his old colleague, the father of the V-2 rocket, Werner Von Braun. Lilly said the meeting was in New York and she said she got squashed by all the Secret Service agents that were surrounding them.

Lilly's oldest son, her pride and joy and the son of Von Nois did something I still do not understand. He was a pilot with the American Air Force and when President Nixon was in Asia he was supposed to be his pilot. He came home for the holidays from Japan where he was stationed and completely surprised his wife. The first thing he did upon entering his home was to introduce to his wife his Japanese girlfriend whom he had brought along. Lilly and her daughter-in-law who have always been very close threw the son and his Japanese girlfriend out and that was the end of that marriage.

The last time we were down in Chautauqua Lilly introduced me to a friend of hers who was an enterprising German cabinet maker. He had a store where he sold only authentic antiques, knowing that I was from Canada and not from the States he showed me his secrets. We went behind the store where he had a large workshop with many large basins, many barn boards and all kinds of tools. He said he obtained furniture from the dump, garage sales or from houses that were being demolished, the cost was near to nothing and then he dumped the furniture into his big basin to get rid of all the paint, after that he repaired everything with old barn boards. One always has to use old wood he said especially for the runners underneath the drawers as that is where the ladies look. Then he took a chain wrapped in sacks and hit the furniture to make it look old saying that there was a science to it and he had to be careful. After that he stained the furniture less on the

corners and more in the middle, like an artist would do. These 'authentic antiques' with an impressive document he would sell to the little rich old ladies from New York as antiques for a lot of money, much more than new furniture would cost. The United States of America; the land of opportunity.

Through Monika I got to know two more ladies who all lived on Brunswick Avenue. The owners of the rooming house were Estonians and the lady of the house must have had some medical training. She was always very busy because at that time the pill did not exist and many young ladies got into trouble and out of the goodness of her heart she had to help them with their problem. Her husband, who was somewhat younger, was a specialist in making false teeth in his basement. He always had to go out to a lot of business meetings which he continued till midnight in his driveway in the car. I never could understand why girls that young needed dentures. I did feel sorry for him because he was very unlucky. Once when he was working in his laboratory in the basement the whole thing exploded and he lost all of his tools and equipment, in addition he ended up in the hospital.

Getting back to the ladies who roomed in the house, Lizzy, the taller of the two, worked for Eaton's as an interpreter, she was very intelligent and knew five languages. She was so untidy and sloppy that later when she got married to a professor he was not able to invite anybody to his house because cleaning up was not important to her. Her children however achieved the highest marks of the Ontario schools. The other lady was Helgi and she was a very sweet lady who cared for everybody. She worked for Coles in the head office and she had a boyfriend who was studying to become a doctor. The boyfriend was born in Prague before the war and he had rescued the identification medal of an American pilot who was shot down. He was able to send the medal to the parents in the United States who in turn paid for him to come to North

America. Helgi fell in love with him and financially supported him through medical school and when he finally became a doctor he got married in New York, but not to Helgi. She was heart broken, but when he came to Toronto she forgave him and they lived together for one week. She was so in love with him that she let him live with her for one week each year, that was all she lived for. It was crazy.

These ladies invited me to my first Christmas in the new land. They had a small Christmas tree, a record player and a big goose in the oven, the same as in Germany. It was nice. When the goose was done you should have seen everybody's eyes. The goose consisted of a skeleton wrapped in skin with over one inch of fat in the tray. There was not one ounce of meat on the carcass. The ladies were furious; they were going back to the butcher after Christmas. They had some pork chops and fried them quickly and the evening turned out very nice, despite the goose. That was my first Christmas in Canada.

In the meantime Monika and I continued to date, we really liked each other and after less than a year we decided to get married. I had some problems as the priest in St. Patrick's Church, Father Koertsch, would not marry me because I would not swear on the bible. I said the bible is a beautiful history book but not the word of God and we were not created, but according to Darwin we evolved. I was sent to the Jesuit seminar on Wellington Street and I had to take lessons from the Jesuit Professor Mueller, the same priest who converted Father Berman from Jewish to being a Catholic. Berman became the representative of Pope John the 23rd for English Canada. He said he did not believe that man and the ape had the same roots; he said it was impossible as man has more chromosomes. He said that if anyone could prove to him that we evolved he would hang up his black frock and become a scientist again and after six lessons he gave me the blessing. I am probably the only one who got married in the

Catholic Church without swearing on the bible. The wedding reception was held in a restaurant called Little Denmark and we had Lilly, Eric, the Loewens, Helgi and many more, probably about 40 people in all. It was very nice. Many years later the St. Patrick's Church had ordered a shrine in honour of Bishop Neumann and sent a priest to inspect the progress of the shrine. As he entered our factory I recognized him. It was Father Koertsch. I asked, "Don't you remember me?" "O my God now I do," he said. "In my 50 years as a priest I always remember two unusual incidents. One was in Park Lawn Cemetery. There were about 200 family members and friends, the grave was dug. I was in the middle of my sermon and they were slowly lowering the coffin, then someone yelled out, stop the funeral, my mother is not going to be buried here. This is not a Catholic cemetery and the ground is not blessed. The confusion was something else. The fights between the relatives. Finally they winched the coffin up, drove it back to the funeral home and had the funeral the next day in Holy Cross Cemetery. Then I remember you, in all my years as a priest did anybody ever refuse to swear on the bible, except you, but you still got your blessing," he said smiling.

We moved close to the subway because we did not have a car yet and the apartment was close to Yonge Street and Broadway Avenue, right beside the fire station. There were two boarders, one gentleman who made telephone books and the other was a lady who was the secretary of the Granite Club who told us how difficult it was for Jewish people to become members. It was very hot in that house as there was no air conditioning at that time. The whole summer of 1954 was so hot. We were so tired from the heat and we were sleeping so deeply that one particular day we did not know that the house was on fire throughout the night. What happened was that the firemen next door were playing cards in front of the fire hall and they noticed a funny smell and when they looked up they saw smoke coming

from our house, two windows down from ours. The boarder working for Bell Telephone left a burning cigarette in the ashtray and went out. The cigarette had fallen on the floor and the fire expanded very rapidly in his room and then to the next room and to the stairs, causing thousands of dollars in damages. If it was not for the instant response of the firemen we would have burned to death especially because the stairway had already started to burn. I still do not understand why we did not wake up; they had to smash the front door open. The house was full of water; our neighbour had locked his door so the firemen had to use the axe to open it. Maybe because of our loud fan and the heat we could not hear anything. We were very lucky that day.

In the first two years of our marriage all kinds of disasters happened. The biggest was Hurricane Hazel. Never in its history did Toronto experience a hurricane that was as devastating. When it was clear that the hurricane was coming in the direction of Toronto we were all told not to go to work. There was so much rain that Holland Marsh, a large area north of Toronto used for growing vegetables, was completely under water. Houses along the river were swept away, 2000 families were left homeless. Near the Old Mill five firemen drowned in the Humber River in a rescue attempt. The Hogs Hollow Bridge on Yonge Street was washed out, in total 20 bridges were washed away. It looked like Lake Simcoe was overflowing. Thousands of signs were ripped off; water pressure was so great that many basements were under water from the sewage pipes. A wall of water came down the Humber River and washed away on Raymore Drive a block of houses killing 32 people while they were sleeping.

Hurricane Hazel killed 81 people in Toronto but in total from Granada, Haiti, the United States and Canada 1200 people died and the damage in today's money was 3 billion dollars. After the hurricane many policies were changed; no constructions near riverbeds were permitted any more and many flood plains were

created, it changed Toronto's landscape forever. One thing that did worry me was that despite being told not to go to work because of the danger Monika insisted upon going and when she arrived, the office of course was closed.

Work became more challenging; we were doing more shape carving, our product improved and our reputation increased. One incident I will never forget happened on a very hot and sunny day in 1957. We were all sitting in front of the shop on Yonge Street during lunch time enjoying the nice weather, when a loud screeching of tires coming from across the road disturbed the peace and then there was a loud crash followed by desperate screaming and crying. What had happened was that the driver of a car was in the process of turning into his own driveway, when he had a heart attack. The driver's body bent forward and his foot slammed on the accelerator hitting the post that divides the double garage and killing the driver immediately. Mr. Taylor ran over to the other side of the street to see if he could help and we all followed him. There we saw a lady sitting beside the smashed car crying hysterically and only then did we realize that when the car turned with tremendous speed to the garage it ripped the baby buggy with the baby inside out of the hands of the lady who was walking on the sidewalk. Mr. Taylor found the baby and the buggy completely smashed between the car and the garage post. The driver of the car was a doctor and this was his house, it was terrible. The shock of this incident was so great that it was in all the newspapers for many weeks. It was debated in the City Hall and in Parliament. The reason was that the doctor was very advanced in age. They finally passed a law that made it mandatory to get a certificate from your doctor once you reach 80 and you had to take a new driver's test. This reminds me that in three years I will have to take that test.

When we moved to Richmond Hill we got to know a lot of nice people. I should not forget the

Hungarians especially Heinrich, Rose and Frank who taught me how to make wine. That was always a lot of fun especially in the spring when we all had to sample each other's wine. We started early first in our house where we tasted the wine and had some cheese then we went to Frank's house and tasted his white wine and then his red wine and started to tell each other stories which were always a little bit inflated. Then we had Hungarian sausages, always music which was so loud we could not understand each other but it did not matter. Then we marched to Heinrich's place around 2 o'clock in the morning and that was the time when we all had the urge to sing and sing we did. Richmond Hill had not seen anything like it at two o'clock in the morning. When we arrived at Heinrich's place we had so much fun and were laughing so much that Rose could not hold her water. It was her house. Then Heinrich made us a breakfast of bacon and eggs. What a night.

Now being a city boy I had a lot to learn about the outside, the front of the house and the backyard, the grass, the fertilizer, manure, bushes, trees, making a sandbox or a swing for the kids, it was fun but it was all new to me, especially the flowers. On the weekend we went to buy some rose bushes from Loblaws. Coming home in the evening I planted the three bushes right away according to the instructions. In the spring I was inspecting the bushes for any sign of life and getting on towards summer I did not know what to do so I called Heinrich. He came over and there we were lying on our stomachs on the ground studying these rose bushes and then he yelled out, "Oh my god what have you done!" I looked at him and said "what do you mean", he was laughing and said, "You planted these things upside down". The next thing we did was to have a glass of wine.

We got ourselves a cat. Very cuddly, never gave us any trouble, but we noticed that she was getting very fat. She became somewhat irritable but minded her

own business. One day at the end of the summer, it was very hot and most of my neighbours were sitting outside in front of the house and the cat was lying in the middle of the lawn watching the traffic on the street. Then a huge German shepherd came trotting along the street, but then stopped in front of our house looking at our cat. The cat let out a funny sound stretched herself on all four feet and then like lightning shot across the ditch at the dog. The German shepherd first was stunned, then in fright ran as fast as he could along the street. All my neighbours got up from their chairs, beer in hand, looking at the unusual occurrence. The cat kept up chasing the dog till the dog jumped down the creek to the other side. The cat stopped and slowly marched back and lay down on the same spot in the middle of the lawn. All my neighbours came over laughing and discussing till late in the evening not believing what they had just seen. Then we realized she must have been fooling around because she was pregnant.

In the first years of our marriage we spent our holidays mostly up north at Lake Couchiching and we especially enjoyed going to Bala in Muskoka which at that time was the centre of entertainment. In the summer the big bands such as Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, Les Brown and many others played in Dunn's Place. They served no alcohol so we all had to bring our own. They played until 12 o'clock and then we would all go to a restaurant in Torrance and continued dancing there, we did have some good times.

Our trip to Barbados was quite a crazy experience. My friend Mike and I had an especially good time. We took a ride on the fun boat, the Jolly Roger; our beautiful young captain was constantly encouraging us to sample the pure rum from the open barrel. The natives were swimming around the boat catching the quarters we were throwing in the water. I also jumped in the water trying to catch some money directly thrown at me by my friends. I was unsuccessful. The boat was swaying a

lot, I think it was because of the rum, Mike and I had to hide under the table not to be thrown overboard. We were both very much surprised when we left the boat on a plank that we did not fall in the water. The photograph showing us hiding under the table I immediately destroyed.

One thing I couldn't understand was that Monika changed her employment quite often and it was at a company Christmas party that her boss explained to me that Monika was very difficult to work with. I did not understand at that time. Now we were thinking of starting a family and I went to the doctor and found out that it would be very difficult for me to have children. I was very disappointed. Then we began to explore the possibility of adopting a little baby. We talked to the Catholic Children's Aid Society about the adoption procedure and discussed with their representative the responsibility and safety of the baby and also how to be well prepared. It was an exciting time getting baby furniture, clothing and waiting. We also wanted the baby to be comfortable later on in life and that's why it was important for the baby to be similar to us.

Then we finally saw the little baby. The baby was like a little treasure; the big eyes, the beautiful face, right away I wanted to hold the baby but I was afraid of breaking the little girl. It was such a beautiful day I do not know how to explain it. Rose and Helen, everybody came to admire the baby. Everything revolved around the baby. I came home from work early just to see her. We searched for a nice name and thought Benita was fitting. It sounded somewhat Spanish. Benita was very pale because she could not hold her food; the stomach valve did not close properly. But as that solved itself Benita gained weight and her cheeks became more and more rosy. As soon as Benita could stand up she would hold onto the side of the baby bed and jump and jump. That could go on for hours and one time she jumped so high, right over the side of the bed and hit the floor with her head first. No damage done

to the floor (just kidding!). It is amazing what children can endure.

Benita was developing beautifully but to grow up as an only child does not enrich the life of a child so I proceeded with an inquiry at the Catholic Children's Aid to adopt a little brother or sister for her. This time it went much faster because they knew us. I saw the little boy first at the Catholic Children's Aid office on Wellesley Street and right away drove to Lake Simcoe and reported to Monika who was at the cottage with Rose and our young daughter Benita. It was the same cottage where Marilyn Bell who was the first woman to swim across Lake Ontario used to go in the summer. We came down right away to Toronto and everybody was surprised what a beautiful little boy he was. He was somewhat shy but he was so cuddly we fell in love with that little boy. He was also so gentle; Benita thought the baby was a great toy to play with. We named the little boy Norbert because we liked the name. Benita and Norbert did like each other and they still care for each other to this day even though they are both married now and have children of their own.

Richmond Hill was rapidly expanding, even the Catholic Church where the children went to kindergarten and school was getting too small. We had meetings, social events and drives to raise funds for the construction of a larger church. On behalf of the church I visited many families to ask for pledges for the church fund. Many families in modest homes were quite generous; others in very expensive mansions could not give anything. The architect designed a model that was much larger than the old church. Even though it was modest in design it was difficult to raise enough money to cover the cost. We were lucky, a very wealthy and generous gentleman by the name of Roman offered to help, then everything changed. The design became much richer. When the church was unveiled everybody liked it, it was beautiful. But quite a few of us, still being very grateful, were disappointed because we felt after

all the work we had done in the beginning it was not our church, it was Roman's church.

Mr. Roman has been involved in many charities (coming from Slovakia himself) he built for the Slovakian community a beautiful cathedral called the Cathedral of Transfiguration. It was not too far from Richmond Hill. Pope John Paul II on his visit to Toronto in 1984 came to the cathedral and in a very memorable ceremony blessed the cornerstone. Mr. Roman's generosity is exemplary.

Now that we were four people the house in Richmond Hill was a little too small, that's why we bought a new house in Thornhill. It was on the former estate of the piano maker Heinzman. His family home is still in the middle of the sub-division, it serves the community. Our new house was very modern and much bigger and it was nicely decorated and had a nice fireplace. Outside we planted a lot of trees and bushes and quite a few flowers, our guests used to admire the house, it was nice.

Having moved to Thornhill we again were involved in a new church being built called St. Luke. The priest, Father Chidlow, gave our company the contract to produce two larger than life sculptures, St. Luke and St. Matthew for the main altar. Father Chidlow was very respected in the community. He spent some of his holidays on cruise ships as the in-house priest. During that time most of the replacement priests made it very difficult for me to stay awake, that's when my daughter Benita made sure that I didn't fall asleep by hitting me with her elbow in the side, which she never had to do when the German monks from the monastery north of Maple replaced Father Chidlow. They were preaching fire and brimstone. Then absolutely nobody was able to sleep.

On the weekends in the summertime we used to go very often up north, mostly to a provincial park where we had picnics or we went to a lodge on Lake Couchiching, the home of Rolls and Honey. There we

had a somewhat embarrassing incident when we went to the Lodge with a family with three children for the weekend. The Lodge had a very fancy dining room for about 100 people who were all nicely dressed and we were sitting right in the middle of the room. When our meal arrived at our table our friends stood up and made the sign of the cross and proceeded to pray loud and clear, so loud that all the people in the dining room the waiters, the kitchen help and the cook who still had the ladle in his hand, watched in silence. I wanted to crawl under the table but ended up watching my friend.

At work I had a lot of time to think about the total monument industry. I saw that all the monument shops had a problem. It was difficult to keep the shops operating in the winter. People did not buy monuments, nobody went to the cemetery because there was too much snow and if they did buy we could not set the monuments because the ground was frozen. So most of the shops were closed for three months and the workers were unemployed and then in the spring many found different work and did not come back. It was very expensive because they wanted to reduce the unemployment for the workers so they had the shop repainted and cleaned each winter but they were not producing anything. McIntosh and Kilvington were good enough to give me all their costs for running their shops. I took the family to Algonquin Park and while they were swimming I was adding up all the expenses these companies had. I slowly persuaded a number of companies to close their shops and let me do all their work and concentrate on sales only. I already worked in the evening and weekends for Thomson Granite, a wholesaler.

In 1962 I leased the shop of McIntosh Granite and the back of Thomson Granite. At the same time I was awarded the contract for the lettering of the Toronto subway's 24 stations. At that time I had no employees, I was lucky. Customers that came to the new company were: McIntosh, Kilvington, Schweyer, Kitchener,

Rankin and Virro and some others that wanted to see what we could do. Skilled workers who had come within a short time were Grivan King, Joe Lorenz, Billy Digiacommo, Siggy Puchta, Joe Sidney, Murray Gage, Ted Berowski, and Fritz Schulze, later on George Dimitroff, Ralph Briggs and Jim Yeadon. We had the most skilled team in Ontario and within a year we were the largest monument company in Ontario.

But I still had to learn quite a bit about business practices especially what the word 'unforeseen' means. When a quotation is given for any kind of construction work all costs should be included plus the profit and in addition a percentage for the 'unforeseen'.

At the time when I was awarded the contract to engrave all the signs on the ceramic tiles in twenty-four subway stations, I had no machinery, compressors, trolleys, scaffolding, electrical tools or trucks – neither did I have any experience in lettering ceramic tiles (only natural stone) but we managed. When we completed the contract we had all the machinery paid for and a clear profit of over \$10,000.00.

I also had a little episode during this contract. My foreman, Joe Lorenz, became aware of how important he had become, so he demanded that I double his pay otherwise he would quit and then what would I do? I responded that he should have told me that before I gave the quotation for the contract, not in the middle of the project. Then I told him that whatever you do, Joe, the sun will come up just the same. He stayed.

Now the next contract was for the extension of the subway. We had all the machinery paid for and the experience of carving lettering on ceramic tiles plus we added 20 percent on top of the final contract because it was a few years later. But we did not think we needed to add anything for the unforeseen. What happened was we had hundreds of signs cut on stencil ready to be sandblasted when the weather changed and the tiles in the subway became all wet (the same as the tiles in a shower stall after a shower). If the subway cars had

been running they would have pushed the wet air out of the underground tunnel. But they were not so all our rubber stencil slid down from the walls and we had to start from the beginning! A week later we were ready to start sandblasting early in the morning. But overnight, when the watchman had his coffee, a number of vandals entered the subway station and ripped off all our rubber stencils from the station's walls. We completed the contract cutting the stencils for the third time. That is what is called 'unforeseen' in the industry. We not only had no profit from the contract – we lost over \$8,000.00 on it!

The third subway contract was much more profitable. We had to redo the signs on the existing University line. The reason was that the University subway line was built on an underground stream and the pressure caused most of the ceramic and glass tiles to crack and as a result they all had to be replaced. We could only work after the subway had stopped operating for the night. The management gave us a subway car to use as a workstation and every night we had a lot of fun trying to evict the totally drunk derelicts from attempting to use our train as their sleeping quarters!

At home we got to know quite a few nice families and in addition to Lilly and the Hungarians we became friends with the Leowens and the Fedynyshyns. Helen came from Dusseldorf and her husband was Ukrainian, very pleasant to be with, we spent many Christmas times together. They were very hard working and in the beginning they had very bad luck. What very often happened to immigrants happened to them. They bought a house with a third mortgage and were told not to worry that the mortgage would be renewed when it was due so they started to repair the house. They replaced the windows, the floors and the furnace. He did a beautiful job and spent thousands of dollars and when the third mortgage became due the people did not renew the mortgage and they lost the house. That was a very hard lesson. They had three children, two

boys and one girl. The second boy later worked on the DEW line in the Arctic Circle, he said one could save a lot of money there or lose it all gambling because there was nothing else to do. He later on became a pilot and he did fly tourists from Buttonville Airport on sightseeing tours around Toronto and Ontario. The oldest boy worked for the bank and later became self-employed and did very well. The girl was very nice; she had two children but could not find a husband.

The Leowens we used to see quite often. We liked them very much and we had come to know them through Lilly. Horst Leowen also used to live in Frankfurt. Their children were the same age as Benita and Norbert. We were there when Ontario Hydro bought some land from the Indian Reservation which is not far away from where the Leowens lived. We were all impressed with all the new cars and new refrigerators that were arriving at the reservation, the refrigerators had to stand on the porches as their modest shacks were too small.

I knew of Horst's father from Germany. He was the German champion of the bicycle race behind big motorcycles. In most cities in Germany they have a special stadium where the track on each end is built on an angle so that the motorcycles can take the curve at great speed and attached to the back of the motorcycle is a two foot roll installed (similar to a rolling pin) that enables the bicycle to stay close to the motorcycle.

At home it looked like we had some problems coming up. Monika expressed many opinions which did not make sense. When we had big events like moving or when Norbert put his shoes on the wrong foot or a spoon was missing, she acted as if she was going to have a nervous breakdown. She would run around the house shaking her pills in the glass bottle and then go and lie down, it did not make any sense. I asked her to see a doctor but she refused and said that we were the problem. I bought her some books on health and women's lib and hoped they would help.

With the new company we engaged an accountant Mr. Newsome and a lawyer Mr. Chauhan to register the company. Monika offered with her office experience to look after the daily office work and with the help of Mr. Newsome and some evening courses in accounting which she did not finish it seemed to work to some degree for a short time. Then she began phoning our customers very rudely for what she thought were outstanding accounts even though they were on consignment or were mistakes we had made. When I asked her not to do it and to ask me first she said she was in charge of the office and it was none of my business. The first thing I had to do was to apologize to all our customers and then I moved all the office work out of the house to Mrs. Gagnon's Bookkeeping Services, a professional company very close to the factory.

The children were now at the right age to enjoy the forest, the rivers and the waterfalls. We really wanted a cottage of our own and we were already looking for one to buy when we became the proud owners of a cottage with the best view we could ever have hoped for. But let me tell you how it all came about. It is a story of the O'Brien's. McIntosh Granite had a sales manager by the name of O'Brien a real fine gentleman, he was part of the reason that we were never unemployed. He had some very rambunctious sons who watched a lot of television. They saw a movie where some adventurers were looking for treasure in the mausoleum of some ancient king of the Orient. The boys were teenagers at that time and they thought that they were going to do the same. They got some old tools and went over to Mt. Pleasant Cemetery and then broke into a mausoleum that was constructed into a hill close to Yonge Street. They were able to break into the coffin because that's where they thought the treasure would be; of course there was nothing. The police quickly traced the trail to Mr. O'Brien's boys. The embarrassment was incredible. Because of the fine reputation of Mr. O'Brien and especially the respect the

cemetery officials had for him, they were able to keep this incident out of the newspapers. After Mr. O'Brien ran back and forth to explain, to repair and pay for everything, the cemetery officials and the police regarded the break-in as a prank and no charges were laid. As the O'Brien boys grew up one of them opened a monument sales store. Even though he was a product of the flower children era he did sell a lot of monuments but the money seemed to disappear. He was unable to pay us or our competitor, Smith Monuments. The more pressure we put on him the more he promised us. I threatened to take him to court and he told me not to worry, we would all get paid, it wouldn't be long. He said he had a deal with the cemetery and they owed him a lot of money. I did not understand how the cemetery could owe him a lot of money; it was probably the other way around. Then he began talking about Christ coming and he informed the local radio station as well that Christ was coming; what that had to do with owing the money I do not know.

After some inquiries I was told there was a problem in the cemetery. Someone had broken into the big public mausoleum and stolen 25 urns filled with ashes of the deceased and the cemetery had a phone call that the thieves wanted \$1000.00 for each urn and then they would return the urns. This all happened a long time ago, approximately 1967, and \$25,000 then would be the same as \$200,000 today. Mr. Allan Clark the superintendent of Mount Pleasant Cemetery was a good friend of mine and he kept me informed of the events that were happening. The police installed a police radio in Mr. Clark's car so they would be aware of anything that was happening. Mr. O'Brien phoned and told me I would get my money on Saturday. The Cemetery got a phone call to deliver the \$25,000 on Saturday and they will phone later where to deliver it. It was like a TV movie. They phoned Mr. Clark and told him to go to an outside phone in the east end of Toronto in Scarborough. He did go there and then he was told

to go 40 miles to the west to an outside phone in Mississauga, from there the instructions were to take Highway 401 and stop on the middle of the bridge on Yonge Street in the centre of Toronto then get out of the car and throw the bag with the \$25,000 over the bridge into the valley. Mr. Clark did that and he looked down and he saw a man in a leather jacket running down the valley and grabbing the bag with the money. As he did that he saw the police coming down from both sides of the valley. The man dropped the bag of money and ran like hell. They did not catch him. In the afternoon the family had Mr. O'Brien committed to the mental institute in Whitby. Three months later two hobos found all 25 urns in the garbage dump in Leaside. I was told that a few weeks later they had to kick Mr. O'Brien out of the institute because he was teaching the inmates how to roll marijuana cigarettes.

A month later I received a phone call from the Toronto jail, it was O'Brien calling and asking if I would bail him out of jail. If I would he would turn his cottage over to me, it would just about cover what he owed us and our competitor. I went to the Toronto jail and met him and he said he should not be in jail, it was all a mistake. He was at a party and they all were smoking marijuana but not him. I had to pay a few hundred dollars to bail him out. Then he would not sign the cottage over unless I did give him some pocket money for cigarettes and other things. I went to our lawyer and had everything done legally, paid off my competitor and then took possession of the cottage. All of our new neighbours were very happy that the O'Briens were gone. They told us the O'Briens and their friends were talking, singing and smoking marijuana and the cottagers were kept awake all night long. In front of the cottage was a waterfall and over the years a number of people had drowned there but the O'Briens had an old army raft and with 10 of their friends and many cases of beer and portable music they would all come half drunk, singing, yelling and screaming down the

waterfall while all the people on the lake watched them, but nothing ever happened to any of them. I think that God always protects little children and drunks. I do not know what happened to his family, it probably fell apart and he disappeared.

The cottage was very good for us. The children were at the right age, the location was excellent, the lookout, the waterfall, the rocks, we even had some small caves. I had a lot of work to do but it was worth it. The children and I still talk about that time a lot. It brings back nice memories, the beavers, raccoons, chipmunks and the different birds as well as the turtles. The fishing in the canoe and our dog Fifi trying to catch fish and the time he was stung by the bees, he would not come out from under the bed for three days. We had many outings by canoe above the waterfall and fun exploring the different coves. We never knew what to expect behind the next hill. I remember looking down from the cottage watching Norbert fishing on the dock then seeing our dog coming up behind him and licking his neck and when I looked down I saw between my legs Fifi our dog. The animal behind Norbert was not Fifi, it was a raccoon. Norbert never turned around, he just shook his shoulders and the raccoon slowly marched away. Nearly every morning we would see our neighbour's boat floating in the middle of the lake because at night the beavers always cut the rope that tied the boat to shore, it went across their walkway.

Norbert will not forget the big lesson I gave him on how to tie the rope for the anchor, then I threw the anchor in the lake and the rope followed, I had forgotten to tie the rope. That was a big lesson.

The only thing that did put a cloud over all that happiness was Monika's behaviour. It was always confrontational and aggressive. We could not understand but to our friends she behaved perfectly so nobody believed us.

At work there were many changes, Thomson Granite got sold, and McIntosh got sold and then went

bankrupt. We rented our own factory on Castlefield and did very well. We usually had our lunch at Rocco's which was the best Mafia restaurant in Toronto, good wine, many of that family were guests of the 'state' in the Kingston Penitentiary. Our building was getting too small and in addition we were not adding to our assets because we were renting. So we had a lot to think about.

In the meantime at home things got worse by the day and that was a problem. Monika told her doctor off like he had never been told off in his life. He was the President of the Doctor's Association and not used to such treatment. She refused to see a psychiatrist. The children were being locked out of the house when they came home from school and often I had to come home from work to let them into the house. On one occasion I had bought tickets for the Stratford Festival for the whole family as a surprise and the day before the event Monika returned the tickets even though she had really been looking forward to seeing the play. I went ahead and purchased new tickets for the children and me but she became upset and said that no one was allowed to go, it was a crazy situation. Nevertheless I took the children and we had a very pleasant time. During this time the biggest problem was that to all of our friends she behaved perfectly sane, even over-friendly, while at home she was impossible to understand, so nobody believed us. Every day we had a different incident. Benita was not eating very well so we bought her a nice cookbook as a present so that she could learn how to cook and perhaps her eating habits would improve. She was very happy about the book and as she was preparing to start cooking Monika told her "not in my kitchen". Mental illness was in Monika's family and her younger sister was mentally impaired.

When we married my parents made the trip from Bamberg to Wurzburg to visit and to get to know Monika's parents. The trip is about 50 kilometres and upon arrival my parents were met at the gate but it

never occurred to them to ask them into the house so after only a few minutes my parents left.

At work everything was going well. Our reputation was regarded as the best in the industry. We bought a retail company in the east end of Toronto from Steve Pratt and that added quite a substantial amount to our sales. For that company we erected a very large memorial in honour of the Ukrainian Galician Army. The background is quite interesting. The Ukrainian Galician Army was formed to fight for a free Ukraine against the communists. Most of the soldiers came from the Ukrainian province Galicia which was occupied by Austria up to World War I and that was why some soldiers did serve at that time in the Austrian army. They were very idealistic and fought gallantly against the Russians hoping that one day they would have their own free country. They suffered a lot of casualties. At the end of the war they were approximately 20 thousand and were very anxious not to fall into the hands of the Russian army because they would have been executed by the Russians as traitors. They were lucky because a Canadian officer of Ukrainian descent was instrumental in making the British army aware of the situation and they in turn moved the Ukrainian army to Austria under their jurisdiction and from there to Britain. From there many Ukrainians immigrated to Canada and most of them lived around High Park in Toronto. When that officer died there were thousands of former soldiers and their descendants at his funeral to give thanks.

One day I had a phone call from my good friend Mel Chandler, the superintendent of Pine Hills Cemetery, who said he had to talk to someone about some of the entertaining things that were happening in the cemetery. "This morning" he said, "there were these two ladies trying to lay flowers in front of one of the ladies husband's monument and as you know it was raining all last week and the grave was fresh. So one of the ladies who was somewhat corpulent stepped in

front of the monument and as she was bending forward to put the flowers down her feet sank into the mud up to her ankles. Her friend who was also somewhat corpulent immediately came to help; she was trying to lift her friend from the back out of the mud. In doing so she pushed herself even deeper into that mud and they both fell backwards in their nice clothes into all that slime. To them it was so funny lying there that they began to laugh hysterically and that was when the cemetery foreman Joe came by with his pickup truck. He yelled out Ladies, what are you doing, but they were laughing so hard they could not explain. So Joe got his shovel out of the truck and dug the first lady out of the mud and then he got the second lady upright and tried to lift her out but they both fell back into the mud which was now mostly water. Now to top this off, today was payday and Joe had all the pay cheques in his back pocket and they became useless which meant new ones had to be made up. Anyway Joe finally got the second lady out of the mud and then the search began for their shoes. They were sunk so deep it took quite a while to find them. Then he drove the ladies to the office and hosed them off and cleaned their shoes with the whole office staff participating and while this was all going on the laughter never stopped". Mel Chandler said that when those ladies get home they will have quite a story to tell their friends.

Later that same day my phone rings and it is Mel again and I ask what is happening now. "Oh," he said: "it is such a nice day I thought I would give you a call. I am looking out of my window towards the gate and you should see the beautiful flowers, they really look magnificent. There is a truck at the gate and it has stopped and the driver is jumping out and running like crazy to the back of the truck and now I can see flames are coming out of the back of the truck. I better have somebody phone the fire department as now the flames are engulfing the whole truck and the compressor on top of it. The driver is standing helpless beside the

truck and you know something, Heinz my good friend”, Mel Chandler said, “I think the truck is yours and that is your driver Grivan King”. That was the day that was. Grivan was smoking and had thrown his match on top of the half open gasoline can in the back of the truck.

We were now enjoying our cottage more and more and I added a large dock for the boat and extended the balcony on the front of the cottage. Norbert liked to float on his raft and Benita learned to water ski while Fifi tried to catch the chipmunks. Early in the morning I liked to go out on the lake with my cup of coffee and just let the canoe float on the calm water. Even Monika sometimes enjoyed the cottage but any small excitement created a major problem. Once she twisted her ankle which would normally take a long time to heal. She didn't like the idea and we thought she might have a nervous breakdown. I couldn't leave Monika and Benita alone together because I was afraid that some harm would come to Benita. Our bookkeeper Mrs. Gagnon who liked Benita offered to rent a room for Benita and look after her in her home. I accepted her offer and moved Benita to Mrs. Gagnon's house. Now there was peace for a very short time. I had a talk with Doctor Boadway and he said Monika is definitely mentally ill. She is paranoid schizophrenic and desperately needs to see a psychiatrist. I was very worried about our future, especially that of the children. I asked myself did we have to go through such misery for the rest of our lives. I made one more attempt and I had a very frank discussion with Monika. I did not mince my words and asked my wife as a last alternative to make an appointment with the psychiatrist but she refused and said I needed to go and she accused me of cruelty and called the police. A few weeks later in the court the Judge asked what we were doing in his courtroom, he could not understand it. He said: “I have no room in my courtroom, you do not belong here, and you better go home”. I told the judge that the children and I were

moving out of the house and we were refused any furniture or household items. The Judge told me that he hoped we would get our share and if not he would personally give us some blankets and bed sheets. Monika's lawyer Mr. Lawlor agreed to split all the household items.

I had purchased a condominium before the children and I moved out of the house and my wife did not expect this to happen. Even at that time nobody believed us that Monika was mentally ill except for her doctor. I got a separation order immediately and during the first year of the separation I received 950 phone calls from Monika. Only after I threatened legal action to her lawyer did the phone calls stop. Then I got a legal divorce. We were told by Helen Fedynyshyn that at parties Monika had everybody lying down on the floor because she said I was outside the window spying on her. Years later she was removed from her home by the authorities and placed in an institution. This was a very unfortunate time for everyone and I wish it would never have happened. Only at the end did her friends realize that Monika was indeed mentally ill.

Right after we had moved out of the house my mother got sick and she had an aneurism in the brain and suffered a lot and died shortly after. I wanted to attend her funeral but needed my passport or citizenship papers which I had left behind in the house with Monika. She refused to turn the papers over to me and I had to go to the lawyer and then the immigration office to get an emergency passport to be able to go to the funeral. Because of my problem the family in Germany delayed the funeral by two days. It was like a family reunion and everybody that could come was there from places like Berlin, Cuxhaven, Wurzburg, Heilgenhafen, Hanover and all of the friends from Bamberg. By that time my grandparents were already deceased and for that reason my mother was regarded as the head of the family. My brother Hubert in Bamberg had arranged everything for the funeral and when I

returned to Canada we had her monument made in Toronto and then we shipped it to Bamberg.

It was like a big load was lifted from our shoulders when the children and I moved into our new condominium. It was on the 14th floor and the view was beautiful. The balcony being on the corner was 80 feet long. Even so Benita and Norbert enjoyed their new home with all the amenities like the swimming pool and sauna very much and I had the feeling they had a little too much freedom. Taking turns preparing meals was always fun and we never knew how they would turn out. Our friends not knowing our situation and trying to take sides plus constantly bringing up the past did leave me no choice but to cut all contact with them.

On the big advice from Benita and Norbert not to sit at home all the time I joined the Single Parents Association. It turned out to be a good choice as we all had similar problems and it was more like a family.

The first time I attended one of their dances I felt like a teenager. It was very difficult to find a lady with whom I would have something in common. Some were too tall, too small, too old or too young, and then some were just right until they opened their mouths to talk and then you knew that you had nothing in common. But everybody was very nice and it was a very relaxing atmosphere.

In the first few years after I started my own company I realized that there were a lot of problems in the monument industry. The quality of work was not what it used to be before the war. The manners displayed by some salespeople soliciting by phone were an embarrassment to the industry. Many cemeteries did not spell out in their regulations who was responsible for the safety of monuments.

The president of the Toronto Board of Trade Mr. Kay, Mr. Anderson of McIntosh Granite and myself had a meeting and as a result started the Ontario Monument Association. In a very short time we had a lot of members and the first thing we did was to produce a

Code of Ethics. After a terrible accident where a young girl (while climbing an unsafe monument) was killed, as the mother was watering flowers, the cemetery and the government got involved. Solicitations by telephone were eliminated, the liability was ascertained and therefore the regulations in regards to the safety of monuments were improved.

I was very much involved, had many meetings and provided many charts for the improvement of the safety of monuments. As time went on I saw that the selling of all merchandise was changing. The superstore had arrived. People did not have time for each item to go to a different store. The same was true for the burial industry. During the very stressful time when you lose a relative it is difficult to go to the funeral home, select a coffin, deal with the insurance company, the flower shop, the cemetery, the monument company and the government all in a very short time. That's why I fought together with the cemeteries for one stop shopping, making speeches, presenting briefs to the government committee, writing to all members of Parliament. The laws were changed allowing cemeteries to take on more function. The Monument Association did not like that and even though I was a founding member they did not renew my membership. Today most monuments are sold directly by the cemeteries and so are many cremations and also quite a few funerals.

During this time Al Miller from Rock of Ages and myself attended many conventions and seminars. Our company used the occasion to exhibit our products. I really enjoyed these get-togethers, especially the evenings. Between playing cards we discussed all the problems of the world, but mainly the future of the cemetery industry. Aside from adding to the confusion I was in charge of providing the potato chips and saw that nobody suffered from thirst. This went on very often till three o'clock in the morning.

Most were very outspoken individuals like Mr. Clark, the alderman from Windsor. He became famous

when he tried to straighten out a disagreement with a fellow alderman on the steps of City Hall in a boxing match. Another time he was so full of vigour coming from a party in the morning that he decided to cut down a large branch from a tree in front of his house. It was a very big branch, so he provided himself with a supply of beer. He got a rope where he attached six beer bottles. By the time he finished the bottles the branch was cut through and half of Windsor had no electricity because when the branch fell it ripped the hydro high voltage wire apart. There are many more stories, too many to tell about Mr. Clark.

When we were in Ottawa we needed some fresh air after an all-night session and ten of us went for a walk before breakfast and found ourselves in front of an interesting establishment, the Pandora's Box. While Al Miller, Paul Clune, Jim Graham, Glenn Timney's father and the others were still discussing perpetual care and cemetery regulations, Mr Clark and I were studying the advertisement and photographs on the door of this establishment. They had continuous shows and provided extra services like nobody else.

Then a young, beautiful lady came out of the building. She was very nice. Asked us if we belonged to the convention in the hotel and if she could be of any service to us.

Mr Clark and I looked at each other, kind of confused. Looking at us she said "No, I meant if you would like to buy some stuff". Clark said "Sure" and I asked if it was fresh. We both did not know what she was talking about. It must have been all the refreshment from the night before.

She said "I am waiting for my driver to pick up quite a load, you can sell it for me at the convention. I will give you 25%". Clark said that was not enough. "All right" she said "30%, but wait here, I will be back in 15 minutes".

The car came and off she went.

Only then did it hit us what she was talking about.

She wanted us to sell marijuana for her to our friends.

We turned around and told all this to our group who were still engaged in talking about cemetery regulations. Paul Clune got frightened and said: "O my God, imagine tomorrow's newspapers. A group of cemetery officials attending the Ontario Convention for Cemeteries were apprehended in front of the Pandora's Box striptease establishment trying to take delivery of many pounds of marijuana to sell to their friends at the convention. Most of the people were executives of the organization, including the brother of a Catholic bishop."

We all turned around and ran to the safety of the hotel and never went near the Pandora's Box.

At work the real estate market looked much better for us and now we were able to afford our own building. We purchased one double the size of our present building close to the airport. Inside the building we still had a lot of work to complete such as moving walls, laying pipes, installing cranes and much more. We hired the brother of our foreman Billy who was a very skilled contractor but not so lucky in real estate. He had invested a small amount of money in a number of houses but when the house prices dropped his mortgages were bigger than the value of the houses. He lost everything and fled and nobody knew where. His brother Billy had a social meeting with the local godfather of a Sicilian Society, all very respectful, including the cognac ritual. A few days later he was informed his brother was in Vancouver. The brother's wife who knows how to express herself (at the last family event they held she did not agree with something so she pulled the tablecloth with food and all the dishes right to the floor and proudly walked out of her brother-in-law's house) took the train to Vancouver and to persuade her husband to come home she took along a pistol. It worked.

During this time one of our customers Mr. Izenberg had a very unfortunate incident. Competition was

getting worse and he was very upset with his new competitor “the Rabbi” and wanted to see what he had in his showroom so he drove his car past the show window to have a better look and not looking straight ahead he smashed right into his new competitor’s car. In a very short time the whole trade knew about it and the laughter was unstoppable.

At one of the single parent events I was in a deep conversation with a gentleman about his operation and it was quite a relief when a lady asked the fellow for a dance because I was already beginning to feel quite ill. As he was getting up the lady said no and pointed to me, did I ever feel good. Then she started to talk and said that at the last meeting they had decided that they should cater more to newcomers and that was the reason she had asked me for a dance. I thought to myself, “why don’t you shut up” as I thought it was because she liked me. I asked her if she had a ride home and she said yes, I did not believe her. After the dance ended I parked my car (a new Thunderbird) right beside the bus stop and there they were the lady and her two girlfriends. I enjoyed her embarrassment and I heard one of her friends tell her to get rid of me, it did not work. That lady was Victoria my future wife.

We started dating and could not stay away from each other, we never got much sleep and that was no good so I proposed and asked Victoria to marry me. She pretended to be surprised and it took her a long time to say yes, at least two minutes. The first thing we did was to tell the children, we both had two. I had Benita and Norbert and Victoria had Cesar and Adriana. It was all quite exciting, they all wanted to become one big family. It was not wise to move into each other’s home therefore we moved just before Christmas into a brand new home and we were married in the pioneer home of the founder of the forerunner of the N.D.P. Woodworths. With Ukrainian, German and Canadian traditions Christmas sure was different.

We also got to know Victoria's mother and sister. Her mother was a well known Ukrainian writer and her sister had graduated as an engineer. Victoria's father was a university professor who was shot for political reasons by the Russians. That was the reason they had all fled the Ukraine to Brazil where they lived for 20 years. It was in Brazil that Victoria had married for the first time and had two children, a boy and a girl. After her husband had been killed in a car accident it became too difficult for her to make a living in Brazil so she moved to Canada with her children.

When the children were still teenagers we all went on holidays to Disneyland, Wildwood and Myrtle Beach. That's where we rented an apartment by telephone. We were promised very large, 4 bedrooms, on the beach, very exclusive. When we got there, it had no door, could not see the beach because it had no windows and was below ground. We got something else with a beautiful balcony, facing the beach and a swimming pool in front of us. Victoria and I were sitting on the balcony sipping our Pinacoladas when a young couple were playing around, then he pushed her in the pool, but when she came out of the water her bathing suit became all transparent (it was for sun bathing only), it did not bother the couple. Victoria and I had our mouths open, forgot to sip our Pinacoladas, trying to study that young lady the way God made her.

Myrtle Beach is the all-you-can-eat country. When Victoria and I were lying on the beach we saw an example of the generosity of the restaurants to offer as much food as you can eat for one price. We saw three objects slowly moving from the street negotiating their way towards the beach. As they came closer we saw they were three ladies. They were massive, by far more than 400 pounds each everything was moving, it looked like they had breasts of equal size in the front and back. All the eyes from the people on the beach were on the ladies. We were all afraid if the ladies would slide in the loose sand and fall down. Then we

all would have to run and help them to get up. They definitely would not be able to get up by themselves or we would have to hire a crane, but nothing happened. They got in the water and toddled out again to their motel. Now each time we pass by an all-you-can-eat restaurant we have to think about these ladies.

In the meantime our factory was well established and everything was in place. Living in a city that was the most ethnically diverse in North America we tried to create memorials that reflected the traditions of all the different groups, that is one of the reasons we travelled a lot, to learn about the history of the different traditions. We just completed the Canadian Korean War Memorial, it is over 100 feet long, and over 500 Canadian soldiers lost their lives in Korea. For the unveiling there were thousands of people including many government officials, Canadian Korean veterans and a large group of Korean soldiers who had come all the way from Korea for this occasion.

A few months later we erected a memorial for the Grand Duchess Olga Alexandrovna of Russia in York Cemetery in Toronto. I talked to her daughter-in-law who told me of the interesting life the Duchess had prior to the time she was picked up by the British warship HMS Marlborough near Yalta in the Black Sea.

As our company expanded we attracted some very unusual characters. One of those was Mr. Singleton who was over 6 feet tall and built like a tank but very gentle, he was a native Indian and came to us highly recommended by my competitor Mr. Goldberg. If we did not know how to spell something we asked Singleton. I asked him how come you are so well educated and he said, "You see, when you are in prison there is nothing to do, you read anything, even the label on the soup can." That is how I was informed that he had been in the penitentiary. He explained, "The police you cannot trust. They were trying to break up a poker game and I had a lot of money riding on it and I was defending it. That was how I ended up with the

right side of my face paralyzed just like Jean Chretien our Prime Minister” he said grinning “and three policemen in hospital.” He lived together with two extremely beautiful looking ladies of pleasure. “It was too dangerous for them to live alone, somebody has to protect them,” he explained. After a while he told us that he had to quit, the police were always bothering him. A month later we got a letter from him out of Vancouver, he wrote that he was running a hotel for the organization (whatever that meant) and he had some disappointment. He had invented a device that you attach to the bottom of the public telephone and when you tighten the screw the whole bottom with all the money would fall to the floor, but there in Vancouver the telephones were different and the device did not work, so it was back to the drawing board. He seemed to be very determined.

Another character was George Georgiev. He was a genius who could do nearly everything. He was Bulgarian and had to serve in the Russian army and then was sent to Yugoslavia for further study, there he lived in a cave with the wrestling champion of Bulgaria in order to save money. He escaped to Italy and from there immigrated to Canada. He did sculpture work which included the statue in front of Joso’s Restaurant on Davenport Road in Toronto as well as welding, carvings, mathematical problems, but one time he was not so lucky. He had installed a new bathtub in the apartment above my office where he lived with his wife and a big dog. I was in the office when he took the first bath in the new bathtub and that was when the disaster occurred. When he pulled the plug to drain the tub I received a complete shower. All of the papers on my desk, the whole office was under water, George had forgotten to weld the drainpipes together. What a mess. When the Russian astronaut Gagarin came to Toronto and was interviewed in the Royal York Hotel George pushed his way through the journalists to whom he apologized and sat down beside Mr. Gagarin greeting

him in perfect Russian. Because George knew more about rocket propulsion than any of the journalists it was easy for him to dominate the interview and of course this made the journalists furious. He also invented a new pump for the oil industry, then he became the specialist for speed bikes in North America. The bike that the handicapped Rick Hansen used to travel across Canada was his creation. On July 22nd, 1998 in Blainville, Quebec the bikes designed by George were awarded 6 world records, the fastest was the 200 metre from a flying start speed, and it achieved 100.06 km per hour. I really miss that crazy nut.

We also employed a fellow by the name of Bill Kiss who was just the opposite of George. He was Hungarian and was always happy but not too fast. I would ask him how come he was always happy and he would say I left my wife who always made me do things and then I drink a lot of tea and that makes me feel good. I didn't trust him and one day when he went to the washroom I reached into his private bag, which I know I should not have done, and unscrewed his thermos bottle and nearly fell over from the smell of pure rum. I told him of my discovery and he was surprised himself, he was sure he had put tea in the bottle. A few days later in the middle of the day I could not find Bill Kiss, his sand blast machine was idle and nobody had seen him. I had to go to the bank and then went next door to the restaurant to buy some cigarettes. There was Bill sitting at a table having his second beer. He was so happy to see me and he invited me to join him for a beer. I asked him if he was nuts and he was very disappointed that I did not join him. He agreed with me that work was no good for him but said that was no reason to fire him.

We are very lucky with our employees. They are very skilled and trustworthy, Bill Kiss being the exception, but I have to forgive him. He is very entertaining. Bill needs somebody to look after him, like a wife.

To show you one example of trustworthiness, we

had an estimator, Bob Hildreth (he is retired now). He was also in charge of the payroll. Bob used to work for many years in Quebec for Rock of Ages, our supplier. One day he made a mistake in estimating that was very costly for the company. A few months after that I checked the payroll record and found that Bob had not paid himself for a few weeks. I confronted him and told him that I cannot accept that, we all make mistakes and it is the company's responsibility. He said "You better accept it. I made the mistake and I am going to pay for it. It has to do with my honour." I could not live with that. At the end of the year I increased his bonus.

During this period we had two very sad tragedies. One happened to our customer Steve Pratt who owned a monument company. His secretary of many years unexpectedly took sick and within a short time passed away. His salesman, a very fine gentleman, committed suicide by drinking some poisonous fluid, why we do not know. Then Steve's wife Wanda became very ill and nearly died and then the worse thing they could have ever imagined, their only son a beautiful young man developed cancer in the chest and within a few months passed away. This all happened within one year. I have always admired Steve and Wanda for being able to survive such tragedies.

The second tragedy happened to Joe Sidney our oldest employee. He was like a grandfather and everybody liked him. He had to leave Hungary under the Fascist president Hortey because he was Jewish. His brother, who for some reason was allowed to stay in Hungary, finally received after 40 years permission to leave the country and go to Israel. Joe followed him for a reunion. After three days Joe received a terrible phone call telling him that his daughter had committed suicide, nobody understood why, including her husband and their children. Within a year more tragedy when his daughter-in-law also committed suicide. She was very active in community life and helped everyone. She was a very talented woman who appeared

before the Eddie Cantor Show in Hollywood. She was close to achieving her dream when she was invited to appear at a very important international event in Moscow. She was refused because she was Jewish and that could perhaps be the reason for her suicide. A few months later Joe's grandson was sleeping over at a friend's house downtown when a jealous woman set fire to the house and the grandson burned to death. I attended Joe's funeral recently and I learned that the last years of his life had not been so happy.

Victoria and I were invited to attend the premiere of a film where Malcolm Muggeridge, the English journalist and Victoria's mother played a prominent role. The name of the movie was "Harvest of Despair". Stalin needed money so he sold the total harvest of the Ukraine to the west. He confiscated the total harvest including the seeds for the next year from the farmers who then had nothing to eat. The result was the greatest tragedy ever. In the winter of 1932 to 1933 approximately seven million Ukrainians starved to death. The cruelty of the communists under Stalin was indescribable.

Now that our family had increased all kinds of new events were taking place. Benita met a nice young man named James and they fell in love and it was not long before they were married. They had a nice wedding where a friend of theirs, Judge Morrison officiated. We were somewhat worried because they were still very young but like they say love conquers all. It was not too long after that Benita told us she was pregnant and impatiently waiting for her first child. On a day when they were visiting us Benita's water broke and I quickly drove her along with James and Victoria to the hospital. Everything went very well and Benita was overjoyed. She said this was the happiest day in her life. The baby was a little boy and they named him Justin. As he grew up he was sometimes very funny. I remember when he was only 4 years old he was not behaving and his mother Benita told him off in our kitchen after which he stood in front of the whole family and said, "How

could you be so mean to your own son”, we all had to look away in order to keep from breaking out in laughter.

We had another pleasant surprise around this time when my father, Rudi my brother’s son, and his wife came to visit us from Germany. My father was so happy to see everybody especially his great grandson Justin. We showed him all the highlights of Ontario and he was sincerely impressed. He was also so proud of what I had achieved and praised me a lot. He got along especially well with Victoria. That visit will always stay in my memory as one of the most pleasant in my life.

Now that we had lived for a while in our new home we found that there was always a lot of excitement in front of our house. We live on a winding road which encourages especially young people to race their cars. On the opposite side of the road going down about 20 feet is a creek. A number of motorcycles that could not take the curve ended up completely smashed in our driveway. A car with four security officers and two girls of pleasure broke our telephone pole in half plus cut our neighbour’s tree down and we found it strange that we never saw a thing in the newspaper. On one occasion two cars went down into the creek and a crane had to winch the cars up the 20 foot slope. I felt sorry for the young man who was crying on the telephone while talking to his father, he had taken a brand new sports car on its first trip and smashed it into our new telephone pole. The pole was alright but the car was a write off. Many of our neighbours had their trees and hedges cut down. There were so many accidents that the city erected a safety guard which they also attacked. The chief of police was holding a safety lecture in front of our house for the neighbourhood when two drivers while passing by, wanted to know what was going on and smashed into each other in front of the chief. It surely is not monotonous, especially at night with sirens, flashing lights and police cars.

Having sold our cottage enabled us to see the world. Mexico from Puerto Vallarta south we visited at

least a dozen times. In Oaxaca we stayed in a converted monastery that was over 400 years old and the walls were still covered with paintings of saints. There were some of the oldest Mayan ruins where they honoured their ancestors by burying them underneath their living-room floors.

For us Chichen Itza was very confusing, they could tell by the movements of the stars the days of the year better than we could at that time. But in order to have a good harvest, they held a football game (we got to see the stadium) and the captain of the losing team had his head cut off so that the blood would flow into the ground, that they were convinced would bring a good harvest. They also had a secret well (cenote) where they used to push people in so they could talk to the gods to bring rain. In order that they could properly talk to the gods and not come up, they put stones between their legs. The National Geographic Society sent divers into the cenote and found stones still connected to the leg bones of the unfortunate creatures. The Mayans specifically celebrated the ritual of human sacrifice and were assured that they would go directly to paradise. The priest would send soldiers out into neighbouring territories to catch prisoners for the sole purpose of cutting out their hearts while they were still alive for the honour of Itzamna Cocahmut, the god of civilization. I don't think we will go back there again.

Not far away from Yucatan off the coast from Nicaragua is a little island, San Andres, if it was any smaller they would not have room enough for an airport. This is a very important island for the drug dealers. San Andres is a good place to get additional gas for their fast speedboats to reach Jamaica from Colombia with their special cargo. We had a lot of fun watching the Colombian navy who circled the island every day, playing cat and mouse with the drug dealers. They were lucky quite a few times. We had seen the police taking the hardworking drug dealers in chains from the boat to the jail in town.

From there we went to Cartagena in Colombia, it has so much history. This is the city where all the boats assembled with the gold treasures from the Incas to go to Spain. We saw the fortifications and the old town which is a marvel. It is amazing the way the Spanish built their houses to survive in the heat. They were at least 20 to 30% cooler than outside.

Cartagena is also known for the excellent emeralds. We bought a ring for Victoria and a very large expensive emerald for Benita's upcoming birthday. There was a constant wind. It was so strong that the sand from the beach plugged the road along the seashore so much that they had to clean the road with the snowplow every day.

On our day of departure I made the payment at the counter, then went upstairs to get the suitcases. But there was a cleaning lady in front of our room who was very nice and engaged me in a long conversation about Cartagena and we also admired the big lazy sloth in the tree in front of us, who was over a metre long. Then I went to get Victoria and as I turned I saw a second cleaning lady with broom and pail come out of our room. I did not think anything of it. When we were in the plane I wanted to admire the emerald again, reached for the little pouch in the carry-on bag pulled it out and surprise, the pouch was empty. Now it came to me. While the lady engaged me in the long conversation the other lady was inside stealing the emerald.

My Aunt Uschi from Hanover surprised us when she decided to spend her holidays with us in Canada. She is the one who was punished when I smashed my grandmother's porcelain figurines when we were very young. We decided that we would take Uschi along with us for a week's vacation to Tobago. Tobago has a very interesting history; dating from the time of Columbus it changed ownership 21 times. England used to send petty thieves to the Caribbean to work in the sugar plantations and they in turn fled to the dense forest of Tobago. That is why part of Tobago is called the

red-neck country. On our second day in Tobago a whole plane load of adventurous Swedish ladies arrived, no boys and within an hour they were all on the dance floor of the hotel. At the same time quite a few dozen dark African local gigolos arrived and now the party really began. Within a short time one of the very tall Swedish ladies took the hand of one of the gigolos and led him up the winding stairs to her room. This was followed by the applause of the other ladies from the dance floor.

Aunt Uschi was also asked for a dance and the gigolo enquired if he could be of any service to her, she thought it was very funny. In the morning the ladies brought their gigolos down from their rooms for breakfast. We had never seen anything that bold before and I do believe that men would have been more discreet.

We also had a lot of fun feeding the fish in the ocean from an outcropping. We threw pieces of bread into the sea, first only one or two fish would come then more, after about 5 minutes there were hundreds, they came with such speed from all sides that the fish in the centre got thrown at least two feet out of the water, it was indeed something to watch.

Soon after we returned from our holiday Norbert started dating a very pleasant girl by the name of Brenda who was a classmate of his and it did not take long before they had decided to get married. Their wedding took place in the chapel of the Old Mill. It wasn't long after that when Benita and James had their second son Jordan, a playmate for Justin. He was a very nice baby and just looking at him made you smile and that has not changed.

Then something very unexpected happened. Mrs. Gagnon, the owner of the Bookkeeping Services, was arrested. She did all of our accounts payables and receivables, what a shock. We had no idea why she was arrested but slowly the story began to unfold.

Mrs. Gagnon used to be a volunteer in the local prison helping the inmates and that was where she had

met Kenny. After Kenny had served his time they were married. Kenny had kept all of his old friends and therefore was always running out of money.

Mrs. Gagnon had many customers who entrusted her with their payroll and paying all their bills. One customer on his holiday in Florida knew he had a lot of money in the bank and wanted to draw out some cash but was told that there was no more money in his account. That started the investigation. He contacted the police and found that many of Mrs. Gagnon's customers had less money in their bank accounts than there should have been.

What she had been doing was making out the cheques along with the one for her services but not the centre of the cheque, which she would later print with her cheque writing machine. The customers would all sign their cheques and when they would leave she would add one number i.e. instead of \$100.00 she would make it \$2100.00 and then print the higher amount. One customer told me that she had stolen \$165,000.00 that he knows of, but he was sure that that was not all. I had never given Mrs. Gagnon permission to make out cheques and that was why we did not lose any money. She was found guilty but before the sentence could be announced she died of cancer. The nice husband said: "The stupid bitch let herself be caught".

We removed all our office papers from the book-keeping office and hired our own bookkeeper by the name of Mrs. Newman. Norbert had joined the company right after he had finished school and Benita who always wanted to be sure that the company remained in the family joined somewhat later and she took over the office work from Mrs. Newman.

We continued to spend our holidays in the South American countries and nearly all of the Caribbean Islands. Curacao was very interesting, it was the centre of the slave trade and that was where most of the slaves were auctioned off. It also had the oldest Jewish settlement in the Americas but most of the Jewish

monuments had Christian ornamentation, the reason being that there are no stones in Curacao. That was why the monuments were ordered from Holland and made by Christian stonemasons. It was probably too far to send them back and so there they stand with angels, urns, crossbones and broken trees.

We have a lot of contact with Brazil because Victoria's brother and his family live there as well as quite a few relatives from her first marriage, many of whom have visited us here in Toronto. Victoria's nephew was honoured when they named the new airport in Uberlandia (a city of 1½ million) after him, it is called "Bombonato". The reason for this honour was that he was a major in the Brazil air force and served in Bosnia. His plane crashed and he was killed over Rio when a bird was sucked into the jet engine.

Adriana studied for one year in Brazil, part of the time was in the jungle. Cesar who really loved Brazil, tried to see if he could make a living there but all he managed to earn was pocket money. The first time I went to Brazil with Victoria I was introduced to all of the relatives and I soon realized what a beautiful country Brazil is. While flying from Uberlandia to Belo Horizonte we flew right through a thunderstorm, lightning and thunder were all around us and my face was swollen because of a toothache. The pain became so bad I wanted to jump out of the airplane. I was very relieved when we landed. Brazil has beautiful people especially in Rio. They may be poor, you can tell because they can't even afford proper bathing suits, they are so small sometimes you can't even see them. But I have never seen such disproportionate people as in Belo Horizonte. It must be the mixture of races. Usually mixing races produces the most beautiful people such as in Hong Kong, Trinidad or Rio. I had to wait in the centre of Belo Horizonte and had time to observe. Dealing with sculptures all of my life I could tell that some of the people had: necks too long, bodies too short, arms too long or the legs too short, not only one

or two people but a very large percentage of the people.

From there we travelled to Ouro Preto a small beautiful Spanish city with wrought iron balconies just like in Spain. It was named a historical city by the United Nations. When we were there Victoria kept talking to everyone in Portuguese including me. Of course I do not understand a word of Portuguese but let this continue for more than half an hour with my encouragement. Only when I broke out laughing did she realize what she was doing but that is what happens when one deals with many languages.

Uschi phoned us that she was in the process of organizing a family reunion in Germany. Victoria, Benita and James and I promised to attend. We first visited my father and Rudi in Bamberg and then went to Pottenstein, a beautiful cave with very colourful stalactites, one of the best in Europe. From there we went to see the Von Stauffenberg castle high on a mountain, it was in excellent shape, drawbridge and all. This is the family where the young officer who tried to assassinate Hitler came from. There were weapons in the rooms from every century and some were very gruesome especially the big iron balls with spikes on a chain. They could kill the rider plus the horse. Benita looked at that and became ill.

After that we said goodbye to my father who was not well and continued with Rudi to Hanover. When we arrived there we were surprised that so many people, aunts and uncles, cousins and their children, most of whom I had not seen for more than 30 years were all there. It didn't take more than half an hour to feel as if we had never been apart. They came from all over Germany. It was great, we embraced, we cried, we laughed, we played games and most of all, we talked. Everybody was so happy. Then at night in the hotel they took all the doors to the rooms off of their hinges and then they could not get them back on again. I looked at all that and thought these are all my relatives, how embarrassing. We all had a great time and the

reunion was a tremendous success. Even though Aunt Uschi is not with us anymore I still like to thank her. James and Benita continued on to Paris where he was representing his father's company at a convention.

At the home front once again we had to extend our dining room table as Benita and Jim were blessed with their third son, Alexander. Benita, who always wanted at least a dozen children, was overjoyed. Brenda and Norbert had their first child, Cameron, and it was a big event. Norbert and I celebrated with a small bottle of brandy in the hospital yard. Norbert is always very busy especially after work and on weekends, he plays with his rock and roll band. He is also very talented. The other day he was playing so intensely and dancing at the same time that he ripped a tendon in his knee and had to go to the hospital. A few months later he really did damage to his knee by reaching for a beer from the fridge. Music must be a dangerous occupation. Adriana also got married but she drifted apart from the family and that was very sad. Victoria suffered a lot because of losing her daughter.

We received many large contracts for the company and one of them was for the police memorial honouring all the officers that had died while on duty in the last 100 years in the province of Ontario. We designed the memorial and made models for two 8½ foot tall police officers and then flew to Bangkok in Thailand to complete the sculpture in bronze at a foundry there. Victoria, myself, our sculptor and his wife flew to Thailand to supervise the project and combine it with a holiday which turned out to be the nicest we ever had. We saw hundreds of beautiful temples, the river boats, the King's garden and many bronze sculptures. We also travelled to the south and spent a few days in Phuket the same place that was later hit by the Tsunami which washed our hotel away. On the beach we saw a young elephant crying and we all tried to calm the baby elephant down. From there we travelled by boat to the island where they had filmed the movie "The man with

the Golden Gun". We were amazed with a huge bronze elephant statute which showed the Queen riding the elephant against the Burmese. Each leg of the elephant was defended by a warrior who was over 8 feet tall and if anything did happen to the elephant's leg the warrior was immediately killed.

One thing I always found interesting in Toronto whenever we went to auctions they all had a lot of bronze sculptures, large and small, and we were told they were all antiques. In Thailand we visited a few foundries and saw hundreds, no thousands of the same North American sculptures in different stages of completion. I enquired as to what they did with all of these bronzes and was told that they sent them by container to New York where they were sold as antiques. Now I had my answer.

When we were finally ready to pour the foundation for the police memorial which weighted about 50 tons and was located in a public park, we discovered that underneath the park was a very large parking garage. This made our foundation an engineering project. For the unveiling of the memorial there were delegations from all over the province of Ontario as well as our neighbour, the United States, the Premier of Ontario, the Governor General of Canada, many officials, family members of the fallen officers and more than 10,000 police officers all in uniform and hundreds of motorcycles. It was quite an event. The sad part is that each year we had to add more names to the memorial.

Our next holiday we spent around the Mediterranean and it was while we were in Rhodes I had to interrupt our holidays and fly to Bamberg, Germany as my father was very ill. It was good to be able to say good-bye to him because it was only a few months later that he passed away.

The next time we went to Greece we decided to go to Delphi. We had so many problems I had to talk to somebody so I figured I might as well talk to the oracle

just like the kings in ancient Greece had done. I waited and waited for an answer but none ever came. The next time we travelled to the island of Crete to go to the birth place of the greatest god Zeus. We climbed close to a mile up the mountain and then down into a cave surrounded by stalactites where Zeus's mother had hidden when Zeus was born because she was afraid the father would eat Zeus. Once again I told him all my problems. After that Victoria and I took a lecture in Greek mythology and asked the professor how long do we have to wait for an answer from the oracle and he said that the gods are very busy. Now it has been many years since that visit and I am not sure if I can believe in any gods any more.

At work we were faced with a big tragedy. After our sculptor Siggy retired we hired a Polish artist by the name of Gajda (we called him Bishop) who had studied in Krakow, Poland and was very talented. He loved fishing and after Christmas he and a friend went ice fishing on Lake Superior. On their way back across the ice the skidoo carrying the both of them broke through the ice and as there was no way they could be rescued, both men drowned. Bishop would have had a great future ahead of him, he was not even 40 years old at the time and he was married with a wife and children, it was very sad.

Now we were faced with many contracts and no sculptor. Some of the work was half finished and to find a sculptor who could work in granite was very hard to find. We have an artist by the name of Cherkasov who is specialized in etchings and had never cut granite. He had studied in Baku, Azerbaijan. I asked him if he wanted to become a sculptor, he would love to he said. I have never seen anyone learn as fast as he did. In the beginning, in order to train him, I had to be with him every day, now very seldom. He has finished many statutes some as tall as 11 feet, he just now completed work on four 8 foot apostles. We were very lucky.

In the meantime our family continued to expand

when Benita gave birth to a little girl, their princess Charlotte, and Brenda and Norbert had their second son, Ryan. Charlotte is a very pretty girl and Ryan is always very gentle. Now to finally make her dreams come true Benita and James bought a summer home way up north right on a lake surrounded by a large forest, ideal to relax and get away from all the turbulence of the city and especially good for the children.

As time went on I began to realize that I was getting older and should make sure that Norbert and Benita would be able to continue to operate the company once I retired. When I discussed how to transfer the responsibility of the company in the future, Norbert became very upset. He did not feel that it would be good for him. Norbert felt that he had so much pressure that any more responsibility would cause him to have a heart attack and his wish was that his sister, Benita, should head the company. I settled Norbert's wish with our lawyer. Without any clear cause Norbert felt that he was under tremendous pressure and he was having trouble controlling himself. We had a long talk about seeing a doctor which he did. He was diagnosed with extremely high blood pressure.

Not too long after that we received an emergency phone call telling us that Norbert was in the hospital in terrible pain. Brenda and I immediately went to the hospital and after many x-rays the doctors discovered Norbert had an aneurism in his brain. He was moved to a hospital that specialized in neuro-surgery where the operation took place. It was a very dangerous operation but it turned out to be successful. We were all very relieved. Norbert had to stay in the hospital for a period of time in order to recover. A few weeks later we received a phone call from Norbert's doctor telling us that he had some bad news, Norbert had another aneurism and this one was much more serious, he said he was very sorry. Benita hung up the phone and we both cried. We were so helpless, especially Brenda with two children and the surgeon did not give us much

hope. This was the worst day of my life. The operation was immediate and it was much longer than the first one. The operation was successful and what a joyful day it was for all of us. Norbert was so grateful that he always sends the doctor Christmas cards thanking him. We all need some luck in life.

Cesar who was still not married met a very pretty girl during one of his trips to Brazil, her name was Ana Luiza. They fell in love and within a short time were married in the same chapel as Norbert, the Old Mill. It was not long before they had a lovely little girl named Michela and two years later they had twins, two little girls called Aryana and Fabrizia. The chatter of these three little girls never stops.

Victoria and I continued to travel, we were lucky when we went to Las Vegas not that we did win any money, but after we saw the Grand Canyon by helicopter, it crashed about two weeks after we left. I think they discontinued the helicopter rides after that.

Finally after waiting for about ten years we were able to go to Egypt, each time we tried to go there was either a shooting or a hostage taking. We started out from Cairo and visited the Pyramids (they were ready to stage the play Aida in front of the Pyramids, what a background), we were able to see so many historical sites, especially the museum. The treasures in the museum are breathtaking. It is difficult to remember all the structures or what time period they belonged to, there were so many. From Cairo we took a short trip by plane to embark on our boat that took us to Luxor and then to the Aswan Dam. The boat was quite large, had a swimming pool, a dance hall and they had entertainment and a masquerade party. There were many stops to see the different historical sites which were all very well preserved probably due to the dry climate. That is why Victoria and I did not feel any pain despite that we both have advanced arthritis. To see all these treasures such as the Valley of the Kings or the gigantic sculptures in Abu Simbel in pictures or in the movies is one

thing but to be in front of these treasures is overwhelming. On our way back from Cairo to Athens I got all confused with the different money I had in my pocket, American, Canadian, Greek and Egyptian and when we left our hotel in Cairo to go to the airport I gave the doorman a two dollar tip. Driving away I looked back and saw him looking in awe at the money I had given him and I began to check the money in my pockets discovering that instead of a two dollar tip I had given the doorman fifty dollars to move one suitcase.

One of the reasons that we were able to enjoy our trips to faraway places was that Benita and James had been representing the company for years at all the conventions and seminars. James had a very responsible position as Director of Sales with his father's company which he retained even after the company was sold. He had to travel all over North America which meant that he could not spend much time with his young family and that was a very high price to pay.

Being well past the normal retirement age I had several long talks with Benita and James. I asked James if he would like to manage our company and replace me. After many discussions with Benita, James accepted. I was relieved! James is managing very well which pleases me and he now can spend more time with his family.

Victoria and I still continued to travel because we know that life is short and we like to see the many beautiful treasures the world has to offer. We spent some time in Spain and were amazed at the Alhambra, the seat of the Muslim Kings, the palace is truly an amazing treasure. I had always thought that our company had the best stone carvers there were but when I saw the carvings in Ephesus in Turkey which were produced over 2500 years ago with much more primitive tools, I felt very small. We also spent some time in the centre of Turkey, Cappadocia. It is so unusual I can't really describe it. The mountains look like cigars. There were up to 20,000 people living in caves and

underground and we only went down to level 4, they have 9 levels. We saw underground churches and storage rooms and most of them were covered with paintings of saints. Even now they have hotels built right into the mountain. Then we took a sightseeing tour over Cappadocia in a very large hot air balloon and we were close to a kilometre up in the air, it was a great experience. After that we had a ride on a camel that was so big we had to take a ladder to get on it and when the camel made a sharp turn we both nearly fell off. When we returned to our hotel we were reminded how old we were, getting out of the bus there was this little old lady, she must have been 95 years old, trying to help Victoria and myself off the bus.

After we returned home I had a very pleasant surprise while attending the annual convention for the Cemetery Association. I was honoured with a lifetime membership in the Cemetery Association for my contribution to the industry. I did feel somewhat uncomfortable getting all that attention. Talking about the past and how things have changed from the time I learned the trade and now our company has more than a dozen computers and because of that more educated craftsmen, and more automated machinery. To give one example we completed a large memorial in memory of the Holocaust with more than 200,000 letters. When I learned the trade 50 years ago in Germany it would have taken one man 3000 days and now it took us 250 days for one man.

The Holocaust memorial was one of the largest and it also was very expensive. The two people in charge of the project were David Smushkowitz and Peter Silverman who were former partisans who lived in the forests of Lithuania and Belarus for 2 years fighting the German army. The former president of the United States, Mr. Bill Clinton, was also a great help when he came to Toronto to take part in the fundraising for the memorial. At the unveiling there were quite a few thousand people present including many officials,

relatives of the people murdered in the concentration camps as well as a number of older people who had been rescued by the Allied Forces at the end of the war from these camps. They still had the tattooed numbers on their arms. The unveiling was a very emotional event.

Because she was getting older we encouraged Victoria's mother to visit her place of birth in the Ukraine and Victoria offered to accompany her. After some persuasion she agreed with a smile and even thought it was a nice present. She was a well known writer and was asked to make a number of speeches at Ukrainian universities which was the highlight of her life.

When she came back to Canada she was a changed person, perhaps because of the attention she had received as well as the therapy she already received, maybe she was worried about her health. Whatever the reason, Victoria's sister Mira, who was not on the best of terms with her mother and was the reason her mother had moved away from her, found out that her mother was very ill and tried to prolong her life by any means she could, even importing medicine from the Ukraine which only prolonged her mother's agony. But I am sure she meant well.

Victoria and I would have liked to be a part of her mother's last days in order to share pleasant memories and thoughts of her long life but it was not possible because Mira was furious with anyone who did not agree with her to the point that she refused to give our phone number to the nurses who wanted to tell us when Victoria's mother died. We received the news of her death from Victoria's brother in Brazil. This caused Victoria a lot of pain and did not help the relationship with her sister.

At work in order to be able to compete, we have to import more and more granite from Asia especially from China and India. Our agent from India (his name is Indra) has a lot of problems. He lived in the northern

part of Sri Lanka in the city of Jaffna, that's where most of the Tamils live whose religion is Hindu and are fighting for independence. Indra is Buddhist and Sinhalese. His house in Jaffna was taken away and in order not to be killed he had to pay a ransom of 100,000.00 dollars. After that he moved to the south, the city of Colombo.

When he was visiting us on his normal business trip his new house in Colombo was completely ransacked and all the contents were stolen. Whenever he comes to Toronto he makes sure that nobody from the Toronto Tamil Community knows where he is staying. He knows that they are collecting money for their cause in Sri Lanka and sometimes by force. Now he spends most of his time in India in Madras where the granite factory is, his wife has a job in Dubai, the United Arab Emirate, his daughter studied in Australia and his son works in South Africa. When Sri Lanka got hit by the Tsunami the Sinhalese government of Sri Lanka as a result of all the fighting diverted very little from the incoming donations to the northern Tamil port of Sri Lanka. There is very little hope for the future of Sri Lanka.

Let's talk about something very pleasant. Benita was adopted when she was only a few months old and she never knew much about the health record of her birth parents and with four children it is important to know these things. A few years ago Benita told me that she was worried not knowing the health history of her natural parents so Benita and James started the search at the hospital in Scarborough where she was born. When she went looking for her baptismal certificate the parish priest sent her the wrong copy with information she would not have been able to find otherwise. With the information shown on the certificate James hired a detective and it did not take too long to track the birth mother's home. Through the detective a meeting was arranged to take place in Brampton, Ontario and both women were very nervous not knowing what to expect.

One cannot know what must have been going on

in their minds when the birth mother and daughter met for the first time in 43 years. Very carefully they got to know each other but it did not take long before they discovered they had a lot in common. Benita was especially worried about how I would react to having Mildred in the family and whether or not she would fit in. I met her for the first time in a restaurant near our office and then we invited her to our house and Victoria and I were both pleasantly surprised at what a fine lady she is and welcomed her to the family.

We have all become friends and we feel that the family has become richer. I think we are very lucky and Benita smiles more. The story as I was told goes like this, apparently Mildred the birth mother was dating a young man in the army and when he returned to his base in Ontario she discovered she was pregnant. She wanted this to be just between her and her young man but other parties were not so nice and being very naïve and knowing what children born out of wedlock in her hometown went through she was determined that would not happen to her baby. She moved to Ontario and eventually ended up in an unwed mother's home and had Benita whom she placed for adoption. After all the papers had been signed and court dates held her young man appeared on the scene again and they eventually married and had two more children, the marriage did not work out.

During their marriage they lived a half a block away from our factory on Castlefield Avenue. She may have seen Benita many times going back and forth to the bank never knowing she was her daughter. Benita and James went to Nova Scotia for the first time and they had a chance to meet a good part of Mildred's family and have since been back for vacation.

Cesar received very good news that he had a position in the United States as a computer specialist and because he knew that his future did not look too great in Canada in that field and the fact that his wife Ana Luiza coming from Brazil never liked the

Canadian winters is especially very happy to move further south. They were moving to Arkansas and have already bought a house in the middle of the forest with deer and foxes that come close to the house, it is beautiful.

We have just had a phone call that Michela, the oldest girl, while playing has fallen and broken both her arms and she cannot use her hands and the younger sisters have to feed her, poor girl.

We had an especially lively summer, Tante Trude's daughters, Rosie and Hanelore, and their husbands spent one month with us. They were so full of energy we were very busy seeing Niagara Falls, and the CN Tower. We took a boat ride all around the Muskoka Lakes and then they were forced to do belly dancing with nearly naked girls, they had a wonderful time. The best thing they liked was spending one week at Benita's cottage especially with the chain saw cutting all the dead trees down. They were great to have, Tante Trude herself wanted to visit us but a big happy dog jumped on her and threw her down to the cement floor and up to this day she cannot walk without a walker, she is very sorry but now it is impossible for her to visit.

Recently we spent a few days with Cesar's family in Arkansas and then we took a tour through New Orleans (before the flood) and saw the entertainment district, also the bordello where Louis Armstrong used to play. New Orleans was full of life. Then we were floating on the Mississippi River in a very luxurious riverboat to Baton Rouge, where we attended on a large cotton plantation in the slave quarters, an old fashioned broomstick wedding. After that we took part in a very entertaining jazz funeral and it was really something to see. First the coffin and then two musicians playing like crazy, one had a saxophone and the other a trumpet (both of them were colourfully dressed) and we all followed, each holding an umbrella decorated with pretty flowers and in the other hand we had a handkerchief in case we wanted to cry. But

we were singing our hearts out and dancing like we never did before and then we would stop and the preacher would yell out all the terrible deeds the deceased had done and we would fall in with “praise the lord” and then continue to sing and dance with the music. After we got our senses back we visited the City Hall and saw the bullet hole caused by the killing of the Governor, who was the main character in the novel “All the King’s Men”. We both thought it was time to go home and take a rest from our holidays.

A few nights ago our good friend Fumiko Nomura and her son Yoshe were joining us for supper. Pat is her nickname and she is now 91 years old but aside from occasionally repeating herself she is very happy and content even though her life has been very turbulent. Pat was born in Tokyo, Japan. Her uncle said to her: “You are getting older you should get married”, “but I do not know anyone”, she said. “But I do”, her uncle said, “here is his photo, he is a very nice young man, does he not look nice”. “Yes he does but where is he”, she asked. “He belongs to the Japanese embassy in Argentina in Buenos Aires”, her uncle replied. After sending her photo Pat packed her bag and off she went to South America. The moment they laid eyes on each other for the first time they fell in love and were married immediately. They had one son and later a daughter.

They were right there when the battle between the German battleship Graf Spee and the British cruisers took place and after the battleship was damaged beyond repair the Captain sailed the sinking battleship into Montevideo Harbour and released the crew who were then held by the Argentine authorities. The Captain who sank nine Allied boats had always made sure that not a single crew member lost his life said: “I’d rather have 2000 young men alive than 2000 heroes that are dead”. After everyone had left the battleship Captain Hans Langsdorf set an explosive charge sinking the ship and then shot himself. Many soldiers were able to escape to the Japanese Embassy where

Pat and her husband were working at night falsifying passports for the sailors to go through neutral countries to go home. From there Pat's husband was moved to Peru and then he died so Pat went back to Japan. Years later she immigrated with her children who were now adults to Canada. Victoria and Pat worked together for many years in the university library. She is a joy to be with.

Santorini cast a magic spell, the history, the mystery draws us like no other place. We have been there a number of times. It had many volcanic eruptions but the greatest in recorded history was at the same time as when the Jewish people left Egypt. Ash covered the island in some places up to 40 metres high, the total island of Crete was covered also Asia Minor and the Nile. The oxide in the dust made the Nile red. It created a tremendous hole underneath the volcano which was too much pressure from above and that's why 84 square kilometres of solid ground collapsed and created a tidal wave 250 metres high rushing outward at a speed of 350 kilometres per hour. This washed away most of the Minoan civilization. All of this happened about 1500 years before Christ.

The myths made it even more interesting. The first one said that the god Zeus had sent the flood to punish mankind. The second myth was that Santorini was the island of Atlantis. A.G. Galanopoulos argued that Plato related the story from Solon, an Athenian statesman from 590 B.C. which produced a distortion in translation from Egyptian into Greek to thousands instead of hundreds and the time when the eruption happened 900 years earlier. That would have put the eruption at 1490 B.C. and the island of Atlantis ten times smaller than what everybody continues to look for. The third myth of course concerned the Jews leaving Egypt. The Nile was overwhelmed with iron oxide which turned the sea red and killed all of the fish. Compounds of sulphur poisoned all life and the volcanic ash burned all vegetation, plus the all-consuming flood must have

washed away the Egyptian army that was following the Jews. Which one of these myths is true we will probably never know but the site is breathtaking and we will go back again.

Now that I am retired I still occasionally visit the factory. I can see that competition is getting worse especially because of the imports from China. I never did like competition, we would have made more money but I am not complaining as we are still getting thousands of orders and we have a very highly skilled workforce.

To give you some idea of where they come from I will list them: Finland, Holland, China, Russia, Israel, Italy, Germany, Cuba, France, Czech Republic, Poland, Ireland and Canada. They are all now Canadian citizens. Having such a diverse work force helps with all the ethnic languages required on our monuments.

One of our setting crews returned from a funeral in a cemetery on Bathurst Street in Toronto which is on very low lying ground and it had rained a lot. The gravedigger had dug the hole for the grave and as soon as they had finished the grave filled with water so they quickly obtained a water pump to empty the hole while watching for the funeral party. As soon as the funeral procession came around the corner they ripped the pump out of the hole hiding it behind another monument and hoped that the funeral would be fast. There was a table set up with refreshments which were very strong, I call it medicine, and the Rabbi had a very long sermon. The coffin was lowered into the hole and the people threw a shovel of earth on top of it and as the Rabbi continued to preach the coffin slowly began to rise. You could see that the people were very confused and did not understand what was happening and therefore had a deeper meaning for what had occurred, especially that by now the coffin was completely out of the hole and level with the ground. This is when the crew left the cemetery because they did not want to become involved in what would happen next.

As I get older I realize what a beautiful tolerant country Canada is, at a recent party I asked our friends where they were born. That was interesting. Some came from Switzerland, China, Japan, India, Russia, Holland, Poland, Ukraine, some Russians (deported from China), Colombia, Spain, Argentina, Brazil, two were born in Canada.

It becomes even more complicated, the Chinese one worked as a preacher in Panama, Dubai and Burma, the Japanese one as a professor in the U.S.A., the Indian as an engineer digging tunnels in China, the Russian working with machines in Germany, Brazil and China, the Ukrainian working on pipelines in Tunisia, Morocco and France, the Canadian teaching in Peru, and Victoria my wife worked for a long time as a teacher in Brazil. The knowledge that everybody brings makes life richer and much more interesting.

Victoria and I are very lucky as we both love history and like to explore the treasures of the past. The only thing that does not work too well lately is my head. I just recently had to pick Victoria up at the airport from a visit she had with Cesar in Arkansas and I could not find her so I phoned our home and there she was. She had taken a taxi home as she could not find me at the airport as I must have been at the wrong terminal. It was now 2 o'clock in the morning and I went looking for my car in the parking lot and could not find it after looking for more than an hour. Then I also took a taxi home. The very next day I returned to the airport by taxi to look for my car and there it was, exactly where I had left it. I also had a lot of problems with my knees for many years and finally had an operation on both of them. After the operation I behaved very strangely. I ripped my tubes out and frightened the nurses. The doctor decided to give me a test, 30 questions, very difficult, what is your name, where do you live, what is your wife's name, how old are you, one can see they were very difficult. I had 27 questions wrong and that told the doctor about my state of mind, I was over

medicated. The same test was repeated three days later and I had only 1 question wrong.

Whenever I meet people from Europe even relatives I notice that I have changed from the time I left West Germany. It must be the environment, the customs of the different regions, and having seen so many different countries that changed my outlook. We were in Germany on top of the Stauffenberg Castle looking down at the village in the valley below and my son-in-law James said what a pretty sight, everything is so clean, all the fences and houses are painted and all the flowers are so nice, like in a fairy tale, I told him “knowing you, you would not like to live there”. “Why,” he asked me. I told him that in Canada and the United States we have houses that are well maintained and some that look terrible, some front yards are really pretty but some do look awful, because we are all different. In Germany the community standard is different, neighbours will tell you when your house is ready to be painted and you would not like that. In the parks they have signs that say it is “verboten” to step on the grass. We in Toronto have signs that say the opposite, “please step on the grass”.

Here are a few paradoxes of life which I have experienced. When we were in New Orleans (before Hurricane Katrina) they had two conventions at the same time, one was the convention of the Baptist church and the other was a large gay convention. Victoria and I were sightseeing on Bourbon Street when a very corpulent Baptist lady stopped two young men holding hands in their tracks and with a tight grip on their shoulders she gave them both a lecture, that they both should be ashamed of themselves. God would punish them, they will go to hell, this went on for quite a while. In Toronto she would have been charged with disturbing the peace but in New Orleans it is called free speech.

In Cairo we looked from an old high castle down on to the rooftops of one section of the city. It resembled a

garbage dump; all of the rooftops were full of large piles of garbage. I asked the guide why they put their garbage on the top of the roof and he said: “what garbage, that is their property”.

In Mexico near Chichen Itza we watched a native lying in his hammock trying to persuade his big pig to get out of his living room, he behaved as if this was nothing unusual, the pig liked it there, it did not move.

In Tobago at carnival time a very happy participant told us that he had six children but was still single. He was very proud of his achievement.

I have just finished reading Richard Dawkins’ book “The God Delusion” attacking all religion and telling us that all religions are the invention of the human mind. He will make a lot of money because his book is nearly one year on the best sellers list. In contrast Salman Rushdie’s head is also worth a lot of money and has risen with interest to over two and a half million dollars all because of his book “The Satanic Verses” that was critical of the Muslim religion, which I found very interesting.

Now being retired and having a large family I am keeping track of all the unfortunate incidents. There is always somebody who breaks a leg, a finger, and Michaela just broke two arms, or the older grandchildren get into car accidents. Benita, our daughter, has a car that can’t be trusted. It always wants to hit other cars.

I am busy feeding the birds. We have a number of bluejays, they come every morning wanting their peanuts.

I made a feeding station for our chipmunks, we have up to six chipmunks. They come every day; they will eat us out of house and home. Our big parrot, who has a large cage by the window, and I are protecting the chipmunks from the cats. As soon as the parrot sees a cat in the back yard he yells like crazy. I run out with a stick in hand and the cat jumps over the fence like the devil is after her, the chipmunk just sits there and

watches (he knows it's not for him) and the parrot, after it is all over, sings his victory song.

Slowly coming to the end of my experiences I recall having a conversation with a reporter from the Toronto Star newspaper. She had written a long article about the funeral industry and what the future held and then she asked me what kind of memorial I would like to have on my grave. I told the reporter that there was no doubt in my mind that I am not going. She printed exactly that in the paper, Mr. Mueller said: "He is not going".

My life has been very turbulent but I have received a lot of sunshine.

HEINZ ALFONS MUELLER - Tribute

Heinz Mueller, Founder of Wholesale Lettering & Carving Limited, was born in the Free City of Danzig (which is now Gdansk, Poland) on June 25, 1930. The wartime deportation of his family resulted in Heinz's family settling in East Germany and then escaping undercover across the border into West Germany, into the Bavarian city of Bamberg.

From Heinz's earliest years art has played an important role in his life. Painting, sculpting in clay and sketching led him to an apprenticeship at a Bamberg monument company as a stonemason. His apprenticeship consisted of extensive training in the restoration of stone, working on cathedrals, church interiors as well as performing memorial inscription, carving and memorial design.

Heinz, then 22, left Germany and his family for a new life in Canada. Although arriving in Canada with no knowledge of English, two weeks after his arrival he was hired at McIntosh Granite in Toronto. After only a few months of employment, his foreman suffered an injury which prevented his return to work and Heinz was promoted to fill the position.

In 1961, as southern Ontario was in the midst of an industrial boom, many of the small monument retail and manufacturing shops in Toronto began losing staff to the large automotive and manufacturing entities. Identifying the need for quality craftsmanship, Heinz approached these shops, and in a small room in the back of Thompson Granite, Heinz founded Wholesale Lettering & Carving Limited, a strictly wholesale manufacturing operation.

In 1966 Thompson Granite closed, forcing Wholesale Lettering & Carving to find a new address, which eventually led him to WLC's current address in Mississauga, Ontario. Wholesale Lettering & Carving's growth in the 1970's and 1980's was explosive. During this time WLC grew to become the largest letterer and

carver of finished monuments in Canada and remains Rock of Ages Canada's largest customer.

On June 30th, 1999, Heinz handed the reins of WLC to his daughter Benita and her husband James DesRoches, and together they are continuing the tradition of quality craftsmanship and Heinz's sound business practices.

Extensive travel helped Heinz transition into retirement. Since his retirement Heinz has been sighted in Brazil, Mexico, Thailand, Egypt, Turkey, Greece, Costa Rica, and Germany, to name a few places. When not traveling, Heinz and his wife Victoria enjoy the company of family and friends and are the proud grandparents of nine grandchildren.

Heinz has not totally abandoned his interest in the granite trade however, and has frequently been called upon by son-in-law James for advice and counsel. "When I need a good project manager for a large offsite public project, Heinz has all the knowledge and experience to provide guidance to the staff on site" James said. Two good recent examples were The Ontario Police Memorial at Queen's Park and The Holocaust Memorial in Toronto where Heinz offered his valuable skills to the WLC crew. "Currently we are in the midst of three or four very large projects and his guidance has been priceless for our team of designers and craftspeople. Seriously, there are very few people in North America who possess the skill, artistic ability and insight that Heinz has", according to James.

Rock of Ages has always valued their relationship with Heinz Mueller and Wholesale Lettering & Carving Limited. All of us at Rock of Ages would like to wish Heinz a happy retirement and we look forward to our continued close relationship with James, Benita and the staff of Wholesale Lettering & Carving Limited.

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*In the summer the beach at Zoppot
was always filled with thousands of people.*



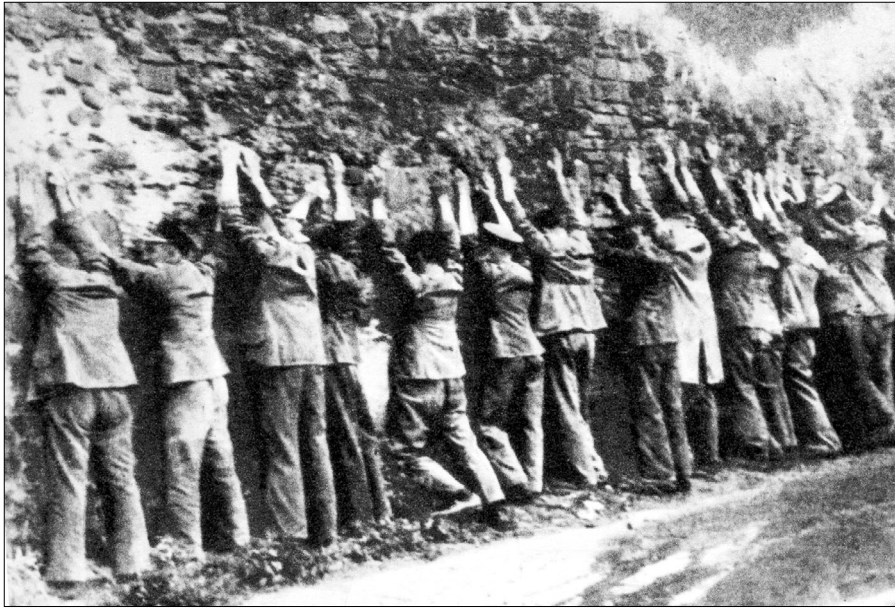
*The stage of the
forest opera in Zoppot.*



The dance pavilion in Zoppot on the beach.



The longest pier in Europe.



The execution of the 39 defenders of the Polish post office in Danzig.



The Polish commandant of the island in the middle of Danzig harbour, the Westerplatte.